

Complete Agenda

CABINET

CYNGOR GWYNEDD

DATE	Tuesday, 7th March, 2023
TIME	1.00 pm
LOCATION	Hybrid Meeting - Siambr Hywel Dda, Council Offices, Caernarfon, Gwynedd, LL55 1SH and on Zoom LL55 1SH This Meeting will be webcast https://gwynedd.public-i.tv/core//en_GB/portal/home
CONTACT POINT	Sioned Mai Jones 01286 679665 / cabinet@gwynedd.llyw.cymru

GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET MEMBERS

Members	
Dyfrig Siencyn	Leader of the Council
Nia Wyn Jeffreys	Deputy Leader
Craig ab Iago	Cabinet Member for Housing
Beca Brown	Cabinet Member for Education
Berwyn Parry Jones	Cabinet Member for Highways and Municipal and YGC
Dafydd Meurig	Cabinet Member for Environment
Dilwyn Morgan	Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing
Elin Walker Jones	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People
Ioan Thomas	Cabinet Member for Finance
Menna Jones	Cabinet Member for Corporate Support

AGENDA

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THE CABINET TUESDAY, 14 FEBRUARY 2023

Present-

Councillors: Dyfrig Siencyn, Nia Jeffreys, Craig ab Iago, Beca Brown, Berwyn Parry Jones, Elin Walker Jones, Menna Jones, Dafydd Meurig, Dilwyn Morgan and Ioan Thomas.

Also present-

Dafydd Gibbard (Chief Executive), Geraint Owen (Corporate Director), Huw Dylan Owen (Corporate Director), Iwan Evans (Head of Legal Services), Dewi Morgan (Head of Finance Department) and Sioned Mai Jones (Democracy Team Leader).

Item 6: Garem Jackson (Head of Education Department) and Debbie Jones (Education Corporate Services Manager).

Item 8: Ffion Madog Evans (Assistant Head - Finance Department)

Item 9: Dewi Wyn Jones (Business Support Service Manager).

Items 10 and 14: Ian Jones (Head of Corporate Support Department).

Item 11: Sioned E. Williams (Head of Economy and Community Department), Angela Jones (Eryri National Park Authority) and Sian Pennant Jones (Tourism, Marketing and Events Manager).

Item 12: Sioned E. Williams (Head of Economy and Community Department) and Esyllt Rhys Jones (Regeneration Programmes Manager).

Item 15: Carys Fôn Williams (Head of Housing and Property Department).

1. APOLOGIES

No apologies were received.

Cabinet Members and Officers were welcomed to the meeting.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

The Cabinet Member for the Environment declared a personal interest in Item 12 as he was the Chairman of Ogwen Partnership, one of the partnerships involved in the bid. He withdrew from the meeting during the discussion of this item.

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

The minutes of the meeting, held on 24 January 2023 were accepted as a true record.

6. YSGOL HIRAEI

The report was submitted by Cllr Beca Brown

DECISION

- 1.1 To allow the allocation of £3,000,000 from a total of £18m from the Bangor Phase 2 budget, Sustainable Learning Communities Programme (Band B) in order to invest in Ysgol Hirael. The budget would be subject to submitting a successful business case to the Welsh Government.
- 1.2 To agree for the Cabinet to assume the review of the Assets Plan by confirming a contribution of £1,050,000 from the Assets Plan for 35% of the match funding to fulfil the Ysgol Hirael project.
- 1.3 Subject to the Cabinet's decision in 1.1 above, and following that, the support of the Welsh Government to transfer the budget for Ysgol Hirael, to approve the preparation and submission of a business case to the Welsh Government in order to release the funds required.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted, noting that Ysgol Hirael is the only primary school in the Bangor catchment area which has not received any investment as part of Band A or Band B funding. It was added that the condition and suitability of the school require attention, with accessibility elements requiring specific attention at Hirael as it currently fell into category C.

It was noted that Ysgol Hirael was a very important Education resource and that it was essential to bring the school up to the same standard as the rest of the other schools in the area. The importance of the children of Hirael receiving their education at a school which had suitable resources was expressed, and this investment would allow improving the school's learning environment.

Observations arising from the discussion

- The Chief Executive noted that there had been strong comments and support from the Local Member which could be seen in part 6.3 of the report. It was added that the Local Member had been campaigning hard for this investment for the school.
- The Department was wished well in submitting their business case to Welsh Government.

7. 2023/24 - 2024/25 SAVINGS PLAN

The report was submitted by Cllr Dyfrig Siencyn

DECISION

- To approve the efficiency savings in Appendix A (£6.4M) as the first phase of savings that can be used as a contribution towards our financial gap in 2023/24 – 2024/25.
- To commission further work to establish the next phase of savings and cuts (approximately £1.6M - £2.2M) before setting the 2024/25 budget.
- To make a provision of £1.6M to address the level of risk involved in realising the efficiency savings plan.
- To delegate the right to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Finance, to make adjustments to this Savings Plan as the maturity of the plans listed in Appendix A develops, within the financial totals specified below.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted and the Chief Executive and the Finance officers were thanked for their work summarising all the savings received from the Departments. It was noted that a report had been submitted to the Governance and Audit Committee the previous week and the Committee's observations were received. It was added that the Governance and Audit Committee agreed with the sum of 20% to be allocated for risk. It was stated that one comment had been made about the equality assessment that had been conducted. This comment questioned whether the geographical impact on different areas had been considered; this comment had been noted and would be considered.

It was noted that the process had been followed professionally and that every Department had contributed which had resulted in a robust process and plans for the next two years.

The Chief Executive guided the Cabinet through the main matters of the report and detailed the financial gap of £12 million. It was explained that a two-year plan had been put together in order to close the financial gap; today, it was the phase one plan that was being submitted which included savings to the tune of £6.4 million. It was stressed that these were not cuts.

It was recognised that the savings would create pressure on Services and different ways of working would have to be considered. It was added that a lot of effort had been made by the Departments and that the second phase of the plan would be presented later in the year.

Observations arising from the discussion

- Members gave thanks for the report and it was believed that the process had been thorough.
- Pride was expressed about being able to make so many savings without having a substantial impact on services.
- Nevertheless, it was recognised that there would be some impact on service provision but that the list of savings included many budgets that were no longer needed and that many reasons for this was as a result of the effects of covid.

8. 2023-24 BUDGET

The report was submitted by Cllr Ioan Thomas

DECISION

To recommend to the Council (at its meeting on 2 March 2023) to:

1. Set a budget of £317,880,310 for 2023/24, to be funded by £227,842,930 of Government Grant and £90,037,380 Council Tax income (which is an increase of 4.95% on the tax of individual dwellings).
2. To set a capital programme of £67,780,150 in 2023/24, to be funded from the sources noted in Appendix 4 of the report.

DISCUSSION

The report was presented and the decision sought was noted. It was noted that the recommendation to increase council tax in a period of increasing costs of living was not an easy recommendation to make given the impact on the residents of Gwynedd. Reference was made to the financial challenges facing Local Authorities across Wales, particularly given recent inflation levels which were currently over 10%.

It was noted that Cyngor Gwynedd had received a grant increase of 7% for 2023/24 which was a significant improvement on the indicative settlement and was equivalent to an increase to the value of £14.6 million in external funding. However, it was stressed that this amount was not sufficient to meet inflation and additional pressures on services.

Reference was made to the provision for salary inflation which was £14.2 million. It was explained that salary inflation in the 2023/24 budget included an element to correct the 2022/23 deficit as the final agreement was higher than what had been budgeted for, as well as consider notional inflation for 2023/24. It was also mentioned that there was provision for other inflation of £11.1 million which included £3.3 million of inflation on electricity prices and £3 million in the care field.

It was recommended that bids to the value of £2.75 million for additional permanent resources submitted by the Council's Departments to meet unavoidable pressures on services should be approved. It was believed that these bids were necessary and were in addition to the £3 million extra added to the Homelessness budget funded from the Council Tax Premium.

It was explained that all bids submitted had been challenged thoroughly by the Leadership Team as well as considered in the Budget Seminar with all members held on 26 January 2023.

To summarise, it was noted that the Council's spending needs (before taking out savings) for 2023/24 was £323.1 million as noted in part 3 of the report. It had been noted in part 2 that the grant from Welsh Government would be £227.8 million. This

meant that there was a residual deficit of £95.2 million to be filled. It was recommended to meet the remaining deficit through Council Tax as well as using the savings; using the savings that had already been approved for 2023/24 and the new ones would create a total of £5.2 million which would be used to reduce the financial deficit. Increasing the Council Tax by 4.95% would generate a little over £90 million in income, which would be sufficient to full the financial deficit.

Attention was drawn to Appendix 4 which reflected the capital requirement, as well as funding, in order to establish an entire programme worth £67 million in 2023/24. It was noted that the Head of Finance would note the observations received from members of the Governance and Audit Committee held on 9 February 2023.

The Head of Finance added that there were no specific points by the Governance and Audit Committee for the Cabinet to consider but that he would refer to the observations received. A question had been received about the use of balances with the Head of Finance explaining why it was not use made by the Council; this response had been accepted by the Committee. A comment had been received on inflation costs on teachers' salaries as there had been mention from Welsh Government that there would by a further increase to teachers' salaries. It had been asked whether the budget would have to be adapted to address this. The Head of Finance had noted that not enough details had been received to date about this proposal but he would expect that the Welsh Government would fund the increase through an additional grant. He added that not enough information had been recieved to adapt the budget.

A further question had been asked about the Corporate Joint Committee and its increasing levy. It had been explained that the Corporate Joint Committee's responsibilities continued to grow through the regional Planning and Transportation Sub-committees which were in the process of being established. It had been noted that decisions needed to be made and reference had been made to the discussions about the intention to combine the CJC's governance responsibilities with that of the Economic Ambition Board. Assurance had been given that the Finance Officers had been doing their best to keep costs down in relation to the regional work.

As well as the above, the Governance and Audit Committee had asked whether the 2024/25 financial year would be even more difficult. It had been explained that plans had been made to fill the financial deficit for the next two years but that it was difficult to anticipate what inflation levels would be by then and what the settlement would be. It was added that Committee Members had been pleased to support the bids.

Finally, a question had been asked about the use of the Premium for Homelessness purposes to deal with further expenditure but reference had been made to the specific sum of £3 million which had already been earmarked for 2023/24 for this purpose.

Observations arising from the discussion

- It was asked if the Council had not agreed to increase the Premium form 100% to 150% back in December 2022, how much more would have to be earmarked to deal with the deficit in Homelessness.
- In response, the Head of Finance noted that the deficit would be equivalent to increasing the Council Tax by 3% - 4%.
- A question was asked about the impact of increasing the Council Tax. The opportunity was taken to talk about the work of the benefits team and the

assistance offered by the Council. The Council Tax Reduction Scheme was referred to, and the residents of Gwynedd were encouraged to apply for it, and it was noted that further information was available on the Council website. It was added that some would not be eligible for the Scheme as there were strict rules imposed by the Government but that further assistance was available by the Council from various Departments such as tackling poverty to try to fill the gap. It was recognised that officers used to encourage applications for benefits and that this gap may be one that would need to be addressed in the future.

- It was recommended that anyone having difficulty paying the Council Tax should contact the Department, not only those receiving benefits, assistance would be available for all.
- It was noted that the report referred to some very positive aspects and showed the Council's ability to deal with risks. It was added that one of the Council's main risks over the year was its inability to provide enough care due to a shortage of carers. It was noted now that the Council, when setting the budget, had been able to meet this pressure by increasing carers' salaries to a competitive level which reflected their duties. It was hoped that this would allow the Council to attract more carers to do this necessary work which was a positive step.

9. CYNGOR GWYNEDD PLAN 2023-28

The report was submitted by Cllr Dyfrig Siencyn

DECISION

To approve the Cyngor Gwynedd Plan 2023-28 (the Plan) for submission to the Council on 2 March 2023.

To approve the amendment proposed to add the following sentence to Priority Field 5 in the Plan: *“Ensure access to facilities and information of a good quality in relation to leisure, culture and the arts”* in order to reflect the Cabinet's vision.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted and reference was made to the consultation and responses received. It was stated that the Council was duty-bound to prepare a Plan for the current term and that work had been carried out since the Summer on the priorities. It was noted that two consultations had been held with the Members during the Autumn and a public consultation had been held on the draft Plan following that.

It was noted that 643 responses had been received during the public consultation with the feedback very positive on the whole and a few suggestions made. A summary of the responses can be seen in appendix 5 of the report. Reference was made to the projects in the care field which had been re-packaged as three new projects, namely Local Preventative Support, Independent living and Quality specialist care.

It was added that it was an easier to read format this year and more succinct, and it was hoped that this would encourage more people to read the Plan. It was noted that it was an important document which showed the Council's ambition and aspiration for the

people of Gwynedd over the coming year and the Council's performance could be measured against its ability to deliver matters included in the plan.

The Business Support Service Manager noted that he would appreciate any recommendations or observations from the Cabinet. It was added that the Plan would be presented to the Full Council on 2 March.

Observations arising from the discussion

- Anyone listening was encouraged to read the Plan.
- The comment that the Plan was easier to read was echoed and it was believed that it was an innovative and ambitious Plan.
- It was believed that there was something missing in terms of the Cabinet's vision about the importance of leisure time and being active as well as the importance of culture and the arts and the positive difference made by these activities to the well-being of residents. It was formally proposed to add a sentence to Priority Field 5 noting "*Ensure access to facilities and information of a good quality in relation to leisure, culture and the arts*" in order to reflect this vision.
- Support was expressed for the amendment and it was believed that it was a valuable addition. It was believed that it was easy to forget how important the arts field is and the pleasure that can be derived from seeing and listening to the arts. Including it was proposed and accepted as an amendment to the Decision.
- The opportunity was taken to express the Cabinet's condolences to the First Minister, Mark Drakeford, for his recent loss. Best wishes were sent to the First Minister.

10. PARTICIPATION STRATEGY - LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND ELECTIONS (WALES) ACT 2021

The report was submitted by Cllr Menna Jones

DECISION

To recommend the draft Participation Strategy to the Full Council meeting on 02/03/2023 for adoption.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted, noting that there was a duty on the Council to encourage participation by the public as it made decisions. It was noted that this was a requirement under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. It was explained that further to this requirement, there was also a requirement to create and publish a Participation Strategy; the purpose of the Strategy would be to note the ways that local people would be encouraged to participate in the Council's decision-making process.

It was noted that there were specific requirement regarding what needed to be included in the Strategy, which could be seen in the second paragraph in point 4 of the report.

It was noted that in order to respond to the requirements of the act, Cyngor Gwynedd's first Participation Strategy had been created. It was explained that a public consultation

had been held in January on the content of the draft Strategy, which had given the public an opportunity to voice their opinion on the content. 89 responses had been received to the consultation.

It was added that the responses had been positive on the whole. Some comments and suggestions had been received; it was noted that the report explained how the draft Strategy had been adapted after receiving the relevant observations from the consultation.

It was asked whether the Cabinet believed that there had been sufficient response to the observations arising from the public consultation and whether the Cabinet was satisfied with the content of the draft Strategy. It was noted that the Strategy would develop over the coming years but that this was a strong starting point.

It was noted that the draft Participation Strategy would be recommended to the Full Council meeting on 2 March for adoption. It was added that the final design would be ready by the time the Strategy would be presented to the full Council.

Observations arising from the discussion

- The importance of including the residents of Gwynedd in the Council's Democratic processes was noted, and it was also stated that this was not always easy but that this Strategy was a step forward in trying to improve this.
- It was believed that the work of the Council needed to be conveyed to the County's residents.

11. GWYNEDD AND ERYRI SUSTAINABLE VISITOR ECONOMY PLAN

The report was submitted by Cllr Dyfrig Siencyn

DECISION

- To approve the Gwynedd and Eryri 2035 Strategic Plan as our Strategic Plan for the Visitor Economy in the area.
- To approve the establishment of the Gwynedd and Eryri 2035 Partnership in addition to the relevant structures that will be needed to develop, implement and monitor the Strategic Plan, The Gwynedd and Eryri 2035 Action Plan and its relevant indicators.
- To agree to add that there is a need to delegate the right to the Leader, in consultation with the Chief Executive, to confirm the terms of reference of both bodies.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted noting that the work had started since before the Covid period and that discussions with partners had been happening regularly since then. Appreciation was expressed about the close collaboration that had been happening between the Council and Eryri National Park and that the same vision and basic principles had been shared. It was believed that the report was an important step to try

to steer the visitor industry to be more sustainable and more accountable to the communities.

The background of the report was provided by the Head of Economy and Community and she noted that the plan was in place and the vision for the future had been set and the main objectives for the future had been identified. It was noted that there was a significant change seen in this work by placing the community at the centre which would ensure benefits for Gwynedd as a result of the developments in this field in the future.

Reference was made to the Gwynedd and Eryri National Park Visitor Economy and the objectives included in part 3 of the report. It would need to be ensured that there was a clear action plan in place in order to realise the vision. A new structure was proposed for implementation which included the Gwynedd and Eryri Sustainable Visitor Economy Partnership, Gwynedd and Eryri Sustainable Visitor Economy Steering Board as well as the Gwynedd and Eryri Sustainable Visitor Economy Operational Group. Details about these implementation arrangements could be seen in part 4 of the report.

The next steps and timetable for completing them were explained. The importance of collaborating across sectors in order to fulfil the vision was recognised. It was noted that consultations had been held but that there was more to do and that it was the beginning of a new period of implementing the Plan and collaborating with the Visitor Economy sector.

The Officer from Eryri National Park added that she was pleased to announce that the authority had adopted this Strategic Plan the previous week and was very proud of the arrangements and collaboration. Council officers were thanked for their work.

The Deputy Leader received observations from the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee in which a very useful discussion had been held and constructive suggestions made, for example, extending the membership of the partnership to include the emergency services, the farmers' unions and other representatives of landowners. It was noted that these Bodies would be invited to join the partnership in due course.

It was explained that a discussion had been held about the impact of tourism on the Welsh language and the Police, comments regarding parking and some questions to the Park; the Officer from the National Park had responded directly to the Scrutiny Committee about Eryri National Park matters. The Deputy Leader noted that she had already discussed with Officers and that she would ensure that the matters raised would be given priority.

Reference was made to the importance of measuring progress and setting measures for the Visitor Economy Plan and that this had been mentioned by the Scrutiny Committee. It was explained that the Scrutiny Committee had made a suggestion to amend the vision slightly, it was noted that this suggestion had been considered in full but that there was a feeling that the current vision was clear and simple. The Scrutiny Committee was thanked for its observations.

Observations arising from the discussion

- The benefits of the Visitor Economy were recognised but also an awareness of the problems that can arise from it and pride was expressed that this Strategy attempted to address the balance.
- The mindset of the Visitor Economy Plan was praised, and that a clear vision existed about the importance of a Visitor Economy which was fair for all.
- Council Officer and Eryri National Park Officers were thanked for their work and pride was expressed about the collaboration between the Council and the Park.
- The Plan was welcomed; a comment was made that it was an attempt to turn the tourism industry on its head.
- Pride was expressed about the name used in Welsh and English and it was believed that this was an important step by the Park.
- It was agreed to add that there was a need to delegate the right to the Leader, in consultation with the Chief Executive, to confirm the terms of reference of both bodies to the Decision. The addition was accepted.

12. LEVELLING UP FUND - LLEWYRCH O'R LLECHI SCHEME

The report was submitted by Cllr Nia Jeffreys

DECISION

- To accept an offer letter for funding from the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund, to implement the Llewyrch o'r Llechi scheme jointly with partners within the Slate Valleys.
- To authorise the Head of Economy and Community Department, in consultation with the Head of Finance Department and Head of Legal Services, to agree on the contractual and operational arrangements and the complete financial package with partners.

DISCUSSION

The report was presented noting that three substantial bids had been submitted by the Economy and Community Department and the Environment Department to the Levelling Up Fund, UK Government. The Bywiogi Bangor and the Ardudwy Green Corridor bids had been unsuccessful but the Llewyrch o'r Llechi bid was a success. It was explained that confirmation had been received of a £18.8m investment to be spent before the end of March 2025.

It was noted that the Llewyrch o'r Llechi scheme was a package worth approximately £27 million in plans across the slate valleys of Gwynedd that respond to the theme of 'investing in culture'. It was reported that it was a scheme that offered opportunities and developments that contribute towards the regeneration of these communities. It was noted that the details of what the package included had been noted in part 2.2 of the report.

The Head of Economy and Community added that discussions had been held with the communities and that the most mature projects needed to be focused on in order to be able to complete the work within the timeframe. It was added that this had been a factor

when identifying projects. It was noted that interpretation work needed to be commissioned as part of the Scheme.

It was noted that this package contributed to the wider vision noted in part 2.3 of the report namely to 'Protect, preserve, improve and convey the area's important features to reinforce the cultural distinctiveness and strengthen the Welsh language, and become an important catalyst for economic regeneration and social inclusion.' It was believed that the Scheme was very ambitious and a long-term programme and it was hoped that this would lead to further opportunities in these communities.

To close, it was noted that Cyngor Gwynedd would lead on the bid but that it would be working in partnership with the three areas that are a part of the bid essentially in order to realise the various projects. It was noted that there would be a need to agree on a legal agreement between Cyngor Gwynedd and the partners in the community in order to realise the projects and deliver. It was added that work had commenced in terms of discussions with the Heads of Finance and the Head of Legal Services therefore it was hoped that it would be possible to move ahead and confirm the arrangements with partners.

Observations arising from the discussion

- The investment and opportunities stemming from the Scheme were welcomed.
- A question was asked about the joint-funding sources noted in the report on pages 264 and 265 and that they are noted as 'possible'. It was asked how certain the Economy and Community Department was that the amounts noted would reach us.
- In response, the Regeneration Programmes Manager noted that she was certain of this as initial meetings had been held for example with Museum Wales and that they were a part of wider schemes with them. It was added that there was a low risk of the schemes not going ahead, it was reported that Cyngor Gwynedd had now received assurance of the developmental phase by the Lottery Heritage Fund.

13. PERFORMANCE REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ECONOMY AND COMMUNITY

The report was submitted by Cllr Dyfrig Siencyn and Cllr Nia Jeffreys

DECISION

To accept and note the information in the report.

DISCUSSION

The report was presented by the Leader who referred to the regional matters included in the report. Reference was made to the North Wales Growth Deal, noting that some projects had been withdrawn for various reasons which had left a sum of £30 million remaining. It was reported that bids for projects had been invited for this sum. It was noted that the projects would be for a period of 15 years and would be funded by both Governments.

It was added that project costs had increased which had had an impact on other projects as well as putting pressure on staffing resources. It was noted that this was one of the main risks identified and that work continued to respond to the risks.

The Deputy Leader referred to the performance of the Department's services which included Byw'n lach and the level of Centre users which continued to be lower than pre-covid. Reference was made to specific matters which had had an impact on figures such as the temporary closure of the Arfon swimming pool for 3 months in order to renovate it and restricting the opening hours of Bangor swimming pool due to staff shortages. It was reported that discussions were regularly held between Byw'n lach and the Council in order to overcome some of these barriers that were affecting the Company's income.

It was reported that the number of people engaging with Museums and Galleries had reduced over the last period as a result of the fact that Storiel gallery and the Lloyd George Museum had had to close without notice following accidents at the building and repair works that needed to be completed before being able to re-open. The opportunity was taken to thank the Museum and Volunteering Co-ordinator for her work during these incidents.

To close, attention was drawn to the supporting communities work, noting that 121 groups and enterprises had been supported between October and December 2022 noting that these were projects on the ground close the hearts of the residents of Gwynedd, and pride was expressed about this.

The Head of Economy and Community added that the Department had not had a lot of opportunity to make progress on the projects contained in the Council Plan because of the need to divert staff from working on strategic projects to help with the regional schemes that the Council was leading on.

To close, reference was made to the shared prosperity fund, noting that the closing date for submitting bids for projects was 24 February. It was noted that a job had been advertised to manage the fund in Gwynedd, but no applications had been received.

Observations arising from the discussion

- Members gave thanks for the report.
- Concern was expressed about the situation of vacancies and the difficulties filling them, generally across the Council. It was believed that there was room to try to attract candidates and promote the vacancies and opportunities available in the Council.

14. PERFORMANCE REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CORPORATE SUPPORT AND LEGAL

The report was submitted by Cllr Menna Jones

DECISION

To accept and note the information in the report.

DISCUSSION

The report was presented noting satisfaction that the projects being led by the Department, along with the day-to-day performance, had been undertaken within the budget. Appreciation of the work of all the officers of the Department was noted and recognition of the key contribution they made to support the work of the Council.

Attention was drawn to the Women in Leadership project which had received particularly good feedback as well as the successful Mental Health Conference held recently. Reference was made to the improvements in the Customer Care service where a reduction in the time taken to answer calls had been seen, as well as a reduction in the percentage of calls missed.

Reference was made to the staffing and recruitment challenges in the Legal service and the steps being taken to address these risks. Reference was also made to the performance and progress in the work of the Elections service and the Coroner's service.

The Head of Corporate Support echoed the appreciation of the Department's staff for their co-operation and work. He noted that a lot of good work was being done in a challenging time and that good progress was being made on projects.

No further observations were received.

15. PERFORMANCE REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND PROPERTY

The report was submitted by Cllr Craig ab Iago

DECISION

To accept and note the information in the report.

DISCUSSION

The report was presented with reference to the number of people who were homeless in the County and the increase in the numbers presenting as homeless as a result of receiving a 'section 21 notice' from landlords (notice that their tenancy will end). It was noted that, during 2022, 169 notices had been issued and 78% of the reasons given by landlords for issuing the notice was because they were selling the property. Reference was made to what the Department was trying to do to try to offer solutions to this situation, for example offering support packages to private landlords.

Reference was made to House purchase and Land purchase schemes, noting that 8 houses had been bought and another 5 were either close to completion or with the purchase agreement in the hands of the solicitors. Reference was also made to the Gwynedd Homebuy Scheme, noting that equity loans to the value of £13m were available to give even more of an opportunity for people to buy a home on the open market in their local community.

The new Energy service that had been established was mentioned, noting that over 570 persons had received help with their energy bills by receiving energy vouchers. It was noted that this was a success but that the original problem had been created by the Government with the Council having to try to solve it. Reference was made to the One-Stop-Shop developments, noting that staff had already been appointed and that the Department was currently looking for a new name for the 'One-Stop-Shop'.

Observations arising from the discussion

- Attention was drawn to the number of social housing developed in order to try to reach the ambition of 500 by 2026, noting that 160 had been developed to date. It was asked how easy would it be to reach the ambition.
- In response, it was noted that the target was not an easy one but that funds had been committed for the next two years and the Department would be looking at the needs right across the County. It was noted that a scheme would be in place over the next three years.
- The Homebuy Scheme was praised, noting that the main challenge was finding out that it existed in the first place. In response, it was noted that a video had been created and that the Department had visited community councils in Dwyfor. It was added that the Department would appreciate any further suggestions in terms of engagement.
- It was questioned if the figure of buying 8 houses was low and it was asked if the Council could do anything to help speed up the process.
- In response, it was noted that it was very difficult to find suitable housing as the Department cannot compete with local people wanting to buy houses, staff challenges and the need to make the most out of the money that existed. It was added that there were many obstacles in terms of the standard of houses such as fire requirements and size of rooms which meant that many houses were unsuitable. It was noted that the Department had visited over 100 houses but because of the reasons noted above, it had only been possible to buy 8 to date.
- Concern was expressed about the situation in the private housing sector with fewer private landlords letting property in the future. It was acknowledged that this was a risk.
- Reference was made to the situation in Ukraine and the refugees and the significant risk that needed to be highlighted and the concerns that many would be presenting as homeless. It was noted that the Council was trying to obtain information from the Government and was currently in the dark regarding the Council's duties. It was added that a system was needed to support the refugees. It was noted that discussions were currently ongoing with the Government. The Chief Executive added that a statement would be made in the Senedd today and it was hoped that an update would be forthcoming following that; it was hoped that there would be better support for the refugees.

The meeting commenced at 1:00pm and concluded at 3:15pm

CHAIR

Agenda Item 6

CYNGOR GWYNEDD CABINET



Date of meeting: 7 March 2023
Cabinet Member: Councillor Dyfrig Siencyn,
Contact Officer: Geraint Owen, Corporate Director
Contact Details: 01286 679923
Title of Item: FFORDD GWYNEDD PLAN 2023-28

Report to a meeting of the Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet

1. THE DECISION SOUGHT

- 1.1 The Cabinet's approval to adopting a Plan (Appendix 1) which builds on the development of the work culture within the Council for the next five years.

2. THE REASON FOR THE NEED FOR A DECISION

- 2.1 "Ffordd Gwynedd" is the name given to the "way of working" that Cyngor Gwynedd has adopted in order to place the people of Gwynedd at the centre of everything we do. This is all rooted in a change of culture, behaviours and mind-set and its aim of realising the ambition across all parts of the Council's activities is acknowledged as a substantial challenge and one which requires a comprehensive programme of support.
- 2.2 The original "Ffordd Gwynedd Plan" was adopted in October 2015 and was further reviewed in July 2019 when the Cabinet approved the current Plan. Much of what was identified as objectives in that Plan have been delivered and implemented; however, lockdowns during the period of the Plan did slow down progress.
- 2.3 It is timely to review and update the Plan once more and to look towards the next steps needed in order to fully embed the culture and the "way of working" in everything we do.
- 2.4 As a basis to this latest review, every Department held a self-assessment of the progress made and identified the obstacles which hinder their ability to realise the "way of working" within their services. Those self-assessments were challenged by a working group of members of the Governance and Audit Committee and the findings were presented to a meeting of the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee on 20 October 2022 (Appendix 2).

- 2.5 The proposed Plan for the next five years is presented based on those consultations. The Plan summarises what has been delivered to date but also focuses on the work programme that we wish to implement in order to move forward to support all Council staff and services to reach the overall aim.

3. VIEWS OF THE STATUTORY OFFICERS

i) Monitoring Officer:

I note that the draft Plan is the result of detailed review and scrutiny in a period of significant change for the Council. I am satisfied with the propriety of the report and recommendation.

ii) Head of Finance Department:

Nothing to add from the perspective of financial propriety

APPENDIX 1

FFORDD GWYNEDD (2023-2028)

VISION

Ffordd Gwynedd is the name given to the “way of working” that we in Cyngor Gwynedd have adopted in order to place the people of Gwynedd at the heart of everything we do.

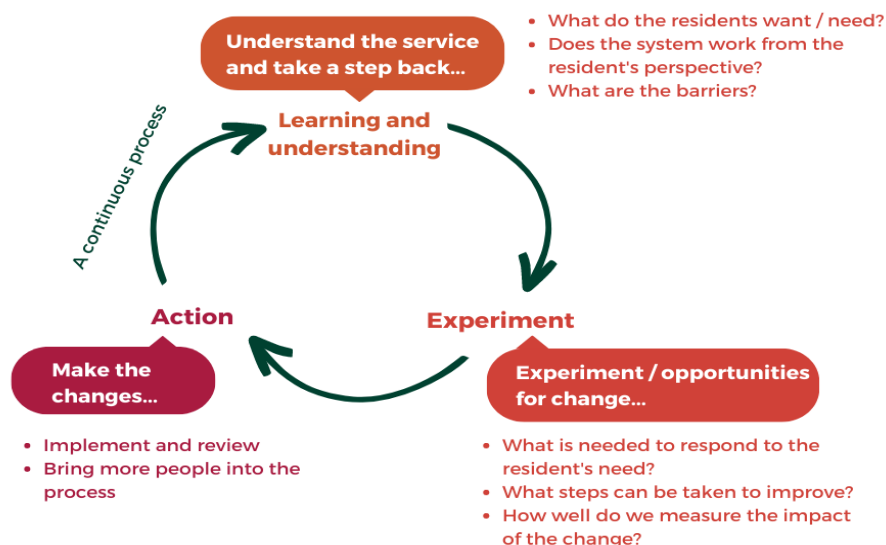
It is neither a process nor a theory, rather a collection of working arrangements, behaviours and culture which, together, allow us to be confident that we always consider the service from the perspective of the user.

Developing this culture means that we need to remove the obstacles that prevent our employees from delivering and that this leads to a continuous challenge in terms of the way that we work. The decisions that follow are evidence-based rather than assumptions.

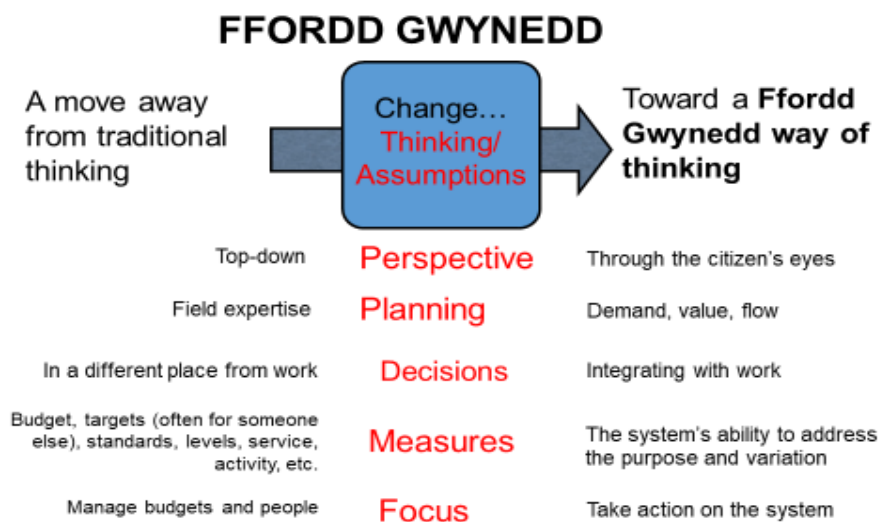
It means working across the Council's internal structural boundaries in order to deliver what is needed, creating and maintaining a work environment that includes everyone. It also promotes and supports the mental and physical well-being of our workers as well as respecting the key operational principles in the context of equality and language.

"Building on the culture and way of working, which is based on the principle of providing the best possible services to the residents of our county, with every one of us supporting each other to achieve this, is central to the Council's vision. The aspiration to ensure continuous improvement can already be seen widely across the Council and the next step is to ensure that nothing prevents us from embedding that mindset further and aim to improve even further what is already being delivered" (Chief Executive)

In the Ffordd Gwynedd culture, teams question and challenge historical arrangements and processes that are being taken for granted. Time is invested recording the workflow and what really happens. They identify empty steps that do not now add value whilst noting barriers from operating effectively. It encourages innovation and creativity with the emphasis on experimenting and then implementing the necessary changes. Collectively this will assist us to improve the service but in order to maintain the "way of working", the mindset must be changed above anything else.



“Doing the right things before making the things better” is the mantra. Unless we change the mindset before, or during, changing a process, we will certainly fail and the changes will not be sustained in the long-term.



A shift in culture is a gradual process but everything possible needs to be done in order to facilitate the development needed so that we are able to take advantage of what can be realised.

This is the third review of the Plan which was introduced in order establish that culture, and there is strong evidence and numerous examples where the Council has developed and benefited significantly from implementing the previous work programmes, embedding the expected behaviours amongst the workforce, reviewing work systems and consequently improve services.

The amended Plan for the 2023-28 period is an attempt to build on the successes to date with the work programme focusing on the further sustainable development needed in order to realise the long-term benefits stemming from implementing good practices and the mindset across the Council.

The main objectives for the period of the Plan have been identified as a result of comprehensive consultation. There will be an annual exercise to report on the progress of the individual objectives and to review what is recognised as priorities.

The following are the details of those priorities which will drive the work programme for the next period in order to embed Ffordd Gwynedd further;

1. Learn, Experiment and Act to Improve

In order to change culture and mindset, it is essential that managers and staff have experience of implementing it at work and see for themselves that the new principles are working.

Most Council managers are now immersed in the basic principles and how to use them to learn about and understand the customer experience when carrying out reviews of work arrangements. There are a number of good examples of where this has already been implemented, but a number of managers report that things have stalled/come to a standstill due to the Covid crisis and that the process is also seen as resource-heavy and consequently difficult to free up the capacity of managers and staff to be maintaining it.

In a situation like this, having vivid examples of successes/failures is invaluable to drive others to be willing to change, experiment and take risks, to be creative, and to act to improve the service to the customer.

We will:

- Accelerate the programme of holding service reviews across the Council offering support that will include:
 - Short workshops for specific teams on elements of conducting service reviews.
 - Training on conducting reviews
 - Practical support on conducting reviews
 - Facilitate one-day workshops to assist managers to present to their teams
- Adapt our training to incorporate hybrid working methods, and to use examples of implementing reviews on smaller pieces of the system showing how it can be incorporated into the day-to-day work rather than having to do large reviews.
- Develop e-modules that managers can use with their teams.
- Using the managers network to share experiences and develop ideas
- Develop the existing site on the intranet to facilitate the sharing of examples of good practice and learning.
- Consider prioritising support for cross-departmental reviews.
- Revisit Gwynedd's awards to reflect the work culture.

2. Leadership

Effective leadership is key to driving and embedding the culture and principles of Ffordd Gwynedd. It sets a clear direction, motivates others and creates an appropriate environment to get the most out of staff.

The political and executive leaders of the Council are unanimous regarding the need to establish and nurture a culture of leading people rather than managing people only. To this end, continuous development for Council leadership is one of our top priorities, including individual incentive sessions for the purpose of personal development.

We will:

- Re-establish the Managers Network to include team leaders
- Focus on collaboration and developing appropriate leadership behaviours
- Continue to run developmental sessions for Elected Members and the Corporate Management team

3. Understand and Improve Performance

To ensure that the Council achieves what Gwynedd residents need it is essential to measure performance, which is to measure how well services serve their purpose and the impact those services have on residents. There is a performance regime in the Council where each unit measures and reports the extent to which they are delivering what matters to the residents of Gwynedd.

We will:

- Continue the regime ensuring a work culture where all staff own and understand what the performance is, can identify the reasons behind the performance as well as what is hindering them to improve.
- Highlight the difference between managing and reporting on performance.
- Respond to the change in Council services as well as ensure a focus on measures of effectiveness as well as efficiency by ensuring that services regularly review their purposes and measures.
- Consider relaxing the performance reporting requirements, at times where this is justified, to ensure that staff can be removed from day-to-day work to carry out reviews or support on cross-departmental work, without causing undue concern as a result of a decline in short-term performance.
- Develop methods to nurture an environment where managers feel safe to declare that performance is not up to scratch.

4. Support and Develop

'Change' can be very difficult for many individuals, particularly if the new 'way of working' is different from what they are used to. It is important that as a Council we support and develop our staff to be able to:

- o Understand the need for change
- o Cope with the change
- o Adapt to maintain services
- o Sustain their own well-being and that of their colleagues.

We will:

- Create multimedia resources to improve the understanding of 'Ffordd Gwynedd'
- Create and deliver a framework of learning titles that include:
 - o A short e-learning module for all Council staff to
 - Share the vision
 - Clarify the main principles
 - o Intensive programmes for conducting service reviews
 - E-learning modules on specific elements e.g. *Studying Demand*
 - o Reminder sessions for officers
- Provide a range of further learning sessions to support individual managers, teams and staff, including elements such as:
 - o Workshops tailored to focus on specific needs (for managers/teams/staff)
 - o Change Management/Coping with Change Workshops
 - o Workshops to support 'Flexible Working' and 'Remote Leading'
 - o Sessions on 'Emotional Intelligence'
 - o Induction and Team Building Workshops
 - o Development Centres
 - o Mental Well-being Support

5. Digital Transformation

Reviewing our systems and how we deliver services is going to lead to alternative approaches and our ability to introduce and implement the necessary changes will be dependent on the development of current use of technology. People's expectations and trends have changed substantially in recent years, and this is an opportunity to see whether we can further improve the experience of Gwynedd residents of front-line and back-office services by using digital technology.

We will:

- Adopt a Digital Strategy over the 2023-28 period which will be reviewed annually
- Review and rationalize systems, innovating with technology to reduce our administrative efforts
- Increase opportunities and extend our on-line self-service provision
- Review the role of Galw Gwynedd and Siop Gwynedd within the digital provision
- Ensure that we are clear about our information needs so that the data collected helps us identify improvements as well as measure whether or not changes introduced are succeeding.

6. Workforce Planning and Talent Development

Planning to ensure that a workforce is in place with the right ability, attitude and skills is essential, both for the present and the future. We must consider what we will need to respond to growing needs for services, as well as the expectations of the people of Gwynedd.

We will focus our efforts on:

- The demand on our services in the future
- Identify key areas and posts in terms of risk to continuity of service
- The nature of our existing workforce in terms of turnover, age, skills and experiences
- Identify gaps and plan by
 - Establishing 'Talent Development' schemes for staff within the Organisation
 - Extending the Apprenticeship and Trainee schemes
 - Developing highest quality work experience opportunities in key areas for the future

7. Continuous Appraisal

Each person working for the Council should have a job description setting out core expectations for their role, duties and way of working.

All managers are expected to have regular conversations (*Continuous Appraisal*) with their staff, and the expected behaviours should be central to the discussion.

We will create and develop resources that:

- Highlight the '*Behaviours*' expected of all Council staff
- Support managers to be able to engage in meaningful appraisal discussions with individuals:
 - Plan and execute appropriately
 - Hold a meaningful appraisal discussion with each individual
 - Consider Health and Wellbeing
 - Focus on appropriate '*Behaviours*'
 - Discuss expectations and performance
 - Provide regular feedback
 - Encourage Personal Development
 - Support individuals to perform the best they can
- Ensure appraisal is timely and effective in all services across the Council

8. A Satisfied and Healthy Workforce

A vital part of embedding our culture is ensuring that we look after the health and well-being of our workforce. The Council has a Wellbeing Strategy, based on current data and information which is updated annually.

We will:

- Continue to implement and develop a Council-wide Well-being Programme ensuring the scheme is coupled with our work arrangements and training programmes.
- Ensure that a programme to collect data and conduct well-being questionnaires is developed and implemented on an annual basis to identify the support that needs to be prioritised.
- Place the current focus, in line with what has been gathered in the latest data, on stress issues as well as musculoskeletal issues.
- Ensure all managers receive I-ACT training, develop e-learning kits on musculoskeletal issues and organise physiotherapy offers.
- Pay particular attention to services where the greatest need to promote health and well-being manifests itself.
- Address alternative issues that have an impact on health and well-being, for example the current financial climate, where a financial well-being programme will be developed and implemented.

9. Customer Contact

Identifying the needs of the people of Gwynedd and what matters to them is absolutely core to our way of working.

We will:

- Engage with the people of Gwynedd to seek their views on our performance during the year as part of the Council's annual self-assessment.
- In line with the participation strategy, work to raise awareness of the Council's functions among the people of the County; attempt to simplify documents shared with them and encourage / enable them to comment on decisions before, and after, they are made.
- Establish a cross-departmental group to develop and implement a customer care framework that will include our arrangements for handling complaints / enquiries from Elected Members and the public working towards improving our ability to respond in a timely manner.
- Continue to work to ensure that our consultation/engagement arrangements reach the hard-to-reach groups.
- Introduce a new programme of customer care training, which has a particular focus on the well-being of staff who have to deal with difficult situations.
- Introduce a new programme of training on responding to enquiries from Elected Members, the public and fellow service providers.

MEASURE OF SUCCESS

The aim is for every Service within the Council to define clearly what needs they meet and to establish and review the measures that show how well the purpose is being achieved. The true success of this Scheme in reality will be to obtain assurance, by means of the feedback received, that all of this work leads to improving services.

We will submit an annual report to the Cabinet on the progress of the "way of working" setting out the outcomes realised for the services offered to the people of Gwynedd as part of what is reported.

Furthermore, and essentially, we will also measure the change in terms of staff behaviour and work culture that is required in order to embed the "way of working" in all Council activity. The content of the report is based on an annual self-assessment exercise, to which leaders and employees will be asked to contribute, as well as six-monthly staff surveys which will seek feedback in relation to the development of the culture, work environment and behaviours within the Council.

In addition, we will establish a cross-departmental Group, led by the Corporate Director, which will review progress and prioritise the support needed for embedding the culture and associated exercises in each of our departments and services.

This work programme, in its entirety, will help the Council reach the aim of putting the people of Gwynedd at the centre of everything we do.

RESOURCES

The following resources will be provided to support the change in culture that is afoot.

- i) A Senior Advisor and Advisor within the Council's Business Support Service are employed specifically to support managers and staff to adopt and implement the Ffordd Gwynedd principles. They are able to advise on conducting intensive reviews with individual services as well as running developmental sessions with managers and staff with the increasing emphasis on assisting rather than leading reviews on behalf of services.
- ii) The Organisational Learning and Development Service continues to provide training for new managers and prospective managers, as well as planning (and at times, facilitating) workshops with individual teams to strengthen the awareness of what it meant by Ffordd Gwynedd in practical terms. A broader training programme is being led by the needs being identified for driving and embedding the "way of working" and the culture being professed.
- iii) The Research and Information Service will provide guidance and advice on gathering evidence and analysing information. Acting on the basis of evidence, rather than on the basis of what appears to be logical, is one of the cornerstones of the "way of working" and here there is an important function to ensure that managers and their teams use the information and data available to its full potential.
- iv) The Development Team and Infrastructure Team within the Information Technology Service will be instrumental in realising a large number of the improvements recognised by individual services, that are the result of carrying out reviews of their work systems. The Digital Strategy, which will run alongside this Plan throughout, will reinforce the support that it is anticipated will be needed.
- v) The Communications and Engagement Service will advise and provide guidance on engagement methods supporting the efforts to ask, observe and assess if the culture is embedded within the Council.

COMMITTEE	Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee
TITLE	Ffordd Gwynedd Working Group Review
DATE	20 October, 2022
AUTHOR	Geraint Owen, Corporate Director
CABINET MEMBER	Councillor Menna Jones

1. BACKGROUND

Earlier this year every Head of Department was invited to undertake a Ffordd Gwynedd self-assessment for their department. This was undertaken to get an overview of how the Ffordd Gwynedd principles have embedded and to enable us to develop a Ffordd Gwynedd plan that will ensure appropriate support for the coming three years.

A working group was established comprising four Elected Members, the Chief Executive, Head of Corporate Support and the Ffordd Gwynedd Advisors, to initially agree on the form of the questionnaire and then analyse the responses and agree on the way forward.

The questionnaires were completed by the heads of department in February/March with the majority reporting that they undertook this by consulting with their staff and managers prior to submitting the responses to the Working Group.

This report presents the Working Group's conclusions on the basis of the responses received.

2. KEY MESSAGES FROM THE SELF-ASSESSMENTS

In the first place, the Working Group wishes to praise the honest and thorough responses received.

Although there was a feeling that some Departments had underestimated their progress and some had possibly overestimated; generally, there was a belief that the responses provided a fair picture of the current position of Ffordd Gwynedd in the Council and it was heartening to see that every Head could report that they had commenced the work/made considerable progress within some Services whilst also highlighting that there are pockets across the Council where considerable further work is required.

From the responses it was seen that considerable progress had been made to change the culture but that the process of culture change and changing the mindset was slow and difficult and that further work was required to ensure that the changes are disseminated and kept alive.

It was noted that the Ffordd Gwynedd method of conducting service reviews could be burdensome and it was difficult to release the capacity of managers and staff to undertake this on top of the day-to-day work.

It was obvious that a number of common themes arose from the responses and these are summarised below:

2.1 Change of culture

It is evident that considerable progress has been made in terms of the culture change, however, further work is required across the Council in some teams. It is acknowledged that the process of culture change and changing the mindset can be slower and more difficult in some circumstances and this will need to be given consideration when further necessary work is undertaken with those teams.

e.g. the Adults Department reported that this change was seen as something that was done "to" staff, as a great deal of the work was being done by the Transformation Team.

Recommendations

- i) Present simple and clear 'Ffordd Gwynedd Behaviours' that
 - Set expectations in the 'welcome' (induction) at the start of a career/new post
 - Basis for discussion in the Continuous Appraisal sessions
- ii) Supporting leaders / managers to adapt and apply 'flexible' working arrangements to confirm and strengthen Ffordd Gwynedd principles
- iii) Continue to ensure, by holding service reviews, that staff who undertake the work are part of identifying what needs to be changed and the process for change.

2.2 Training / Workshops / Developing skills

Praise was given to the training for managers, however, they noted that workshops/short reminder sessions to stimulate them to resume the work would be useful, especially following the COVID period gap.

Furthermore, it was identified that any sessions/workshops should take into consideration the change to virtual working and for the need to develop skills to undertake virtual reviews whilst also highlighting how to operate without conducting intensive reviews.

It was suggested that providing shorter awareness raising sessions for staff would be beneficial with those sessions being offered via e-learning packages, short videos etc.

A number of departments were keen for the current soft skills training to continue and that it should be provided for more managers and staff in future e.g. Communication / DiSC Workshops, Leading and Managing Training, Emotional Intelligence etc.

Recommendations

- i) Develop a 'refresh' course and make it mandatory for every manager and team leader.
- ii) Advertise and develop the soft skills courses in order that more Council officials take advantage of the provision.
- iii) Develop a brief overview course for all Council staff whilst targeting some teams as a priority on the basis of evidence submitted in the self-assessment.
- iv) Break-down the managers' course into short e-modules for all staff and produce a catalogue of examples of good practice to support them.
- v) Present and offer practical sessions to all Council staff in respect of developing soft skills (similar to those used in assessment centres).

2.3 Impact of the COVID period

Without doubt, the COVID period has had an impact on the progress of Ffordd Gwynedd with several heads reporting a slow down in holding formal reviews. However, a number of examples were also noted where the situation with Covid had pushed the agenda forward and led to a change in arrangements that many previously thought was impossible to achieve. Prior to the COVID period it would be true to suggest that some services were afraid to 'venture' and use new methods and technology but the lockdown and the restrictions forced the changes.

Many reported that they have failed to maintain their arrangements during lockdown in terms of recording obstacles to good performance, primarily since they were previously recorded on whiteboards within individual offices. It is acknowledged that this example demonstrates that working from home or working partly from home/from the office means that alternative guidance needs to be provided for staff in future, in terms of recording and sharing issues which prevent them from working effectively.

Recommendations

- i) Ensure that the teams identify and discuss examples of having moved the agenda forward to ensure that they develop the new principles and that they do not slip back to old ways of doing things. Also to take the opportunity to discuss what did not work as well and discuss how they could have done this differently.

- ii) Introduce a method of recording obstacles electronically to the Managers' Network.
- iii) Ensure that our training considers the impacts of hybrid working.

2.4 Celebrating Successes

It was conveyed that the Council does not sufficiently celebrate Ffordd Gwynedd successes and does not share many experiences in order to learn from others.

Recommendations

- i) Revisit “Gwynedd ar ei Orau” awards to reflect the work culture we currently have within the Council.
- ii) Ensure that the teams share experiences (failures and successes) within their teams and across their service with a view to include a standard item on the agenda of service team meetings.
- iii) Develop the Ffordd Gwynedd network to share and develop ideas and learn about what everyone does. This would provide the opportunity to share ideas, discuss ideas on overcoming obstacles, sharing good practice, identifying support needs.
- iv) Develop the Ffordd Gwynedd site on the intranet in order to facilitate the sharing of good practice examples.

2.5 The Ffordd Gwynedd method is burdensome and slow

There was a sense that the Ffordd Gwynedd method of conducting a service review can be, or appears to be, a burdensome process and therefore difficult to release capacity to undertake such reviews. It is true to say that conducting a cross service review can take time and extensive resources but it is possible to hold smaller reviews on simple systems that can be undertaken as part of the day-to-day work. They are often effective and can easily be implemented.

Recommendations

- i) Increase number of smaller-sized reviews on individual processes/work systems.
- ii) Adapt training/workshops to spread the message that it is possible to implement a Ffordd Gwynedd review in various ways (not only as an intensive review).
- iii) Teams, who have already completed less intensive reviews, to share examples of how they conducted the review and the improvements which were realised.

2.6 The lack of capacity to deliver reviews / present improvements

It was reported that a number of reviews are already being conducted across the Council and making a difference but with an acknowledgement that there is scope to do more.

However, it became clear from the majority of responses that the departments found it difficult to release capacity to commence reviews and to deliver improvements. This can be split into two - lack of managers' capacity to step out to lead and support reviews and lack of staff capacity to respond to obstacles etc. They already have many other set priorities on top of the day-to-day work e.g. the Highways and Municipal Department reported that the managers and staff regularly work additional hours and find it difficult to release time for the purpose of conducting a service review.

Recommendations

- i) If teams had comprehensive lists of the obstacles then these could be used to prioritise, assist in identifying the necessary resource and manage staff expectations (who expect things to change once they are on the list).
- ii) To consider utilising specific additional resource in the short term in order to fulfil some of the day to day work subsequently releasing capacity to drive forward with individual service reviews.

2.7 Working cross-departmentally or with external partners

It was noted in several responses that there were obstacles when trying to work cross-departmentally and with external partners. It is obvious that every department/partner is not on the same page and this hinders success.

It is suggested that we need to consider whether current arrangements lead us to focus too much on departmental performance and achievement i.e. departments / managers are pushed to continuously improve and held accountable for performance and are therefore reluctant to cooperate as one across the Council.

Recommendations

- i) Consider prioritising support for cross-departmental reviews
- ii) Consider the need for the Chief Executive and Corporate Directors to drive the effort to conduct and complete cross-departmental reviews.

2.8 Statutory requirements / grant conditions

It was noted that having to comply with statutory requirements / grant conditions sometimes make it difficult to operate in line with Ffordd

Gwynedd principles e.g. the Education Department reports that grant conditions tie them to specific outcomes and methods of presentation and this means that at times they present services that can be ineffective and duplicate other provisions.

Recommendations

- i) Since conducting the self-assessment, Welsh Government has stated its intention to conduct a piece of work with authorities in an attempt to lessen the administrative burden on local government. The concern voiced as part of the self-assessment will be considered as part of that work in the first place.

2.9 Information Technology

Conducting a Ffordd Gwynedd review raises a number of opportunities to use technology to overcome obstacles / work more efficiently. The Information Technology Service has found it increasingly difficult to provide a timely response to action plans emanating from reviews and this leads to frustration amongst officers who have undertaken those reviews.

These comments have highlighted the need to ensure that sufficient resource is allocated for both maintaining and also developing systems and that we need to ensure that one element is not competing against the other for the same resource.

Recommendations

- i) The Digital Strategic Transformation Group to analyse the IT support position and to lead on priorities corporately ensuring that Ffordd Gwynedd arrangements are given prominent consideration.

2.10 Unwillingness to accept a reduction in performance while undertaking a review

Some departments reported that staff/managers were not comfortable to accept a reduction in performance whilst reviews were being undertaken and that this was often an obstacle to commence or undertake reviews.

Recommendations

- i) Manage expectations and ensure that all Members are aware and accept that there is a possibility that performance levels will drop in the short term whilst conducting a review.
- ii) To consider not challenging the performance of the specific Service for a period during the review.

2.11 Understand the Customer's real needs

It was reported that considerable progress had been made within some services but a number of respondents also noted that there was room for improvement in this respect and acknowledged the need to reach out in order to understand the needs of those individuals who do not currently use services.

Recommendations

- i) Ensure that every department regularly engages with their customers and introduce the need to demonstrate the impact of such engagement within the performance challenge arrangements
- ii) Introduce training/brief workshops on analysing the demand (identify examples of where undertaking this has led to changes and share).

2.12 Purpose and Measures

All departments were able to report that they have made considerable progress on developing their purpose and performance measures but also identified that further work needs to be undertaken by some teams to review their purpose when circumstances change e.g. the Children and Supporting Families Department reported that they needed to revisit their purposes as the demand for the service had changed so much over the last two years, this highlighting the need to review consistently rather than a once and for all exercise.

There was some feedback which suggested that there remains a sense that setting the purpose and developing measures is considered as something for which managers need and retain responsibility. This demonstrates the need to conduct further work to ensure that staff take ownership of the purpose and the performance whilst accepting and acknowledging their role and contribution in improving services.

Some departments brought our attention to the requirement placed upon them to report on national measurements on top of the local performance measurements e.g. the Children and Supporting Families Department noted that it was challenging to have to gather and report on national statutory measures. As previously noted, Welsh Government has stated its intention to conduct a piece of work with authorities in an attempt to lessen the administrative burden on local government. The concern voiced as part of the self-assessment will be considered as part of that work in the first place.

Another issue which was identified as part of the self-assessment was the conclusion that the Council has realised much improvement in

measuring its effectiveness but that the same development was not evident in demonstrating how efficient it conducts its work.

Recommendations

- i) Present training/short workshops on using measures for improvement for staff at all levels (identify and share examples where using the measures has led to an improvement).
- ii) The Data Sub-group (Digital Transformation Board) to consider support to ensure that data is easily available and timely rather than something they have to get others to produce monthly (good examples of where this has commenced using e.g. Power BI).
- iii) Ensure that performance review is a standard item on the agenda of every service team meeting.
- iv) Regularly revisit our current performance measures and present additional efficiency measures in future.

2.13 Obstacles

It was agreed that further work is required to ensure that action takes place to overcome identified obstacles. Some departments reported that the action required often falls between two stools whilst others reported that there is no capacity to take action.

The result of non-action is that staff lose faith in the “way of working” because of the fact that obstacles are slow in being removed or are even not attended to at all.

Recommendations

- i) Ensure that obstacles are on the agenda of every service team meeting, and are prioritised with an owner identified for each one with regular monitoring of progress.
- ii) Development of short training sessions on acting upon removal of obstacles.

2.14 Teams being creative and working innovatively

Every department was able to quote examples of having worked creatively and innovatively but noting that there is a need to continue to develop staff confidence in order to continue working in this manner e.g. the Corporate Support Department notes the importance of continuing to demonstrate, through managers and leaders, that experimenting and not always succeeding is acceptable.

Recommendations

- i) Members and managers to accept that things go wrong from time to time in order to create a working environment that allows enterprise and experimenting.

2.15 Support from outside the department

A number noted the value of having a fresh pair of eyes to look at matters from the customer's perspective and to challenge the current operational arrangements, be that from the Ffordd Gwynedd Team or from managers and staff from other teams/services within the Council.

Recommendations

- i) Need to market the available support better. This can be achieved via the Ffordd Gwynedd network.
- ii) Arrange for staff from other services to come in to ensure that matters are challenged from the perspective of someone who does not understand the service and therefore can look at it as a customer.

2.16 Matters come to a stop when someone leaves.

Some reported that matters come to a stop when the person leading on the Ffordd Gwynedd work leaves his/her post. These comments are of concern since they suggest that it is an individual that takes ownership of the review and that the rest of the team do not feel that ownership.

Recommendations

- i) There is a need to refer to this and provide guidance on it to managers/team leaders as part of the "follow-up" training.

2.17 Staff wellbeing

Some comments were presented in relation to the fact that the natural focus of "Ffordd Gwynedd" is on the customer and on improving performance but that there is a need to also ensure appropriate attention within this culture on the well-being of staff who provide the services.

Recommendations

- i) That staff well-being needs to be introduced and emphasised as a central part of the culture.

3. CONCLUSIONS

The current three-year "Ffordd Gwynedd" plan needs to be reviewed and this exercise, in terms of the self-assessment, is timely in that respect. It is proposed that the recommendations in this report (a summary of which appear in Appendix 1) provide a solid base on which to further embed the culture and the way of working within the Council.

Committee members' comments would be much appreciated, as a further addition to the evidence collated, prior to drawing up and submitting a final draft of the revised Action Plan for the Cabinet to consider adopting in due course.

Appendix 1

Ffordd Gwynedd Working Group Review - Table of Recommendations

Recommendation	Priority
Service Teams	
Ensure that the following are on the agenda of every service team meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance • Obstacles • New examples of good practice and lessons learnt 	
Engage regularly with customers.	
Increase number of smaller reviews.	
Revisit our performance measures and consider efficiency measures.	
Conduct a session to identify examples of good practice as a result of COVID	
Managers	
Ensure that their service teams implement the above and support them to do so.	
Accept that things go wrong from time to time in order to create a working environment that allows enterprise and experimenting.	
Ensure, when holding service reviews, that the staff who undertake the work as part of identifying what needs to be changed and the process for change.	
Invite staff from other services to come in to ensure that matters are challenged from the perspective of someone who does not understand the service and therefore can look at it from the customer's perspective.	
Identify and organise for the training needs and support for their teams.	
Ensure that examples of good practice is shared across the teams and corporately.	
Ensure that Ffordd Gwynedd behaviours are grounds to continuous evaluation discussions.	
Ensure that cross-departmental work occurs rather than being avoided because it is not easy.	
Manage expectations and ensure that all members are aware that reviews are proceeding and it is expected to have an effect on the performance.	
The Chief Executive, Directors and Members	
Consider prioritising support for cross-departmental reviews	
Accept that a review proceeds and is expected to have an impact on the performance.	
Accept that things go wrong from time to time in order to create a working environment that allows enterprise and experimenting.	
Agree not to challenge performance for a period during the review.	

Recommendation	Priority
Revisit “Gwynedd ar ei Orau” awards to reflect the work culture we have within the Council.	
Staff well-being	
Digital Strategic Transformation Group / Data Sub-group	
Digital Strategic Transformation Group to analyse the IT support position and to lead on priorities corporately ensuring that Ffordd Gwynedd arrangements are considered.	
Refer to the Data Sub-group to consider support to ensure that data is easily available and timely rather than something they have to get others to produce monthly (good examples of where this has commenced using e.g. Power BI).	
Core Support Group	
Develop a 'refresh' course and make it mandatory for every manager and team leader.	
Develop an overview course for all Council staff by targeting some and consider making it mandatory	
Ensure that our training considers the impacts of hybrid working and spreads the message that is possible to implement Ffordd Gwynedd in various ways.	
Break-down the managers' / overview course into short e-modules for all staff and produce a catalogue of examples good practice in support for the following fields: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyse the demand • Use measures to improve • Act on the barriers • Innovative/creative working 	
Advertising and developing soft skills courses.	
Present/offer similar practical sessions to those used in assessment centres	
Present simple and clear 'Ffordd Gwynedd Behaviours' that set expectations in the 'welcome' (induction) at the start of a career/employment	
Supporting leaders / managers to adapt and apply 'flexible' working arrangements to confirm and strengthen Ffordd Gwynedd principles.	
Present a method of recording obstacles electronically to the Managers' Network.	
Develop the Ffordd Gwynedd network.	
Develop the Ffordd Gwynedd site on the intranet to share examples.	
Marketing the available support.	

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Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet meeting report

Date of meeting:	7 March 2023
Cabinet Member:	Cllr. Beca Brown
Liaison Officer:	Garem Jackson, Head of Education
Contact E-mail:	GaremJackson@gwynedd.llyw.cymru
Item Title:	Post-16 Education in Arfon – Band B Sustainable Learning Communities Programme

1. THE DECISION SOUGHT

- 1.1 The Cabinet’s permission to undertake further work with stakeholders that form the Gwynedd and Anglesey Post-16 Education Consortium to develop possible models for post-16 Education in Arfon following on from the informal engagement period on post-16 Education in Arfon that took place during the Autumn term 2020.

2. THE REASON FOR THE NEED FOR A DECISION

- 2.1 On 10 March 2020 the Cabinet was approached to request *“permission to hold discussions with stakeholders to consider the current provision and highlight the key considerations to mutually identify the direction and opportunities to strengthen post-16 secondary education provision in Arfon. It is expected that a further report will be presented to the Cabinet to report back on the outcome of the discussions.”*
- 2.2 Since 2013, secondary schools in Arfon have been in partnership with Cyngor Gwynedd, Anglesey secondary schools and Grŵp Llandrillo Menai known as the Gwynedd Anglesey post-16 Education Consortium. The Consortium sets the area’s post-16 curriculum through a partnership agreement.
- 2.3 The post-16 curriculum provision in Gwynedd and Anglesey is drawn up through an agreement and decision of the partnership rather than by individual schools and colleges. This means that every school regardless of the size of their sixth form provision could offer the 25 A level subjects and 5 BTEC level 3 subjects to meet the 30 subjects that each school is required to offer.
- 2.4 Securing the support of the Cabinet to move forward with the Post-16 Education project in Arfon would enable the Education Department to hold discussions and carry out further work to develop models for post-16 education in Arfon in conjunction with the Consortium's partners and key project stakeholders.

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3. INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 In March 2020 permission was obtained from the Cabinet to start an informal engagement process with key stakeholders to consider the current provision and highlight the key considerations in order to identify the direction and opportunities to strengthen the post-16 education provision in Arfon. A detailed report entitled [Post-16 Education Overview](#) was drawn up as the basis for the engagement.
- 3.2 It was intended to start the informal engagement process at the end of March 2020. However, before the Cabinet's decision came into force, the whole of the UK went into lockdown on 20 March 2020. As a result of responding to the crisis of the pandemic, and its impact on our schools, at the time it was not possible to proceed with the informal engagement process as intended.
- 3.3 In September 2020, the informal engagement process was resumed virtually, over a period of 6 weeks between 10 November and 22 December 2020. The conclusions of the Informal Engagement process were reported before the [Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee on 4 February 2021](#).
- 3.4 During the informal meetings, minor changes to the current system were discussed on one end - to a sixth form centre for all learners on the other.
- 3.5 As some time has passed since consideration of this area began in 2018 and the original case for change was established in 2020, the Education Department has revisited the case for change as there are new considerations that may influence the direction of the project due to the pandemic.

4. THE INFORMAL ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

- 4.1 As part of the engagement process, the following background documentation was published on the Council's [website](#)
 - Cabinet Report 10 March 2020
 - Post-16 Education Overview (March 2020)
 - IAITH Ltd Report 'Assessment of the current post-16 education provision in Gwynedd' (April 2019)
 - Presentation October 2020
 - The vision and the Objectives
 - Response Form
- 4.2 To support the engagement period, virtual meetings were held with learners, parents, teaching staff and governors to enable key stakeholders to voice their opinions and ask any questions regarding the field. Six virtual sessions were held, and over 140 stakeholders attended.

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- 4.3 To promote the engagement process and the virtual sessions - press releases, social media coverage and e-mail communication were used to raise awareness amongst stakeholders.
- 4.4 In addition, to encourage as many as possible to contribute to the conversation, special virtual sessions were held to gather opinions and ideas from learners in Arfon regarding the style of post-16 education system that would meet the vision together with their needs into the future.
- 4.5 Below are the details of all the engagement sessions held:

The Informal Engagement Process	Timetable	Frequency and medium
Arfon secondary headteachers' meeting – update and outline the next steps and engagement timetable	14 October 2020	1 virtual meeting
Arfon Elected Members Meeting – update and outline the next steps and the engagement timetable	15 October 2020	1 virtual meeting
Meeting of Governing Bodies of Arfon High Schools – update and outline the next steps and the engagement timetable	w/c 19 October 2020	6 virtual meetings
Gwynedd special school headteachers' meeting – update and outline the next steps and the engagement schedule	11 November 2020	1 virtual meeting
Grŵp Llandrillo Menai representatives meeting – update and outline the next steps and the engagement schedule	18 November 2020	1 virtual meeting
Publish informal engagement on Arfon's post-16 education on the Council's website	10 November 2020	Council website, press release, e-mail to stakeholders
Engagement Session for Governors	30 November + 9 December 2020	2 virtual meetings
Engagement Session for Staff	1 + 7 December 2020	2 virtual meetings
Engagement Session for parents, learners, and any member of the public	2 + 8 December 2020	2 virtual meetings
Engagement Sessions with learners (2 groups from each secondary school in Arfon + 1 group from GLIM)	December 2020 (to be completed in January 2021)	13 virtual meetings

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5 MAIN MESSAGES FROM INFORMAL ENGAGEMENT

As a result of the engagement, the comments received can be grouped under the following themes below -

- Quality of education
- The Welsh language
- Learners' welfare
- Travel
- Facilities / learning environment
- Virtual learning

5.2 Quality of education

The majority of comments conveyed that the quality of education is generally good in the schools.

"We believe that any change in the provision / organisation must be able to clearly show how it will at least maintain the quality of the education and experiences currently offered."

There were recommendations among parents and learners on how to improve the current system which included the following comments -

- Increase practical learning and use of alternative environments.
- Increase real life experiences by offering workshops/sessions with local employees, lessons skills required after education such as paying taxes, how to buy a house and more information around politics and voting.
- Increase the number of subjects available in one institution so that all learners have the same opportunity without the need to travel.

In general, there was no wish to centralise the post-16 provision in Arfon.

"I would not be supportive of seeing a Tertiary College in Arfon which would perhaps see our schools lose their best teachers and weaken the experience and facilities for the rest of the pupils."

It was suggested that more collaboration with Grŵp Llandrillo Menai would be sensible rather than competing with them and what they offer.

"In my opinion, a system that allows collaboration between the schools and Coleg Menai would make sense rather than one that is going to try to compete with Coleg Menai."

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5.3 The Welsh Language

Several strong opinions were noted in favour of Welsh-medium and bilingual education.

"One crucial aspect of the current system is its provision through the medium of Welsh in Arfon schools. This is absolutely essential whatever comes out of the big conversation."

and

"Following courses through the medium of Welsh should be the default position where possible and we still need to promote the benefits of Welsh medium education."

The majority of comments recognised the importance of the Welsh language as an asset in Wales and in our communities. Several stakeholders supported maintaining and strengthening the Welsh-medium provision in the context of post-16 education.

Despite recognising the importance of the Welsh language, a minority believed it was important to ensure learners' skills in English as well,

"I am concerned about the provision of what is described as bi-lingual education...the process of education should ensure that all students achieve a good standard in English."

Among a small number of responses, there was concern about the quality of Welsh education, including the shortage of bilingual teachers and the Welsh-medium resources available,

"The lack of resources through the medium of Welsh is a problem."


5.4 The Welfare of Learners

A large part of the responses received acknowledge the pastoral and safe environment that the current schools offer because of the close relationship with teachers, a detailed knowledge of the learners and the sense of belonging. As one learner says,

"We know the teachers better here and they know us better – relationship with the teachers is important."

Some concerns were expressed that one large organisation would not be able to offer first class pastoral care. Several comments were received that the current schools have the skills and experience needed to ensure that learners receive the best care whilst studying their A - Level subjects. Comments were made expressing the desire from learners to receive the best quality education at their home school,

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"The sense of a close family in our school is continuously passed on to future pupils. I don't want to see this change."

There were comments that referred to the risk of setting up something that would be too big and that would not address the welfare of the learners as a matter of priority and that would not recognise the strengths and weaknesses of the learners as well as a school where they have been studying for a few years. That opinion was expressed among the parents –

"Since they (teachers) have taught the pupils in previous years they already know the pupils when they start in the sixth form. This means that they could ensure that every pupil reaches their full potential and if necessary, offer them pastoral care."

5.5 Travel

The opinion of many stakeholders was that travel has a negative impact on the education of post-16 learners, and that it is better for learners to stay in the same learning environment where possible. It was highlighted by some that the impact of post-16 learners travelling across the county for their education has a negative effect on the environment.

"81 people in taxis is not good for the environment."

Some said that if travel is to continue to be an element of post-16 education, investment is needed to improve the public transport system.

"In a rural area where provision is spread out, better buses and transport to allow students to access courses in different areas seems the best approach."

A suggestion was received from a minority that the educators should travel rather than the learners to offer specialist subjects.


"If we have a subject expert, perhaps we share teachers across different educational establishments? Instead of the students travelling, could the teachers do so instead?"

It was recognised that travel between schools and colleges is an unavoidable factor in an area such as Arfon, and it was suggested that centralising the provision would not remove the need to travel completely to attend post-16 courses.

"From centralisation of 6th form, the problem remains; young people having to travel from their local area to be educated in a centrally located 6th form."

5.6 Facilities and learning environment

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Many of the comments regarding the learning environment stated that there is a need to invest in the existing buildings in the Arfon area to modernise them and create a suitable learning environment for post-16 education.

"Our schools need to be developed with spending on modern resources, not spending on a brand-new college in order to get rid of our traditional 6th form."

However, a small number indicated that the quality of the education was more of a priority than the learning environment and an environment with updated facilities does not necessarily lead to first class post-16 education.

"Modern facilities are important but not as important as quality of provision and a high level of attainment."

It was suggested to utilise the money to invest in our school buildings enabling all learners to benefit from the modern facilities.

"Despite the excellent teaching that takes place, a learning environment that is supported with dedicated resources resulting from equal and fair funding from Cyngor Gwynedd promotes learning and teaching."

5.7 Virtual learning

A large number of the responses expressed concern about any proposals that suggested that technology could replace face-to-face learning. It was suggested that technology should be used to support learning in a structured way not at the expense of face-to-face teaching.

"...however, digital technology has a significant role to play in 'blended learning' when it complements rather than replaces teaching."

In addition, a large number were in favor of using technology as an additional learning tool to enrich the educational experience.

"Teaching through virtual methods has now become familiar to us all. With monitoring the quality of education it can be an effective method of teaching. Cost effective too!!"

Many anticipated the financial benefits that could result from using technology to provide a combined learning system if the teachers received standard training and suitable resources were available.

"The use of technology will reduce the need to travel between schools... time and money should be invested in creating digital resources and providing appropriate training for staff as not all of them possess the digital skills to the same standard."

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5.8 The main messages received from the informal engagement process can be summarised as follows:

- The main priority is the Quality of Education.
- ICT should be used to supplement and support face-to-face learning.
- That Welsh and bilingual Education is fundamentally important (despite comments to the contrary).
- That the capital investment should be used to improve the facilities of our secondary schools in general so that all learners aged 11-18 can benefit.
- That there is general opposition to any intention to centralise the provision
- That there were several comments about the provision of GLIM in terms of quality, medium, and pastoral care.

6. NEW CONSIDERATIONS IN THE WAKE OF THE PANDEMIC THAT MAY AFFECT THE DIRECTION OF POST-16 EDUCATION

6.1 Virtual Learning

In the period of the pandemic when the schools and colleges were closed, all learning was moved to online virtual learning. Although this medium was not ideal for all learners, it was an effective means of keeping in touch with the school during the lockdown. A general response from post-16 learners during the informal engagement period on post-16 education in Arfon was that the majority preferred to receive their education with their peers in a class in front of a teacher and that technology could be used to complement and support the face to face learning. The opinion of parents during the informal engagement on post-16 education in Arfon was the same with the majority in favour of face-to-face learning. Considering the significant investment that has been made in the technology to enable virtual learning during the pandemic, real consideration should be given to hybrid learning models as a way forward for post-16 education in Arfon. We should strive to improve on the advances made in the field of digital learning during the pandemic.

6.2 E-Sgol

[E-Sgol | Website](#) This project is funded by the Welsh Government in order to assist schools in mainly rural areas with their post-16 and Welsh-medium provision. E-Sgol can make it possible for schools to offer more subjects for post-16 learners. The learning takes place virtually through *Microsoft Teams* and combined learning methods are used using Hwb. The obvious advantage of an E-Sgol in a rural area is that there is no need to travel from one school to another and that leads to more time in the school where the pupils are registered. With that comes financial savings as there are no travel costs to go to lessons in other schools leading to a reduction in carbon footprint, together with improving the experience for the learner.

6.3 Post-16 travel pass

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As a result of the abolition of the cost attached to the travel ticket for post-16 learners, pupils are free to travel from their homes to any post-16 education institution in Gwynedd on certain specific journeys free of charge. In abolishing the fee, one barrier to enabling learners to choose to continue in education in the post-16 period has been removed.

6.4 Estyn Report

In January 2021 Estyn published a thematic report called [Post-16 Partnerships](#) which gives attention to the strategic partnership work for post-16 education in schools and colleges in Wales.

The main findings of the report are:

According to the majority of senior leaders in schools with a sixth form, the relationship with their local colleges is not as strong as it is with other schools on the whole.

- Many providers work together effectively to share post-16 provision where learners from different providers come together to form collective teaching groups.
- In a few cases, different planning, funding and oversight regimes hinder productive partnerships between providers.

The findings in the Estyn report recognises the Gwynedd and Anglesey Consortium as good practice.

7 CONCLUSIONS

7.1 It was noted from the engagement period that the quality of the education was the main priority and ensuring that the experience is available to all learners. Other prominent themes were the Welsh language and the provision of Welsh and bilingual education. Also, due to the pandemic, the use of technology was discussed at length, and the general opinion expressed was that face-to-face learning is the best educational experience any learner can have, but that digital learning can support the face-to-face contact.

7.2 Following on from the informal engagement period, it became clear that there was no desire to centralise the provision on one site such as an Academic College or to co-locate with Grŵp Llandrillo Menai.

7.3 This is the Education Department's ambition for post-16 education in Arfon:

- A post-16 education system that can offer more face-to-face courses and hybrid courses as it is less dependent on transporting learners in taxis from one location to another, to improve the learner's experience, and respond to the current financial

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austerity situation and increase in fuel costs, together with contributing to reducing the carbon footprint.

- Appropriate numbers of learners following courses to ensure rich learning experiences and valuable opportunities to share experiences and flourish amongst peers.
- Sufficient variety in the choice of courses available to all learners.
- Excellent pastoral support, personal support, health, and wellbeing support for all learners.
- A significant investment in the resources and infrastructure to ensure appropriate spaces for hybrid pedagogy provision as a means of preparing learners to be independent learners.
- A consistent experience that would ensure fairness for all learners in wherever they study.

7.3 The Education Department seeks permission from the Cabinet to undertake further work with stakeholders that form the Gwynedd and Anglesey Post-16 Education Consortium to develop possible models for post-16 Education in Arfon following the outcome of the informal engagement period.


8 NEXT STEPS

- 8.1 Dependent on approval from the Cabinet to carry out further work with stakeholders who form the Gwynedd and Anglesey Post-16 Education Consortium to develop possible models for post-16 education in Arfon, the intention is to proceed immediately with the work of looking at the current system and key considerations in order to strengthen the post-16 provision in Arfon.
- 8.2 If the Cabinet decides to approve the recommendation, it is anticipated that a further report will be submitted to the Cabinet in the Autumn term 2023 to report back on the results of the work on developing possible models for post-16 education in Arfon.

9 ANY CONSULTATIONS HELD PRIOR TO THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE DECISION

The Well-being of Future Generations Act

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The Education Department has a role to promote the well-being goals of the Act among the county's learners through its activities and projects. The Act places a duty on public bodies in Wales to improve economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being. As part of the duty the Council has published well-being objectives which outline how we will improve well-being in the "Gwynedd Plan 2018-2023". It is intended to take into account the requirements of the well-being act and carry out an assessment in the context of the 7 well-being goals of the Act as a result of the work to develop possible models for post-16 Arfon provision.

Equality

The Education Department has a responsibility to promote equality together with general duties to ensure fairness and foster good relationships. The Equality Act 2010 requires the Council to consider the effect of any change to a new policy or procedure on people with protected equality characteristics, namely race, gender, disability, language, religion or belief and age.

An initial Equality Impact Assessment has been drawn up as part of the work of illustrating a current overview of the post-16 education provision in Gwynedd, and the assessment will be updated regularly as a result of further discussions. **See Appendix 1.**

10 THE OPINION OF THE STATUTORY OFFICERS

Monitoring Officer:

"This report has been the subject of input from the Legal Services. No observations to add from a propriety perspective."

Head of Finance:

"The decision sought is to hold further discussions in order to undertake modelling work. Apart from any direct costs to develop the models I am satisfied that the decision sought will not create a spending commitment in itself. The Cabinet will require further details, including detailed financial estimates, before reaching any decision on the way forward following the modelling."

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Equality Impact Assessment

Assessing the Impact on Protected Characteristics, the Welsh Language and Socio-Economic Disadvantage

For help to complete this form see the *How to Undertake an Equality Impact Assessment* leaflet. You are also welcome to contact Delyth Gadlys Williams, Policy and Equality Officer on ext. 32708 or DelythGadlysWilliams@gwynedd.llyw.cymru for further assistance.

The Council's is required (under the Equality Act 2010) to consider the effect any change in policy or procedure (or the creation of a new policy or procedure), has on people with protected equality characteristics. The Council also has a general duty to ensure fairness and foster good relations. A timely Equality Impact Assessment must be undertaken before making any decision on any relevant change (i.e. which has an effect on people with protected characteristics).

The Council is also required, under the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (Section 44 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011) to consider the effect of a change in any policy or procedure (or the creation of a new policy or procedure), in its opportunities for people to use Welsh and to ensure that Welsh is not treated less favourably than English. This document therefore ensures that these decisions protect and promote the use of the Welsh language.

From April 1st 2021 the Council has a duty to have due regard to tackling socio-economic disadvantage in strategic decisions.

1) Details

1.1. What is the name of the policy / service in question?

Post-16 Education

1.2 What is the purpose of the policy / service that is being created or amended? What changes are being considered?

This is the Education Department's ambition for post-16 education in Arfon:

- A post-16 education system that can offer more face-to-face courses and hybrid courses as it is less dependent on transporting learners in taxis from one location to another, in order to improve the learner's experience, and respond to the current situation of financial austerity, increase in fuel costs, together with contributing to reducing the carbon footprint.
- Appropriate numbers of learners following courses to ensure rich learning experiences and valuable opportunities to share experiences and thrive amongst peers.

- Sufficient variety in the choice of courses available to all learners.
- Excellent pastoral support, personal support, health and wellbeing for all learners.
- A significant investment in the resources and infrastructure to ensure appropriate spaces for hybrid pedagogy provision will be a means of preparing learners to be independent learners.
- A consistent experience that would ensure fairness for all learners in whatever position they study.

1.3 Who is responsible for this assessment?

Garem Jackson, Head of Education

1.4 When did you commence the assessment? Which version is this?

Version 3 – 31 January 2023

2) Action

2.1 Who are the stakeholders or partners you need to work with to undertake this assessment?

We will continue to work together with our partners and stakeholders of the project that looks at Arfon's post-16 education provision. They include governors, headteachers, teachers and learners together with our partners who make up the post-16 education Consortium which is Anglesey Council, Grŵp Llandrillo Menai and Anglesey Secondary Schools.

2.2 What measures have you taken to engage with people with equality characteristics, regarding the Welsh language or with communities (either of place or of need) that live with socio-economic disadvantage?

The laith Cyf company was commissioned to carry out research work on behalf of the Department, conducting interviews with head teachers, focus groups with learners, and gathering the opinions of parents and learners through questionnaires, to enrich and validate the evidence base gathered from desk top research.
The work was carried out between December 2018 and April 2019. A copy of the laith Cyf report is available on the Education Modernisation website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation.

A [Cabinet meeting on 10 March 2020](#) was returned in order to report on the conclusions of that work and to receive permission to start an informal engagement process with a key stakeholder in order to consider the current provision, and highlight the key considerations in order to identify the direction and opportunities to strengthen the post-16 education provision in Arfon. A detailed report entitled [Post-16 Education Overview](#) was drawn up as the basis for the engagement.

In September 2020, a period of informal engagement was held for 6 weeks between 10 November and 22 December 2020. The conclusions of the Informal Engagement process were reported before the [Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee on Thursday, 4th February, 2021](#).

2.3 What was the result of the engagement?

A report was drawn up in order to present the research collected as part of Iait Cyf's fieldwork - this report can be found on the Modernising Education website. www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation

A detailed report entitled [Post-16 Education Overview](#) was drawn up as the basis for the engagement.

A report will go to the Cabinet on 7 March 2023 reporting back on the informal engagement process, but the main messages from the informal engagement process can be summarised below:

- The main priority is the Quality of Education.
- That ICT should be used to complement and support face-to-face learning.
- That Welsh and bilingual Education is fundamentally important (despite comments to the contrary).
- That the capital money should be used to improve the facilities of our secondary schools in general so that all learners aged 11-18 can benefit from the investment.
- That there is general opposition to any intention to centralize or third the provision
- That there were several comments about the provision of GLIM in terms of quality, medium, and pastoral care.

2.4 On the basis of what other evidence are you operating?

The purpose of the informal engagement was to give all stakeholders and the public an opportunity to submit comments and ideas regarding the post-16 education system in Arfon, within the context of the Council's vision and objectives.

In order to support the engagement, virtual meetings were held with learners, parents, staff and governors in order to give them the opportunity to voice their opinions and ask any questions regarding the field.

We act following the gathering of the views and comments of the stakeholders following this process.

2.5 Are there any gaps in the evidence that needs to be collected?

There are no gaps in the evidence that needs to be collected.

Stakeholders were given the opportunity to express their views on the current provision in the informal engagement period. There was a questionnaire on the Council's website and a dedicated email address and an opportunity to attend meetings that were open to the public in order to give an opinion on the current system.

3) Identifying the Impact

3.1 The Council must give due regard to the effect any changes will have on people with the equality characteristics noted below. What impact will the new policy/service or the proposed changes in the policy or service have on people with these characteristics?

Characteristics	What type of impact? *	In what way? What is the evidence?
Race (including nationality)	-	Premature to identify any impact at this point.
Disability	-	Premature to identify any impact at this point.
Sex	-	Premature to identify any impact at this point.
Age	Positive	The work will focus on provision for the post-16 age - as a result, whatever the direction of the work, it is likely to have an impact on ages 16-18.
Sexual orientation	-	Premature to identify any impact at this point.
Religion or belief (or non-belief)	-	Premature to identify any impact at this point.
Gender reassignment	-	Premature to identify any impact at this point.
Pregnancy and maternity	-	Premature to identify any impact at this point.
Marriage and civil partnership	-	Premature to identify any impact at this point.
The Welsh language	-	Premature to identify any impact at this point.
Socio-Economic Disadvantage	-	Premature to identify any impact at this point.

* Delete as appropriate

3.2 The Council has a duty under the 2010 Equality Act to contribute positively to a fairer society by promoting equality and good relations in its activities regarding the following characteristics – age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, race, gender reassignment, disability and pregnancy and maternity. The Council must give due attention to the way any change affects these duties.

General Duties of the Equality Act	Does it have an impact? *	In what way? What is the evidence?
Abolishing illegal discrimination, harassment and victimisation	No	Premature to identify any impact at this point.
Promoting equal opportunities	No	Premature to identify any impact at this point. But we would ensure whatever the direction of the work that we promote and promote equal opportunities.
Encouraging good relationships	No	Premature to identify any impact at this point. But we would ensure whatever the direction of the work that we promote and promote equal opportunities.

* to be deleted as appropriate

3.3 How does your proposal ensure that you work in accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011), to ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than English and that you seize every opportunity to promote the Welsh language (beyond providing services bilingually) and increase opportunities to use and learn the language in the community?

It is premature to identify any impact at this point, but we would ensure that whatever the direction of the project we will work in accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards. (Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011).

3.4 What other measures or changes could you include to strengthen or change the policy / practice in order to have a positive impact on people's opportunities to use the Welsh language, and to reduce or prevent any adverse effects that the policy / practice may have on the Welsh language?

It is premature to identify any impact at this point.

3.5 How does the proposal show that you have had due regard to the need to address inequality caused by socio-economic disadvantage? (Note that this is about closing inequality gaps rather than just improving outcomes for everyone)?

It is premature to identify any impact at this point.

3.6 What other measures or changes might you include to strengthen or change the policy / practice to show that you have had due regard to the need to reduce disproportionate outcomes as a result of socio-economic disadvantage, in accordance with the Socio-Economic Act?

It is premature to identify any impact at this point.

4) Analysing the Results

4.1 Is the policy therefore likely to have a significant, positive impact on any of the above and what is the reason for this?

Premature to assess any impact on equality or the General Duty.

4.2 Is the policy therefore likely to have a significant, negative impact on any of the above and what is the reason for this?

Premature to assess any impact on equality or the General Duty.

4.3 What should be done?

Choose one of the following:

Continue with the policy / service as it is robust	-
Adapt the policy to delete any barriers	-
Suspend and delete the policy as the detrimental impacts are too big	-
Continue with the policy as any detrimental impact can be justified	-
No further action at this time because it is too soon to decide, or there is insufficient evidence	x

4.4 If continuing with the project, what steps will you take to reduce or mitigate any negative impacts?

Irrelevant.

4.5 If you are not taking any further action to delete or reduce the negative impacts, explain why here.

Irrelevant.

5) Monitoring

5.1 What steps will you take to monitor the impact and effectiveness of the policy or service (action plan)?

This assessment will be updated regularly as the work progresses.

CYNGOR GWYNEDD CABINET



Date of meeting:	7 March 2023
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Nia Jeffreys
Liaison Officer:	Nia Gruffydd
Contact Telephone Number:	01286 679 461
Item Title:	Cyngor Gwynedd acting as Lead Authority for LMS Cymru (Library Management System)

1. Decision:

The Cabinet is asked to:

Agree to the proposal that Cyngor Gwynedd acts as the Lead Authority for LMS Cymru which means:

- That Cyngor Gwynedd's Procurement Unit undertakes the procurement for a new LMS which means acquiring a system on a framework not only for the North Wales Library Consortium but for Welsh Library Authorities who wish to be members of an LMS Cymru Consortium, an agreement which will last for the duration of the contract for 7 years from 2023/2024.
- That LMS Cymru is based on a Consortium Agreement which will commit each member to pay their full share of the costs, and any potential costs such as redundancy costs, for the duration of the consortium agreement.
- As part of the Consortium Agreement, to employ an LMS Support Unit staffed by 3 full-time officers (neutral location) for the duration of the agreement.

2. Reason for the decision:

Currently, 20 out of 22 Library Authorities/Trusts in Wales share an LMS (which enables users and staff to search, order and borrow library resources), and a new LMS will have to be procured when the current agreement expires at the end of December 2024.

All the membership of SCL Cymru (Society of Chief Librarians of Wales) are keen to continue sharing a system for Welsh Libraries which will act as a National Digital Platform for Welsh Libraries, that will mean increased benefits for users in terms of developing and improving services.

In order to protect the interests of Gwynedd and the North Wales Library Consortium, and to support Welsh Libraries, we are asking Cyngor Gwynedd to take on the role of Lead Authority for LMS Cymru, or if LMS Cymru cannot be achieved as a project, to take on the role of Lead Authority for the North Wales Library Consortium as the second option. This would mean leading on procurement for a system on a framework, and leading a consortium arrangement supported by a Systems Support Team, employing 3 full-time officers.

We expect financial support from the Welsh Government for the project , and if LMS Cymru is realised it will be an example of a flagship innovative project for Wales which will ensure a single digital presence for Welsh Libraries - something that has not been able to be realised in the UK to date . It will be a means to drive improvements in the performance and quality of library services and ensure continuous development.

The cost will be neutral for Gwynedd. No other Council has proposed to act as Lead Authority.

3. Introduction

The LMS project for the whole of Wales was started in 2011, with a pilot scheme involving 6 North Wales Authorities (Gwynedd, Anglesey, Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham) as well as Grwp Llandrillo Menai Further Education College. The intention of this pilot project was to eventually extend the LMS to all Public Library Authorities in Wales, with the intention of offering a high quality Library service to library users across Wales, as well as offering significant savings to the Library Authorities themselves .

An LMS for the whole of Wales was one of the main priorities of the Welsh Government at the time. LMS Cymru as it came to be known was implemented in 20 of the 22 authorities in Wales, with Merthyr Tydfil and Pembroke Authorities choosing not to join currently for specific and practical reasons. It must be emphasized however that there is no formal structure to the current LMS Cymru in terms of governance.

We are in the process of negotiating an extension with our current supplier for an additional 12 months in order to give time to put the appropriate arrangements in place to plan for a new Welsh LMS, which will see the supply agreement expire in December 2024.

SCL Cymru managed to secure funding from the Welsh Government to commission the company Actica to create a report on LMS Cymru and options for future governance. A strong recommendation from Actica was the need for a Systems Support Team for LMS Cymru, to replace the current unsustainable and high risk goodwill model.

Gwynedd Libraries, as part of the North Wales Library Consortium , see great benefits to being part of the current consortium, in terms of benefits for the user. Gwynedd Libraries would need to retender for a new LMS system when the current agreement expires in December 2024, and our wish is to procure on the basis of a framework not only for the members of the North Wales Library Consortium, but for the rest of the Welsh Library Authorities and Trusts.

The Welsh Government has already given financial support to create a new system requirements document for the tender and we are in close dialogue with them at the moment in terms of further support towards the capital costs of the system and support for a Systems Support Team. This support has already been agreed in principle, recognizing that a collaborative system like this is core to the development and quality of Library services in Wales for the future .

4. Rationale and Justification for recommending the decision

No other Authority has expressed a desire to act as a Lead Authority and we need a decision regarding Gwynedd acting as a Lead Authority due to the following benefits:

- Enable Gwynedd to continue being part of the north Wales consortium sharing a catalogue and Systems Manager in order to improve the service for our users
- Being able to share books and offer a better library service to the people of Gwynedd

- Being able to save the costs of purchasing books to meet demand by sharing stock with other Library Services.
- Be able to ensure system security and suitable governance
- Being able to be part of an all-Wales arrangement that will be able to attract the support of the Welsh Government
- Being able to be part of an all-Wales arrangement to improve the quality of Libraries' digital services in general, and ensure that key skills are nurtured in order to drive digital developments and improvements forward, ensuring a single digital gateway to Library services for the user.

5. Next steps and timetable

The next steps are to draw up a Consortium Agreement which will be scrutinized by the Conwy Legal Unit (where there is an arrangement in place for Legal services via the Gwynedd, Mon and Conwy Bibliographic Unit arrangement).

Cyngor Gwynedd's Procurement, Human Resources and Finance Units are aware of this request and have contributed to the process through:

1. Putting forward a fully costed procurement proposal - accepting the proposal for Gwynedd to be a Lead Authority would mean over £15k of revenue for the Procurement Unit and £3k of subsequent revenue for maintaining the contract
2. Appraising the proposed Systems Support Team job descriptions.
3. Working on core costs and administrative costs - a contribution from all LMS Cymru members would mean that there is a neutral cost for Gwynedd.

The work of drawing up a Requirements Document for the tender has been completed.

February 2023 – further discussions with the Council's Procurement Unit

March-May 2023 – Completion of the tender documents

June 2023 – Publication of the tender

June-August 2023 – Sign the LMS Cymru Consortium membership agreement

October-December – recruit and appoint officers to the Systems Support Unit

November-December 2023 – Award of the Tender to the winning supplier

January – December 2024 – Renewal or implementation of the new system

6. Any Consultations undertaken prior to making the Decision

National

Actica Report

Engaging with users – WLGA Digital Unit

Requirements Document – engaged with staff and users

Market Assessment Report

Discussions with members of SCL Cymru

Discussions with the Welsh Government

Local

Discussions with North Wales Library Authorities

Discussions with Cyngor Gwynedd service units

Cyngor Gwynedd Procurement Unit

Chief Finance Officer's opinion:

"I can confirm that Finance officers were involved in the discussion in preparing the report and we will continue to work with the Economy and Community Department as the plan develops."

Opinion of the Monitoring Officer:

"No observations to add in relation to the propriety of the decision. However, I note that as Gwynedd are the lead authority it will be necessary for Gwynedd Council Legal Services to have input into the Consortium Agreement to ensure that Gwynedd's interests are acknowledged in the documentation."

Local Member's Opinion :

Agenda Item 9

CYNGOR GWYNEDD CABINET



Date of meeting:	7 March 2023
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Nia Jeffreys
Liaison Officer:	Nia Gruffydd
Contact Number:	Telephone 01286 679 461
Item Title:	Living Libraries - Gwynedd Libraries Plan 2023-2028

1. Decision:

Approve the Gwynedd Library Service Plan – Living Libraries 2023-2028.

2. Reason for the decision:

We want to ensure that the Library Service has a clear direction for the next five years. According to the requirements of the Welsh Public Library Standards, each Authority is expected to have a current Library Plan publicly available.

3. Introduction

The More Than Books Strategy came to an end in 2020. This strategy gave direction to the Library service following the Her Gwynedd Challenge in 2016.

The Library Service, when drawing up the new plan, has tried to respond to the needs of the people of Gwynedd in line with the Ffordd Gwynedd way of working.

Gwynedd Libraries have 13 Libraries in different locations across Gwynedd varying in terms of size and opening hours. There is a library in each of the Regeneration Areas apart from Dyffryn Peris.

4. Rationale and Justification for recommending the decision

Libraries are a valuable physical contact point for the Council's services and today the Library Service operates as a digital service as well as being face-to-face, providing resources and digital resources that users can access from home.

Over the years the buildings of Gwynedd Libraries have benefited from Welsh Government Transformation Capital Grant funding, with Penygroes and Dyffryn Ogwen Libraries benefiting from an improvement grant this year to develop a Petha Library (borrowing everyday items and toys) to addressing the need to support communities, the environment and the anti-poverty agenda .

The decision will support the vision and direction of the Library Service for the next five years.

Equalities Act 2010

The Council is subject to public sector duties under the Equalities Act 2010 (including specific Welsh public sector duties). Pursuant to these legal duties Councils must in making decisions have due regard to the need to (1) eliminate unlawful discrimination, (2) advance equality of opportunity and (3) foster good relations on the basis of protected characteristics and having due regard to the socio-economic duty under Section 1 of the Act. An equalities impact assessment has been prepared and is appended at Appendix 1. The Cabinet will need to have regard to its findings when coming to a decision. The assessment does not identify any particular negative impacts stemming from the decision.

Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act places a 'well-being duty' on public bodies aimed at achieving 7 national well-being goals for Wales - a Wales that is prosperous, resilient, healthier, more equal, has cohesive communities, a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language and is globally responsible. The recommendations have been prepared having regard to the requirements of the Act.

5. Next steps and timetable

Implement the plan and review annually.

We will endeavour to respond to budgetary challenges whilst trying to maintain core services in the most sustainable way possible, accepting that there may be an impact on availability and provision of some elements of the offers we have.

We will collaborate with external services and organizations in order to find the best methods of maintaining services in the most cost-effective way possible in the long term.

6. Any consultations undertaken prior to making the Decision

The Library Service staff teams were consulted in the drawing up of the plan.

The user engagement undertaken is outlined in the Equality Assessment document (attached) and the Equality Officer and the Language Officer were also consulted.

Chief Finance Officer's opinion:

"Adopting this Library Plan would not create a new spending commitment and the plan highlights the way in which the service will make the best use of the resources available to it. I therefore have no further comments to add from the perspective of financial propriety."

Opinion of the Monitoring Officer:

"No observations to add in relation to propriety."

Local Member's Opinion: Not a local matter.

Library Plan 2023-28 – Living Libraries

Providing means for everyone to discover, learn, create, socialize and share information and ideas

The purpose of Gwynedd Libraries for the People of Gwynedd

“Help me find the books I want to read through the library, at home or online, give me access to computers and IT equipment, help me use IT, provide activities to help me learn or socialize, and help me find up-to-date information about things that are important to me.”

Key Facts about Gwynedd Libraries in 2021/22



29,466 people are members of Gwynedd Libraries



96% of users are completely satisfied with the service they receive



59,534 items were digitally downloaded



3373 packs were home delivered on request and on demand



186,222 books were borrowed and 25,585 titles were individually requested



Over 1550 free reusable menstrual products packs were delivered

OUR SERVICE STANDARDS AND CORE VALUES

Our core values underpin everything we do:

Equality

Providing access to those who cannot visit their library in person.
Providing an equal and inclusive service to all our users.
Providing equal access for all and embracing digital technology

Honesty and Trust

Maintain the name of Gwynedd Libraries for reliability
Respecting our customers' personal data, complying with Legislation and good practice

Performance

Maintain a culture of performance management to ensure the development of our staff and improve our services.
Engaging with the people of Gwynedd, putting them first to deliver relevant and high quality services
Improving our services by supporting our staff to achieve their full potential and through collaboration with our partners
Listening to our users, staff and partners in order to inform our decisions and plans for the future.

Sustainability

Providing and promoting services that people want to use, ensuring value for money, maximizing income generation opportunities, and working in partnership and attracting investment when it is appropriate to do so.
Working in a way that tries to consider the impact on the environment and the climate crisis in everything we do.
Contribute to the health and well-being of our communities by providing safe and trusted community spaces that are free and open to all and inspire people to read, learn and access reliable sources of information

BACKGROUND AND STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Local Authorities have a statutory duty under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 'to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service to all'. The Local Authority is responsible for providing an efficient library service that meets the needs of the residents of Gwynedd. In providing this service, Local Authorities must, among other things:

- encourage adults and children to make full use of the library service
- provide free Library membership to those who live, work or study in Gwynedd providing print materials to borrow at no cost to the user

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 sets out the objectives of the Welsh government with the aims below:

A prosperous Wales • A resilient Wales • A healthier Wales • A more equal Wales • A Wales of cohesive communities • A Wales with a vibrant culture and a flourishing Welsh language • A globally responsible Wales

When drawing up this plan, we will operate within the context of local, regional and national policies and plans, including:-

Cyngor Gwynedd Plan 2023-28

Connected and Ambitious libraries: the sixth Welsh public library standards quality framework 2017 to 2020

Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act

Project 2050

New Culture Strategy tbc

The last strategy, More Than Books, came to an end in March 2020. Following the pandemic and lockdown period between 2020-2022, some fundamental changes were made to the provision of Library services in Gwynedd by removing fines entirely on overdue books, and review our Mobile Service to establish an on-demand Home Delivery Service in its place. The traditional mobile vehicles were to be replaced by smaller electric vehicles, which would be able to provide a monthly Home Service, and an on-demand and free Delivery Service for all Gwynedd residents.



In 2020 the Gwynedd Libraries Manager became responsible for Neuadd Dwyfor Theatre and Cinema in Pwllheli, where Pwllheli Library is co located, with the aim of strengthening and developing the collaboration between teams by ensuring a cohesive service for the public provided by the Theatre/Cinema team and the Library team.

ROLES OF GWYNEDD LIBRARIES SERVICE

Public Library Service - Provided through a county network - opening hours each week in brackets

Caernarfon Library (44)

Bangor Library (44)

Porthmadog Library (37) - co-located in Byw'n Iach building, Glaslyn

Pwllheli Library (31 + 12 hours outside basic staffing hours) - co-located with Neuadd Dwyfor Theatre/Cinema

Dolgellau Library (31)

Blaenau Ffestiniog Library (27.5) - co-located in the Maenofferen Center building

Tywyn Library (27)

Abermaw Library (26)

Bala Library (20) - co-located at Ysgol Godre'r Berwyn

Penygroes Library (16)

Cricieth Library (14) - co-located at Encil y Coed

Dyffryn Ogwen Library, Bethesda (15) - supported by Partneriaeth Ogwen who hold the Lease of the building

Nefyn Library (14) - supported by Nefyn Town Council who hold the Lease of the building

Each library offers a range of reading materials, public computers and wi - fi. The staff can also arrange 1:1 Digital Support sessions for users by our professional Librarians.

Story times and Ji Babi Bach sessions for babies are held in some of the Libraries along with sessions for adults such as Reading Clubs for Learners.

Delivery Service and Home Service (one vehicle each in Arfon, Dwyfor, Meirionnydd) A Home Library Service is offered free of charge on a monthly basis to individuals who are unable to visit their library, in addition to a free Delivery Service on demand for everyone in Gwynedd.

Library Link - The click and collect link is located at Hen Institiwt and Library Harlech where you can order a book through the online catalogue, collect it and return it for free through this link.

Digital Library – Users can access and download a wide variety of resources for free including e-books, e-audiobooks and e-magazines.

Access is provided through the Libraries to genealogy websites Find My Past and Ancestry, and the TheoryTest Pro website, as well as Learn My Way and Access to Research.

Items can also be ordered and renewed online and over 55% of book orders are now made online.

Schools Library Service - We provide a Library Service to Gwynedd Primary Schools via a Service Level Agreement with the Education Department, where teachers can request learning resources and where pupils can borrow books from Lori Ni, the mobile service that visits their school twice a year, plus access e-books through our e-resources platform.

OUR PERFORMANCE

Gwynedd Libraries report on performance regularly at the Council's performance monitoring meetings. Our performance indicators are:

1. Borrowing and Usage Statistics
 - a. Book loans
 - b. Digital resource loans
 - c. Number of requests for individual books
2. User Satisfaction

We do this through monthly loan reports and holding sample surveys during one week, four times a year.

We are required to submit an annual report on our performance for the Welsh Public Libraries Standards to the Welsh Government's Culture Division. An annual assessment report is made to the Council and this report is published on the Welsh Government website and Cyngor Gwynedd website.

According to the 2020/21 Welsh Public Libraries Standards Annual Assessment Report

Gwynedd has strong partnerships in a number of priority areas such as learning, health and wellbeing, and children and families. It has maintained its strong performance in terms of Welsh language provision, and the library appears to be in a good position to build on its improvements during the pandemic and attract more existing and new customers.

We strongly believe that all services and organizations benefit by work collaboratively. By working together we are able to develop strong services to meet the needs of the people of Gwynedd and make the best possible use of our resources.

We will also take advantage of every opportunity to collaborate at local, regional and national level in order to make the best use of resources, expertise and funding.

We are committed as a service to the Gwynedd Way of working and we will incorporate the principles of Ffordd Gwynedd in the way we plan our work and work in the future.

- We will follow the Ffordd Gwynedd way of working and ensure that all members of staff understand what this means and are empowered as individuals and teams to do the best for the people of Gwynedd according to our purpose and service demands.
- We will constantly review our performance and challenge ourselves to operate as efficiently as possible, by maintaining a high level of service. We will do this through performance metrics and regular user surveys.
- We will promote our services so that the people of Gwynedd are aware of all the services available and how to access them.
- We will revisit the ethos of Ffordd Gwynedd following the pandemic, including undertaking interviews with the entire staff team to understand their feelings about the work and understand the things which affect staff whilst serving the people of Gwynedd. These responses will be the basis of an action plan during the year and will guide us in terms of attention areas in order to improve the way we work and provide service to the people of Gwynedd.
- We will maintain a skilled and trained workforce and organise the ongoing programme of staff training, which is planned annually.
- We will continue to collaborate regionally and nationally, seeking out opportunities to ensure value for money and efficiencies for consumers
- We will ensure that our library buildings remain welcoming, attractive, fit for purpose, sustainable, and open at appropriate times.
- We will try to reduce any real or perceived barriers that prevent people accessing and using their local library

WHAT OUR USERS ARE SAYING

" Not owning a computer the library is vital to me. I also read a great deal. Being able to use any library in Gwynedd is wonderful. "

"I have used both libraries today in Pwllheli and Caernarfon. In Caernarfon for a computer course and books, Pwllheli to use the computer and more books. This service is vital for my well-being and life progress. Myself, like many would be very disadvantaged without this service and would lose a valuable asset of book reading should it be closed."

"The library helps me a great deal with college work, internet and books."

"Libraries - this is very important when housebound as it helps me through bad days and long nights."



"Thank you so much for the work that you do - it is a really important and life enhancing service that you bring to people and I have enjoyed the range of books you have selected which I wouldn't have otherwise chosen - really informative and interesting ."

"Wonderful visit to Bethesda Library today with the little one. A nice atmosphere for small children...plenty of toys to play with, and a worthwhile selection of children's books in both languages. It is also possible to borrow toys from the Petha Library."

"As I have become more physically disabled I find e-books and digital magazines invaluable. I would not be able to borrow books without them. I recommend the e-services to all my family, friends and their children."

"I use the computers to try and find a job."

"Had been looking for help with a bus pass ...In the end I called the library and got the correct information and forms I needed."

" I would like to bring to your attention the sterling work done by the library assistant at Tywyn Library. She seeks out new and interesting books for me over a wide range of genres and gives them to my partner to bring to me as I sit in our car. I am disabled and find even the lovely library is too much for me to cope with. (The Library Assistant) makes my life bearable.

OUR DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Considering the strategic context and the needs of the people of Gwynedd, we will undertake to develop the areas below and the corresponding goals as the basis of our Library Plan for the next five years so that a comprehensive and efficient library service can be provided which will be able to adapt to the changing needs of our users, while incorporating local and national objectives.

The Libraries Service is managed within the Council's Economy and Communities Department.





READ

A more equal Wales: A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio-economic circumstances).

We will continue to place supporting reading at the heart of our service offer. According to service surveys, around 60% of users visit libraries to borrow a book. We will continue to try to maintain a strong book fund in order to supply appropriate resources to provide the widest choice of books to meet the reading and learning needs of the people of Gwynedd.

OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS
<p>Access to up to date and relevant reading materials</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase new books and resources regularly, making the most of the money available by working together as part of the All Wales Purchasing Consortium in order to get the best value for money in terms of the supply of reading materials in English and buy multiple copies of high demand books for adults and children. • Working with local Welsh bookshops to ensure the best terms for providing reading materials in Welsh as part of our provider specification, and buying multiple copies of high demand books for adults and children. • Collaborate with the Books Council of Wales to benefit fully from services such as gwales siop and ffolio • Being a member of the North Wales Library Consortium, maintaining a shared catalogue and ensuring that the people of Gwynedd can order books for free through an inter-lending arrangement. • To be a partner in the LINC scheme to ensure that the people of Gwynedd have free access to items in the catalogues of colleges of further and higher education in north Wales and that these items can be ordered through the Library.
<p>Promote books and reading for pleasure and support early literacy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold song and story times by Library staff in 7 Libraries regularly during the school term. (Caernarfon, Porthmadog, Pwllheli, Dolgellau, Abermaw, Bethesda and Tywyn) Caernarfon Library – Weekly Session Bethesda Library – Weekly Session Pwllheli Library – Fortnightly session Porthmadog Library – Fortnightly session Tywyn Library – Fortnightly session Dolgellau Library – Monthly session Abermaw Library – Monthly session • Collaborate with our partner– Cymraeg i Blant - to regularly hold story times at 2 Libraries (Bangor, Blaenau) • Hold Ji Babi Bach sessions by Library staff in 2 Libraries weekly during the school term at Caernarfon Library and Pwllheli Library • Working as a partner with Booktrust Cymru to deliver Bookstart and collaborate with the Health Visitor Service to ensure that Baby and Early Years packages are given to families through the Bookstart scheme • Participating in family support schemes such as Cyfuno, providing Family Learning support sessions, and SHEP schemes (Education Department)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working in partnership with the Early Years Unit on projects to promote reading and literacy • Hold a programme of Summer Fun activities for children and families in the libraries during the summer holidays free of charge • Encourage children aged 4-12 to continue reading books over the summer holidays by taking part in the Summer Reading Challenge and working with stakeholders to promote the national Summer Reading Challenge at all libraries. • Promote reading for pleasure for adults and encourages adults to expand their reading choices and experiences, for personal benefit and learning, and do this by supporting reading groups by giving them free access to our library facilities and access to book sets. • Holding Paned a Sgwrs activities for adults where emphasis is placed on attracting Welsh learners
Promote inclusion and equal access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain designated LGBT+ collections at Caernarfon and Bangor Libraries
Promote access to books in different formats and widen access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide digital resources such as e-audiobooks, e-books and e-magazines for adults and children in Welsh and English through the national offer • Collaborate with the North Wales Society for the Blind to provide audiobooks in Welsh for adults and children to Welsh Libraries and facilitate the availability of Welsh e-audiobooks on the national platform in the same way. • Provide a monthly Home Library Service for all those unable to visit their library in person, providing reading material to meet individual requirements in print, large print and audio form. • Provide an on-demand book Delivery Service for everyone who needs it to their home free of charge and enabling people to order books by phone/email and online
Deliver a Library Service to Primary Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will continue to work with the Council's Education Department via a Service Level Agreement to deliver a library service to Primary schools with the emphasis on providing the highest quality leisure reading materials for pupils and high quality and creative learning resources for teachers.



HEALTH AND WELLBEING

A healthier Wales: A society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.

We believe that the well-being of the people of Gwynedd is core to the work of Gwynedd Libraries. Libraries are accessible, safe and welcoming spaces at the heart of communities, and we want people to feel part of their community when using the library service. Libraries are places to socialise, and we also provide a quiet space for people to relax, work and study.

Gwynedd Libraries help the people of Gwynedd to take positive action in order to manage their own health and well-being by providing information and advice services in partnership with other organisations.

We also believe that Gwynedd Libraries play a role to provide opportunities and activities where people can come together in order to reduce the effects of loneliness.

OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS
Encouraging sustainability and reducing poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a solid working partnership with Benthyc and Dolan in order to offer a Library of Things - Petha - in Dyffryn Ogwen, Penygroes and Blaenau Ffestiniog Libraries. • Develop Petha by introducing a Petha delivery service and a school uniform loan service • Provide free menstrual products in libraries • Promote library buildings as warm welcome spaces in order to help with the costs of living in a period of energy crisis • Provide opportunities for adults to socialise by providing activities on a drop-in basis eg board games, colouring, cuppa
Supporting well-being through books	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and promote the Reading Well scheme across Gwynedd Libraries in the subject collections- Dementia, Mental Health, Children's Mental Health, Young People's Mental Health • Maintain a Helping Hand collection, which is a collection of books for children and families that can help in difficult or special situations. We will maintain a central collection and two satellite collections in Caernarfon Library and Bangor Library. • Work with other service units within Cyngor Gwynedd with the aim of working together to improve use and access to well-being services within Gwynedd and to encourage people to improve their personal well-being through the five ways to well-being, to promote and promote collaboration in order to make the best and most effective use of resources and to reduce duplication. • We will invest in resources for users with disabilities and learning difficulties, such as the Bag Books collection • Collaborating with other organizations to develop our health and wellbeing offers for diverse audiences, including older people and people living with dementia and developing a Memory Boxes resource and making our Libraries Dementia friendly places. • Developing our Croeso Cynnes offer which provides an informal space for people to call into their library and socialise in a welcoming and informal atmosphere.
Encourage participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will continue to host work experience opportunities and consider volunteering applications in accordance with our policy. • Develop the Caban space at Dolgellau Library as an activity and learning space for children and adults.
Responding to Welsh Government Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain awareness of local and national strategies and priorities and seek out opportunities to collaborate eg Age Friendly Gwynedd
Responding to the Climate Crisis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moving from diesel vehicles to electric vehicles to deliver the Home Delivery service • Start a library staff sub-group to look at our way of working and to make recommendations on how we can work in a more environmentally friendly way • Developing a partnership with Natural Resources Wales to work on a Green Libraries network • Letting the grass grow uncut between the end of March and the end of August at Caernarfon and Dolgellau and encourage sowing with wild flower seeds.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and maintain a wellbeing garden at Dyffryn Ogwen Library • Develop a green space and wild garden at Dolgellau Library
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WELSH LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language: A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.

We believe that Gwynedd Libraries have an important role in promoting awareness of Welsh and Welsh culture and the use of the Welsh language, in order to support and reflect our national identity and our unique culture. Libraries can play a key role by supporting people to learn and speak Welsh, have access to reading materials and information in Welsh, learn about our culture and heritage and take part in Welsh and Welsh cultural activities.

We will work with key partners to ensure that Welsh language resources are available to support all types of reading and information needs, and to support the needs of users who need access to books and other materials in Welsh in different formats.

By providing access to Welsh books and resources, as well as activities in Welsh, we will contribute to the Welsh Government's ambition to increase the number of people who learn and speak Welsh and who see a benefit in learning and speaking Welsh in order improving skills and job opportunities, and strengthening a sense of national identity.

A high percentage of the population of Gwynedd are Welsh speakers, with 75.5% indicating that they can speak Welsh.¹

Library data shows that loans of Welsh books by children under the age of 7 often overtake loans of English books.

OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS
Promote Welsh as a living language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with the Council's Language officers to hold awareness courses to promote the use of the Welsh language and ensure that the Council's Language policy is fully implemented. • Ensure that activities for children and families are either held in Welsh or bilingually with the emphasis on Welsh as the main language. • Ensure that priority is given to adult activities where Welsh Learners are welcomed and encouraged to participate. • Provide and maintain designated collections of Learning Welsh resources in each library • Maintain a local history collection and magazine collection in our main Reserves and ensure that information about the collections is available to users. • Collaborate with Hunaniaith on specific plans and activities in the Libraries to attract families • Collaborate with Bangor University's Welsh Learning Centre to attract learners to join our reading groups after completing a block of Welsh learning courses.

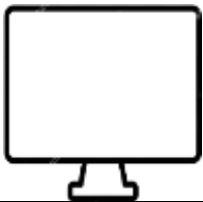
¹<https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Welsh-Language/Annual-Population-Survey-Welsh-Language/annualpopulationsurveyestimatesofpersonssaged3andoverwhosaytheycanspeakwelsh-by-localauthority-measure>

<p>Promote the availability of Welsh language materials and resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gwynedd Libraries will continue to take a leading role in delivering the Welsh Large Print Books scheme on behalf of Welsh Libraries, by coordinating the Welsh Large Print book publishing scheme with the intention of ensuring that large print resources are made available in Welsh to those users who have trouble reading normal size print. • We will collaborate with the North Wales Society for the Blind to ensure that audio Welsh books are available to borrow through Welsh Libraries and digitally through the national digital platform offer. • We will maintain book resources of historical value through our collection of 19th and 20th century Children's Books held in the main Library Reserves at Caernarfon.
<p>Promoting Welsh culture</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise the annual Darlith Llyfrgell Penygroes lecture held in collaboration with the Dyffryn Nantlle History Society • Organise the annual Darlith Goffa Dafydd Orwig memorial lecture in Dyffryn Ogwen Library • Collaborate with The People's Collection to identify content to the website and ensuring staff have the skills to be able to upload content in accordance with strategic objectives. • Participate in the BFI Replay scheme which is a service provide film content from the Archives through Libraries only • Support the visitor industry by being a reliable source of local information for visitors, and by directing users to the Visit Eryri website through the information kiosks in Pwllheli, Bangor, Caernarfon and Dolgellau Libraries.

INFORMATION AND DIGITAL

A Wales of cohesive communities: Attractive, safe, viable and well connected

Current information is increasingly to be found only online, with a digital sift being increasingly made by agencies, organisations, Local Government and Central Government. We believe that the role of libraries is essential in helping the people of Gwynedd to find the most reliable, relevant and current information they need, and to have the necessary digital skills needed to access any information online. In order to ensure that the people of Gwynedd get the most service and benefit from their library, we believe that a programme of ongoing staff training is key, and we will invest time, energy and resources in this area over the next five years.



OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS
<p>Providing learning opportunities for adults through the Community Learning Grant</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage the Adult Community Education grant provided through the Welsh Government and collaborate with providers and partners through the Gwynedd and Ynys Mon Community Learning Partnership to identify needs for courses locally and develop local partnerships to strengthen learning opportunities for adults. • Collaborate at national and regional level to develop and promote learning opportunities and attract adults back to further education by participating in events such as the North Wales Learning Festival.
<p>Ensuring that digital opportunities, help and support are available to users</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide ways for users to get additional specialist support by offering 1:1 Digital Support sessions at libraries open 20 hours and more (9 Libraries) as well as offering home visits/phone calls/virtual to those who unable to visit their library. • Work with partners and key stakeholders to ensure that staff have the latest skills and knowledge to support users digitally • Develop learning sessions and modules through the Digital and Learning Officer to ensure that the skills and knowledge of the staff team is kept up to date • Support a VR hub at Caernarfon and Penygroes Libraries and work with partners and stakeholders to hold sessions for young people • Update the front page of public computers in order to point users to reliable sources of information under different key areas • Develop Coding and Lego Club sessions in the largest libraries and work with key partners to maximize volunteering opportunities.

<p>Ensure that IT equipment and suitable digital facilities are available in our Libraries</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the quality of public computers and free wi-fi in each Library during the Library's opening hours • Identify gaps and create more USB points in the libraries where possible. • Provide wireless printing in all libraries • Provide a card/contactless machine as a payment method in Caernarfon and Bangor Libraries and look to extend the provision to other libraries according to demand. • Take a lead role in the process of procuring a new LMS (Library management system) for Wales and work together as part of the North Wales Library Consortium on the proposal to create LMS Cymru. Lead on the project for Gwynedd act as Lead Authority for LMS Cymru Consortium.
<p>Providing first class e-resources and digital resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure access to e-resources includes e-books, audio e-books, e-magazines in Welsh and English for adults and children, and collaborate with partners and stakeholders to ensure that digital resources are available in Welsh to libraries. • Secure free access to online genealogy websites • Collaborate with The People's Collection to identify content to the website and ensuring staff have the skills to be able to upload content in accordance with strategic objectives. • Participate in the BFI Replay scheme which is a service provide film content from the Archives through Libraries only
<p>Promoting Library Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a full-time Digital and Learning Officer position in order to maintain Gwynedd Library's social media accounts including facebook, twitter, Instagram and Tik Tok

Impact Assessment on equality characteristics, the Welsh Language, and socio-economic disadvantage

See the *How to Do an Equality Impact Assessment leaflet* for help completing this form. You are also welcome to contact Delyth Williams, Policy and Equality Officer on ext 32708, or DelythGadlysWilliams@gwynedd.llyw.cymru, for further assistance.

The Council is required (under the Equality Act 2010) to consider the effect that a change in any policy or procedure (or the creation of a new policy or procedure) will have on people with protected equality characteristics. The Council also has additional general duties to ensure fairness and foster good relationships. A timely assessment must therefore be made before making a decision on any relevant change (ie which has an impact on people with a protected characteristic).

The Council is also required, under the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (Section 44 Measure of the Welsh Language (Wales) 2011) to consider the effect of a change in any policy or procedure (or the creation of a new policy or procedure), is to have on any opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and to ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favorably than the English language. This document therefore ensures that these decisions protect and promote the use of the Welsh language.

From April 1st 2021 onwards the Council has a duty to give due attention to tackling socio-economic disadvantage in strategic decisions.

1) Details

1.1 What is the name of the policy / service in question?

Living Libraries - Gwynedd Libraries Service Plan 2023-28

1.2 What is the purpose of the policy/service that is being created or changed? What changes are being considered?

The purpose of the plan is to set out our vision and priority areas and development for the next five years for the Libraries Service.

Our purpose - To help me find the books I want to read through the library, my home or online, give me access to computers and IT equipment, help me use IT, provide activities to help me learn or socialise, and to find up-to-date information about things that are important to me.'

1.3 Who is responsible for this assessment?

Nia Gruffydd, Libraries Manager

1.4 When did you start the assessment? What version is this?

22 December 2022 version 1
January 2023 version 2
February 2023 – version 3

2) Action

2.1 Who are the stakeholders or partners you will have to work with to make this assessment?

The plan has been drawn up jointly with the Library Team and is based on continuous engagement with staff and users through:

1. Staff interviews held as part of the Ffordd Gwynedd exercise during the summer and autumn of 2022.
2. Ongoing User Satisfaction Surveys with library users, and online surveys with library users and non-library users.
3. Stakeholders and Partners within the Council and externally
4. Consultations or specific engagement with service users at different times

2.2 What steps have you taken to engage with people with protected characteristics, regarding the Welsh language or with communities (either because of location or because of need) who live with socio-economic disadvantage?

As part of service changes we have been making since 2020 and before drawing up this Plan, we have been engaging specifically with users of the mobile library service and the home library service.

We also engaged with users about the proposal to remove fines on overdue books - but the pandemic restrictions prevented this from being done as effectively and fully as possible.

We have also been engaging with the public in specific locations when reviewing our service in terms of individual library opening hours.

We regularly carry out satisfaction surveys with our users and non-users and keep a log of comments in order to monitor improvement actions taken in response to those comments.

We collect the opinions of users and attendees at library activities in terms of the needs of specific groups, for example, children and families, Welsh learners, and work closely with partners such as Dysgu Cymraeg i Oedolion and Cymraeg i Blant. We work with stakeholders in terms of producing resources for those who are visually impaired, namely the North Wales Society for the Blind. Through our collaboration with Dolan, extensive consultation was carried out with the communities involved at Dyffryn Ogwen, Dyffryn Nantlle and Blaenau Ffestiniog regarding the Petha project in terms of need and affordability.

2.3 What was the result of the engagement?

The result of the engagement was to decide on a Petha loan model in the three Petha hubs at Dyffryn Ogwen, Penygroes and Blaenau Ffestiniog Libraries, where toys are borrowed free of charge, and other items for a small fee. The engagement also led to decisions about the type of items users wanted to see available.

The result of the opening times review was to change the opening hours of some Libraries in order to be more accessible in response to the wishes of our users.

The result of the Mobile Library Service engagement which was done mainly with older individuals was to move to a new model of smaller vehicles providing a delivery service to the home on request and on demand.

All Library Service staff were consulted through face-to-face interviews on the Ffordd Gwynedd engagement model. This engagement showed what staff felt about the Library service, and the need to be more proactive in providing activities to attract audiences.

Based on the engagement below with partners, we have seen the results below:

Providing a space to hold Welsh learning courses in the Libraries which will be supported by reading clubs

Holding two LGBT specific collections in our Libraries in accordance with the wishes of the members of the LGBT+ GISDA group

Provision of audio books and e-audiobook resources in collaboration with the North Wales Society for the Blind

Development of VR hubs in two Libraries in discussion with possible input by the Youth Service

2.4 What other evidence do you act on?

We consider the consultations stated above and take note of the comments that reach us regularly through our user satisfaction survey exercises with library users and non-library users as well as our collaboration with partners and stakeholders. Information from partners

regarding priority areas, comments from users and usage patterns is the basis of our Library Plan.

2.5 Are there any gaps in the evidence that needs to be collected?

Yes. We have identified a gap in our understanding and treatment of race and ethnicity in our collections. We will participate in the Anti-Racist Library Collections: training plan for public libraries in Wales, during 2023.

3) Identify the Impact

3.1 The Council must pay due attention to the effect any changes will have on people with the equality characteristics below. What is the effect that the new policy/service or the proposed changes will have on people with these characteristics? It is also necessary to consider the impact on socio-economic disadvantage and on the Welsh language.

Characteristics	What kind of effect? *	In what way? What is the evidence?
Race (including nationality)	Positive	<p>A collection of books in the Ukrainian language is available in print format and digitally.</p> <p>We can make inter-loan requests for books in different languages</p> <p>We have identified a gap in our understanding and treatment of race and ethnicity in our collections. We will participate in the Anti-Racist Library Collections : training plan for public Libraries in Wales, during 2023.</p>
Disability	Positive	<p>We try to ensure that our buildings are accessible in terms of automatic doors and a lift where there is more than one floor/stairs.</p> <p>We offer the loan of specific multi-sensory resources for children and adults with a learning disability and we have resources for people living with dementia, and book collections to support carers.</p> <p>Our Reading Well collections include Dementia, Adult Mental Health, Young People's Mental Health and Children's Mental Health collections.</p>

		<p>We have a large number of books that can be considered dyslexia friendly, and it would be very difficult for people to access them outside of them being available in the library.</p> <p>Through our collaboration plans with the North Wales Society for the Blind and Y Lolfa, we are able to produce audio book resources and e-audiobooks, and large print books, through the medium of the Welsh language.</p> <p>Our Delivery service can supply a book service on request monthly or on demand to the home. It is intended to extend the delivery service to Petha items (The Petha - Library of Things) in the future.</p> <p>We provide access to e-books and e-audio books where assistive technology can improve accessibility.</p> <p>We are also able to offer 1:1 Digital Support at home for those who find it difficult to visit their library.</p>
Sex	Positive	<p>Public toilets in all libraries offer free menstrual products. We apply for menstrual poverty support grants and offer access to reusable menstrual products on an occasional basis.</p> <p>Our activities for children and families also have a positive effect on women as data shows that they are the most likely to look after children. This is particularly true in the case of single parents - and data shows that approximately 90% of heads of single parent families are women.</p> <p>The Petha project which lends toys for free also helps parents.</p>
Age	Positive	<p>Our Delivery service can supply a book service on request monthly or on demand to the home. It is intended to extend the delivery service to Petha items (The Petha - Library of Things) in the future.</p> <p>The delivery service means that people who work during Libraries' opening hours can also take advantage of the Service.</p> <p>We provide access to e-books and e-audio books where assistive technology can improve accessibility.</p> <p>Our Reading Well collections include Dementia, Adult Mental Health, Young People's Mental Health and Children's Mental Health collections.</p>

		<p>We provide large print books in Welsh and English</p> <p>We have a 1:1 digital support service. We also collaborate with services that help young people looking for a job and help with digital skills and resources can help them and students.</p> <p>We offer tailored sessions for children of different ages and their families, eg Ji Babi Bach sessions for babies Story Time Sessions Summer Holiday Activities</p>
Sexual orientation	Positive	<p>We provide Reading Well Mental Health - Young People collections which include books on sexuality, gender and mental health.</p> <p>We hold designated LGBT collections in the two largest Libraries.</p>
Religion or belief (or lack of belief)	None	We have not identified any impact
Gender reassignment	Positive	<p>We provide Reading Well Mental Health - Young People collections which include books on sexuality, gender and mental health.</p> <p>We hold designated LGBT collections in the two largest Libraries.</p>
Pregnancy and maternity	Positive	<p>Our Libraries are locations that welcome Breastfeeding</p> <p>Our Delivery Service and e-books offer help people to access books and other items (including those for pregnancy and maternity) if they are unable to come to the library due to their pregnancy or when they have young children</p>
Marriage and civil partnership	None	We have not identified any impact
The Welsh language	Positive	<p>By providing access to Welsh books and resources, as well as activities in Welsh, we will contribute to the Welsh Government's ambition to increase the number of people who learn and speak Welsh and who see a benefit in learning and speaking Welsh in order improving skills and job opportunities, and strengthening a sense of national identity.</p> <p>Through our collaboration with the North Wales Society for the Blind and Y Lolfa, we are able to produce audio books and e-audiobooks, and large print books, through the medium of the Welsh language.</p>

		<p>All our services are offered by Library staff through the medium of Welsh , including sessions such as Digital Support.</p> <p>Our activities for children and families are exclusively Welsh or predominantly Welsh/bilingual depending on the area in question.</p> <p>The only exceptions to that are a very small number of activities by external leaders/providers where it is not possible to provide fluent Welsh speakers, and the sessions are offered bilingually, or where the sessions take place through the English language eg a reading group reading English literature.</p> <p>We collaborate with Cymraeg i Blant to hold sessions for children and families in the Libraries.</p> <p>We collaborate with the Canolfan Dysgu Cymraeg to hold Welsh learning sessions in our Libraries which lead to learner reading groups.</p>
<p>Socio-Economic Disadvantage</p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>We have fully removed fines on overdue books We do not charge for books accidentally damaged by babies and young children It is intended to start a Petha loan scheme where items can be borrowed rather than bought Free menstrual products are provided through the Libraries We do not charge for printing documents related to accessing benefits We are part of the Good Things Foundation's National DataBank scheme and work with partners to refer people to SIM cards for free . Access to public computers and digital support is available for people who don't have access and helps when looking for a job, taking a course, or socialising. We can also offer 1:1 Digital Support in the home.</p> <p>Our users have said that the Library Service supports their mental health and well-being in terms of being able to have the opportunity and space to socialise.</p> <p><i>" Not owning a computer the library is vital to me. I also read a great deal. Being able to use any library in Gwynedd is wonderful."</i></p>

		<p>"I have used both libraries today in Pwllheli and Caernarfon. In Caernarfon for a computer course and books, Pwllheli to use the computer and more books. This service is vital for my well-being and life progress. Myself, like many would be very disadvantaged without this service and would lose a valuable asset of book reading should it be closed."</p> <p>"Libraries - this is very important when housebound as it helps me through bad days and long nights."</p> <p>"Thank you for always providing us such a fun sanctuary at the library. You've helped me more than you know on numerous occasions"</p> <p>Where possible, we co-locate with other services, so that libraries remain close to people, and services are available to deliver to the home for people who cannot visit because they are living too far / without suitable transport.</p>
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* To be deleted as needed

3.2 It is the Council's duty under the Equality Act 2010 to contribute positively to a fairer society by promoting equality and good relationships in its activities in the areas of age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, race, transgender, disability and pregnancy and maternity. The Council must pay due attention to the way any change affects these duties.

General Duties of the Equality Act	Is it having an effect?*	In what way? What is the evidence?
Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimization	Yes	<p>We remove discrimination by facilitating access to Library services through a number of different ways for the people of Gwynedd, and we try to remove any possible obstacles for people to use the service.</p> <p>For example: We have completely removed fines on overdue books We do not charge for books accidentally damaged by babies and young children It is intended to start a Petha project where items can be borrowed rather than bought Free menstrual products are provided through the Libraries We do not charge for printing documents related to accessing benefits</p>

		<p>We are part of the Good Things Foundation's National DataBank scheme and work with partners to refer people to SIM cards for free .</p> <p>Access to public computers and digital support is available for people who don't have access and helps when looking for a job, taking a course, or socialising. We can also offer 1:1 Digital Support in the home.</p> <p>We do not require proof of address from people without a fixed address.</p>
Promote equal opportunities	Yes	<p>Every individual in Gwynedd can apply to be a Library member for free and have items delivered to their home, and we do not discriminate against people who do not have a fixed address.</p> <p>There are several ways to contact the Library Service, online, email, phone or face to face.</p> <p>We recognize that people's needs and circumstances will vary, and we consider the socio-economic situation of Gwynedd residents when planning our service (see point 3.5 below).</p> <p>We provide a service through the libraries, or digitally and can deliver books on request to the home without any restriction.</p>
Cultivate good relationships	Yes	<p>Books and reading can contribute positively towards well-being and mental well-being. Reading can also alleviate feelings of loneliness and isolation.</p> <p>Gwynedd Libraries try to reach out to all individuals who need books and reading, in order to provide an easy, convenient and worry-free way of receiving a Library service.</p> <p>We collaborate with a wide range of partners and organisations in order to improve our service to the people of Gwynedd and to make the best and most efficient use of resources.</p> <p>We regularly poll users and keep a response log to record and review responses.</p>

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* To be deleted as needed

3.3 How does your proposal ensure that you work in accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (Measure of the Welsh Language (Wales) 2011), to ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than English, and that advantage is taken of every opportunity to promote the Welsh language (beyond providing services bilingually) and increase opportunities to use and learn the language in the community?

The Library Plan will put the Welsh language at the heart of everything we do. This means:

1. Ensuring that resources and digital resources are sufficiently available in Welsh for adults and children and that fair expenditure is set aside for Welsh language books
2. Ensure that the interfaces of all systems are available in Welsh
3. Ensuring all our activities for children and adults are provided primarily through the Welsh language
4. Ensure that emphasis is given to activities for adults that encourage speaking Welsh
5. Ensure that training for staff is provided through Welsh or bilingually where possible.

We as a service contribute to several aims in the Council's language strategy (Welsh Language Promotion Plan 2018-23) by offering various opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and to learn the Welsh language.

We follow the Council's Language Policy and ensure that all permanent members of staff reach the appropriate language designation for the role, namely being able to read Welsh at an Advanced level and speak and write Welsh at Intermediate level.

3.4 What other measures or changes could you include to strengthen or change the policy / practice in order to have a positive impact on people's opportunities to use the Welsh language, and to reduce or prevent any adverse effects that the policy/practice could have on the Welsh language?

Provide more Welsh language resources digitally, but at the moment they are not commercially available and special arrangements must be put in place to produce them, or ensure that they are available.

3.5 How does the proposal show that you have paid due attention to the need to tackle inequality due to socio-economic disadvantage? (Note that this is about closing inequality gaps rather than just improving outcomes for all).

We have tried to be responsive to the socio-economic situation of our users in a number of ways. Although use and access to Libraries is free, we have put some additional measures in place to ensure that Libraries offer a service that can be used by people regardless of their socio-economic circumstances.

Some examples are:

1. Abolition of fines - meaning that people who cannot afford to pay fines are not excluded from the Service
2. Offer free menstrual products and free reusable menstrual products, so that people can try products that are expensive to buy, to see what suits them best.
3. Offering a free Book Delivery service - of great help to those who do not have transport or who have difficulty traveling for any reason. It means that people without transport, people who live further from the library and people who cannot leave their home easily because of a disability can benefit from the Service.
4. Not charging for printing certain benefit claim documents and using discretion when charging people for printing benefit claim documents in general
5. Promote our Libraries as f Warm Welcome spaces
6. Not charging for items accidentally damaged by babies and small children
7. Facilitating a Chromebook loan scheme for learners registered on Grŵp Llandrillo Menai and Adult Education Wales courses
8. Facilitate a data/SIM card scheme through the National Databank
9. Supporting people who are digitally excluded by offering access to public computers, free wi-fi, and digital support in the library or at home.

3.6 What other measures or changes could you include to strengthen or change the policy / practice to show that you have given due regard to the need to reduce unequal outcomes as a result of socio-economic disadvantage, in accordance with the Socio-Economic Act?

Budgetary constraints mean that we cannot extend opening hours in the evenings and at weekends, but we offer a home delivery service as a way of mitigating this.

Low staffing levels mean we cannot do as much outreach as we would like. However, we collaborate with a number of agencies and organisations in order to make the best use of resources.

Space limitations mean that we cannot provide a private space for people to connect online with organisations eg GP surgeries. However, we are exploring possibilities with others such as the Law Centre.

Our staff use the CAB website to assist people with their inquiries and refer them on for further advice.
 We are exploring the possibility of extending the Petha hubs in collaboration with the Regeneration /Circular Economy Programme.

4) Analyse the results

4.1 Is the policy therefore likely to have a significant, positive impact on any of the above? What is the reason for this?

The aim of the 2023-28 Library Plan is to be responsive to the different and varied needs of our users.

4.2 Is the policy therefore likely to have a significant, negative impact on any of the above? What is the reason for this?

We do not believe that the Library Plan will have a negative impact.

4.3 What should be done?

Choose one of the following:

Continue with the policy / service as it is sound	✓
Modify the policy to remove any barriers	
Suspend and remove the policy as the harmful effects are too great	
Continue with the policy because any adverse effect can be justified	
No further steps at this time, it is premature to decide, or there is not enough evidence	

4.4 If the plan continues, what steps will you take to reduce or mitigate any negative effects?

The most obvious and possible risk to the Library Plan is the demand for savings and cuts in the coming years.

We have identified areas of savings/cuts in order of priority which will have the least possible impact on all the people of Gwynedd.

If there are cuts to the book fund or service, then the most likely effect is that there will be more delay in people receiving a specific service, eg a request for a book.

The use of self-service technology will allow staff to pay more attention to service aspects of value, eg answering enquiries and digital support.

We are of the opinion that maintaining buildings should not necessarily be at the expense of providing a quality library service, and therefore our intention is to protect larger libraries and the delivery service, looking at every opportunity to co-locate, share space and develop sustainable new services.

4.5 If you do not take further action to eliminate or reduce negative effects, explain why here.

None applicable.

5) Monitoring

5.1 What steps will you take to monitor the impact and effectiveness of the policy or service (action plan)?

The Library Service reports regularly to the Council through the Performance Scrutiny process and uses the metrics below:

1. User satisfaction percentage
2. Usage – number of physical loans, number of digital loans, number of requests

Furthermore, a log of responses is kept for ongoing review.

The Plan is expected to be a dynamic document that will be reviewed annually in order to respond to new priorities, obstacles or threats. We will revisit the impact assessment at the same time.

We also try to embed the culture of Ffordd Gwynedd throughout our service.

Agenda Item 10

CABINET CYNGOR GWYNEDD



Report to a meeting of the Cabinet

Date of Meeting:	7 March 2023
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Nia Jeffreys Deputy Leader.
Contact Officer:	Catrin Thomas Assistant Head Supporting Families
Contact Details:	catrinthomas@gwynedd.llyw.cymru 01286 679913
Title of Item:	Supporting People's Wellbeing Programme

1. THE DECISION SOUGHT

- 1.1. Complete the establishing of Supporting People Hubs in the 13 regeneration areas.
- 1.2. Commissioning the People's Well-being Support Service, to give residents a helping hand with their well-being needs in the hubs and the area.

2. THE REASON FOR THE NEED FOR A DECISION

- 2.1. Cabinet approval is required for the next stages of the programme for 2023-24 onwards.

3. THE RATIONALE AND JUSTIFICATION FOR RECOMMENDING THE DECISION

- 3.1. The Supporting People's Well-being Programme is one of the priority projects of the Council's Plan.
- 3.2. The purpose of the programme is to work across the Council's departments, with our partners, to help the people of Gwynedd with those matters that have an impact on their well-being, such as the cost of living crisis and financial hardship; social exclusion; health and care challenges; accommodation issues; the challenges of education, training and work; and people's ability to contribute and participate in their communities.

- 3.3. We will achieve this purpose by
- supporting Community Groups to establish Supporting People Hubs, to ensure that help is available to people locally, informally, and when they need it.
 - commissioning a service to support people's well-being, which will hold residents' hands to help them achieve what is important to them in terms of their well-being.
 - supporting communities to develop their own projects and solutions to challenges and opportunities in their communities, through the Community Support Officers.

(See appendix 1 illustrating the support across the county).

Supporting People Hubs

- 3.4. We have secured funding from the Regional Integration Fund to contribute towards establishing a Supporting People's Well-being Network and Hubs in each of the 13 regeneration areas. We will invest £900,000 in this area over the next 3 years (subject to ongoing evaluation).
- 3.5. The Supporting People's Well-being Hubs respond to one of the priorities of the "Our Area" consultation which took place during 2022. Our residents and other stakeholders told us that there is a need to develop well-being, health, and participation interventions in their areas. The Hubs are now included in the Regeneration Framework's 13 Local Action Plans (DRAFT) produced from the consultation.
- 3.6. The Community Support Officers assist the community groups that host hubs to develop and be viable and resilient for the future. The Officers will also pull local groups and enterprises together to develop hubs in those areas where there isn't currently a hub.

Supporting People's Well-being Service

- 3.7. We have also secured funding from the Regional Integration Fund to commission a partner to provide a People's Well-being Support Service throughout the county. We will invest £625,000 in this area over the next 3 years (subject to ongoing evaluation).
- 3.8. This service will guide individuals to help them, and work with them on what is important to them for building their confidence, skills, networks and relationships for their well-being.
- 3.9. The Supporting People's Well-being Service will work very closely with the hubs and local networks in the area to make sure there are opportunities and local solutions to people's needs

Supporting Communities

- 3.10. The Supporting Community Officers assist groups and enterprises within the regeneration areas to develop and realise community projects so that we build on the wealth of community assets and capacity that help people's well-being and create resilient communities.
- 3.11. These community projects respond to opportunities and challenges that have been identified through the "Ardal Ni" consultation.
- 3.12. The Supporting Communities Officers will assist communities to apply for various grant and funding to develop and deliver projects within their communities.

4. NEXT STEPS AND TIMETABLE

- 4.1. Establish grant agreements to the Supporting People's Well-being Hubs for 2023-24 onwards by the end of March.
- 4.2. Complete the commissioning and procurement process for the Supporting People's Well-being Service by the end of June 2023.

5. ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAEN PRIOR TO RECOMMENDING THE DECISION

- 5.1. Monitoring Officer:

"No observations to add in relation to propriety".

- 5.2. Chief Finance Officer:

"I can confirm that funding is available to implement the decision sought, as outlined in the report".

