

PARTNERSHIP AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 10 April 2018

- PRESENT:** Councillor Gwilym O Jones (Chair)
- Councillors Glyn Haynes, K P Hughes, Vaughan Hughes, Alun Roberts, Dafydd Roberts, Margaret Murley Roberts and Nicola Roberts.
- Ms Anest G Frazer – The Church in Wales
Mr Keith Roberts – The Roman Catholic Church
- Councillor Llinos M Huws – Leader of the Council
- Councillor R Meirion Jones – Portfolio Holder – Education, Youth, Libraries & Culture.
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Chief Executive,
Head of Learning,
Senior Manager – Additional Learning Needs (ET),
Scrutiny Officer (GR),
Committee Officer (MEH).
- APOLOGIES:** Councillors Robert LI Jones and Robin Williams
- ALSO PRESENT:** Mr Arwyn Williams – Head of Learning
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The Chair referred that Mrs Delyth Molyneux, Head of Learning will be leaving the Authority at the end of this week. The Members of the Committee wished to express their appreciation to Mrs Molyneux for her services to the Authority and wished her well in the future.

The Chair welcomed Mr Arwyn Williams, the appointed Head of Learning to the meeting and wished him well in his post.

1 APOLOGIES

As noted above.

2 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None received.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 March, 2018 were confirmed.

4 ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS AND INCLUSION JOINT SERVICE

Submitted – a report by the Head of Learning on the new service for children and young people that came into force in September 2018.

The Head of Learning reported that an Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion Strategy between Gwynedd and Anglesey was established to replace the Special Educational Needs Joint Committee (Anglesey and Gwynedd). The Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion Strategy became operational in September 2016 and it was agreed that monitoring reports on the performance of the Strategy be reported to the Scrutiny Committee twice a year initially.

The Senior Manager – Additional Learning Needs reported that the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) legislation emphasises the need to place the pupil at the centre of every decision related to his/her education, aspirations and needs. She further said that Gwynedd and Anglesey Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion Service provides a comprehensive integrated service across the educational locations in both counties in order to :-

- Promote the development of schools at inclusive locations;
- Reduce the effect of ALN on outcomes for children and young people by improving skills and attainments;
- Provide an appropriate high-quality education for children and young people with ALN;
- Locate high-quality services locally;
- Consider individual aspirations and needs, and that each child and young person is centre to the service and intervention provided for him/her;
- Ensure skills of the highest quality within the central workforce and schools' workforce so as to improve the full ownership and inclusion of ALN within the school of both counties;
- Contribute to improving the quality of life and wellbeing by enriching the educational provision delivered;
- Reduce the cohort of children needing additional intervention because of ALN by improving inclusion within the education provision;
- Strengthen links and accountability for ALN across all strata of the provision model.

The Officer further reported that most of the work of the Specialist Team (other than aspects of work of Educational Psychologists, ALN and Inclusion Quality Officers, and the Welfare and Counselling Service) is organised through ALN and Inclusion Forums as a starting point. Any school can request input into the Forum in accordance with the Criteria by using the child's Individual Development Plan. In the case of children with acute and complex needs, a discussion about those needs is initiated through a County Moderation Panel. The Forums and the Panel act in accordance with the LA's Criteria for accessing and leaving the service. A key part of the Forums' and Panels role is to receive information on the way schools use the specialist services they receive, and whether they implement the recommendations proposed at classroom level. The Support Path for the ALN service was included within the report.

The Senior Management Team operates across both authorities and includes a Senior Inclusion Manager and Senior Additional Learning Needs Manager who are responsible for leading the proposed national developments (ALN legislation) as well as fully implementing the outcomes of the Gwynedd and Isle of Anglesey ALN and Inclusion Strategic Review. An Inclusive Education Leader has been appointed who is accountable for the day-to-day running and quality of the Behavior Support provision, from the early years to the end of Key Stage 4 with a Senior Educational Psychologist who is responsible for the professional supervision of the team of Psychologists. The Senior Manager – Additional Learning Needs further said that an Area ALN Quality Officer at both Counties to ensure that ALN quality is monitored within the schools and reporting to the Education Officers/Senior Management when appropriate. She further said that a training package, on different levels, has been afforded to schools.

The Committee considered the report and raised the following matters :-

- Questions were raised as to the process of reporting to scrutinise the ALN service. The Senior Manager – Additional Learning Needs responded that the Joint Service had expressed that they would expect a monitoring report being submitted to Scrutiny Committees of both counties twice a year initially and thereafter an Annual Report will be prepared.
- Questions were raised as to the level of the provision throughout the service for both authorities. The Senior Manager – Additional Learning Needs responded that the ratio of services will be 60% to Gwynedd Council and 40% to the Isle of Anglesey. However she noted that if a situation was to arise when a need for more ALN service on Anglesey, the service is able to be flexible.
- Clarification was sought as to what practical challenges have been encountered when establishing the new service. The Senior Manager – Additional Learning Needs responded that 115 staff from both Gwynedd and Isle of Anglesey have been incorporated into the service. She said that following the appointment of an ALN Quality Officer in both counties these Officers are able to visit schools and afford guidance and support to the schools staff and the child in respect of the ALN provision. She further said that schools must be confident that they are able to ask for support when required. Further clarification was sought as to how the service deals with the concerns of parents as to the provision afforded to a child who requires ALN support. The Head of Learning responded that it is a challenge for parents to accept that their child may need support through the ALN service. The service provides an Individual Development Plan which incorporates the assessment of the school, parents and service. Early and gradual intervention is essential to reduce the child's difficulties later on in their education.
- Clarification was sought as to the level of training afforded to teaching staff within the schools. The Head of Learning responded that training is afforded to staff within the schools to attend courses over of period of time to specialise in different ALN requirements of a particular child within that school i.e. a child with speech or sight impairment.
- Questions were raised whether there are adequate Educational Psychologists available to be able to afford the specialised services to the needs of ALN children and young people as some parents have expressed that the system of receiving support seems to be taking time and an early intervention is being lost.

It was also expressed that parents have indicated that inadequate hours are provided by Psychologists within schools. The Head of Learning responded that this Authority has been spending much higher on the service of Educational Psychologist over the years. Clarification was sought as to the amount of hours a child would receive by an Educational Psychologist. The Senior Manager – Additional Learning Needs responded that an Educational Psychologist would provide services on a weekly basis of around an hour or two hours, but she emphasised that a child would have a Teaching Assistant who would have received training to assist the child with his/her learning needs. She further said that Teachers within the school are afforded specialist training to address the needs of a child with ALN.

- Clarification was sought as to how the performance of staff is monitored in respect of the ALN service. The Senior Manager – Additional Learning Needs responded that the Quality Officer attends schools on the Island and gives support and guidance to staff on the services afforded through the ALN service. She noted that ‘Drop-In’ surgeries are to be convened during the next school term to afford staff and parents the opportunity to view the ALN service and to ask questions of professional staff. The Head of Learning said that a questionnaire will be sent to schools to gauge the ALN service and the data will be afforded to this Scrutiny Committee in due course. She noted that it is crucial that the method of collecting data electronically needs to be simplified so as to reduce duplication. Members of the Committee considered that a questionnaire should be afforded to parents of children that receive and require ALN to gauge their experiences and comments and that the data should be afforded to this Scrutiny Committee.
- Questions were raised as to the increase in children receiving home tuition. The Head of Learning responded that the numbers choosing to educate their children at home are increasing nationally with 39 at present receiving home tuition on Anglesey. The service has reviewed procedures in response to new national guidelines with the Welfare Service visiting parents on an annual basis (she noted that the new legislation stipulates that the education service may only visit parents annually).
- The Leader of the Council said that she was the Chair of the Special Educational Needs Joint Committee before the establishment of the Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion Joint Service and noted that Anglesey has a free and inclusive service for families ‘Teulu Môn’ which acts as the first point of contact for all Children, Families and Professionals in accessing information, advice and assistance relating to Children or the families of children from the age of 0 – 25 years. The Leader referred to the ‘Llechan Lân’ scheme and it is noted within the report that the facility in Holyhead will open after Easter; she questioned if this facility was to remain open through the newly established Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion Joint Service. The Head of Learning responded that the facility targets Key Stage 3 and 4 and each pupil will be observed in the mainstream educational provision before moving into the ‘Llechan Lân’ provision and specific plans will be put in place before the pupil returns to school when the pupil is ready.
- Questions were raised as to whether the Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion Strategy between Gwynedd and Anglesey will need to be reviewed.

The Head of Learning responded that an Additional Learning Needs Board between Gwynedd and Anglesey will meet every school term to review the service offered to the children and young people of both Counties.

The Portfolio Holder for Education, Youth, Libraries & Culture wished to thank the Officers and Members for their comments and the scrutinising of the item before the meeting. He expressed that the newly established ALN Inclusion Strategy between Gwynedd and Anglesey needs time to establish and an in-depth report which will include data of the services offered by the Strategy will be afforded to the Scrutiny Committee within six months.

It was RESOLVED : -

- **To note the establishment of the new Service in partnership with Gwynedd Council;**
- **To note that the new Service conforms to the Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion Strategy;**
- **To accept the report on the Service's performance and that an in-depth report which will include data be afforded to this Committee within six months.**

ACTION : To note the comments of the Committee as noted above and to receive an update report within six months.

5 WORK PROGRAMME

Submitted – a report by the Scrutiny Officer on the Committee's Work Programme to June 2019.

It was RESOLVED to note the Work Programme to June 2019.

ACTION : As noted above.

**COUNCILLOR G O JONES
CHAIR**