

CABINET CYNGOR GWYNEDD

Date:	11 September 2018
Title of Item:	Performance Report of the Cabinet Member for the Environment
Purpose:	To accept and note the information in the report.
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Dafydd Meurig
Contact Officer:	Dilwyn Williams, Chief Executive

Report for a meeting of Gwynedd Council Cabinet

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update my fellow members on what has been happening in the fields within my remit as Cabinet Member for the Environment. This includes reporting on where we have reached with measuring performance, and the latest in terms of savings and cuts schemes.
- 1.2 I would remind you that all matters have already been the subject of discussions and have been scrutinised at meetings of the Management Team, which also includes two representatives of the relevant Scrutiny Committee.
- 1.3 Overall, I am happy with the performance of the measures for which I am responsible, or that relevant steps have been taken to improve performance.

2 THE DECISION SOUGHT

- 2.1 To accept and note the information in the report.

3 PERFORMANCE

- 3.1 Appendix 1 reports on the performance measures associated with my portfolio.
- 3.2 The **Planning Service** is responsible for facilitating and managing developments in the interests of our communities, the economy and the environment.
- 3.3 I have been monitoring the performance measure **How quickly all applications have taken on average to be determined (C2)** as the performance on the measure became unpredictable at the beginning of this year. The performance has been

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fluctuating between 56 days and 81 days, with a cumulative average of 71 days compared with 59 days reported in the previous round.

- 3.4 I have challenged the performance, and in response, the Service noted that the performance had been influenced by a few applications that had taken a long time to determine, including applications submitted to the Planning Committee and some applications the Committee postponed. The Service also noted that officers had been working hard to clear applications that had been in the system for a long time, which has contributed to the rise in the average. The Service is, however, confident that recent changes to the Planning Delegation Scheme will lead to speeding up decision-making, and to a subsequent improvement in performance.
- 3.5 Satisfaction with the service remains fairly high (86% satisfied) with expression of dissatisfaction revolving around the refusal of an application or inability to contact the service. The ongoing Ffordd Gwynedd work addresses this (see 3.19 below).
- 3.6 I am still not convinced that we have been able to find an appropriated measure in the field of planning enforcement and work is taking place to rectify this.
- 3.7 The purpose of the Public Protection Unit is to support businesses, and safeguard public health and environmental standards and trading standards for the public and ensure that licensable activities are provided in a way that protects the public and supports businesses. The percentage of food establishments that 'roughly comply' with food hygiene standards (G6) measure shows that 98.92% of food establishments comply, and only 1.1% fail, that is 24 businesses. With these, the service works with businesses to rectify the situation.
- 3.8 Recently, the measure for **Percentage of high risk businesses inspected in line with the programme (G2)** has been changed to include food hygiene, food standard and animal health inspections A risk category property (the highest risk category) only. The service has had a strong start to the year, performing in accordance with its work programme. It should also be noted that businesses in the G2 measure are included in the other measures relating to food hygiene and standards.
- 3.9 The measures for the percentage of food establishments that have received Food Hygiene (G8) and Food Standards (G9) inspections show that the service is having difficulties coping with the work programme. 2.91% of the establishments in the G8 work programme and 4.66% of the establishments in the G9 work programme were late to be inspected, and this was at the beginning of the year. The Service noted that it had spent some time updating the 2017-18 work records at the beginning of the year, and had added establishments that had not been inspected to the 2018-19 programme.
- 3.10 It has become evident in recent months that the Service is unable to cope with the anticipated workload, because of the lack of staffing capacity as a result of cutbacks in recent years. Consequently, the Food Standards Agency, which expressed concern that we were falling behind with our visits to low risk food establishments, visited us. In order to address the situation of a staff capacity shortage and inability to meet the requirements of the Food Standards Agency, on 31 July other Cabinet members supported my proposal to divert the higher income generated by the Department toward creating two additional permanent posts to enable it to better cope with the workload.

- 3.11 The information about the **Average number of days taken to determine a taxi licence application (G7)** shows that the performance has regressed to 9.96 days compared with 8.96 noted in the previous report. On challenging the Service, it was noted that licences for taxi companies and vehicles were processed very quickly - within two days on average. The increased average is due to an increase in the applications for drivers' licences. According to the service, they infrequently receive a full and complete application to process, which then delays the process. They often, also, require a DBS certificate and the time the DBS takes to be processed has increased greatly and is now slower than ever. According to the Service, the wait for the DBS certificate is what contributes most to the slowness; this has, therefore, led to a gradual decline since the beginning of 2017 in the processing time of applications for taxi driver licences, from an average of 17.95 days to 54.6 days.
- 3.12 The **Property Service** is responsible for supporting the Council's Departments by providing suitable property for delivering services and ensuring that the Council's property portfolio is managed effectively and efficiently.
- 3.13 We see that the data measuring the **Time (in days) taken to respond to a request for maintenance work (Eiddo1)** has improved from 9.5 days to 8.1 days. The Service recently adopted the new IT system in order to manage work; and this has been successful. A policy change to internalise tradespeople and reducing the dependency on outside contractors is yielding results with a faster service. However, the Service reported that the **Percentage of maintenance unit customer satisfaction (Eiddo2)** had fallen from 90.1 to 89 during the last period. The Service noted that improving the response time to calls had come at the expense of customer care; I have, therefore, asked the service to try to strike a better balance between a fast service and customer care.
- 3.14 The performance on the **Satisfaction Percentage of the Pest Control Unit (Eiddo5)**, has been reassuring and it is pleasing to see the service establishing itself and becoming commercially sustainable. The service has succeeded in increasing its income by £40,000 over the last year and a half, and is now financially self-sufficient. Customer satisfaction is very high and this is reflected in their comments, for example: "Excellent service, very glad the officer phoned us to make sure everything was now in order".
- 3.15 The Property Service began work on installing telecare equipment in January. They ensured that they had designed processes carefully before work commenced, and this has yielded immediate results. Under the previous arrangement, a request would take approximately 53 days to complete. Under the new arrangement, calls take an average of 4.9 days, as reported in the **Time (in days) taken to respond to a request for Telecare work (Eiddo9) measure**
- 3.16 The **Integrated Transport Unit** in its entirety facilitates people's ability to travel from one place to another across a safe network whilst also raising their awareness of and educating them about safety.
- 3.17 The important measures for the Service are the **Number of complaints received about public transport services contracted to the Council (Cludiant02)** and the **Number of complaints received about commercial public transport services (Cludiant03)**. Seven complaints were received about public transport systems and complaints show some frustration with the service. The Service worked hard to resolve problems with transport over the winter and the nature of the complaints and responses to them reflect the present status of the public transport industry in

Gwynedd. I have asked the service to continue to work hard to deliver the best possible service for the people of Gwynedd.

- 3.18 The task of identifying measures that reflect the work of the **Countryside Service** continues. I will report on this in the future.
- 3.19 Three Ffordd Gwynedd reviews are in hand at present, in the field of Countryside Planning (that is begin carried out at the same time as the Building Control review) with Estates and Facilities to begin in the Autumn. I will report on the results that emerge as the reviews progress.

4 FINANCIAL POSITION / SAVINGS

4.1 Realising the Current Savings Plans

All the savings plans of the Environment Department until the end of the 2018/19 ywar have been realised, and the Department continues to lead on some corporate plans relating to Carbon and Salix.

Views of the Statutory Officers:

i. Monitoring Officer:

No Comments in terms of propriety

ii. Head of Finance Department:

I confirm that the comments in part 4.1 of the report are a true reflection of the position in terms of realising the savings attributed to the Environment Department.

The Property Service is leading on some major capital schemes which are addressed in the performance reports of the commissioning departments, and there will be an opportunity to refer to some other schemes in the Environment Department's subsequent performance report.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Performance Measures