

# GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET



## Report to a meeting of the Cabinet

**Date of the meeting:** 26 May 2020  
**Report by:** Dilwyn Williams, Chief Executive  
**Title:** Covid -19 : Recovery

### Decision sought

To commission the Regeneration Programme Board and the Supporting People Board to consider the following-

- the areas which should be given priority in terms of their importance to the people of Gwynedd in the areas for which each Board is responsible, giving appropriate regard to the direction of travel the Boards were considering before the emergency took hold;
- what actions need to be undertaken in those areas of activity in the short term and medium term.

and to report back to the Cabinet with their recommendations

That the Management Group be commissioned to consider what corporate issues require consideration in the short and medium term as we move forwards to the “new normal”, and to report back to the Cabinet.

### Background

1. To date, all the Council Departments’ efforts have been directed at dealing with the Covid-19 crisis.
2. What we have seen over the past fortnight is that the Welsh Government (and more so in England) is looking to move from merely dealing with the emergency to opening up some activities.
3. On the 15<sup>th</sup> May the First Minister for Wales published his plan for doing so in his document “Unlocking our society and economy : continuing the conversation” and already there have been some relaxations.
4. Rather than reacting to the situation, we need to be in a position to influence the programme and start preparing for such a situation. As a Council we

should be able to identify the key steps required in the various areas for which we have responsibility and be ready to act.

5. In an ordinary emergency such as flooding or a major incident, the response phase to the emergency would come to an end and the “recovery” would begin.
6. That would lead to the creation of a Recovery Coordinating Group which would include all agencies which would have a role to play in that recovery. Ordinarily the Chief Executive or a senior officer from the affected authority would chair the group – as it would largely be a technical process.
7. With this crisis, however, the emergency is not confined to one authority and the model does not appear to fit as tidily into the circumstances.
8. It also appears to me that responding to the crisis will continue for some considerable time with elements of “recovery” increasing as time goes by.
9. To some extent, therefore, this will entail a combination of responding in order to keep the spread of the virus as low as possible and changing towards a “new normal”, rather than undertaking a single “recovery” project.
10. This shift in balance will begin when Welsh Governments decides on the appropriate steps which should be taken at a national level. The Regional Strategic Co-ordinating Group will also have a role to play, as it will create a Recovery Coordination Group. Preparations for this are already in place, with the first meeting being held on 20 May, and we will obviously need to be in a position to influence the activities of that Group (and comply with any guidance that emerges).
11. In the meantime, we need to consider how best to arrange ourselves to identify the relevant needs in Gwynedd as we move towards the “new normal”.

### **Internal Arrangements**

12. The generic Recovery Plan which we already have anticipates that the Recovery Coordinating Group would establish a series of sub-groups –
  - Community Recovery Sub Group
  - Health and Well-being Recovery Sub Group
  - Business and Economy Recovery Sub Group
  - Environmental and Infrastructure Recovery Sub Group

13. It appears from initial discussions that the Recovery Coordinating Group may not adhere to this arrangement and will instead use bodies which already exist in order to coordinate the recovery.
14. There has been mention of using the Economic Ambition Board to coordinate efforts in the business and economy area of activity; the Regional Partnership Board to coordinate efforts in the fields of health and well-being; and the Public Service Boards to coordinate efforts in the area of community recovery.
15. Further information will be available after I have attended the first meeting, but such an approach seems to make sense.
16. The nature of that which has had to happen to respond to the emergency in my view means that “recovery” in this context is not a technical exercise and there will be a need to prioritise. It is the Cabinet which will be responsible for that
17. The resulting issue is how best to formulate arrangements which will ensure that the relevant considerations required for the Cabinet’s consideration.
18. We could replicate the structure shown in paragraph 12 above which would shadow the regional arrangements.
19. Another option would be to use the Regeneration Programme Board and the Supporting People Board to act as bodies to consider what needs to be accomplished in their own fields.
20. The members of the Regeneration Board are Councillors Dyfrig Siencyn (Chair), Gareth Griffith, Craig ab Iago, Nia Jeffreys, Gareth Thomas and Catrin Wager along with the associated Heads of Service. The members of the Supporting People Board are Councillors Dafydd Meurig (Chair), Craig ab Iago, Nia Jeffreys, Dilwyn Morgan, Gareth Thomas and Cemlyn Williams along with the associated Heads of Service and the Corporate Director.
21. Between them, these two boards cover the areas noted in paragraph 12 above but we would need to be clear what their brief would be. The advantage of doing this that it would be possible to incorporate some of the ideas the boards were already implementing as we move to the “new normal”.
22. The disadvantage is that the boards encompass a wide range of activities and the risk that we could lose focus on some important fields e.g. the economy and business. It would probably be possible to overcome this by

commissioning taskforces of officers to report to the Boards on individual fields once those fields have been identified.

23. It needs to be clear that the Boards' purpose will be to allow cabinet members and officers to come together to consider areas of activity in a detailed and coordinated manner and that any formal decisions will need to be referred to the Cabinet for determination.
24. One aspect that would not be covered in that structure would be the need to plan corporate governance ; workforce issues, resource issues and service recovery as we move to the "new normal" .
25. I would suggest that the Management Group (the Heads of Service, the Director and myself) could consider the corporate matters requiring attention and refer any issues which need to be prioritised or required political decisions to the Cabinet for decision.

### **Recommendation**

26. In the context of moving forward to the "new normal" that the Cabinet commissions the Regeneration Programme Board and the Supporting People Board to consider the following-
  - the areas which should be given priority in terms of their importance to the people of Gwynedd in the areas for which each Board is responsible, giving appropriate regard to the direction of travel the Boards were considering before the emergency took hold;
  - what actions need to be undertaken in those areas of activity in the short term and medium term.and to report back to the Cabinet with their recommendations

27. That the Management Group be commissioned to consider what corporate issues require consideration in the short and medium term as we move forwards to the "new normal", and to report back to the Cabinet.

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### **Statutory Officers' Observations**

#### **Monitoring Officer**

What the report highlights is a situation of such significance and extent that the usual steps for responding to a crisis need to be implemented in a wholly different context and scale.

The proposed arrangements for reviewing and identifying steps and actions needed offers a sensible framework for initiating the work of identifying actions and priorities in the Council and regionally. It acknowledges that the impact of this situation will be long term

and extensive for the Council and its services at both a strategic and operational level. I am satisfied with the propriety of that which is proposed.

### **Head of Finance**

A report was submitted to the Cabinet on the 19th May regarding the significant effect which the Covid-19 emergency was having on the Council's budget. As the Council continues to respond and plan for recovery it is inevitable that the financial implications will vary with different choices.

As part 16 of the report notes, there will be a need to prioritise, and that is the Cabinet's responsibility. However I believe it is logical and practical to divide the issues which will need attention between the Recovery Programme Board ; the Supporting People Board and the Management Group, and for those 3 groups to refer the required decisions and any significant financial implications to the Cabinet.