

GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET

Date of meeting: 28 January 2020
Cabinet Member: Councillor Cemlyn Williams
Contact Officer: Dilwyn Williams, Chief Executive
Contact Telephone Number: 01286 679 685
Title of Item: Performance Report of the Cabinet Member for Education

Report to a meeting of Gwynedd Council Cabinet

1 THE DECISION SOUGHT

- 1.1 To accept and note the information in the report.
- 1.2. To approve the alternative savings schemes in part 5 of the report.

2 THE REASON FOR THE NEED FOR A DECISION

- 2.1 In order to ensure effective performance management.

3 INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 The purpose of this report is to update you on what has been achieved in the field for which I, as Cabinet Member for Education, have responsibility. This includes outlining the latest position regarding the pledges within the Council Plan; the progress of the performance measures; and the latest in relation to the plan for savings and cuts.
- 3.2 We are implementing the Council Plan for 2018-23, and I herein report on progress to the end of November 2019.
- 3.3 I wish to remind you that all matters have already been the subject of discussions and have been scrutinised by me in Performance Challenging meetings.
- 3.4 On the whole, I am satisfied with the department's performance and I will elaborate on the progress in the report.

4 THE RATIONALE AND JUSTIFICATION FOR RECOMMENDING THE DECISION

4.1 PERFORMANCE OF THE PROJECTS IN THE COUNCIL PLAN

4.2 Strengthening Leadership

- 4.2.1 The purpose of the *Strengthening Leadership* project is to encourage and promote the professional development of our schools' current leaders, ensuring that they follow an appropriate programme of professional learning.

- 4.2.2 The Meirionnydd Secondary project looks at ensuring that the quality of the education is consistently good and is sustainable to the future. The work is running on schedule and discussions have been held with headteachers to discuss the situation and agree on work streams; consultants have been commissioned to produce a report as a result of the discussions with the headteachers. I will update you on this in due course.
- 4.2.3. The arrangements for the Strengthening Leadership project have reached a stage where we have confidence that these arrangements established jointly with Gwe ensure that the quality of our schools leadership are appropriate. Therefore as part of the Council's Plan review we will close this project, and the monitoring arrangements will form part of the day-to-day work of the Department.

4.3 21st Century Schools Programme

- 4.3.1 The **21st Century Schools Programme** plans and delivers innovative projects to adapt schools, or build new schools so that the children and young people of Gwynedd can be educated in the best possible learning environment.
- 4.3.2 The research on the **post-16 education provision** is on-going and many elements of this have already been completed. It is intended to present the conclusions of the research in a report that is to be submitted to Cabinet.
- 4.3.3 The work of constructing the new Ysgol y Garnedd is continuing and on schedule, and work has commenced to agree on the arrangements for transferring to the new site.
- 4.3.4 The arrangements for the project management of Our Lady's School have been agreed with the Diocese, which means that Gwynedd Council is responsible for running the project and presenting the business case. Initial feasibility work has been completed to identify the needs for potential sites to locate the new School building. There will be a need to agree on a favoured site following further discussions and assessments and then a business case will need to be submitted in order to confirm Welsh Government's capital contribution.

4.4 Transforming the provision of Additional Educational Needs and Inclusion

- 4.4.1 The purpose of this project is to transform the additional learning needs and inclusion service, so as to ensure that the children and young people who need the service receive the most appropriate support to enable them to achieve their potential.
- 4.4.2 During the year three cases which challenged a child's statement were presented to a Tribunal. The Local Authority won the tribunal in all three cases which is very positive given that nationally, 89% of cases are lost. I am of the view that this measure is useful, therefore I will be asking the Department to report on this in future.
- 4.4.3 Since September, the Individual Development Plan system has been available on-line to all schools - the system enables the school, parents and other agencies to co-author plans.
- 4.4.4 We see a reduction in the "ALN Provision Hours" (Table 1), this comes as a result of an ongoing monitoring process of the support that is being provided to children. In the past, children would have retained provision for a long time, but by continuously reviewing the situation, the provision is changed as required. This has meant a change in the culture, with schools making better use of their resources. I

am confident that a change in this process contributes towards ensuring that children receive the best possible education.

4.5 Language Charter and Strategy

4.5.1 The purpose of the project is to promote the attainment and welfare of the children and young people of Gwynedd in using the Welsh language.

4.5.2 It appears that the Language Charter is still creating a workload for head teachers, we hope that this can be revisited when the Welsh Government's Language Charter comes into force in September 2020. It appears that the Primary Language Web shows an increase in children's social use of the Welsh language. It was noted that Estyn Inspections now address informal use of the Welsh language, and I will be considering this alongside the language web in the future.

4.6 THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT'S DAY TO DAY WORK

4.6.1 The **Schools Business Centre** was established in September 2019 in order to offer services to the County's Schools. The Centre offers many services including financial management, administrating appointments, arranging supply teachers and ensuring that the SIMS system is up-to-date. The Centre has identified three priorities for the year, and is currently on target to deliver in accordance with the Business Plan. It is very positive that all Gwynedd primary schools are buying into the service, and see the value of it for ensuring that processes are followed correctly. I am keen for us to be able to evidence the value of the service, I have asked the department to look at this matter and I will report on it in future.

4.6.2 The **TRAC project** is a scheme aimed at reducing the number of children leaving Year 11 that are not in education, training or employment, by offering a provision that is tailored to the individual. There are currently 284 individuals open to the scheme, and another 67 are awaiting support. After piloting the TRAC support with Year 6 pupils in the primary sector between April and September 2019, the scheme has been extended since November with 28 referrals received from year 6. Following the pilot, the Primary and Secondary Schools reported that the support was beneficial, and I will monitor progress as a result of extending the scheme.

4.6.3 Since the TRAC project is a Europe-funded scheme, it will come to an end during 2022. I have noted the need to consider how the provision will tie in with inclusion in the future. I will refer this on to the Supporting People Board.

4.6.4 The purpose of the **Catering and Cleaning Service** is to provide nutritious and healthy food for the pupils of Gwynedd Schools and to keep the educational establishments clean and safe in order to assist pupils to reach their potential. The number of children having school meals (*Table 2*) is reducing over time, in an attempt to understand the reasons for that, a Questionnaire was shared with parents in order to gather views on the school meals. A number of responses were received and these will be shared soon. A Report will be presented to the Cabinet early in the year for the purpose of considering the price of school meals for 2020/21.

4.6.5 The Catering and Cleaning Service worked with Ysgol Dolbadarn to look at reducing the use of plastic in schools. By now every primary school has changed to a new method of decanting milk from large bottles into cups rather than giving individual bottles to the children. Eliminating the use of the 189ml bottles has led to a 67% reduction in plastic use which equates to over 7,000kg.

- 4.6.6 The Department provides **Language Centres** across the County. There is a pilot scheme underway at Maesincla Language Centre, where a staffing structure of a teacher and assistant is being trialled. The Research Team was appointed to undertake a piece of work looking at each Language Centre, focusing on the children's linguistic progress. This will set the basis for measuring the effect of the pilot scheme. After completing the research a report will be submitted to the Cabinet in order to agree on the next steps.
- 4.6.7 I am concerned that one of the Language Centres is not full this term, and I am also concerned about the lack of numbers at the Secondary Language Centre in January. I will keep this under review to the future.

4.7 NON-CAPITAL PROJECTS

- 4.7.1 Due to a significant reduction in the number of pupils at **Ysgol Llanaelhaearn**, the Cabinet resolved to commence a period of statutory consultation on the proposal to close the School. The statutory consultation period has begun, and will close on 29/01/2020.

5 FINANCIAL SITUATION / SAVINGS

5.1 2016-2017 Savings Schemes

- 5.1.1 There is one savings scheme for 2016/17 left to be achieved, which is *Ffordd Gwynedd – Payroll and Contracts Unit*. A bid has been submitted for additional resources to accelerate work on the scheme, but in the meantime the Department is bridging the deficit of £28,681.

5.1.2 Savings Schemes for 2017/18, 2018/19 & 2019/20

- 5.1.3 There are two schemes where it is no longer possible to realise the savings, either fully or partially.
- 5.1.4 The first is *Reduce the time and/or charge a fee for the childcare element within the free breakfast scheme for primary school children* which is worth £100,000 and the second scheme is *Increase the fee for the pre-school care club* which is worth £10,000. These estimates were based on the presumption that the care scheme would attract £190,000 of income, with the initial research with parents suggesting that there would be demand for the care. Unfortunately we saw the demand reducing and as a result, use of the scheme has reduced 62%.
- 5.1.5 A report was presented to the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee on 21 November 2019, which highlighted that the two alternative schemes were to remove the above-mentioned savings schemes. Following a recent review of the Education Budget, the Cabinet is requested to approve our alternative scheme, namely to use the underspend of the 'Pupils with Additional Learning Needs who attend Out-of-County Schools' budget to remove the above-mentioned schemes.
- 5.1.6 It is important to note that the use of the care/breakfast clubs will be reviewed continuously, and should there be cases of unreasonably low numbers using a club, then we would have to respond to the situation and identify a saving that could be reinvested.

6 ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO RECOMMENDING THE DECISION

6.1 Views of the Statutory Officers:

The Monitoring Officer

“No observations to add from a propriety perspective.”

Head of Finance

"I am satisfied that the report presents a fair picture of the situation of the Education Department in terms of realising the savings plans, with a number of savings plans having already been realised or are on track to deliver on time. However, the decision sought includes the introduction of an alternative plan; I am satisfied that the alternative plan is reasonable and appropriate.

Finance officers will continue to assist the Cabinet Member to monitor progress against all the plans."

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Measures of the Education Department