

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	Services Scrutiny Committee
MEETING HELD	26 November 2015
TITLES	Changes to the Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion Service
CABINET MEMBER	Cllr Gareth Thomas

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 Transforming services that are provided for children and young people, particularly the vulnerable ones, is one of the main priorities of the Council's Strategic Plan. The aim is to ensure improved outcomes for children and young people.
- 1.2 It is important to note that this Strategy is prepared in the context of significant change in the field, including:
- the legislative proposals for reforming the framework for additional learning needs;
 - the evidence which suggests that there is a need to focus on early intervention and prevention;
 - the programme to develop the new Special School for children and young people with additional learning needs in the County;
 - the financial context
- 1.3 The need for such a strategy became apparent following an analysis of the experiences of children and young people with additional learning needs. Some basic weaknesses were highlighted, including:
- **Inconsistency within the system:**
 - In terms of parents' expectations; the standard and location of the provision and the culture of schools
 - **Traditional and complicated system**
 - criteria's need to be reviewed; the action is reactive (authority and schools); provision is commissioned externally without being sufficiently controlled
 - **Quality of performance**
 - Inconsistency within specialist schools and teams; lack of access to current data (the information being kept separately and in different formats); and difficult to prove progress
 - **Relationship with other services**
 - The structure does not support collaboration
 - **Growth in specific needs**
 - The provision does not reflect the correct emphasis on the main needs
 - **Lack of communication**

- Lack of awareness for receiving information; the current system is too complicated and there is a lack of communication between all stakeholders.

1.4 The aim of the Strategy in Gwynedd is to:

'Ensure that children and young people (aged between 0 and 25) with additional learning needs take advantage of the opportunities and gain experiences that are effectively planned for them, to enable them to progress according to their ability.'

1.5 The outcomes we seek to achieve through the Strategy include:

- a provision which places much greater emphasis on early intervention especially in the early years and which seeks to identify conditions very early on in the children's lives so that this can have an impact on their education and their lives in general;
- increasing the expertise of our schools with the use of training programmes to develop more expertise;
- robust multi-agency collaboration arrangements that will lead to sharing information and ensuring effective joint-planning for the education and development of children and young people who need additional support;
- offering a service that ensures high quality educational experiences;
- children and young people receiving the additional support sooner; making educational progress at an appropriate rate and contributing to promoting their independence;
- a learning environment of the highest possible quality for children who have the most severe needs;
- ensuring an effective and efficient system.

1.6 There has been some delay; however several changes have already been made to the provision:

- **Not offering the 3* support from anew** from 1 September 2015. In the schools where their budget is devolved (secondary schools and the 14 largest primary schools) the budget has already been frozen for around five years. Schools are required to be more flexible in terms of using their ALN budget in the interim.
- **Hold training** for the Additional Learning Needs Coordinators of every school on the use of person centered planning methods, in addition to creating a comprehensive e-learning package.
- **Review the use of criteria for accessing/leaving** the Cognition and Learning Service (literacy and numeracy) meaning that we are better at targeting the right children. Develop the use of Forums to discuss specific cases.
- **Pilot the use of outreach teaching assistants** to offer support to children leaving the language disorder centres rather than having individual teaching assistants for a set number of hours per week.

- Begin to implement the **new Behaviour Support Service**, in response to the lack of provision. Begin holding forums to discuss specific cases.
- 1.7 At the Informal Cabinet meeting held in November 2014, the recommendation to hold a consultation on the draft strategy was supported, and the consultation phase was held during the beginning of January-February, 2015.
- 1.8 It was agreed in Summer 2015 that further consultations were required on the possible impact of implementing the Strategy's principles, and broad consultations were held during September – October 2015.

2. THE RESPONSE TO THE STRATEGY FOLLOWING THE CONSULTATION

- 2.1 22 sessions were held during September-October 2015, discussions were held with over 380 stakeholders, see table below. A further joint discussion will be held with SNAP with 2 groups of secondary school pupils during November.
- 2.2 Various methods were used to raise awareness of the discussion sessions including “Newyddion Gwynedd”, Press release, e-mailing the schools and use of social media. Unfortunately, the response fell below expectations but we will consider different locations and methods when we go back and update them.
- 2.3 It is intended to release a Newsletter and a “Question and Answer” sheet as we have prepared a distribution list for everybody who attended the sessions; and we have already set up an ALN page on the Council's website to share up-dates.

Meeting		Number who attended	Number of Feedback forms
Parents and Governors	Arfon (29-09-15)	20	7
	Dwyfor (30-09-15)	12	6
	Meirionnydd (01-10-15)	9	1
Staff	Cognition and Learning Team (14-09-15)	9	5
	SENJC Staff (17-09-15)	21	2
	Derwen (21-09-15)	30	-
	Support Staff Unions (18-09-15)	5	-
	ALN Task Group (18-09-15)	2	-
Assistants	Arfon (22-09-15)	73	-
	Dwyfor (23-09-15)	31	-
	Meirionnydd (24-09-15)	51	2
Local Members	Arfon (22-09-15)	14	-
	Dwyfor (23-09-15)	5	-
	Meirionnydd (24-09-15)	4	-
Additional	Health (2-10-15)	7	-
	Multi-Agency Session (7-10-15)	8	5
	Multi-Agency Session (12-10-15)	8	9
	Headteachers (Primary <50) (19-10-15)	11	8
	Headteachers (Primary >50) (19-10-15)	19	13
	Headteachers (Delegated) (20-10-15)	8	6
	Headteachers (Secondary) (21-10-15)	11	11
	Secondary Inclusion Group	25	-
Total		383	75

2.4 Principal Messages

- The numbers who have attended the sessions has been very **positive**. Although the number of parents seems low (only 8 parents completed the feedback form), a number of all the stakeholders whom we contacted were also parents of ALN children.
- It is completely apparent that everybody whom we contacted have **taken ownership of the problems** that the service currently has, and support the Case for Change
- Strong support has been received from the Headteachers for the Core Integrated Team, and there is a clear understanding that **schools need to do more BUT** guidance, training and support is required to achieve that.
- Need to focus further on the **role of ALN Co-ordinators** in schools.
- Need to further focus on **distribution of teaching assistants**; schools are very concerned at losing the ALN teaching assistants in their schools.
- Strong general support for the need for **key changes to the Cognition and Learning provision**

- Need **to raise awareness** regarding changes with whole school staff, not only Co-ordinators and teaching assistants.
- Need to develop a Communication Strategy to reach the most vulnerable families.
- Need to establish a **sub-team to focus on the Early Years** (several of the services outside the control of education)
- Need to establish a **sub-team to focus on the post-16 provision** – again outside the control of education
- Need to establish a **sub-team to focus on the Health provision and the links with Derwen.**

3. THE REVISED STRATEGY

- 3.1 A revised version of the ALN Strategy is presented in **Appendix 1**. In our opinion, the Strategy is now ready to be submitted to the Council for approval.
- 3.2 None of the draft strategy's basic principles have changed. These principles include the aim to place a greater focus on the following:
- Early Years and early intervention;
 - Establish a central, integrated team possessing specific specialties to facilitate joint-working and joint-planning;
 - De-commission the SENJC;
 - Training Programme to up-grade the workforce's skills;
 - Introduce the use of Person Centered Planning methods.
- 3.3 The principal purpose of the revised Strategy is to ensure that there is a pack of 16 projects in place so as to improve the service for children and young people with additional learning needs. Every effort has been made, when preparing the strategy, to move towards a new system that focusses on the child/young person and their needs/aspirations.
- 3.4 Two of the main changes in the Strategy since the publication of the draft version, are shown below.
- 3.4.1 Structure of the new ALN Integrated Team (see 4.4 - page. 9 of the Strategy)
Following comments made during the consultations, options are being considered for:
- Providing the schools with an element of control over the teaching assistants
 - Introducing a new role - 'catchment-area' ALN Co-ordinators
- 3.4.2 Training Programme (see 4.8 - page. 12 of the Strategy)
It was shown that the schools were very eager to receive specialist training before the changes occur, and this element will be strengthened through modifying the Training Programme.

4. THE BUSINESS CASE

4.1 The Savings

4.1.1 The business case has focussed on three elements of the budget namely:

- The current ALN workforce
- The Integrated Budget (3* and Statements)
- The ALN Budget (distributed by formula)

4.1.2 The current budget 2015/16 in these three fields are distributed as follows:

	Budget	Amount	Details
1	Workforce	£2,169,077	Central budget to include SENJC and other Specialist Teachers
2	ALN and Deprivation Budget	£1,583,086	Delegated entirely to the schools on a 1:3:3:3 formula basis
3	Statements Integration Budget	£3,823,551	Delegated to some schools to appoint statement teaching assistants
4	Other Integrated Budget (3*)	£1,930,390	Delegated to some schools to appoint 3* teaching assistants
5	Total	£9,506,131	

4.1.3 Following further consultation on the Strategy and the Review's main principles, detailed modelling work has taken place based on pupils who receive support, the current criteria and a Review of the current workforce.

4.1.4 This includes a complete re-structuring of the current workforce, including bringing some specific SENJC teams to an end and offering a much more integrated and simpler structure. A core aspect of this is bringing the current 3* Integration provision to an end - this impacts a large number of teaching assistants posts. The further modelling work involving the ALN budget delegation/centralization indicates different budget delegation percentages for the schools **but the savings figure remains the same for all options.**

4.1.5 The new budget for the new model will be as follows:

	Budget	Amount	Details
1	Workforce	£3,291,006	Central budget to employ the Integrated Team's workforce
2	ALN and Deprivation Budget	£1,583,108	This amount is delegated based on (new) formula
3	Integration Budget statements	£3,823,551	Delegated to every school to appoint statement teaching assistants
4	Other Integration Budget (3*)	£ -	This budget is centralized to establish the Integrated Team
5	Total	£8,697,665	

4.1.6 Savings – This would indicate a permanent annual saving of **£808,466** in the first (academic) year of the Full Integrated Team being operational; and if other savings to the Statements Integration budget were included over time, the permanent annual savings would be **£986,886 by 2021/22.**

4.1.7 This would indicate cumulative savings of **£531,574** for the **3 year savings** window (financial year 2015/16 - 2017/18).

4.1.8 Information on the savings profile is provided in **Appendix 2** and in table 1 below:

Table 1- the savings profile

Permanent Savings Profile - per academic year

Budget Heading	Plan	Proposed Permanent (Cumulative) Savings							Cumulative Total	Details	
		2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22			
Budget for employing the Workforce and the 3* and Statement Integration budget											
1	Workforce Budget and Integration Budget										
	Begin introducing IDPto replace statements in the early years and year 5 (reduce the hours of some statmentsu by changing the thresholds)	£0	£23,550	£56,120	£99,960	£135,830	£153,370	£178,420	£178,420		This sum may be higher - but need to invest to increase the size of the specialist workforce. The budget in its entirety is £3.9m 2015/16
2	Review the service - re-model the workforce, de-comission the joint committee to employ the majority of the workforce centrally. Integration Money (3*) kept back centrally	£0	£41,808	£808,466	£808,466	£808,466	£808,466	£808,466	£808,466	£808,466	Re-model the entire current specialist workforce provision and include the 3* budget in its entirety
3	Total Savings	£0	£65,358	£864,586	£908,426	£944,296	£961,836	£986,886	£986,886	£986,886	

4 Savings for the 3-year savings window (2015/16- 2017/18 Financial Years)

£531,574

4.2 One off Investment:

4.2.1 To achieve these savings, a request will have to be submitted to the Cabinet for a one off investment. A sum of £1,038,583 will be required for the 3 years savings window (financial year 2015/16 - 2017/18). A total of £1,354,000 by 2021/22.

4.2.2 It should be pointed out that very high redundancy cost implications have been identified so that permanent savings can be made. We will, however, work with the care service to direct the workforce to alternative post opportunities.

4.2.4 Information is provided on the one off investment profile in **table 2** below:

Table 2 – One off Investment Profile

One off Investment Profile - per **academic year**

	Heading	One off Costs								Total	Details
		Plan	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22		
	"Change Management"										
1	Training Programme	Comprehensive programme for the current workforce, new workforce and parents.	£40,000	£80,000	£80,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£200,000	need more detailed work. Particular attention to IDP at the beginning
2	Change Management - Information and advice for children and parents	Comprehensive Engagement Programme - including a specific officer for a period of 2 years to manage the change and ensure the flow of information including responding to conflict	£50,000	£50,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£100,000	Communication Resources
3	Interim Support prior to introducing the new workforce	Interim provision to prepare for transforming the provision - offer a speech and language interim provision until August 2016.	£100,000		£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£100,000	All jobs operational by September 2016
	redundancy Costs									£400,000	
4	Cognition and Learning redundancy Costs	significant reduction in the workforce through re-structuring	£0	£177,000	£177,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£354,000	need further checks
5	SENJC redundancy Costs	possible significant reduction in the workforce	£0	£100,000	£100,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£200,000	need further checks
6	3* Teaching Assistants' redundancy Costs	Bring the entire provision to and end whilst offering a significant number of similar jobs	£0	£0	£400,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£400,000	Estimate only - need further checks
7	Total		£190,000	£407,000	£757,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£954,000	
										£1,038,583	
										£206,843	

8 Bid for a an investment during the 3-year savings window (2015/16 - 2017/18 financial year)

9 In addition a specific sum has already been approved for Project Management Cost:

5 THE OUTCOMES

5.1 The outcomes for children and young people with Additional Learning Needs are as follows:

- Plans that are more personal and focuses on the individual
- Earlier and more specific access to ALN services that will be regularly reviewed
- A more specialized service
- Accountability per area in the ALN Area Forums

5.2 Here are the outcomes for Gwynedd Council:

- A permanent financial saving
- Better control of the ALN budget
- Regular Review and Monitoring

6 RISKS

6.1 One of the main risks for this Transformation Project is the impact on the workforce; the posts of over 150 teaching assistants are impacted.

6.2 However, the new provision models can offer a 'Career Structure' for a specific number of teaching assistants with the opportunity to be offered - a permanent contract, guaranteed hours, opportunity for career development, training and develop a specific specialism. An equality impact assessment has already been completed.

6.3 It is also crucial that children, young people and their parents are aware of the changes, and understand the new arrangements. One of the measures taken to reduce these risks was to discuss the new provision model with all the stakeholders during September/October. A clear Communication Strategy

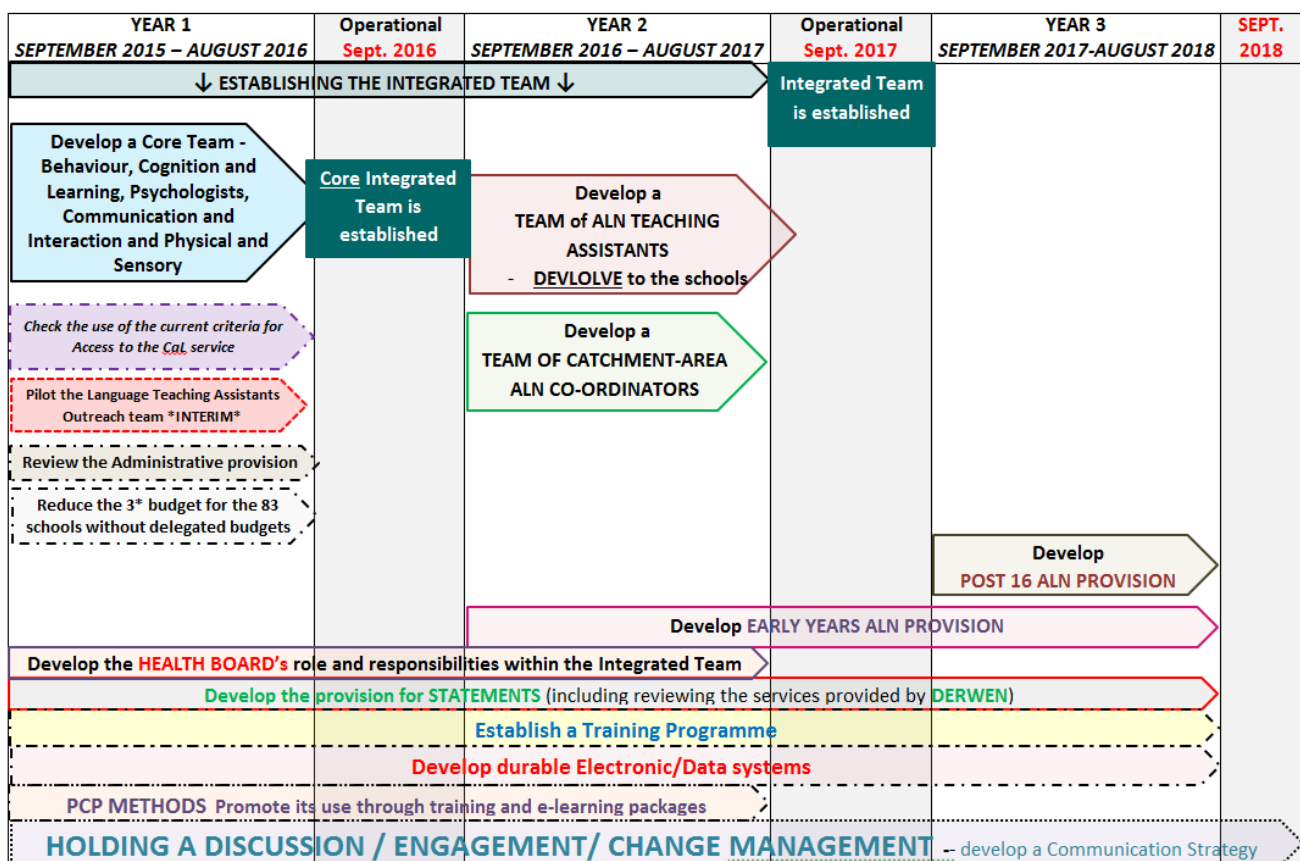
will be developed so as to facilitate the change. We will also hold further consultations with two groups of young people who are on the ALN register during November.

- 6.4 We intend to appoint a 'Change Management' Officer to control communication and respond to any dispute as they arise.
- 6.5 There will be on-going discussions with the Health and Social Services Department. Regular discussions have been held with Isle of Anglesey Council to ensure the best opportunities to work with and support each other in this field, as well as in the educational field in general.

7. WORK PROGRAMME:

- 7.1 In response to the recent discussions, we have adjusted the time-line to achieve the changes.

It is proposed that we focus specifically on establishing a Core ALN Integrated Team during the 2015/16 academic year so as to provide adequate time for necessary adjustments at the schools – before the teaching assistants' provision is changed.



8. QUESTIONS ASKED AT THE PREPARATORY MEETING:

Several specific questions were asked at the preparatory meeting held on 20 October 2015. We have responded to these questions below:

8.1 **Is there consistency in the primary sector and robust collaboration with the secondary sector when pupils transfer from one sector to another?**

An important part of the Integrated Teams role will be to facilitate the transition of children with Additional Learning Needs to the Secondary Sector. The team will also ensure consistency across the County in terms of the most effective way of transferring pupils.

8.2 **There is concern that a greater workload would be placed on Headteachers and Teachers especially in small schools**

Response:

We will create the new role of Catchment-area Co-ordinator to strengthen collaboration between the primary and secondary sector and to provide progression in the transitional periods. In addition, this role will provide the schools with advice and guidance so as to reduce the burden on the Headteachers and the teachers.

8.3 **That there is consistency in past provision through the SEN Units where pupils attended these units in the mornings and attended mainstream schools in the afternoons.**

Response:

This is contrary to inclusion principles within the mainstream schools. The new model will be much more inclusive.

8.4 **The requirement to approach autism as being a separate condition**

Response:

A new Communication and Interaction service has been established that includes language disorders and autism as there is so much overlap between the conditions and also in the skills and training for the workforce. The package offered by the team will be based around the individuals needs and therefore what will be offered to ASD pupils in comparison to other communicative disorders may be different and more specialist.

8.5 **How much would Area Forums administration cost be in the three areas compared to the cost of the current arrangements**

Response:

*In the past, **monthly** Moderation Panels were held to discuss 3* cases. Membership consisted of a Senior Manager, Head Psychologist, 2 Headteachers and SNAP. The new Forums would be held once every half-term in the 3 areas (with an opportunity to jointly hold Meirionnydd / Dwyfor occasionally). Membership*

would vary according to area therefore the same ones would not face too much pressure.

The cost would be higher but the Forum's purpose would be much more effective so as to ensure and prioritise the provision in the best possible manner.

8.6 That training is key to the Specialist Team as well as the teachers and that the element of training should be strengthened

Response:

Fully agree, there is a request for a one off investment to ensure that members of the integrated team possess the required skills, and use their expertise to train the schools. A much more strategic emphasis will be placed on the training programme, planning the programme on basis of evidence of the best interventions. We also respond to a request from the headteachers for training prior to implementation of the changes.

8.7 As regards appointing psychologists, will sufficient expertise be available for the three Area Forums? What will happen to the trainee Psychologists in the SENJC?

Response:

We have modelled the new service in accordance with conditions and the psychologists will provide Strategic leadership for these teams and maintain active responsibility for specific areas. This core team will have to contain trainees so as to ensure progression and maintain the Welsh expertise within the county.

8.8 Should the children's progress be evaluated as well as what impact the provision has on the child?

Response:

This will have a core role, and will holistically occur within the schools in their Individual Development Plans (through person centered methods). Electronic systems will also be developed to track the pupils' progress in accordance with the criteria and specific indicators.

8.9 What will be the School Governing Bodies role?

Response:

Training for Governors is crucial as the whole School needs to take responsibility for providing the best service for all their pupils. Mandatory sessions for the designated ALN Governor will be held in the New Year.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Gwynedd Council Draft Strategy for Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion

Appendix 2 - The Business Case