

ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL	
Report to:	Executive Committee
Date:	14th March 2016
Subject:	Reviewing Anglesey and Gwynedd Collaborative Arrangements in Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion
Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Kenneth Hughes
Head of Service:	Delyth Molyneux
Report Author: Phone Number: E-mail:	Delyth Molyneux 2916 dxmed@ynysmon.gov.uk
Local Members:	Relevant to all elected members

A – Recommendation(s) and Reason(s)
<p>Both authorities are in agreement that the Gwynedd and Anglesey SEN Joint-committee arrangements need to be reviewed in order to face the new challenges in light of new legislation and diminishing budgets. It is also agreed that there is a need to reduce the number of central officers in the field in improving direct accountability for both counties in terms of the specialist services offered to schools and parents.</p> <p>The permission of elected members is requested to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with Gwynedd officers and the SEN JC to remodel the current workforce within the SEN JC, with a view to adopting a new staffing structure between September 2016 – April 2017. • Collaborate with Gwynedd officers and the SEN JC to remodel the workforce currently within the inclusion service by September 2017. • Plan the new partnership to provide savings of 10% or approximately £500,000 over two years, to be fully implemented by 2018/9. • Plan a revised governance and accountability structure between both authorities, to be presented to the Executive Committee by June 2016. • Plan a transitional period of dual governance between the current SEN JC and the revised Anglesey/Gwynedd ALN Partnership. • Share information on the proposed model with schools, parents and stakeholders during the 2016 summer term. • Action the revised commission and governance arrangements by September 2017.

Reasons

There has been a history of effective collaboration between Gwynedd and Anglesey Councils in Special Education, and in light of ALN (Additional Learning Needs) legislative changes from 2017/8 and the financial challenges it has been agreed that it is timely to review future partnership arrangements in ALN and Inclusion.

The services in question include the following:

- Additional Learning Needs – strategy, policy, procedures, criteria and support resources;
- Inclusion service including promoting positive behaviour; out of school education including Pupil Referral Units and Home Education, Children in Care, Young Carers;
- Education Welfare Service;
- Support for vulnerable/sick children;
- Children and Young People Safeguarding Arrangements;
- Counselling Service;
- EAL (English as an Additional Language).

Why collaborate?

Raising Standards

A new arrangement will empower the work of both counties in terms of support, challenge and intervention in order to raise standards among additional learning needs and vulnerable pupils in our schools. A review of the ALN and inclusion arrangements will empower educational outcomes for our children and young people across both counties, and ensure the availability of skills and expertise for staff in our schools to support learners to achieve their potential.

A Strong Voice

One service across both counties would provide a stronger voice on a regional and national level particularly in ensuring Welsh Language and bilingual expertise and resources of the highest quality in ALN and Inclusion. It would also mean that both authorities are well placed to be flexible in responding to any further development which may arise.

The Welsh Language

Collaboration can ensure an appropriate focus on Welsh language and bilingual provision. Collaboration would strengthen the new partnership's ability to select bilingual applicants of good calibre and for both counties to provide National guidance in the field of Welsh language medium service provision.

Expertise

Collaboration would allow both Councils to ensure capacity and access to staff with the appropriate level of expertise where there are shortages in specialist fields. It would also facilitate succession planning for posts. In addition, full collaboration could ensure accountability of services through appropriate support, challenge and intervention to ensure quality services.

Resilience

Collaboration will contribute towards ensuring the increased resilience of services in moving forward. Bringing individual elements together would offer:

- an opportunity to shadow responsibilities;
- sharing of expertise and capacity across both counties where there are shortages in specialist areas;
- developing resilience to reduce the risk of ineffective services;
- filling gaps during absences; and
- unexpected additional demands on specific elements.

Effectiveness and efficiency

The collaboration arrangement will ensure improvement in the effectiveness of the services in question. The aim is to provide efficiency savings of around 10% or £500,000 over a two year period in the current ALN expenditure in the field, focusing on the management and administration levels, which would mean a reduction in the number of officers and joint-sharing of posts between both counties, functions which are currently duplicated.

B – Which other options did you consider and what were your reasons for refusing

them and or for choosing this option?

Consideration was given to continuing with the current arrangement, but this was refused as the current arrangement will not meet the additional requirements in light of the new ALN legislation. In addition, the current arrangement will not ensure the appropriate level of direct accountability for both authorities in terms of the effectiveness and efficiency of the provision.

Consideration was given to not working in partnership with Gwynedd Council, but that model is not sustainable as it does not allow appropriate levels of professional bilingual expertise where there are shortages in specialist fields. Also, it did not provide consistency in the quality of provision, resilience, reliability nor efficiency in the fields of ALN and inclusion.

C – For what reason is this a decision for the Executive Committee?

Executive Committee approval is sought in accordance with the recommendations and permission is requested to move forward with planning a revised partnership with a view to presenting final recommendations to the committees by June 2016 with the intention of implementing Phase One from September 2016 and Phase Two by April and September 2017.

D – Is this decision in keeping with the policy approved by the full Council?

Yes

E – Is this decision within the budget approved by the Council?

Yes

F – With whom did you consult?		What were their comments?
1	Chief Executive / Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) (mandatory)	
2	Finance / Section 151 (mandatory)	
3	Legal/Monitoring Officer (mandatory)	
4	Human Resources (HR)	
5	Property	
6	Information Communication Technology (ICT)	
7	Scrutiny	
8	Local Members	
9	Any other external body/bodies	

G – Risks and any mitigatory steps (if relevant)		
1	Economic	
2	Anti-poverty	
3	Crime and Disorder	
4	Environmental	
5	Equalities	
6	Outcome Agreements	
7	Other	

H – Appendices:
Appendix 1: 'Reviewing Anglesey and Gwynedd Collaborative Arrangements for Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion'

I – Background Papers (please contact the Report's Author for any further information):

REVIEWING ANGLESEY AND GWYNEDD COLLABORATIVE ARRANGEMENTS FOR ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS AND INCLUSION

PART 1 – CONTEXT

There has been a history of effective collaboration between Gwynedd and Anglesey Councils in Special Education, and in light of SEN legislative changes from 2017/8 and financial challenges it has been agreed that it is timely to review future partnership arrangements in SEN and Inclusion.

Both authorities are in agreement that the Gwynedd and Anglesey SEN Joint-committee arrangements need to be reviewed in order to face the new challenges in light of new legislation and diminishing budgets. It is also agreed that there is a need to reduce the number of central officers in the field in improving direct accountability for both counties in terms of the specialist services offered to schools and parents.

This outline paper seeks to summarise the discussion in suggesting some possible benefits, in the hope that elected members will agree to develop the partnership and review the current arrangements.

The services in question include the following:

- Additional Learning Needs – strategy, policy, procedures, criteria and support resources;
- Inclusion service including promoting positive behaviour; out of school education including Pupil Referral Units and Home Education, Children in Care, Young Carers;
- Education Welfare Service;
- Support for vulnerable/sick children;
- Children and Young People Safeguarding Arrangements;
- Counselling Service;
- EAL (English as an Additional Language).

Governance

In the context of the services noted in this paper, there are many possible management and governance models that would meet professional officer, elected member and scrutiny level requirements. There is certainly an agreement to ensure the equal participation of both Councils.

It is anticipated that there are advantages in establishing a joint governance arrangement for the ALN and Inclusion Service across both counties to ensure:

- the strategic priorities of both counties in the learning needs and inclusion educational fields are realised;
- clarity in terms of accountability in both counties' Corporate arrangements through regular reporting on performance and efficiency to the scrutiny committees, the Executive Committee and Full Councils as appropriate;
- ensuring effective, efficient and bilingual services which will provide value for money.

It is anticipated that a dual governance arrangement will need to be in place for the transitional period between the SEN JC and the new Anglesey and Gwynedd ALN partnership.

An inter-authority agreement would be drawn up to establish the partnership, following best practice guidance in the field to include agreement on a range of matters, with the main ones being identified as follows:

- Partnership functions

- Governance arrangements
- Establishing a business plan
- Resource and financial commitments
- Establishing service level agreements, operational protocols
- Performance management, reporting and Scrutiny arrangements
- Authorities' roles in agreed areas i.e. personnel, legal, pay and pensions
- Staffing
- Dispute resolution mechanisms
- Nature of the commitment to the partnership and its discontinuation if required

Why collaborate?

Raising Standards

A new arrangement will empower the work of both counties in terms of support, challenge and intervention in order to raise standards among additional learning needs and vulnerable pupils in our schools. A review of the ALN and inclusion arrangements will empower educational outcomes for our children and young people across both counties, and ensure the availability of skills and expertise for staff in our schools to support learners to achieve their potential.

A Strong Voice

One service across both counties would provide a stronger voice on a regional and national level particularly in ensuring Welsh Language and bilingual expertise and resources of the highest quality in ALN and Inclusion. It would also mean that both authorities are well placed to be flexible in responding to any further development which may arise.

The Welsh Language

Collaboration can ensure an appropriate focus on Welsh language and bilingual provision. Collaboration would strengthen the new partnership's ability to select bilingual applicants of good calibre and for both counties to provide National guidance in the field of Welsh language medium service provision.

Expertise

Collaboration would allow both Councils to ensure capacity and access to staff with the appropriate level of expertise where there are shortages in specialist fields. It would also facilitate succession planning for posts. In addition, full collaboration could ensure accountability of services through appropriate support, challenge and intervention to ensure quality services.

Resilience

Collaboration will contribute towards ensuring the increased resilience of services in moving forward. Bringing individual elements together would offer:

- an opportunity to shadow responsibilities;
- sharing of expertise and capacity across both counties where there are shortages in specialist areas;
- developing resilience to reduce the risk of ineffective services;
- filling gaps during absences; and
- unexpected additional demands on specific elements.

Effectiveness and efficiency

The collaboration arrangement will ensure improvement in the effectiveness of the services in question. The aim is to provide efficiency savings of around 10% or £500,000 over a two year period in the current ALN expenditure in the field, focusing on the management and administration levels, which would mean a reduction in the number of officers and joint-sharing of posts between both counties, functions which are currently duplicated.

Reorganisation

Establishing a new partnership would place both Councils in a useful position if a decision is made to reorganise or move towards further collaboration and joint-provision in future.

THE PRIORITIES OF BOTH COUNTIES IN ALN AND INCLUSION

Gwynedd Priorities – 2015-18 Improvement Plan

1. Continue to develop and implement current authority strategies to improve school attendance.
2. Implement the ALN strategy – ensuring that children and young people (between 0-25) with additional learning needs receive the best support to make progress in line with their abilities through the provision of cost effective services ensuring their safety.

Anglesey 2015-2017 Improvement Plan Priorities

- Reducing the barriers to attainment resulting from learning, behavioural and social challenges.
 - Developing the authority's Inclusion Strategy
 - Reviewing ALN procedures in light of proposed legislative changes.
- Improving primary and secondary attendance rates.

The necessary actions can be summarised as follows:

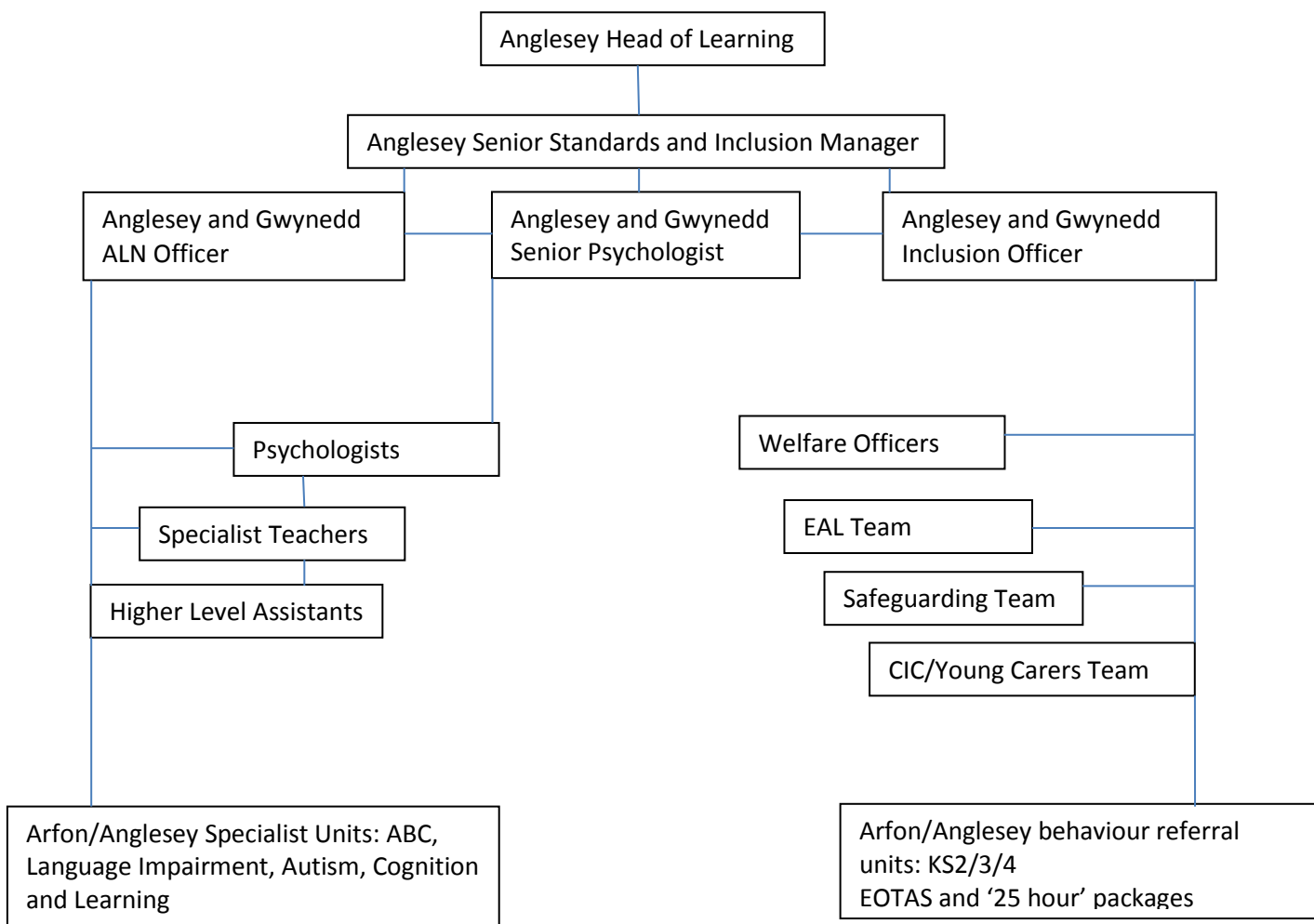
ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS (ALN)

- The need to redefine the service in light of the 2016/17 legislation.
- Redefine roles within current services – operational aspects and accountability for standards and efficiency.
- Formulating a schools training and support strategy for ALN – developing a training programme/CPD to include targeting expertise, upskilling of school staff and specific support packages

INCLUSION

- Continue to develop and implement current strategies to improve school attendance – reduce the number of schools with attendance in quartiles 3 and 4.
- More specific redefining of welfare officer roles – attendance, welfare, and also EAL teachers, EOTAS.
- Safeguarding – need to ensure consistency in leadership, training and action. Reviewing safeguarding arrangements through ensuring that policies and procedures are clearly understood by all individuals working within education and that they are regularly updated and disseminated.
- Reviewing inclusion services with a particular focus on Behavioural Support provision and supporting behaviour within and outside of schools, including referral units and packages for learners at risk of becoming NEET.

Future staffing structure for Anglesey



There will be Specialist Teams for the following areas:

- Cognition and Learning
- Behaviour
- Medical and Physical
- Sensory
- Communication and Interaction
- EOTAS

All Specialist Teams will have an admission panel, including a supervisory lead psychologist:

- Admission/exit criteria
- Provision
- School guidance and training
- Specialist teacher(s) placement and management
- Higher level assistant(s) placement and management
- Tracking, reporting and quality

Next Steps

In order to move forward the permission of elected members is requested to:

- Collaborate with Gwynedd officers and the SEN JC to remodel the current workforce within the SEN JC, with a view to adopting a new staffing structure between September 2016 – April 2017.
- Collaborate with Gwynedd officers and the SEN JC to remodel the workforce currently within the inclusion service by September 2017.
- Plan the new partnership to provide savings of 10% or approximately £500,000 over two years, to be fully implemented by 2018/9.
- Plan a revised governance and accountability structure between both authorities, to be presented to the Executive Committee by June 2016.
- Plan a transitional period of dual governance between the current SEN JC and the revised Anglesey/Gwynedd ALN Partnership.
- Share information on the proposed model with schools, parents and stakeholders during the 2016 summer term.
- Action the revised commission and governance arrangements by September 2017.