

CABINET CYNGOR GWYNEDD

A Report to a meeting of the Gwynedd Council Cabinet

Date: 28/6/2022
Title of Item: Performance Report of the Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Well-being
Cabinet Member: Councillor Dilwyn Morgan
Contact Officer: Aled Davies, Head of Adults, Health and Well-being Department

THE DECISION SOUGHT

To accept and note the information in the report.

THE REASON WHY A DECISION IS NEEDED

In order to ensure effective performance management.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update my fellow members on what has taken place in the areas within my remit as Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Well-being. This will include outlining the latest developments against pledges within the 2018-2023 Gwynedd Council Plan; the progress of performance measures; and the latest on the Department's financial situation.
- 1.2 I would like to remind you that all matters have already been discussed between me, the Statutory Director and a representation from the Adults, Health and Well-being Department.
- 1.3 Given the significant challenges that we continue to face in the field of care, I am pleased to be able to report that progress has been made recently on the Department's priority projects. It must be recognised that there are some projects that have not made the progress that we would have wanted for a variety of reasons, but I will ensure that the Department prioritises these areas over the period ahead.

2 GWYNEDD COUNCIL PLAN PROJECTS 2018-2023

- 2.1 Please see below an update on the priority projects. These priorities address the department's main risks. Projects are generally making progress, with measures put in place to mitigate the impact of any risks.

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- 2.2 An explanation is given on any action which has not made progress, explaining the reason why we have not achieved. I will provide an update on some of the other aspects of the project where there has been progress since the previous Cabinet Member, Dafydd Meurig, last reported to you.

A Suitable and Sustainable Care Provision for the future

- 2.3.1 We have not been able to open the Dementia unit in Llan Ffestiniog due to recruitment issues. Progress regarding recruitment will be provided in part 2.5 of this report. Local recruitment campaigns are continuing to enable the unit to be opened as soon as possible.
- 2.3.2 Though the work of developing Extra Care Housing in Pwllheli is going ahead as expected, there is a slippage to report in terms of trying to seek opportunities in other areas in the County. Specifically in terms of Dolgellau, we are currently unable to find a suitable location.
- 2.3.3 The Quality Assurance team has continued to support providers to sort out issues that were neglected during the pandemic, but the team has not been able to reach all Providers/Services due to a lack of capacity.
- 2.3.4 The work to identify the true cost of care continues. Work has been undertaken in the period since the end of March to look at the fees paid to Residential and Nursing Providers, and a report will be submitted to Cabinet on 28/6/22. We will continue to try to hold open discussions with Providers over the coming months, particularly with providers who refuse the Council's standard fees.
- 2.3.5 The fees problem is highlighted specifically when attempting to commission Nursing care. Most of the county's nursing homes now reject our standard fees and insist on higher fees. The situation is also detrimental to our residents in terms of the ability to offer an extensive choice of nursing care homes in their communities.
- 2.3.6 Since Councillor Dafydd Meurig reported in November, guidance has been received from legal experts on the options open to us as a Council in providing nursing care in-house in conjunction with the Health Board. We are looking at the Penrhos site and more widely. A Cabinet report will follow over the next few weeks on the issue.
- 2.3.7 Work has been completed on a number of our in-house homes to make them more suitable for the future, and to meet infection control requirements. Work has been completed at Cefn Rodyn in Dolgellau, Tan Y Marian in Pwllheli and Hafod Mawddach in Barmouth. This work will enable us to offer more bespoke care to persons with intensive physical needs and to persons with dementia. Work will be planned on other homes during 2022/23.

Redesigning our Care Services

- 2.4.1 The tender packs for re-designing the Domiciliary Care Service went out during April, and the tenders are in the process of being awarded. The tenders by geographical catchment area will be awarded during the summer, and the new model will be implemented subsequently. Providers will receive support and training throughout the period.

- 2.4.2 All posts within the new manual handling team have now been filled. The team will support the area teams by offering manual handling expertise for individuals to continue to live as independently as possible. We have also appointed two Occupational Therapy trainees which will mean we can develop the required future workforce.
- 2.4.3 Although there has been some delay with developing the plans for Canolfan Dolfeurig in Dolgellau due to planning difficulties regarding flooding risk, the work is proceeding. An amended time-scale will be in place shortly, and we can go out to consultation and update the area's residents. We have made use of other temporary resources in the Dolgellau area to ensure provision in the area.
- 2.4.4 It was reported last time that the Community Mental Health Hub in Pwllheli had reopened. For the younger cohort, we have set up well-being hubs for people up to the age of 25 in Caernarfon and Blaenau Ffestiniog. The service will be provided by Gisda. During 2022/23 a Community Resilience project will be launched to develop the hubs across the County, and to bring all the available support together in the local areas.
- 2.4.5 The work of equipping the area teams has continued, with work undertaken to share information across agencies. In addition, the teams have started to establish a procedure where any health or care enquiry reaches one point, to simplify matters for Gwynedd residents.

The workforce and recruitment to the care field

- 2.5.1 Staff recruitment and retention in the care field continues to be extremely challenging, and the shortage has resulted in the Department's inability to meet all the demand for care. This is across the Services, including dementia residential care and domiciliary care in a number of our communities. Although the priorities in the Council's Plan are progressing as expected, the problems with staff recruitment remain.
- 2.5.2 A recruitment officer has been appointed who co-ordinates the recruitment elements in Gwynedd, including continuing to work with WeCare Wales.
- 2.5.3 The campaigns that have taken place in specific local areas (for example Maesgeirchen and Blaenau Ffestiniog) have been successful, with 6 members of staff appointed in Maesgeirchen for Plas Hedd Home for example.
- 2.5.4 'One-off' funding was approved by the Cabinet during 2021/22 to promote immediate recruitment. The money was a valuable resource to be able to recruit immediately and buy time to deal with long-term funding issues.
- 2.5.5 The Welsh Government is committed to enabling providers to pay all care workers the Real Living Wage, and has provided funding for 2022/23. This is to be welcomed but there is a feeling that paying the Living Wage is no longer sufficient to retain experienced staff and attract new staff into the field. We are certain that a National Pay Structure is needed in the care field and we will continue with our efforts to ensure that this is one of our national priorities over the coming period.

3. PERFORMANCE

- 3.1 The main measure of the **Older People, Physical and Sensory Disabilities Service** is 'Did we achieve what matters?' to the individual who is receiving our services. As the effects of the pandemic have eased, the Service's performance has improved. The proportion of individuals who have indicated that we have fully addressed what mattered to them has risen from 66% to 83% on average between the 4 months up to 30/11/21 and the 4 months up to 31/3/22. The figure has remained stable so far in 2022/23. Of those reviewed during the 4 months to 31/3/22, only 5 individuals out of 256 (2%) indicated that we had not achieved what mattered to them at all. This is down from 5% in the 4 months to 30/11/21, which is encouraging. Please note that this measure does not include those individuals who are waiting for a care package to start.
- 3.2 There are a number of different reasons why we have not managed to achieve what matters to individual, but in order to try to improve and respond to gaps in provision, the emerging themes are also reported. Some of the themes include a delay in being able to assess and organise appropriate care to meet personal goals, stress on unpaid carers, reduced social opportunities, loss of confidence and having to move to a care home because of the complex nature of needs.
- 3.3 Data for the last 4 months of 2021/22 shows that **Learning Disabilities Service** has fully achieved what matters in 83% of reported cases, up from 74% in the previous 4 months. There were only two cases during the whole year where we had not achieved what matters at all. Performance has improved again during 2022/23 to date.
- 3.4 An analysis of the reasoning behind the data shows that the main reason why it was not possible to fully address what matters in each case was the impact COVID-19 restrictions were having on individuals. The opportunities available to individuals were limited as a result. Recently, the service has been able to move on to offer more day and respite services safely, restart some groups, and support individuals to go on holidays, etc. in line with their wishes.
- 3.5 The Cabinet Member reported last time that we do not have performance measures in place for the **Mental Health Service**, and that this is something that we need to address. This continues to be a frustration. The Service does not use an electronic information recording system, which hinders our ability to develop a suitable performance measure to measure our purpose, and to extract information in a timely manner. This is an integrated Service which is led by the Health Board and introducing changes to working methods is something that needs to be done together. A solution is needed soon so that we are in a position to have an overview of how effective the service is.
- 3.6 The purpose of the **Safeguarding Service** is to protect individuals who have support needs and are at risk of, or are, suffering abuse. The time it takes us to respond to a safeguarding report has improved – with an increase in the cases where we have managed to respond within 7 days, from 81% in the 4 months to 30/11/21, to 88% in the 4 months to 31/3/22. This pattern has continued over the first two months of 2022/23. One of the main barriers in terms of being able to respond promptly is that officers are waiting to receive information back from workers, and currently there is some slowness with those cases that have a connection with hospitals specifically. There have been staffing changes within

the team over recent months and work has been completed to change the reporting form and this is believed to contribute to more effective reporting and improvement in performance.

- 3.7 Since Councillor Dafydd Meurig last reported the situation regarding the number of people waiting for **Domiciliary Care** has deteriorated, with the percentage of hours we cannot meet rising to 11.2% by now. This is of great concern and it is seen that the situation is at its worst in the Llŷn, Eifionydd/North Meirionnydd areas. The situation is very difficult for individuals and their families and we currently have over 120 individuals on our waiting list. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank those families who support their loved-ones during this difficult time. I trust that the new domiciliary care arrangements will go some way to addressing the need through a culture change, and I will ensure that every effort is made to try to stabilise the market. This will include targeting specific areas when trying to recruit more staff.
- 3.8 Staff sickness levels have improved as the effects of the pandemic have eased (sickness levels in In-house residential homes down from 11.3% in January to 6.3% last week of May), but we need to be wary of the after-effects of Covid. Staff are tired and stress shows throughout the services, with many retiring or leaving the sector. It is important that we continue to support staff as much as we can, in pressing ahead with the recruitment agenda.
- 3.9 We have recently experienced difficulties in providing placements in in-house care homes as a result of staffing problems and the intensity of care the individual needs. The capacity rate of our Homes is lower than we would like it to be. In response to this, and in order to understand the extent of the problem and identify trends, we are in the process of establishing a procedure for reporting on care waiting lists for the Council's homes. As mentioned earlier, work is underway at the Homes to adapt the buildings so that dementia and physical needs can be addressed more intensively.
- 3.10 Since the last report, the performance of WCCIS (*Wales Community Care Information System*) has improved following attention by the Provider. The system has been purchased nationally and we, like most other authorities across Wales, are totally dependent on it to run day-to-day services. The issue of system performance continues to be addressed at the highest level and I will update you further of any developments. We are currently tied to the national contract, but I believe that we need to continue to consider our options carefully in the longer-term.
- 3.11 There are a number of the Department's support units (mainly in the **Business Service**) where there are no measures in place for challenging performance. It is a challenge to develop effective measures for some of the units that truly summarise their performance, because they support the front-line teams in a number of areas. I have discussed measures with the Department and the Corporate Director, and measures have been suggested that will begin to be measured over the coming months. I will be keeping an eye on these measures and will respond flexibly to ensure that we measure the performance of the whole Department effectively.

4. FINANCIAL SITUATION

- 4.1 Based on a review at the end of August 2021 the Department the Department anticipated an overspend of £1.370 million by the end of the 2021/22 financial year. As things worked out, the Department received £1.932 million of Social Care Pressures Grant from the Welsh Government. As a result of grants from Welsh Government to help with the pressures on the sector, the Department underspent by £68,000 by the end of the 2021/22 financial year.
- 4.2 There is a tendency for the first review of the financial year to reflect a financially challenging situation, as there was uncertainty at that time about various significant grants. This is no different for the coming year. The first funding review of the year will take place during August 2022, and I have concerns about the current situation and the challenge we face. The Department is aware that the encouraging financial performance of 2021/22 has been dependent on 'one-off' grants from Welsh Government, and that the outlook for 2022/23 remains extremely challenging.
- 4.3 As has been the case for some years now, significant one-off grants were received from the Government during 2021/22. Some came late in the day with little notice, and needed to be used by the end of March 2022. There are early indications that some New grants (e.g. RIF - Regional Integration Fund) are being planned for 3-5 years, which is encouraging. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our partners for their ideas and the collaboration in preparing to improve and to sustain the sector. It is key that additional resources are put into the sector on a permanent/long-term basis, so that some of the changes that really need to be made in the field can be funded. We as a Council will continue to emphasise to the Welsh Government the need for sustained investment in the sector.
- 4.3 The previous Cabinet Member reported in July 2021 that the Cabinet had reprofiled some of the main savings plans so that they are delivered in 2022/23. The Cabinet of 18 January 2022 re-profiled plans once again to 2023/24. This provided more time to ensure that new Models of Action were embedded within the teams.
- 4.5 At the end of 2021/22, £855k worth of the Department's savings had not been realised, which included 2021/22 and historical savings. In addition to this there is £100k worth of further savings target facing the Department in 2022/23. While £935k worth of savings have been slipped into 2023/24. Addressing these savings is going to be challenging given the significant work that continues to transform services and change the way of working. To ensure that we have the transformation facilitation resources needed to achieve this, there is an effort to use various sources of funding, specifically the RIF Grant (Regional Integration Fund) from the Welsh Government, which has replaced the ICF (Integrated Fund). Reaching the end of the journey in this respect is absolutely necessary to guarantee that the changes that are taking place are sustainable for the future.
- 4.6 As you are aware, the most challenging savings plans for the Department relate to managing the demand on our services. The ability to deliver these rely on the success of the work of transforming our care and health services, jointly with the Health Board. Achieving this is, of course, going to be even more challenging if we find that demand is increasing more than expected. The progress of this programme will be reported upon through the 'Redesigning our Care Services' Improvement Priority.

5. NEXT STEPS AND TIMETABLE

None to note.

6.1 Views of the Statutory Officers:

i. The Monitoring Officer:

No comments to add regarding propriety.

ii. Head of Finance:

I have collaborated with the author to prepare the financial aspects of this report and I am content that the report conveys a fair picture of the financial position of the Adults, Health and Well-being Department.

6.2 Views of the Local Member:

6.2.1 Not a local matter.

6.3 Results of Any Consultation:

6.3.1 None to note.