

Memo: Towards a Sustainable and Thriving Future for the Music Service

1. Introduction

1.1. **General Background**

Carmarthenshire Music Service (CMS) is considered a highly regarded and valued service, both within the county and nationally - and is currently enjoying an upward trajectory in terms of its UK and European profile.

Elements of the service are **sector leading**, as testified by a number of outstanding programmes of study that have been implemented over the last few years. This is well exemplified by the performance of Côr Merched Sir Gâr who, in July 2017, came a close second in the prestigious Eurovision European Choir of the Year competition in Riga, Latvia. The comments of John Rutter, one of the esteemed judges, are worthy of note:

“A beautifully varied programme from a choir of impeccable technical accomplishment and complete involvement in the sense and meaning of the music and the texts.... For me, a set of performances only a millimetre away from a win...”

In September 2017, the County Orchestra was invited to take part in an international project which culminated in the performance of a new commission entitled 'Transatlantic Dance' at the United Nations International School (UNIS), New York City, USA. At the final workshop session, John Latimer (Director of Music at UNIS) said:

"Thank you for coming to UNIS. As a music school we are humbled by your discipline, your passion and your professionalism"

2018/19 also augers to be a successful season, with a large variety of domestic concerts planned, involving primary and secondary school pupils from across the county. This programme of study will once again include the ground-breaking CMS Junior Proms which is one of the largest Primary School music festivals in the country, involving over 2000 Key Stage 2 pupils in four concerts.

Carmarthenshire's local aspirations for Music are ambitious, a view which enjoys widespread support. The Service aims to be innovative and push the boundaries of professional practice, so that as many as possible of our children and young people can derive benefit from quality peripatetic tuition which, in turn, dovetails with, and augments, the new school curriculum – both in formal and informal contexts. Further detail pertaining to the Departmental stance on Music's contribution to children and young peoples' development can be found in **Appendix I**. Recent and current successes have provided further confidence in the Service's potential, whilst also propagating aspirations.

Developing the service as described is potentially tempered by a very challenging fiscal landscape. The Music Service is working hard to surmount these challenges, by the twin approach of cutting costs and increasing income. Though a simple formula, it's more difficult to put into practice – though gains in both components have been achieved of late (see 3.3 below).

The essence of this paper is therefore to outline how standards can be maintained and enhanced, how more learners can derive benefit from musical tuition and education, whilst also balancing the books.

1.2. **National Picture**

There are many significant challenges nationally. Pan-Wales, we are now witnessing significant reductions in Service Level Agreement (SLA) purchasing as a direct result of rate increases and contract changes. However, despite stringent financial pressures on Music Services, the role of Music in the curriculum is being further consolidated:

- In the new Curriculum for Wales (Successful Futures report 2015);
- Furthermore, there are unequivocal national arguments for the continued longevity of Local Authority Music Services:
 - In March 2015, a task and finish group was commissioned by the then Minister for Education and Skills, Huw Lewis AM, to consider the provision of Music services and to develop proposals for ensuring that, despite the difficult financial climate, local authorities can continue to deliver high quality services for learners across Wales. It was made clear in the report and the Welsh Government response that local authority music services in Wales should provide “*high quality, affordable instrumental and vocal tuition in all our schools...and [provide] support for school music departments and non-specialist practitioners to deliver the curriculum*”.
 - Carmarthenshire Music Service is part of the Welsh Government Music Services Consultation Group which was set up in April 2018. The group has been convened to explore the utilisation of £2m Welsh Government additional funding over the next two years. During these sessions the WLGA has also outlined a possible future funding model for Music Services in Wales. This would depend on Welsh Government funding from three Ministerial budgets and from Local Government, realising a total financial profile of around £4.8m.
 - Taro'r Tant / Hitting the Right Note Report (launched 14.6.18) - This independent report was initiated after a public poll was held in the summer of 2016 asking for suggestions for the next investigation for the *Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee*. The public response was overwhelmingly in favour of an inquiry into the funding for, and access to, music education. A significant amount of evidence provided in the report recognises the important work that is being carried out by a number of leading music services in Wales in the development of Music Education. That said, one of the report's recommendations has stated that an arms-length National Body, with a distinct regional footprint be considered.

2. Proactive Approach by Carmarthenshire Music Service

CMS is rising to the challenge – striving towards, and achieving, high standards - whilst also managing the declining resource base. This endeavour, though, is becoming more challenging over time. A summary of the service’s provision, its recent accomplishments and an appraisal of its current status are shown in tabulations below:

2.1. Carmarthenshire Music Service in a nutshell

Table 1: Summary of Provision

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On a day to day basis, Carmarthenshire Music Service (CMS) provides peripatetic music support to 79 schools across the county. • Over 5000 pupils receive tuition across a range of instrumental and vocal tuition, delivered by 32 staff (24 FTE) • Statutory curriculum support is provided at Key Stage 2 in 7 schools • Performing opportunities are offered across all Key Stages, with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 11 Junior ensembles rehearsing termly, culminating in the annual Junior Proms at the end of the summer term ➤ 3 Intermediate ensembles rehearsing weekly, culminating in the annual Intermediate Festival ➤ 5 Senior Ensembles rehearsing termly, culminating in the annual Senior Music festival |
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2.2. Recent and Ongoing Successes and Highlights

Table 2: Recent performance highlights 2016-2018

2016

- Symphony Hall, Birmingham (July 2016) – Music for Youth Regional Finals – Secondary Schools Girls' Choir and Senior Orchestra
- Royal Albert Hall, London (November 2016) – Music for Youth Proms - Secondary Schools Girls' Choir
- BBC Radio Wales outside Broadcast (December 2016): Carmarthenshire Music Service Brass Ensemble

2017

- Côr Cymru (February 2017): Carmarthenshire Secondary Schools Girls' Choir
 - Overall Welsh choir of the year (all choir categories)
 - Welsh youth choir of the year
- Eurovision Choir of the Year (July 2017) - Côr Merched Sir Gâr – Awarded Second Place
- Senior Orchestra Tour to New York (September 2017) World premier performance at the United Nations International School
- National Assembly For Wales Carol Concert, Cardiff (December 2017) Music coordination by CMS of the event which included performances by Côr Merched Sir Gâr and the County Senior Brass Ensemble
- S4C's Carols from Llandudno (December 2017) - Côr Merched Sir Gâr
- Very laudable Junior, Intermediate and Senior Proms festivals, playing every evening to sellout crowds

2018

- Symphony Hall, Birmingham (July 2018) – Music for Youth Regional Finals – Côr Merched Sir Gâr, County Wind Band and Carmarthenshire Youth Jazz Orchestra
- Llangollen International Eisteddfod (July 2018) - Côr Merched Sir Gâr

2.3 Future Plans

Table 3: Forward Thinking

• Therapeutic Music

From September 2018 Carmarthenshire Music Service will be delivering weekly support to pupils at Ysgol Heol Goffa in Llanelli. Initially, pupils will be given access to percussion lessons working individually and in small groups. Pupils will be taught through a new, bespoke curriculum, allowing them to focus on a range of skills such communication and motor development with Music Service staff. We hope to integrate the Heol Goffa pupils with our Key Stage 2 performers ready for the 2019 Junior Proms in the Ffwrnes Theatre, Llanelli. Once established, it is hoped that this pilot scheme could be offered to pupils at the Elfed Unit at Q.E High School and the Garreg Llwyd Unit at Ysgol Bro Dinefwr.

• Composition Initiative

During the 2018-2019 academic year Carmarthenshire Music Service hopes to launch a new Key Stage 3, 4 and 5 composing initiative that will draw on professional talent from the music industry. Three workshops have been proposed: *Folk Music* – to be led by Lowri Evans who is currently championed by BBC Radio 2; *Pop Music* – to be led by three former Music Service pupils who are now performing as successful vocal group and *Classical Music* – to be led by Tom Davoren and Emily Wright, who are both working as professional composers writing music for Brass Bands, Orchestras, film and television across the world.

• Extended Performing Opportunities

Following recent successful tours in Riga and New York, the Music Service is currently discussing several potential performing opportunities / cultural exchanges. Côr Merched Sir Gâr has been asked to perform in a concert in Patagonia and the county orchestra has received an invite to return to the USA to perform at the world-famous Carnegie Hall in New

York. Carmarthenshire Music Service is also investigating the potential of a joint orchestra tour/ cultural exchange with Ceredigion Music Service to Japan in 2020.

3. Realising the Vision and Service Challenges

As alluded to earlier, there are a number of issues to surmount to ensure that the CMS direction of travel is upheld and facilitated, not least the financial situation.

3.1. SWOT analysis of the Service

Table 3: Concise Appraisal of the Service	
<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elements of Sector Leading Practice identified • Rising profile and ambassadorial role for Carmarthenshire, both nationally and internationally • Thriving county ensembles and series of proms and concerts • Service highly regarded by schools and parents • High levels of participation and support 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fragile income model almost wholly reliant on buy in from schools • Due to budgetary pressures, schools cutting back quicker than the service can react • Historical Volatility in buy-back from many schools [points above being addressed – see 3.3.2 below] • Need for concerted succession planning over the next few years • Provision offered to all schools, entailing that rurality and a number of small schools create time and cost demands in terms of transport, thus creating negative economies of scale
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New opportunities for Music in the emerging curriculum for Wales and local curriculum • Côr Merched Sir Gâr invited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Patagonia (2019) ○ Britain’s Got Talent (2018/19) • County Orchestra invited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ New York (2019) ○ Japan (2020) • Develop a wider range of support for disadvantaged pupils and those with ALN, including areas such as music therapy at designated units across the county e.g. Heol Goffa, Canolfan Elfed, Garreglwyd etc. 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in school budgets • Being able to maintain standards....and • Being able to maintain a wide variety of instrumental and vocal tuition.....with a declining resource and staffing base

3.2. Financial Situation

Therefore, despite recent successes, the Music Service has been under **intense financial pressure** and experienced a shortfall of **£169,127.04** for 2017/18. **Between 2015/16 and 2017/18 there has been a £246,770 decrease in buy-back of tuition from schools**, due to budgetary pressures etc.

Table 4: A summary of Music Service budget:

Element of Finance Model (2017/18)	Cost / Value (£)
Staffing (Including Recharges)	1,093,976.46
Premises Related Costs	4,238.84
Transport Related Costs (Including Staff Travel)	76,778.22
Other Expenditure (Including projects and Activities)	27,430.17
Central Recharges	1,941.41
SLA Income	-855,803.50
Grants and other income	-78,107.56

Table 5: Comparative Information [2017-2018]:

County	SLA Rate (£ per hour)	Core Funding (£)
Carmarthenshire	57.00	Currently covering the CMS shortfall
Flintshire	53.20	Not disclosed
Wrexham	46.00	Core funding c. third of total (commensurate to over 300,000 for CMS)
Swansea	29.50 - 40.00 sliding scale	123,000
Bridgend	37.23	Not disclosed
Neath Port Talbot	37.00	Not disclosed
Gwent	33.50 instrumental; 49.00 curriculum support	c. 340,000 (amassed from different settlements from each authority)
Caerphilly	30.00	545,000

3.3. Measures to secure better financial stability

Service managers have been working hard to address the deficit, whilst also striving to maintain and surpass previous standards. By working on identified weaknesses, a range of strategies have been / are in the process of being enacted:

3.3.1. Cutting Costs (Table 6)

Component	Steps Taken in 2017/18	Further proposed Measures
Restructure to Save	Staff Restructure From April 2018: - drums/guitar team c.£5,700 (0.4 FTE)	Further restructure From September 2018: - vocal team c. £36,900 (1 FTE) confirmed - management restructure c.£31,800 (1 FTE) confirmed From January 2019: - vocal team c. £8,200 (1 FTE) - woodwind team approx. £10,000 (1 FTE)

Re-specify to Save	<p>Weekly rehearsals to half termlies Unintended consequences experienced – less pupils enrolling and a dip in standards at intermediate level</p> <p>Staffing Issues Work / life balance became distorted for a number of staff as they worked 'six day' weeks throughout the year</p>	<p>Reverse decision and find £18,000 to re-instate due to loss of pupils and dip in standards</p> <p>Staff morale will improve as we return to a normal working structure and extra-curricular programme of events</p>
Invest to Save	Develop therapeutic provision Income generated £1000	Further staff training Approx. £500
Collaborate to Save		<p>Provide cross-border service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - developing a cost-effective rate may prove problematic - Could alleviate overstaffing as opposed to financial year SLA (which currently create staffing surpluses)

3.3.2 Increasing Income (Table 7)

Component	Steps Taken in 2017/18	Further proposed Measures
Restructure to Save	N/A	N/A
Re-specify to Save	<p>Review of SLA Buy back model – secure all SLAs back by due date</p> <p>45% of SLA contracts were returned by the deadline of 31st March 2018</p> <p>Any schools outstanding as of 31/03/18 were billed the 'status quo'</p> <p>A reduction of £59,000 in SLA 'buy back' predicted for 2018 compared to a reduction of £127,000 in the previous year</p> <p>Review Charging policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Encourage all schools to adopt a peripatetic music charging policy <p>Additional burdens on parental contributions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - May exclude disadvantaged learners - Some schools oppose charging parents for instrumental tuition - FSM pupils could be supported by PDG funding 	<p>Charge for, and review frequency of, county rehearsals</p> <p>Could yield £45K</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some families unable to pay, though could be supported via PDG

Invest to Save	New reporting system - Frees up 800 hours of private staff time Academic Year SLA & incentivizing early return of SLAs	Automation of other processes could be subject to TIC support Develop Composition Workshops
Collaborate to Save	Curriculum Diversification - Offer schools a curriculum package (whole class teaching of statutory music curriculum) - Limited take-up to date Profile, Marketing and Sponsorship - May generate more support -Limited income generation Friends and Supporters' Group - Key lifeline re repair and maintenance of county instruments - Limited income generation	

Note: Possible increase of SLA from £57 to £59/hour - discounted as an option as:

- Budgets of sole client (schools) are under pressure
- Already one of the highest hourly rates in Wales
- over 15% drop off in SLAs experienced in 2016/17
- a further decrease of approx. £59,000 in 'buy back' anticipated in 2017/18

3.3.3. Predicted Trajectory and Ongoing Shortfall

Whilst cost cutting measures are more concrete, methods of increasing income are more speculative and potentially more volatile, therefore it is difficult to definitively quantify the sum total of the tabulated actions at this time, other than to stress that all these options are being actively pursued. Some of these actions may not be palatable to all stakeholders, as exemplified by our main challenges.

However, we **estimate and speculate** that, with continued support, the shortfall for the Music Service will be significantly reduced. At the time of writing, there are a large number of variables which cannot be definitively quantified e.g. costs relating to the early release of staff, potential windfall from Welsh Government etc. It is clear that a national framework and funding structure for Music Services in Wales will be in place by 2020-2021 which will significantly alter the landscape. In the intervening period, we would respectfully request that members consider maintaining support for the provision and development of the Music Service as described in the paper.

4. Next Steps

- Take further steps (as outlined)
- Receive Corporate steer on direction of travel and viability of service

5. Concluding comments

This report celebrates a great year for CMS; addresses the fiscal challenge proactively; recommends constructive ways forward and is presented to colleagues and Elected Members as food for thought, with a view to collectively securing a bright future for musical education in our county. Your support, advice and guidance would be much appreciated.

The role of Music in the Curriculum- a Carmarthenshire view, within the national context

- We are firmly of the view that Music is an integral component of a good education - as we strive to ensure that our children and young people develop holistically: are well educated, well qualified and become well rounded lifelong learners.
- The emerging new curriculum for Wales, as described in the Successful Futures Report (Donaldson 2015) places the Aesthetic & Creative curriculum centre stage as one of the six areas of learning and experience. *'Through the Expressive arts Area of Learning and Experience, schools and teachers can encourage children and young people to develop their creative appreciation and talent and their artistic and performance skills. The expressive arts provide opportunities to explore thinking, refine, and communicate ideas, engaging thinking, imagination and senses creatively. They also promote exploration of issues of personal and cultural identity. Engagement with the expressive arts requires application, perseverance and close attention to detail, capacities that have benefits across learning more widely'* (Donaldson 2015).
- We see music as integral to our interpretation of the new curriculum as expressed in our emerging **Local Curriculum Entitlement** and **Pupil Offer** – appreciating, composing, making, and performing music are all considered intrinsically valuable and can contribute to pupil wellbeing. We are of the view that Carmarthenshire learners can cultivate, through Music, a deeper understanding of their cultural heritage as proud citizens of Wales and the World. Our unique cultural heritage in Wales, as exemplified by enthusiastic participation in school/Urdd Eisteddfodau competitions, are strongly supported by the Music Service.
- Music can foster a 'sense of place', nurture identity, a sense of belonging and pride; foster empathy with cultural diversity and be a window to a wide variety of musical genres. Furthermore, it can nurture an understanding of how creativity and aesthetics influence, and are influenced by, other spheres of creativity such as art, poetry and lyrics.
- We wish to see 'Music for all' as a watchword for the service going forward therefore, in addition to peripatetic tuition for our current learners, we wish to reach other pupils and develop areas of expertise such as Music Therapy for pupils in our special units and settings. Furthermore, the MS Curriculum review is an evolving curriculum support package, targeting mainstream curriculum delivery of the statutory national curriculum and thus, potentially, reaching ever more learners.
- Music a vehicle to promote a number of valuable attributes:
 - Knowledge
 - Conceptual understanding
 - Competencies e.g. perfecting a performance
 - Skills – e.g. fine motor skills
 - Personal attributes and characteristics e.g.: perseverance, confidence (e.g. performing to an audience); practice & preparation; discipline etc.
- There are fertile opportunities to integrate and develop cross-curriculum competences e.g. digital competence; wider skills such as teamwork and problem solving and to investigate links with other subject areas both within, and outside, the creative area of learning and experience.
- For those who may be more predisposed to other subject areas, Music provides an extracurricular outlet. The link with Duke of Edinburgh Award is noteworthy, where a number of participants choose music for their skills section. School productions and concerts are also important facets of school life and foster camaraderie, teamwork and serve to enrich pupils' school experiences.

- Music provides the rhythm for our lives, is our beating heart and accompanies us through major events on our journey, both happy and sad. Put quite simply, our quality of life is significantly enhanced by music and life would be far poorer without it. We owe it to future generations to open their eyes to the merits of music in all its guises. That is why we categorically state that ensuring a thriving and sustainable future for the Music Service in Carmarthenshire is of fundamental importance.

APPENDIX II: School Music Update - correspondence with schools/Governors sent out in the Autumn Term 2017

Dear Headteacher,

RE: MUSIC SERVICE UPDATE FOR SCHOOLS

I am writing to update you regarding two key issues involving Carmarthenshire Music Service:

1. Parental Contributions for Instrumental and Vocal Tuition

A number of schools across the county have been running successful charging/voluntary contribution schemes for instrumental and vocal tuition for a number of years. It has been observed that these schemes have had a number of benefits for schools:

- a) Headteachers have been able to generate income to offset the cost of the Music Service SLA
- b) Pupil attendance has improved significantly as the schemes require greater parental involvement
- c) Parents have been given the opportunity to be consulted and to have 'a voice' regarding the options of tuition offered to the school

In the current economic climate it is advised that all schools that are purchasing instrumental and vocal tuition from the county Music Service must have a system in place where parents contribute towards the cost of the tuition. Pressures on school budgets are such that parental contributions will be essential in allowing the service to continue to provide tuition to the schools in our county.

Pupils that are in receipt of free school meals and those that require the tuition as part of public examination syllabus e.g. GCSE, A Level etc. are exempt from such charges.

Our Music Service is sector leading and is the envy of a large number of authorities in Wales and provides pupils with a unique opportunity. Please also remember that the majority of pupils that begin tuition in Carmarthenshire will be able to borrow an instrument from the authority free of charge for a minimum of twelve months.

A number of exemplar letters from existing successful schemes are attached to this memo and further advice can be obtained from the Music Service Office.

2. Service Level Agreement 2018-2019

The Music Service SLA for the 2018-2019 academic year will be sent out to all schools in January 2018. The deadline for this contract will be 31st March 2018. Schools will have four options:

Option 1: Continuation of the contract from April 2018 to March 2019 with no change to the hours of provision for three terms.

Option 2: Continuation of the contract with the hours of provision increasing / decreasing from September 2018.

Option 3: Cancellation of the contract from September 2018. Schools will still be charged for the summer term's tuition at the existing rate and will only be able to cease tuition from September 2018.

Option 4: The negotiation period for all Music Service SLAs will be between January 2018 and March 2018. A failure to return the SLA contract by the 31st March 2018 will result in the school being charged the full cost of the contract i.e. Option 1.

Yours sincerely,

Gareth Morgans

Director of Education