



# Complete Agenda

**Corporate Leadership Team**  
Swyddfa'r Cyngor  
CAERNARFON  
Gwynedd  
LL55 1SH

Meeting

**THE COUNCIL**

Date and Time

**1.00 pm, THURSDAY, 4TH OCTOBER, 2018**

**\* NOTE \***

**This meeting will be webcast**

**[https://gwynedd.public-i.tv/core//en\\_GB/portal/home](https://gwynedd.public-i.tv/core//en_GB/portal/home)**

Location

**Siambr Dafydd Orwig, Council Offices, Caernarfon, Gwynedd, LL55 1SH**

Contact Point

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(DISTRIBUTED 26/09/18)

**Dilwyn Williams**  
**Chief Executive**

**[www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru](http://www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru)**

**WEDNESDAY, 26 SEPTEMBER 2018**

Dear Councillor,

**MEETING OF GWYNEDD COUNCIL – THURSDAY, 4 OCTOBER 2018**

**YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED** to attend a meeting of **GWYNEDD COUNCIL** which will be held at **1.00 pm** on **THURSDAY, 4TH OCTOBER, 2018** in **SIAMBR DAFYDD ORWIG, COUNCIL OFFICES, CAERNARFON, GWYNEDD, LL55 1SH**, to consider the matters mentioned in the following agenda.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'Dewi Sallan'.

Chief Executive

The following rooms will be available for the political groups during the morning:-

Plaid Cymru - Siambr Dafydd Orwig  
Independent – Siambr Hywel Dda  
Llais Gwynedd – Ystafell Gwyrfai  
United Independent Group for Gwynedd - Ystafell Daron

# **AGENDA**

## **1. APOLOGIES**

To receive any apologies for absence

## **2. MINUTES**

7 - 14

The Chairman shall propose that the minutes of the previous meeting of the Council held on 12<sup>th</sup> July, 2018 be signed as a true record. (attached)

## **3. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST**

To receive any declaration of personal interest.

## **4. THE CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

To receive any Chairman's announcements.

## **5. CORRESPONDENCE, COMMUNICATIONS OR OTHER BUSINESS**

To receive any correspondence, communications or other business brought forward at the request of the Chairman.

## **6. URGENT ITEMS**

To note any items which are urgent business in the opinion of the Chairman so they may be considered.

## **7. QUESTIONS**

To consider any questions the appropriate notice for which have been given under Section 4.19 of the Constitution.

## **8. NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY: FINANCIAL UPDATE AND 2019/20 CONSULTATION**

To receive a presentation by the Chief Fire Officer, North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority.

## **9. WELSH LANGUAGE PROMOTION PLAN FOR GWYNEDD 2018-23**

15 - 45

To submit the report of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Support (attached).

## **10. GWYNEDD COUNCIL ANNUAL IMPROVEMENT REPORT 2017-18**

46 - 74

To submit the report of the Leader (attached).

**11. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE 2017-18** 75 - 88

To submit the report of the Chair of the Standards Committee (attached).

**12. MEMBER OFFICER RELATIONS PROTOCOL** 89 - 99

To submit the report of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Support (attached).

**13. NOTICES OF MOTION**

**(A) NOTICE OF MOTION BY COUNCILLOR CATRIN WAGER**

In accordance with the Notice of Motion received under Section 4.20 of the Constitution, Councillor Catrin Wager will propose as follows:-

**This Council notes that:**

- According to Census data from 2011, 3,724 Gwynedd residents (or 3.1% of the population) have been born outside the UK. In some areas of Bangor, this rises to 20.9% of the population.
- Just under 30,000 people a year are detained in the UK under immigration laws; with around 3,000 in detention at any given time.
- The UK is the only country in Western Europe that detains individuals indefinitely under immigration powers.
- It costs, on average, more than £31,000 to detain a person for one year. The total annual cost was £164.4 million in the year 2013/14. In the years 2011-2014, the government spent £13.8 million compensating former detainees for unlawful detention.
- There are, at present, 10 detention centres in the UK, including short term holding facilities.
- Over 50% of those held in immigration detention will be released into the community in the UK.
- Immigration detention is for administrative purposes.
- In 2016, as part of the Shaw Review, Professor Mary Bosworth conducted a systematic review of studies investigating the impact of detention on the mental health of those detained. The studies showed that the critical point for a negative impact on mental health was 30 days.

- In July 2018, Stephen Shaw produced his Assessment of the government's action following his 2016 Report. In this, he underlines the **urgent need for detention reform**.

**This Council further notes that:**

- In March 2015, the Joint Inquiry on the APPG on Refugees and APPG on Migration into the use of Immigration Detention in the UK (the first-ever parliamentary inquiry into the use of immigration detention in the UK) recommended that the government introduce a maximum time limit of 28 days on the length of time anyone can be detained in immigration detention.
- In March 2016, the House of Lords voted to introduce a 28 day time limit for immigration detention though this was not extended to those persons with a prison sentence of 12 months or more.
- The 2016-2017 Annual Report HM Inspectorate of Prisons 2017a states "there remains a pressing need for a maximum time limit on immigration detention".

**This Council believes:**

- That the Westminster government should bring the indefinite detention of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees to an end.
- That a time limit of 28 days should be introduced for detention under immigration powers.
- That necessitation of a new Immigration Act as part of Brexit provides an opportunity to introduce a time limit.

**This Council resolves to:**

- Write to the Home Office stating that we, as Gwynedd Council, wish to see an end to the indefinite detention of migrants under immigration powers, and ask that a 28 day time limit is introduced as part of the new Immigration Act.



**THE COUNCIL THURSDAY, 12 JULY 2018**

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**Present:** Councillor Annwen Hughes (Chair);  
Councillor Edgar Wyn Owen (Vice-chair).

**Councillors:** Craig ab Iago, Menna Baines, Freya Hannah Bentham, Dylan Bullard, Stephen Churchman, Steve Collings, Annwen Daniels, R.Glyn Daniels, Anwen Davies, Elwyn Edwards, Alan Jones Evans, Dylan Fernley, Peter Antony Garlick, Simon Glyn, Gareth Wyn Griffith, Selwyn Griffiths, Alwyn Gruffydd, John Brynmor Hughes, Louise Hughes, Nia Jeffreys, Peredur Jenkins, Aeron M.Jones, Aled Wyn Jones, Anne Lloyd Jones, Berwyn Parry Jones, Charles W.Jones, Elin Walker Jones, Elwyn Jones, Eric Merfyn Jones, Huw Wyn Jones, Keith Jones, Kevin Morris Jones, Linda A.W.Jones, Sion Wyn Jones, Cai Larsen, Beth Lawton, Dilwyn Lloyd, Dafydd Meurig, Dilwyn Morgan, Dafydd Owen, Dewi Owen, W.Roy Owen, Jason Parry, Nigel Pickavance, Rheinallt Puw, Peter Read, Dewi Wyn Roberts, Elfed P.Roberts, Gareth A.Roberts, Paul Rowlinson, Angela Russell, Dyfrig Siencyn, Mike Stevens, Ioan Thomas, Cemlyn Williams, Eirwyn Williams, Elfed Williams, Gareth Williams, Gethin Glyn Williams, Gruffydd Williams and Owain Williams.

**Also in attendance:** Dilwyn Williams (Chief Executive), Morwena Edwards and Iwan Trefor Jones (Corporate Directors), Dafydd Edwards (Head of Finance Department), Iwan Evans (Head of Legal Services / Monitoring Officer), Geraint Owen (Head of Corporate Support Department), Marian Parry Hughes (Head of Children and Supporting Families Department), Rhun ap Gareth (Senior Solicitor / Deputy Monitoring Officer), Vera Jones (Democracy Manager), Llinos Edwards (Senior Operational Officer), Dewi Jones (Council Business Service Support Manager), Gareth James (Members' Manager - Support and Scrutiny) and Eirian Roberts (Member Support Officer).

**1. APOLOGIES**

Councillors Aled Evans, R.Medwyn Hughes, Sian Wyn Hughes, Judith Humphreys, Eryl Jones-Williams, Linda Morgan, John Pughe Roberts, W.Gareth Roberts, Mair Rowlands, Gareth Thomas, Hefin Underwood and Catrin Wager.

**2. MINUTES**

The Chair signed the minutes of the Council's Annual Meeting held on 3 May, 2018 as a true record.

**3. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST**

Councillor Dewi Wyn Roberts declared a personal interest in item 11 on the agenda - Scrutiny Annual Report 2017/18, as he was the Vice-chair of the Community Health Council and that the matter relating to health in the Blaenau Ffestiniog area had been discussed at that Council.

The member was not of the opinion that it was a prejudicial interest, and he did not withdraw from the meeting during the discussion on the item.

**4. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The following were congratulated:-

- Gwenan Ellis Jones, Gwynedd and Anglesey Welsh Language Charter Co-ordinator, for winning the 'Inspirational use of the Welsh Language' category at

the Professional Teaching Awards Cymru recently. Gwenan had won the award for her substantial contribution to formulating and developing the Language Charter which had been launched in Gwynedd in 2011.

- The Derwen Youth Project, which offered various activities for young people with disabilities in Gwynedd, for winning the 'Promoting equality and diversity' award at the 2018 Youth Work Excellence Awards in Wales recently.

**5. CORRESPONDENCE, COMMUNICATIONS, OR ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None to note.

**6. URGENT ITEMS**

None to note.

**7. QUESTIONS**

*(The Cabinet Members' written responses to the questions had been distributed to the members in advance).*

**(1) Question from Councillor Sion Jones**

"Has the Planning Department got reserves when implementing a commuted sum for developers?"

**Response from the Cabinet Member for Planning, Councillor Dafydd Meurig**

"Briefly, these are contributions from developers in relation to major developments where there is a contribution towards local improvements. For example, there is a £1.2m contribution from the Redrow company related to a large housing estate in Bangor and most of this will go towards education in the city. Therefore, to answer the question, I believe that approximately £1.95m of contributions in total have been received in recent years, including the Redrow money. Subsequently, some of the money has not been spent yet, but this has been earmarked and it will be spent appropriately and the entire system, of course, is managed by 106 agreements."

**A Supplementary Question by Councillor Sion Jones**

"Does the Member agree with me that the Local Development Plan is an opportunity to set more commuted sums on developments in order to give something back to communities across Gwynedd?"

**Response from the Cabinet Member for Planning, Councillor Dafydd Meurig**

"It is not possible to use these sums for anything except something that is related to planning applications. That is their purpose and this is what manages the system here and I'm sure that the planning system takes complete advantage of this money within what is allowed."

**(2) Question from Councillor Cai Larsen**

"With the transfer of Gwynedd Leisure Centres to a Limited Company in the Autumn, has there been any progress with the work of setting up the Company?"

**Response from the Cabinet Member for Housing, Leisure and Culture, Councillor Craig ab Iago**



"As you can see, everything has gone well, therefore, it is very pleasing to stand before everyone today with a very positive report. The company has been registered, a Shadow Board is in place and is operational and we are currently undergoing the TUPE process with staff. Again, this consultation is very positive and the union has been part of the process from the offset. They support it, the staff support it and also all staff have been part of the process to design the business plans. We are learning a lot and their opinion will be part of how the plan will be run. It has been fantastic. The only thing I am concerned about is the timescale, it is tight, there is a lot of work - I don't think the staff will have summer holidays. I'm very happy to answer questions, if you have any, after the meeting."

**(3) Question from Councillor Alwyn Gruffydd**

"How much of Gwynedd Council's resources, in officer time and cash, have been contributed and will be contributed in the future towards establishing the North Wales Growth Bid and its viability?"

**Response by the Leader, Councillor Dyfrig Siencyn**

"Every council in north Wales has agreed to contribute £50,000 towards the work of setting up an office for the programme in due course, and the two further education colleges and two higher education establishments are also contributing £25,000 each towards that work. I would venture to say that it is very difficult to measure in hours or in money how much I have invested in it. I have committed to our partners in north Wales that I am willing to represent them in the different discussions that we hold. As it happens, I was in London yesterday having a discussion with the relevant minister. Also, of course, staff from all councils have contributed to the background work here. Our Treasurer has contributed towards work on the finance side and our Monitoring Officer has been part of drawing out the governance agreement, which is on the agenda today. Therefore, substantial work is taking place and each council, in turn, contributes towards the work, but we are currently taking a leading role and I believe that this is important."

**A Supplementary Question from Councillor Alwyn Gruffydd**

"In light of the fact that a quarter of the Head of Economy and Community Department's time is spent on this work and half of the Corporate Director's work, who is doing their work in their absence?"

**Response by the Leader, Councillor Dyfrig Siencyn**

"We have an economic regeneration service, and we have had a meeting with the Chief Executive, for example, to ensure that we are capable of enabling our Director to undertake this work, and this is important work that could bring in substantial benefit to this Council in future. I think the investment is worth it. If you believe otherwise, fine, but that is my opinion. I believe it is important that we commit as much as we can so that we can say that this bid is a success for the benefit of, not only Gwynedd residents, but all residents in north Wales. This is part of all our responsibility and it is also part, of course, of the day to day work of our officers, our economy service and also our Directors".

**8. GWYNEDD CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18**

Submitted - the annual report of the Corporate Parenting Panel 2017/18 by the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, which highlighted the role and responsibilities

of the Council to act as corporate parents for looked after children, shared information about the panel's implementation over the past year and outlined the panel's intentions for the future.

He noted further that it had been reported at the end of a full inspection of the Children's Service by Care Inspectorate Wales in May this year that the Corporate Parenting Panel was positive and developmental in nature, and that this, in turn, would ensure that looked after children and young people in Gwynedd received suitable support throughout their looked after period and beyond.

The Cabinet Member thanked panel members for their work and members of the Care Scrutiny Committee for their interest and positive input to the department's work.

In response to questions from members, the Cabinet Member explained:-

- Although the foster placement extension scheme "*When I am Ready*" had been targeted for young people aged between 18 and 21, that the Council continued to be responsible for young people until they were 25, but that support was optional for them by then.
- Information in the report had been presented in percentage form instead of numbers so as to avoid individual cases being identified.

It was emphasised that the Council had a responsibility to assist these young people to achieve their aspirations.

## **9. NORTH WALES GROWTH BID - GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS**

Submitted - a report by the Leader inviting the Council to approve the scrutiny arrangements for the Growth Bid Joint Committee ("North Wales Economic Ambition Board") to be incorporated in the first stage Governance Agreement.

At the beginning of the discussion, the Leader and the Corporate Director were thanked for their work in this field and for being a strong voice for Gwynedd. It was noted that this was the most important scheme that would be submitted before this Council, and if successful, it would create many jobs for young people in our areas. Therefore, it was important that everyone supported this no matter what the cost would be for this Council.

On the contrary, serious reservations were expressed about the scheme based on a number of financial and political risks. The Westminster and Welsh Governments were happy to bind north Wales with the North West of England although it would be much more sensible and natural for Gwynedd to collaborate with counties in west Wales, and counties such as Wrexham and Flintshire would link with the Northern Powerhouse. There was concern regarding impact on the rural economy and the fact that the scheme would drown Gwynedd economically, culturally and linguistically. Also, there was substantial risk associated with delegating the right for one person to lead the work in Gwynedd, no matter who would hold the post in future. On this basis, members were urged not to support the scheme. In response, the Leader noted that he refused the ideology of withdrawing, building defences and refusing to do anything with anyone else, and that Gwynedd had to be confident and willing to collaborate with every northern county in order to thrive in the modern world.

In response to further observations and questions by the members, the Leader noted:-

- He had reminded the Secretary of State of his recent failures to attract investment to Wales and that the future of the Secretary of State depended on the success of this scheme.

- The question of business rates was not part of the matter in hand, but that he was aware of the concerns and that the private sector was a central part of all discussions.
- He was very aware of the economic problems of rural areas and although the Growth Bid could not be the answer to everything, he, along with other leaders, would voice a strong opinion for projects that would have an impact across the countryside.
- The aim of the Growth Bid and this Council's strategy was to increase the skills of Gwynedd residents rather than the money leaving the area to the major companies.
- Although there was no scheme involved directly with agriculture, the importance of securing input from both agricultural unions to the project was recognised, especially in view of Brexit implications.
- Approving arrangements did not constitute signing any blank cheques. Although he understood that there was an element of cynicism regarding this scheme, in view of the failure of some schemes in the past, this did not mean that we should not take advantage of what was being proposed this time.
- He was not able to make decisions on a number of matters without the approval of the full Council.
- The Growth Bid had led to a political agreement across north Wales.

**RESOLVED to approve the scrutiny arrangements for the Growth Bid Joint Committee ("North Wales Economic Ambition Board") to be incorporated in the first stage Governance Agreement.**

#### **10. GWYNEDD COUNCIL ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2017/18**

Submitted - a report by the Leader which recommended that the Council approved the annual performance report as a balanced, fair and accurate reflection of the Council's performance during 2017/18, and to adopt the report.

The Leader thanked the officers that had been involved with the work.

In response to observations / questions by members, the Leader noted:-

- He would ask the Cabinet Member for Education whether or not the reduction from 64.4% in 2016/17 to 57.4% in 2017/18 in the percentage of 16 year old pupils who achieved the Core Subjects Indicator was a matter of concern for the service.
- The Cabinet Member for Housing, Leisure and Culture was working hard in the leisure field to create a new arm's-length company and it was greatly hoped that the new arrangements would give the service a new life and direction and attract people back to the leisure centres.
- He was not hopeful that additional funding could be attracted from Welsh Government in recognition of the extra value the innovative work carried out by this Council's staff on the Welsh language, such as the Language Charter, offered to people across Wales. He added that it must also be acknowledged that other councils were undertaking substantial work on the Welsh language and that this Council was willing to offer a helping hand to anyone who wanted help to promote the Welsh language.
- It was recognised that recruiting home carers in the county's rural areas was an increasing problem, and in the long-term, a career structure in the care field must be created where the Council could be proud of the work undertaken. He also referred to the success of collaborating with the Health Service in the field of care for the elderly, and noted that priority was given to the needs of the adult and what they required to be able to continue to live independently.

- Adopting this annual performance report was part of the work to promote the good work undertaken by Council staff. As well as publishing the report in its entirety on the Council website, there was an intention to communicate messages from the report on digital media.
- He intended to have a conversation with the local member regarding a concern expressed by him about a lack of funding to run the Talysarn nursery school building.

**RESOLVED to approve the report as an accurate, balanced and clear reflection of the Council's performance in 2017/18, and to adopt it.**

#### **11. SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18**

Submitted - the scrutiny annual report for 2017/18 by the Chair of the Scrutiny Forum, Councillor Beth Lawton. She thanked the scrutiny members who attended scrutiny committee meetings and noted that attendance was very high. She apologised that there were some minor errors in the report and noted that she would ask officers to rectify those errors prior to publishing its final version.

In response to questions / observations by members, the Chair of the Scrutiny Forum noted:-

- She was satisfied that scrutiny work was being heard and that the Scrutiny Forum now had status, with the Chief Executive and key officers attending the meetings. She added that there was still room to improve scrutiny and that the situation would be reviewed over the coming year in order to see how the system worked.
- In the unavoidable absence of two scrutiny chairs from this meeting, that the Scrutiny Forum's wish was for her to submit the annual report on behalf of the four Chairs.
- The Scrutiny Forum could investigate the observation made that the workload of scrutiny committees merited a full day to be assigned for scrutiny committee meetings.

It was enquired who would undertake the independent investigation on health provision in the Blaenau Ffestiniog area, and when. In the absence of the Chair of the Care Scrutiny Committee, the Vice-chair, Councillor Dewi Wyn Roberts (who was also the Vice-chair of the Community Health Council) noted that his understanding was:-

- The Care Scrutiny Committee had invited the Community Health Council (CHC) to hold an independent investigation into the health provision in the Blaenau Ffestiniog area.
- Although the CHC was fully supportive of the people who had raised this matter, they did not have the resources to undertake this type of investigation. Also, the purpose of the CHC was to examine the matters of individuals, and this was something much more.
- Therefore, it appeared that this was a matter for Welsh Government to decide who should undertake the investigation.

During the ensuing discussion, it was noted:-

- The situation was shameful as reasonable people were awaiting a response to their totally reasonable and democratic request, but nobody was taking any notice of them.
- The Care Scrutiny Committee needed to re-address the matter, with the likely intention of referring the matter back to Welsh Government.

The Chair of the Scrutiny Forum was thanked for submitting the report on behalf of the scrutiny chairs.

**12. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STATUTORY DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES 2017/18**

Submitted - the Statutory Director of Social Services submitted her annual report offering an overview of the 2017/18 performance and evaluating how Gwynedd Council Social Services had promoted the well-being of people in Gwynedd who needed care and support, along with their carers.

She noted that a positive performance had been seen during the year, and this in the context of higher demand and increasing complexity. Very much had been achieved in the field during the year, and this, to a degree, was a reflection of the good relationship the Council had with its key partners within the field.

She also noted that the Children and Supporting Families Department had recently been the subject of a full inspection of their services by Care Inspectorate Wales, and although the official report had not yet been agreed and published, that verbal feedback from the Chief Inspector at the end of the fieldwork had been very positive and praised the work that was taking place within the Council.

She took advantage of the opportunity to thank all staff, internally and externally, for their tireless and committed work once again this year. In particular, she thanked Marian Parry Hughes (Head of Children and Families Department) and Aled Davies (Head of Adults, Health and Well-being Department) who had worked closely with her in creating the annual report. She also thanked members of the Care Scrutiny Committee for their work and constructive observations and the Cabinet Members in the care field, Councillors W.Gareth Roberts and Dilwyn Morgan for their support over the year.

In response to questions / observations by members, the Statutory Director of Social Services noted:-

- In terms of staff morale, it was recognised that it was a challenging period for everyone, and although some staff were more confident and found changes in the service easier than others, that they welcomed the fact that managers now entrusted in them. She added that inspectors had noticed that the Council had committed and confident staff and that morale seemed to be high. Also, staff were staying in posts, liked to work through the medium of Welsh and were experienced in their work.
- The Regional Workforce Board was looking at what impact people returning to Gwynedd from the continent would have on the service in light of Brexit, but that there was no easy answer to this problem.
- The excellent provision and support at the Respite Unit, Hafan y Sêr, Penrhyndeudraeth was praised.

**13. THE COUNCIL'S POLITICAL BALANCE**

The Head of Democratic Services reported:-

- After receiving a message on the morning of the meeting from Councillor Sion Jones who had noted that he was withdrawing his request to join the Independent Group, the 'Political Balance' report that had been included with the meeting's agenda, needed to be amended.
- In light of a discussion with the Monitoring Officer and the members in question, and also of informing the Leaders of the Political Groups of this latest development, the following recommendation had been submitted, in an attempt

to ensure a practical solution and to maintain a membership as full and consistent as possible on Council committees:-

- (a) The Council was asked to: appoint Councillor Stephen Churchman to the individual seats on the Communities Scrutiny Committee, the Planning Committee and the Pensions Committee.
- (b) The Council was asked to appoint Councillor Sion Jones on the Audit and Governance Committee and the Licensing Committee.

**RESOLVED**

- (a) **To appoint Councillor Stephen Churchman to the individual seats on the Communities Scrutiny Committee, the Planning Committee and the Pensions Committee.**
- (b) **To appoint Councillor Sion Jones on the Audit and Governance Committee and the Licensing Committee.**

**14. RESPONSES TO PREVIOUS NOTICES OF MOTION**

Submitted, for information:-

- (a) A letter from Welsh Government, in response to Councillor Elin Walker Jones's notice of motion to the meeting on 8 March 2018, in relation to taxes on plastic.
- (b) Letters from the Westminster and Welsh Governments, in response to Councillor Judith Humphreys's notice of motion to the annual meeting on 3 May, 2018, in relation to Associate EU Citizenship.

**RESOLVED to note the contents of the letters.**

The meeting commenced at 1.00pm and concluded at 3.35pm.

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**CHAIR**

<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>FULL COUNCIL</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>04 October 2018</b>
<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>Welsh Language Promotion Plan for Gwynedd 2018-2023</b>
<b>PURPOSE:</b>	Present the final Promotion Plan and the proposed work programme to be approved and adopted
<b>CABINET MEMBER:</b>	<b>Councillor Nia Jeffreys</b>
<b>AUTHOR:</b>	<b>Gwenllian Williams</b>

## 1. Background

- 1.1 Standard 145 of the Welsh Language Standards, Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011, sets on the Council a statutory obligation to publish a language strategy that explains how we intend to promote and encourage the use of the Welsh language in the county.
- 1.2 The Language Promotion Plan has therefore been developed in response to that obligation, and it shows the Council's commitment to promoting the use of the Welsh language in every part of life for the residents of the county.
- 1.3 The strategy was developed earlier this year on the basis of consultation with members and relevant officers, and taking into consideration other strategies and plans relevant to the field of work. There was a public consultation on the content of the draft plan, after receiving approval from the Council Cabinet, between April and June 2018.
- 1.4 The final Plan has been revised in light of that consultation, taking into account some of the issues raised, and an initial work programme has been compiled to show how we will go about working towards some of the priorities in the Plan.
- 1.5 The Priority Fields in the Promotion Plan follow quite closely those that were seen in the previous language strategy, and also try to reflect the fields of interest in the Welsh Government language Strategy Cymraeg 2050.
- 1.6 The initial work programme shows the first steps that will be taken and is based on discussions with relevant departments, as well as partners, in order to identify the work streams that contribute to the aims, and also to identify opportunities to work together or new projects that could be implemented.
- 1.7 This is a work programme for the first year and it will be a live programme, with work streams and projects added as they develop.

- 1.8 The final draft of the Promotion Plan and the initial Work Programme was approved by the Cabinet on the 18<sup>th</sup> of September.

## **2. Next Steps**

- 2.1 Thematic groups will be set up to coordinate and drive the work in various fields, and details of new plans or projects agreed with external partners as a result of these groups will be added to the work programme.

## **3. Recommendation**

- 3.1 We ask the full Council to accept and approve the Welsh Language Promotion Plan for Gwynedd 2018-2023 and the associated work programme.





# Welsh Language Promotion Plan for Gwynedd 2018-2023



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# 1. Introduction

Standard 145 of the Welsh Language Standards, as imposed on Gwynedd Council in accordance with Section 44 of the **Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011** sets a requirement on the Council to produce a 5-year strategy that will show how we intend to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language in the county.

Gwynedd Council has a long history of promoting and protecting the Welsh language as a natural means of communication in all of its services. The language is given a prominent place in the strategic plans of the Council, and the Language Policy sets out our commitment to the Welsh language by noting that it is the responsibility of **all** staff and council Members to promote the Welsh language in all aspects of their work.

The **Gwynedd Council Plan 2018-23** sets as one of its well-being objectives the aims to ensure that all residents can live in a community where the Welsh language is a natural part of life.

This is not the Council's first language strategy as the Gwynedd Welsh Language Strategy (latest version 2014-2018) had set out the priority and foundations for the work of Hunaniaith, the language initiative that has been operating as part of the Council's Language Unit, for several years.

This strategy, therefore, sets out the current opportunities available to promote and increase use of the Welsh language as a natural part of everyday life in the county, and also reflects the Council's wider commitments in relation to the Welsh language, in areas such as education, planning and care and social services<sup>1</sup>, and complements the priorities noted in the **Gwynedd Council Plan** and the **Gwynedd and Anglesey Well-being Plan**.

The Strategy will also show how Gwynedd can contribute towards the **Welsh Government Language Strategy: Cymraeg 2050**, which sets the target of getting a million Welsh-speakers in Wales by 2050.

The implementation and success of the Strategy will depend on cooperation with many partners, such as public bodies and community groups, in order to tackle the various challenges and barriers that face the Welsh language across the county.

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<sup>1</sup> More than just words.... Follow-on strategic framework for Welsh language services in health, social services and social care

## 2. Summary of the present situation and challenges

### 2.1 Key statistics

According to the 2011 Census 65.4% of the population of Gwynedd can speak Welsh.

There was an increase in the percentage of Welsh-speakers in some parts of the county, namely the wards of Waunfawr, Ogwen, y Groeslon, Llanbedr, Corris/Mawddwy and an increase back over the 70% mark in the ward of Clynog.

However, there was a general decline in the number of wards with over 70% of the population able to speak Welsh, with only 39 left of the 71 wards according to the 2011 census.

The largest drop in Welsh-speakers was seen in the 65+ age group, with the biggest increase amongst the youngest of our population, with an increase from 70.9% to 73.0% in the 3-4 age group and from 91.8% to 92.3% in the 5-15 age group, which suggests that early years programmes and the education system is doing a good job of setting strong foundations for the children and young people in regards to their abilities and use of the language.

### 2.2 Summary of the challenges

In order to find the opportunities to increase the use of the Welsh language that will lead to the increase in the number of speakers, we must also acknowledge the challenges and barriers that stop that from happening. We need to be able to identify those areas in the county or parts of life where people use less of the language during their day to day lives, and understand the factors that can affect the personal language use of individuals.

**Certainly, the challenge, and one of the most important factors in the prosperity of the language in Gwynedd, is to get people to use the skills and abilities they have in as many situations and circumstances as possible.**

In order to encourage that increase in use, we need to consider the effects of the following factors, and how we can counteract them to increase the opportunities available to people in all parts of the county to use and feel a connection with the language.

- **Geographical challenges :**

Varying levels in the number and percentage of Welsh-speakers across the county, and the range of jobs/services available in some rural areas, means that different answers and interventions are needed in different areas in order to protect the Welsh language.

- **Mobility and migration:**

Young people moving out of the area to find work and fewer families moving in to some areas – particularly rural ones – because of a lack of services. The number moving into areas from other areas of the county and outside Gwynedd create demographic changes.

- **Transferring the language within the family:**

Families not transferring the language to the children, leading to losing the language as a language of the home.

- **Losing Welsh-speakers after 16 years of age:**

No steady progression in regards to language use as young people leave education and stop using the language when they move into work or in their social life as young adults.

- **The status of the Welsh language as a language of business:**

The language not given a prominent enough place in business.

- **Opportunities and support for learners:**

A number of newcomers who are keen to learn but find it difficult because of a lack of timely and convenient opportunities.

- **Technological influences:**

Technology plays an increasing role in people's lives, particularly young people. The lack of Welsh-medium resources and developments means that there is an increasing English influence on everyday lives.

- **People's confidence in their own ability and skills:**

A lack of opportunities to use the language regularly in socialising, and difficulties in accessing Welsh-medium services can lead to a lack of confidence, and to less use.



### 3. What we would like to see

Our wish for the long term is to see Gwynedd raise again over the 70% mark for the percentage of Welsh speakers, and the percentage being maintained above that number in the strongest communities.

Our successful education system already means that 92% of the 5-15 age group can speak Welsh. The challenge for us is getting those Welsh speakers to continue to do so through their lives.

Our priority for the first period of this plan, leading up to the next Census in 2021, therefore, is to increase the opportunities for using the Welsh Language, to increase the confidence of those who don't consider themselves Welsh speakers, and also to look at opportunities that will help us keep young people in their communities.

To get to that point of increased use, these are the things that we need to see happening:

- Families that see the benefit of using the language as a language of the home.
- Schools and educational institutions that give encouragement and support to developing confident Welsh-speakers.
- Young people that see a value to the language as a skill for life and as a means of entertainment and socialising, and who use it in every aspect of their lives.
- Public bodies that offer Welsh language services regularly and to a high standard.
- Private and business sector that gives the Welsh language value and status and that understands its value as a skill and a business asset.
- The Welsh language is used naturally when developing and using technology.
- Community groups given support to maintain the language as the natural means of communication and to ensure that people of all linguistic and social backgrounds are included in community activities.
- The Welsh language given prominence in economic, housing and planning schemes locally in order to ensure that any schemes and developments contribute in a positive way towards the efforts to safeguard the Welsh language in our communities.
- Residents that are confident in using the Welsh language and show good will and a positive attitude towards it.

In the next part of the document, we will take a closer look at some of the points above under five thematic areas that also reflect the key strategic areas in the **Welsh Governments Language Strategy, Cymraeg 2050**.

Specific steps and work streams that contribute the vision and change we would like to see under the five main priority areas will be identified in an action plan, which will be an Appendix to this Promotion Plan.



# **3.1**

## **Priority Area 1 –**

### **The language of the family**

## The vision...

- Better collaboration between partner organisations to ensure that Welsh medium care providers are monitored and supported adequately.
- Better understanding amongst parents of the value of transferring the language to their children, and of the benefits of bilingualism and multilingualism.
- An increase in the number play opportunities available for pre-school age children through the medium of Welsh.
- An increase in the number of opportunities for families and parents to learn some Welsh in order to use those skills with their families.
- An increase in the number of children who come from homes where more than one language is spoken who can speak Welsh.

## The statistics...

**90% of 3-4 year olds in Gwynedd can speak Welsh if they come from homes where both parents speak Welsh.**

**63% of 3-4 year olds can speak Welsh when only one parent in the home can speak Welsh.**

**Even more positively, 35% of children in Gwynedd who are being raised in homes where neither parent can speak Welsh, are noted as Welsh-speakers in the 2011 census.**



## What needs to happen next?

**In order for the Welsh language to be a natural means of communication in families, we must ensure that positive language patterns are set from early on in children's lives. The priority in this area as a results is to work with agencies and partners in the early years sector to ensure that positive and consistent messages are being shared with parents and carers about the value of the language, not only for the children but for the whole family, and also to ensure there are enough opportunities provided that will encourage more families to learn the language alongside their children.**

We need to make sure that efforts are targeted effectively, and therefore we will need to ensure that resources and expertise are shared effectively between organisations and providers to ensure the widest and best possible reach and influence.

We need to ensure that early year care providers are given all the support they need to maintain the language medium of the care, and to have the best possible influence on the language acquisition of children in their care.

We need to make sure that enough informal play opportunities are available that will encourage parents and carers to learn and use the Welsh language with their children. They should be welcoming and supportive to anyone, whatever their own language abilities, and be available across the county.

There are also a host of independent groups and providers in Gwynedd, who provide a variety of informal play and socialising opportunities for young families, such as story and song sessions, swimming and keep fit sessions.

This provides an opportunity to influence those providers by offering them language awareness sessions and training tailored especially for them on matters such as their role in conveying positive messages about the Welsh language to parents. Hunaniaith has already done some work in this area, in partnership with **Cymraeg for Kids**, and we would like to see that work continued and developed over the next few years.



## **3.2**

# **Priority Area 2 – The language of learning**

## The vision...

- Schools that give the language prestige and value and encourage more use of the Welsh language as a medium of socialising, by continuing to implement the Language Charter in primary schools and the Language Strategy for secondary schools.
- An increase in the number of young people who choose to study and receive qualifications or recognised accreditations through the medium of Welsh.
- More pupils continuing to improve their Welsh language skills in transferring from primary to secondary, and on to post-compulsory education.
- More extended learning opportunities offered to young people – in the form of work experience and apprenticeships with employers that give the Welsh language a certain status. This will develop an understanding amongst young people of the demand for Welsh language skills in the workplace.

## The statistics...

According to the 2011 Census, 1,997 or 73% of 3-4 year olds in Gwynedd can speak Welsh and 13,038 or 92% of 5-15 year olds.

According to the data of the Language Charter, published in the Gwynedd Well-being Assessment recently, only 41.2% of KS2 pupils use the Welsh language “all the time” on the schoolyard.

The percentage of Welsh-speakers in Gwynedd drops sharply when you move from the 3-15 age group to the 16-24 age group, from 89% to 58.6%.

The Welsh Language Strategy of the Welsh Government, Cymraeg 2050, notes that over half of Wales’s learners leave school at 16 years of age, moving on to further education, work-based learning or employment.

## What needs to happen next?

In order to ensure that the Welsh language remains the main language of education and learning in the county, the priority for this area will be to ensure a strong link between the language of learning and the language of work, and raising awareness and understanding amongst teaching staff and the wider family of the school and college of their role in promoting the Welsh language within their establishments and their contribution to the wider vision for the county.

Various projects are being implemented by the Council's Education Department in relation to this priority area, with Gwynedd Education Department's Language Policy and the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan setting strong foundations for that work. In extending the reach and operation of those projects over the next few years, we hope to have a positive effect on the language use and choices of our young people, which in turn will lead to a better attitude towards the language as they grow older.

The project that will be the main focus for the next few years will be the **Secondary Sector Language Strategy**, which has been developed as a continuation to the work of the Language Charter – a project developed under the previous Gwynedd Language Strategy. The aim of the strategy is to ensure that the Welsh language is an effective medium for schoolwork and life in all its variations, and to have a positive influence on the language used by young people in a curricular and social context.


Every school will implement the **Secondary Sector Welsh Language Strategy**, and work towards ensuring that all school stakeholders are a part of the scheme. It will try and ensure that more young people choose to study and gain qualifications through the medium of Welsh in the secondary schools -that will hopefully lead to more studying through the medium of Welsh on the higher and further education level; developing young leaders by giving young people and school councils a clear role in organising activities and influencing the language use of their peers; and ensuring that school staff understand the role they have to play as role model and in encouraging and supporting students to make decisions that will develop their language skills.

The **Language Charter** for primary schools is continuing to grow as well – having been rolled out across the whole of Wales under the guidance of the Welsh Government. This project means that schools are working hard to have a positive influence on attitudes and use of the Welsh language outside the classroom, and continuing to provide support to the staff and wider school family will be essential over the next few years.

### Post-compulsory education

We will also be working to try to reduce the number of natural Welsh-speakers we lose in Gwynedd as they leave the influence of the school environment.

There is a strong link here with the use of the Welsh language in business and work, and the need for young people to see the value of the language as an asset and a skill. We will therefore be working with post-compulsory education providers to strengthen the link between occupational courses and the work opportunities and employers in the county who are looking for employees with linguistic skills, in order to ensure that the skills and abilities needed in the local workplace is provided through the education system.



# **3.3**

## **Priority Area 3 – The language of work and services**

## The vision...

- An increase in the number of residents who use the Welsh language in work and in using services – face to face and online.
- An increased awareness amongst business owners and managers of the benefits of Welsh language skills in the workforce and the benefits of offering Welsh-medium services.
- A better understanding and awareness of the opportunities provided by technology and resources to increase the use of the Welsh language and confidence in doing so within the workforce.
- The Welsh language being given a central place in regional collaboration and in cross-county strategic plans.

## The statistics...

According to the National Language Use Survey of 2013-15, 85% of the fluent Welsh-speakers in Gwynedd use the language every day. This has decreased from 90% in the 2004-06 survey.

Over 90% of Gwynedd Council staff can speak Welsh, which means that it is possible for the residents of Gwynedd to access Welsh-medium services wherever they are in the county.

## What needs to happen next?

**We will be trying to ensure that there are as few barriers as possible to using services through the medium of Welsh, in the public and private sectors, and that those services are as easy as possible to use and understand.**

This will mean working together with the other bodies of the Public Services Board to increase the use of the Welsh language within public services in the county in order to encourage service users to use the Welsh language in their first contact with the public bodies, as well as developing an understanding amongst the bodies themselves of best practice in relation to greeting service users in that first contact.

The Council as an employer will develop a varied programme of language training in order to develop the skills of the workforce, to give people opportunities to learn whilst they work, to practice their newly acquired skills and to try to deal with the issues of confidence in written skills – all of this in order to lead to a positive change within the workplace. We will also work with Bangor University on behavioural change models in order to try to have a positive influence on the linguistic practices of the workforce. By developing the skills of the workforce we will ensure that our Welsh language services are provided consistently across the county.

We will need to find new ways of encouraging people to use Welsh language services, as online and face to face services change. And we will need to continue to ensure that the Welsh language is promoted and highlighted as part of contracts to co-provide or outsource services.

By setting and agreeing to strong conditions with partners and external providers, and insisting that working contracts adhere to our principles and standards, we can improve the quality of more services provided to the public.

In accordance with the commitment in the **Council Plan**, we will need to work with local businesses, and particularly in the tourism and leisure sectors, in order to provide clear guidance on giving the Welsh language a prominent platform in their activities, and to Welsh (and multilingual) skills in their recruitment policies.

This would raise the profile of the language as a working language, as well as raising its profile amongst international visitors and contribute towards the sense of place for tourists.


In ensuring that workforces have the necessary ability and skills, and that businesses understand the need to give the Welsh language status in recruitment practices, we will increase the opportunities for people to use the Welsh language while seeking services.

We will be encouraging more businesses and bodies to adopt the active offer principle, and to realise that linguistic courtesy and respect towards the language choice of users can create a lot of good will, and that we should always strive to offer the services that meets the linguistic needs of the public rather than waiting for them to have to ask for them.

To that end, we will need to ensure there is practical support available for businesses in order to help them increase the use of the Welsh language in signage and written materials and all other aspects of the business.

To echo the priority in the **Language of learning** field, we will work with businesses and establishments that give a clear priority and status to the Welsh language in order to promote them as employers of choice for work experience, and in order to strengthen the link between linguistic choices in education and the language of work.





## **3.4**

# **Priority Area 4 – The language of the community**

## The vision...

- A population that is confident in using whatever Welsh language skills they have in their daily lives and in the community.
- The Welsh language being visible, in advertising and conducting events, and less events being held in English only in our communities.
- Different social and community factions, including less willing speakers of the language, being made to feel a part of the “Welsh community”.
- Working towards ensuring that more community events are inclusive - that learners and less confident speakers feel that they are supported in Welsh medium activities.
- Community groups and councils are aware of their role, and are given support to organise and put on activities that actively promote the Welsh language.
- Young people being encouraged to be community leaders by organising events that influence the language use of their peers.
- The Welsh language given a clear and obvious priority in economic, housing and planning schemes locally in order to ensure that any schemes and developments contribute in a positive way towards the efforts to safeguard and strengthen the position of the Welsh language in our communities.

## The statistics...

**The National Language Use Survey of 2013-15 (Welsh Government and Welsh Language Commissioner 2015) shows that an increasing number of people consider themselves Welsh-speakers, but not fluent speakers, with that number increasing from 13,800 in 2004-06 to 19,400 in 2013-15.**

## What needs to happen next?

**The menter iaith (language initiative) in Gwynedd is Hunaniaith, and operates as part of the Council's language unit, and as such the work carried out by them and their partners will be crucial in implementing the vision in this specific area.**

Hunaniaith will continue to develop projects, alongside community partners and organisations, that will:

- provide opportunities for people to use the Welsh language naturally in new and varied contexts
- look for opportunities to develop the use of the language in technology
- give those that are less willing to speak, or that are new speakers, the opportunities to practice and gain confidence
- offer support to local voluntary groups and community representatives
- raise awareness and understanding of the role each and every one of us has to play in sustaining the language, and to increase the pride in it as a living language.


Hunaniaith will also work with the Youth Service to ensure there are varied opportunities available to young people, who are at a very vulnerable and influential stage of their lives, to use the language in a variety of contexts. We will also be using schemes like PCAI (a project that aims to supports the language use of young people) in order to encourage confidence and skills in young people in organising activities and increasing the use of the Welsh language amongst peers.

We also aim to work with other bodies such as Grŵp Cynefin, Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd and Pontio, who work with communities, to ensure the widest possible reach and influence, and to offer support to locations who offer family activities and activities during school holidays in order to increase the Welsh offer.

In order to support this work, it is crucial that community representatives and elected members are aware of their potential role and influence, and that they use the local knowledge that they have to refer businesses and individuals for support, and to ensure that the Welsh language is given fair play in activities of all sizes in our communities. Raising the status of the Welsh language within some of the high profile large events, and seeing organisers giving Welsh language providers and entertainers a prominent platform would show the community as a whole and especially young people, that there is value to the language in all fields.

It will also be very important that the language is given the proper priority and attention in the Council's strategic plans and policies that have an effect on communities, and ensuring that any impact assessments on new proposals or policies take into consideration any possible effect on the ability of the local population to use and hear the welsh language.

The Council's Welsh Language Unit and Planning Unit will continue to work together in order to develop expertise in linguistic planning. The Language Unit will provide specialist and independent input for the Planning Unit in order to protect linguistic interests within the planning process.



# **3.5**

## **Priority Area 5 – Research and technology – setting the right foundations**

## The vision...

- More people ready and willing to use the Welsh language in the context of technology.
- Supporting growth in the technology sector by promoting new developments and the development of young people's skills in the field.
- More public and educational bodies using Welsh language software and technology.
- Developing a better understanding of people's habits in using the Welsh language in order to find new ways of influencing and encouraging people's use of the language.

## What needs to happen next?

We will try to use our unique situation and the large concentration of Welsh-speakers in the county in order to have a better understanding of the habits and trends of people in using the Welsh language, and in particular their use of the Welsh language while using technology.

We will develop the working relationship with Bangor University, and other universities in Wales, in order to identify opportunities to contribute towards research in the fields of language planning and behavioural change. This in turn will help us to have a better understanding of how people use the language in different contexts and how we can adapt to those changes. We will work in particular with Bangor University on behavioural change models, and to offer work experience opportunities for students that will give them a better understanding of the practical elements of language planning, and to contribute towards developing expertise in the field.

As a Council, we will look at projects that will encourage more people to use the Welsh language on the internet, on social media and in using self-service, and consider the most effective way of using the Welsh language in those contexts to encourage and increase use.

## 4. Implementing the Strategy

This Plan concentrates mainly on those areas on which the Council has direct influence, and on work that will be led by departments within the Council. However, as the priorities and plans of many other bodies and agencies overlap ours in some of the strategic areas, many other partners and community organisations will also have a role to play in working with us to implement this plan and promoting the Welsh language across the county.

In order to ensure that our plans have the best possible effect and that they contribute towards wider efforts to increase the use of the Welsh language – and as a result the number of Welsh speakers – we will need to ensure an appropriate platform for sharing information and coordinating efforts, as well as monitoring the progress of joint plans.

In working across Gwynedd and Anglesey, for example, the Public Services Board can influence other bodies like the Health Board and other bodies who provide services to the public.

Maintaining effective relationships with organisations such as Cymraeg for Kids, Mudiad Meithrin, the Urdd, and the YFC, who receive funding through the Welsh promotion grant distributed by the Welsh Government, will also be crucial in order to ensure there is no duplication of work, and that our efforts to protect and promote the language is going in the same direction.

The other main partners which have been identified include:

### Internal services:

Early Years  
Education Department  
Libraries  
Youth Service  
Business Services  
Economy and Communities  
Planning Department

Hunaniaith  
Menter Iaith Bangor  
Business World Officer (Welsh Government and Mentrau Iaith)  
Bangor University  
Mudiad Meithrin

Welsh for Kids  
Health Service – Betsi Cadwaladr  
Snowdonia National Park  
National Trust  
Urdd  
Ffermwyr Ifanc / YFC  
Grŵp Llandrillo Menai  
Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd  
Grŵp Cynefin  
Community and Town Councils  
Community establishments and providers

The annual work programme for the Promotion Plan (the initial Year 1 Work Plan will be published with this final draft) will contain details of the ideas we have for interventions and working together to increase the use of the Welsh language.

All this will be in addition to supporting the numerous activities and campaigns to promote the Welsh language that are implemented directly by communities themselves.

The aim is that the Welsh language, and the promotion of its use, becomes a natural part of policy and the implementation of economic and regeneration plans, planning, housing policy, education and integration and that the Welsh language and language planning is an essential part of developing plans, strategies, programmes, policies and activities provided and held in Gwynedd.

## **Initial Work Programme for the Welsh Language Promotion Plan in Gwynedd 2018-2023**

### **Introduction:**

This work programme is proposed as a starting point for implementing the priorities identified in the Promotion Plan. It highlights schemes that are currently a part of the Council's work and also gives suggestions for projects that could be developed, jointly with other organisations, over the period of the Plan.

This work programme will be a live document, which will be updated and amended as discussions and schemes develop. Details about the exact projects or collaboration commitments will be added as they become known, and as new areas and opportunities arise in discussions with partner organisations.

Therefore, under every priority area, we remind you of what we have stated in the Promotion Plan that we would like to see happening, and what steps we hope to take in order to increase the use of the Welsh language in that area.

## Priority Area 1 – The language of the family

### The vision...

- Better collaboration between partner agencies in order to ensure that Welsh-medium care providers are monitored and supported appropriately.
- A better understanding amongst parents of the value of transferring the language to their children, and of the benefits of multilingualism.
- An increase in the number of pre-school age children that have access to play opportunities through the medium of Welsh.
- An increase in the number of parents who learn some Welsh and use those acquired skills with their families.
- An increase in the number of children who come from homes where more than one language is spoken who can speak Welsh.

### Actions

- Establish collaboration and information-sharing arrangements on a county level for the Early Years field, with the aim of:
  - avoiding duplication and ensuring that resources are targeted appropriately
  - collaborating on a training programme for early years workers
  - developing ideas such as establishing a Language Charter for pre-school age care providers
  - identifying collaboration opportunities in order to increase Welsh-medium play and learning opportunities for the family.
- Offer training for care providers and providers of activities for pre-school age children and their parents in order to:
  - develop their understanding of the advantages of multilingualism and the way they can influence the attitudes of parents with whom they will come into contact
  - develop their understanding of how to support learners
  - develop bilingual introducing skills
- Offer support and collaboration with activity providers to increase the number of family activities offered through the medium of Welsh, and which give children and families opportunities to use and practise their Welsh in a wide variety of informal and supportive contexts.



### 3.2 Priority Area 2 – The language of learning

#### The vision...

- Schools that give the language prestige and value and encourage more use of the language as a medium for learning and socialising by continuing to implement the Language Charter and the Language Strategy.
- An increase in the number of young people that choose to study and receive qualifications through the medium of Welsh.
- More pupils continuing to improve their Welsh language skills in transferring from primary to secondary, and on to post-compulsory education.
- More extended learning opportunities offered to young people – in the form of work experience and apprenticeships with employers that give a prominent status to the Welsh language – which will develop young people’s understanding of the need for Welsh language skills in the workplace.

#### Actions

- Implement the current priorities of the Education Department’s plans which look at developing use of the Welsh language in an education and social context:
  1. Welsh in Education Strategic Plan
  2. Primary Schools Language Charter
  3. Secondary Sector Language Strategy
- Ensure that there are increasing opportunities for young people to gain qualifications and accreditations beyond the education provision and in various fields that will develop their Welsh-language skills.

This will be done by providing opportunities directly and also by influencing national providers and accreditors.
- Co-ordinate work with the Youth service to ensure that more extra-curricular and informal learning opportunities are offered through the medium of Welsh, consistently across the county.
- Develop a joint project between education providers and employers, in order to raise young people’s awareness about the need for Welsh-language skills for jobs at all levels, looking at securing formal and informal work experience, and develop an information sharing network between education providers and employers.

### 3.3 Priority Area 3 – the language of work and services

#### The vision...

- An increase in the number of residents who use the Welsh language in work and in using services – face to face and online
- An increased awareness amongst business owners and managers of the benefits of Welsh language skills in the workforce and the benefits of offering Welsh-medium services
- A better understanding and awareness of the opportunities provided by technology and resources to increase the use of the Welsh language and confidence in doing so within the workforce
- The Welsh language being given a central place in regional collaboration and in cross-county strategic plans.

#### Actions

- Collaborate on the Well-being Plan project through the Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board to encourage more people to use the language in their first contact with public services.
- Implement the Gwynedd Council Plan project with the intention of encouraging businesses to use the language when offering services. This will include businesses and event organisers across several sectors.
- Continue to collaborate with the Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board on projects that offer guidance and training to the primary care sector.
- Research potential opportunities to contribute to strengthening and developing growth sectors in the county, such as technology and app development, looking at developing young people's skills in this field.
- Provide training within the Council which will increase confidence levels and use of the Welsh language in work and look specifically at developing the language skills of staff in work fields which are considered frontline, sensitive ones:
  - Youth
  - Leisure
  - Care

### 3.4 Priority Area 4 – the language of the community

#### The vision...

- Residents who are confident using whichever skills they have in Welsh when living their daily lives in our communities.
- The Welsh language visible, in activities and in advertising and fewer English only activities held in communities.
- Different social and community factions, including less willing speakers of the language, being made to feel a part of the “Welsh community”.
- Working to ensure that more community events are inclusive – that learners and less confident speakers feel that they are supported in Welsh-medium activities.
- An increase in the number and percentage of the population that consider themselves fluent Welsh speakers.
- Community councils and groups aware of their potential role and are given support to arrange and hold activities to actively promote the Welsh language.
- Young people being encouraged to be community leaders by organising events that influence the language use of their peers.
- The Welsh language given a clear priority in economic, housing and planning schemes locally in order to ensure that any schemes and developments contribute in a positive way towards the efforts to safeguard and strengthen the position of the Welsh language in our communities.

#### Actions

- Improve collaboration between the Council and community groups in order to ensure that community stakeholders have a voice when determining where resources and intervention are directed.
- Hold regular sessions with councillors and representatives of community councils and organisations in order to raise awareness about their role in promoting the Welsh language within the community.
- Provide targeted intervention for specific areas, through the work of *Hunaniaith*, which will seek to:
  - Provide varied and consistent opportunities for families, young people and learners to come together to use the language in a variety of contexts
  - Offer support to community groups and organisations to arrange and hold activities
  - Offer support for businesses to make more prominent use of the Welsh language

- Look at ways we can influence and ensure that major activities held in the county use the language proactively and reflect the linguistic constitution of the county, by:
  - offering support to event organisers
  - monitoring language use at events which are funded or receive support by the Council or Welsh Government
- Strengthen our influence on the private sector through the planning process, including:
  - Securing the impact assessment arrangements (SPG) within the planning process in order to ensure that any developers understand the effect of their plans on the local community and set and implement appropriate mitigation measures.
  - Contribute expertise to external groups or forums in the context of major developments such as Wylfa, Horizon.
  - Develop an information-sharing system with community councils and the planning department (and the National Park) in order to ensure that information about change of use applications are referred promptly for support and guidance.

### 3.4 Priority Area 5 – Research and technology – setting the right foundations

#### The vision...

- More people willing to use the Welsh language when using technology
- Supporting growth in the technology sector by promoting new developments and developing the skills of young people in the field
- More public and education institutions using Welsh-medium software and technology
- Develop a better understanding of people's habits when using the Welsh language in order to be able to find new ways of influencing language practices

#### Actions

- Collaborate with Bangor University on developing the *Arfer* project – which looks at changing the language use patterns and practices of colleagues – in order to find new ways of influencing people's language practices and ensure that they have the confidence to use the language with colleagues.
- Facilitate the process of sharing information about research fields and about new findings or publications that contribute to our understanding of practices and changes in the field.
- Offer work experience opportunities to students in relevant courses in order to give a practical experience and contribute to developing future expertise in linguistic planning.
- Develop ideas for projects that will increase the use of the language in the context of technology.

# Agenda Item 10

<b>MEETING</b>	<b>FULL COUNCIL</b>
<b>DATE</b>	<b>4 OCTOBER 2018</b>
<b>TITLE</b>	<b>GWYNEDD COUNCIL ANNUAL IMPROVEMENT REPORT 2017-18</b>
<b>PURPOSE</b>	<b>PRESENTATION OF THE REPORT TO THE FULL COUNCIL</b>
<b>AUTHOR</b>	<b>GERAINT OWEN, HEAD OF CORPORATE SUPPORT</b>
<b>CABINET MEMBER</b>	<b>COUNCILLOR DYFRIG SIENCYN COUNCIL LEADER</b>
<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>	<b>ACCEPT THE REPORT</b>

## **1.0 BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The 2017-18 Gwynedd Council Annual Improvement Report by the Auditor General summarises the audit work undertaken in the Council by the Wales Audit Office since the publication of the last report in March 2017.
- 1.2 It should be noted that this report is not a full review of all the Council's arrangements or Services.
- 1.3 On the basis of the work undertaken by the Wales Audit Office and other regulators, the Auditor General states whether or not the Council is likely to make arrangements to ensure continuous improvement for 2018-19.
- 1.4 In the opinion of the Auditor, "The Council is meeting its statutory requirements in relation to continuous improvement" whilst adding "based on, and limited to, the work carried out by the Wales Audit Office and relevant regulators, the Auditor General believes that the Council is likely to comply with the requirements of the Local Government Measure (2009) during 2018-19".
- 1.5 The Report states that the Auditor General did not make any formal recommendations to improve but he did make some proposals for improvement as noted in the report.
- 1.6 Officers from the Wales Audit Office will give a presentation on the key points to the Council.
- 1.7 There will be an opportunity for members to ask questions to Wales Audit Office officers in relation to the Report's content.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION**

Members are asked to accept the Report.



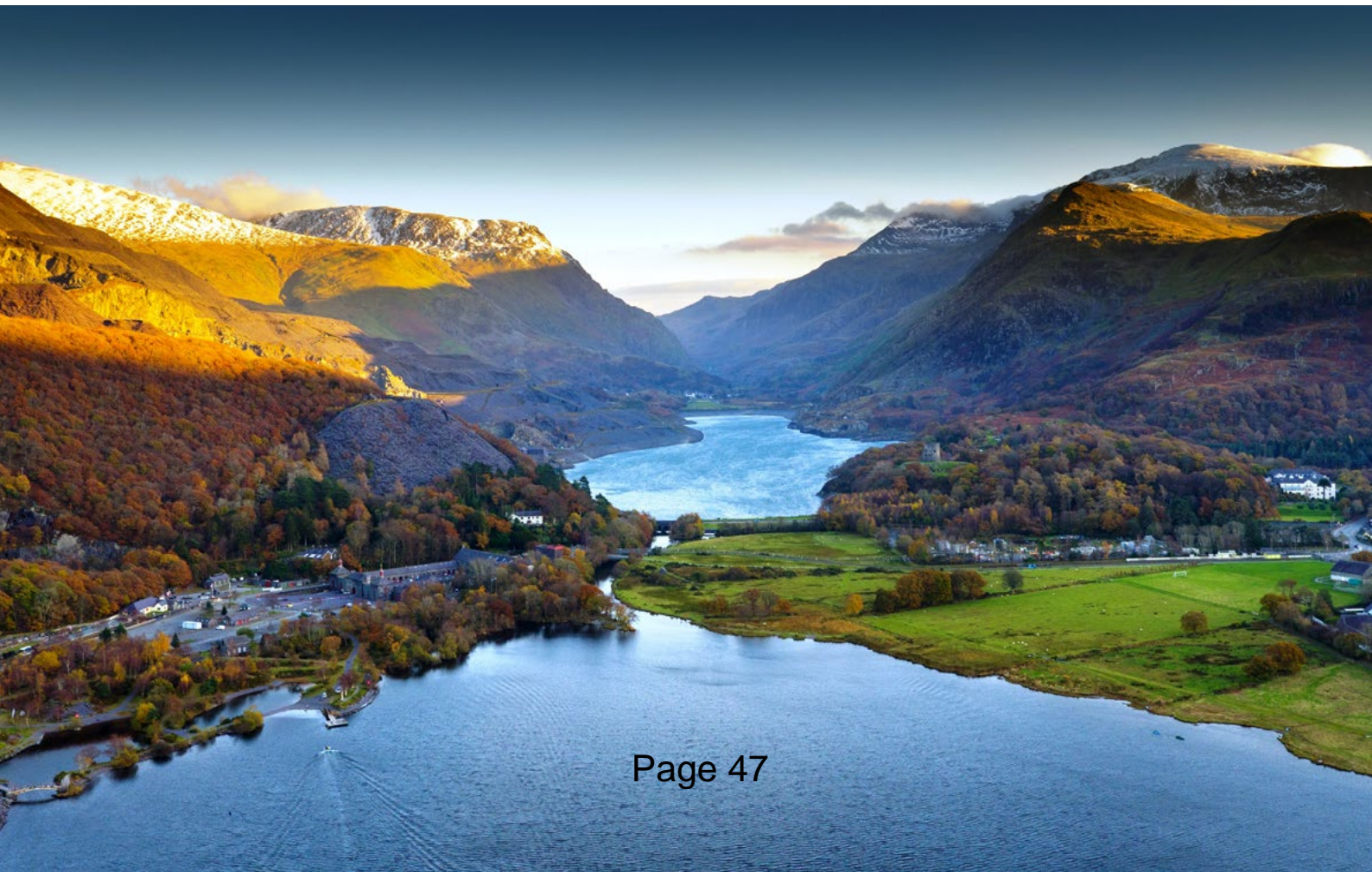
WALES AUDIT OFFICE  
SWYDDFA ARCHWILIO CYMRU

# Annual Improvement Report 2017-18

## Gwynedd Council

Issued: September 2018

Document reference: 753A2018-19



This Annual Improvement Report has been prepared on behalf of the Auditor General for Wales by Alan Hughes, Charlotte Owen, Paul Goodlad and Jeremy Evans under the direction of Huw Rees.

**Adrian Crompton**  
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The Auditor General is independent of government, and is appointed by Her Majesty the Queen. The Auditor General undertakes his work using staff and other resources provided by the Wales Audit Office Board, which is a statutory board established for that purpose and to monitor and advise the Auditor General. The Wales Audit Office is held to account by the National Assembly.

The Auditor General audits local government bodies in Wales, including unitary authorities, police, probation, fire and rescue authorities, national parks and community councils. He also conducts local government value for money studies and assesses compliance with the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009.

Beyond local government, the Auditor General is the external auditor of the Welsh Government and its sponsored and related public bodies, the Assembly Commission and National Health Service bodies in Wales.

The Auditor General and staff of the Wales Audit Office aim to provide public-focused and proportionate reporting on the stewardship of public resources and in the process provide insight and promote improvement.

We welcome correspondence and telephone calls in Welsh and English. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to delay. Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg a Saesneg. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

This document is also available in Welsh.



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# Summary report

## 2017-18 performance audit work

- 1 In determining the breadth of work undertaken during the year, we considered the extent of accumulated audit and inspection knowledge as well as other available sources of information including Gwynedd Council's (the Council) own mechanisms for review and evaluation. For 2017-18, we undertook improvement assessment work at all councils. We also undertook work at all councils in relation to the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, a service-user-perspective themed review and a review of overview and scrutiny arrangements. At some councils, we supplemented this work with local risk-based audits, identified in the Audit Plan for 2017-18.
- 2 The work carried out since the last Annual Improvement Report (AIR), including that of the relevant regulators, is set out in [Exhibit 1](#).

## The Council is meeting its statutory requirements in relation to continuous improvement

- 3 Based on, and limited to, the work carried out by the Wales Audit Office and relevant regulators, the Auditor General believes that the Council is likely to comply with the requirements of the Local Government Measure (2009) during 2018-19.

## Recommendations and proposals for improvement

- 4 Given the wide range of services provided by the Council and the challenges it is facing, it would be unusual if we did not find things that can be improved. The Auditor General is able to:
  - make proposals for improvement – if proposals are made to the Council, we would expect it to do something about them and we will follow up what happens;
  - make formal recommendations for improvement – if a formal recommendation is made, the Council must prepare a response to that recommendation within 30 working days;
  - conduct a special inspection, and publish a report and make recommendations; and
  - recommend to ministers of the Welsh Government that they intervene in some way.
- 5 During the course of the year, the Auditor General did not make any formal recommendations. However, we have made a number of proposals for improvement and these are repeated in this report. We will monitor progress against them and relevant recommendations made in our national reports ([Appendix 3](#)) as part of our improvement assessment work.

## Audit, regulatory and inspection work reported during 2017-18

### Exhibit 1: audit, regulatory and inspection work reported during 2017-18

Description of the work carried out since the last AIR, including that of the relevant regulators, where relevant.

Issue date	Brief description	Conclusions	Proposals for improvement
July 2018	<p><b>Service User Perspective Review</b></p> <p>To understand the 'service user perspective' at every council within Wales. In Gwynedd Council we reviewed the library service. In particular, whether the Council was using the experiences and aspirations of service users to inform the design and delivery of services.</p>	<p><b>While most people we spoke to are satisfied with the quality and accessibility of their library, a lack of coordinated engagement means that users do not feel as engaged as they could be in shaping the service.</b></p> <p>We came to this conclusion because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• some flaws in the Council's approach to reviewing the library service reduced the effectiveness of its engagement with service users and their ability to contribute to shaping the service;</li> <li>• most service users we spoke to were satisfied with the service they receive; and</li> <li>• service users can access the library services effectively but there is potential to improve the range of services offered by the mobile library service.</li> </ul>	<p>P1 Ensure there are effective arrangements to share information between library-based staff and centrally located library service management.</p> <p>P2 Communicate the outcomes of future consultations so that service users understand the issues raised and what the Council has done in response.</p> <p>P3 Improve the level of support provided to users of the mobile library service. In particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• where possible provide ICT equipment and internet access in mobile libraries to meet the needs of library service users; and</li> <li>• explore how the service might be used to enable rural residents to access other Council services.</li> </ul>

Issue date	Brief description	Conclusions	Proposals for improvement
August 2018	<p><b>‘Scrutiny: Fit for the Future?’ Review</b></p> <p>Review of how well placed Councils’ overview and scrutiny functions are to respond to current and future challenges.</p>	<p><b>The Council’s overview and scrutiny function has improved however, there is a need to further strengthen scrutiny arrangements in light of current and future challenges.</b> We came to this conclusion because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the Council acknowledges there are opportunities to strengthen scrutiny arrangements;</li> <li>better planning of scrutiny activity, using a greater range of inputs and more innovative methods of delivery would increase scrutiny effectiveness; and</li> <li>the Council reviews its scrutiny function annually, the next review is scheduled for late 2018.</li> </ul>	<p>P1 Further develop scrutiny forward work programming to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a clear rationale for topic selection;</li> <li>be more outcome focussed; and</li> <li>ensure that the method of scrutiny is best suited to the topic area and the outcome desired, and consider more innovative methods for undertaking scrutiny activity.</li> </ul> <p>P2 Review the type of scrutiny support required to enable the scrutiny function to respond to current and future challenges.</p> <p>P3 Clarify the role of scrutiny committee members and officers in the service performance review meetings, ensuring that committee members challenge service performance appropriately and hold officers to account.</p>

Issue date	Brief description	Conclusions	Proposals for improvement
November 2017	<p><b>Annual Audit Letter 2016-17</b></p> <p>Letter summarising the key messages arising from the Auditor General's statutory responsibilities under the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 and his reporting responsibilities under the Code of Audit Practice. The Annual Audit Letter is in <a href="#">Appendix 2</a> of this report.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council complied with its responsibilities relating to financial reporting and use of resources;</li> <li>• The Auditor General is satisfied that the Council has appropriate arrangements in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources;</li> <li>• The Auditor General issued a certificate confirming that the audit of the accounts has been completed on 29 September 2017; and</li> <li>• To date my work on behalf of the Auditor General on the certification of grant claims and returns has not identified significant issues that would impact on the 2017-18 accounts or key financial systems.</li> </ul>	None

Issue date	Brief description	Conclusions	Proposals for improvement
<b>Local risk-based performance audit</b>			
August 2017	<p><b>HR Information System Review.</b></p> <p>We looked at how the Council was mitigating the risk associated with the in-house development.</p>	<p>The Council's in-house HR system is likely to meet the Council's needs, now and in the future, but whilst development risks are being managed, project management arrangements need strengthening.</p> <p>We came to this conclusion because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the Council has mitigated the risks associated with development skills and resources; and</li> <li>project management arrangements are in place, but these are not comprehensive or mature enough.</li> </ul>	<p>P1 Review and strengthen project management arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a formal Project Initiation Document, based on the Project Board Terms of Reference, containing reference to all key project activities and documentation.</li> <li>Clarify the project timeline to avoid the risk of 'always developing – never getting there'.</li> <li>Review the layout of the project risk matrix to reduce the potential to mark all risks as medium.</li> <li>Establish a formal Communications Strategy or Plan and publish regular highlight reports. Involve the Council's Communications Team in identifying a suitable name or brand identity for System Swyddi Gwynedd (SGG) and the HR systems suite.</li> <li>Establish a formal benefit realisation programme so the aims of the development project can be properly evaluated.</li> </ul> <p>P2 Review technology options within the project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve access to enable more staff (for example those remotely based) to engage with the system.</li> <li>Network with other councils to gather and share practice examples.</li> <li>Consider a cloud implementation.</li> </ul>
November 2017	<p><b>Wales Audit Office annual assessment of performance audit</b></p> <p>Review of the Council's published performance assessment.</p>	<p>The Council has complied with its statutory improvement reporting duties.</p>	None

Issue date	Brief description	Conclusions	Proposals for improvement
<b>Improvement planning and reporting</b>			
April 2017	<b>Wales Audit Office annual improvement plan audit</b> Review of the Council's published plans for delivering on improvement objectives.	The Council has complied with its statutory improvement planning duties.	None
November 2017	<b>Wales Audit Office annual assessment of performance audit</b> Review of the Council's published performance assessment.	The Council has complied with its statutory improvement reporting duties.	None
<b>Reviews by inspection and regulation bodies</b>			
No reviews by inspection and regulation bodies have taken place during the time period covered in this report.			



# Appendices

## Appendix 1 – Status of this report

The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 (the Measure) requires the Auditor General to undertake a forward-looking annual improvement assessment, and to publish an annual improvement report, for each improvement authority in Wales. Improvement authorities (defined as local councils, national parks, and fire and rescue authorities) have a general duty to 'make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of [their] functions'.

The annual improvement assessment considers the likelihood that an authority will comply with its duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement. The assessment is also the main piece of work that enables the Auditor General to fulfil his duties. Staff of the Wales Audit Office, on behalf of the Auditor General, produce the annual improvement report. The report discharges the Auditor General's duties under section 24 of the Measure, by summarising his audit and assessment work in a published annual improvement report for each authority. The report also discharges his duties under section 19 to issue a report certifying that he has carried out an improvement assessment under section 18 and stating whether (as a result of his improvement plan audit under section 17) he believes that the authority has discharged its improvement planning duties under section 15.

The Auditor General may also, in some circumstances, carry out special inspections (under section 21), which will be reported to the authority and Ministers, and which he may publish (under section 22). An important ancillary activity for the Auditor General is the co-ordination of assessment and regulatory work (required by section 23), which takes into consideration the overall programme of work of all relevant regulators at an improvement authority. The Auditor General may also take account of information shared by relevant regulators (under section 33) in his assessments.

## Appendix 2 – Annual Audit Letter

Dilwyn Williams  
Cllr Dyfrig Seincyn  
Gwynedd Council,  
Shirehall Street  
Caernarfon  
LL55 1SH

**Date issued:** 28 November 2017

Dear Dilwyn and Dyfrig,

### Annual Audit Letter Gwynedd Council 2016-17

This letter summarises the key messages arising from the Auditor General for Wales's (Auditor General's) statutory responsibilities under the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 and my reporting responsibilities under the Code of Audit Practice.

**The Council complied with its responsibilities relating to financial reporting and use of resources.**

It is the Council's responsibility to:

- put systems of internal control in place to ensure the regularity and lawfulness of transactions and to ensure that its assets are secure;
- maintain proper accounting records;
- prepare a Statement of Accounts in accordance with relevant requirements; and
- establish and keep under review appropriate arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

The Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 requires the Auditor General to:

- provide an audit opinion on the accounting statements;
- review the Council's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources; and
- issue a certificate confirming that I have completed the audit of the accounts

Local authorities in Wales prepare their accounting statements in accordance with the requirements of the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom. This Code is based on International Financial Reporting Standards. On 29 September 2017 the Auditor General issued an unqualified audit opinion on the accounting statements confirming that they present a true and fair view of the Council's and the Pension Fund's financial position and transactions. The Auditor General's report is contained within the Statement of Accounts. The key matters arising from the accounts audit (for both the Council and Pension Fund) were reported to members of the Audit Committee in the Audit of Financial Statements report on the 28 September 2017, and the Auditor General does not need to bring anything to your attention in this letter.

It is also worth noting that the Council lead on the preparation of the accounts of the GwE Joint Committee and also prepared Annual Returns for the Gwynedd Harbours, the Special Educational Needs Joint Committee (SEN) and the Joint Planning Policy Joint Committee (JPP). On 29 September 2017:

- The Auditor General issued an unqualified opinion on GwE Joint Committee's accounts confirming that they present a true and fair view of the Committee's financial position and transactions; and
- The Auditor General confirmed that the information contained in the annual returns for Gwynedd Harbours and the SEN and JPP Joint Committees was in accordance with proper practices.

The key matters arising from these audits were reported to the relevant committees where appropriate. Again, the Auditor General does not need to bring anything to your attention in this letter.

The Auditor General is satisfied that the Council has appropriate arrangements in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

The Auditor general's consideration of the Council's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness has been based on the audit work undertaken on the accounts as well as placing reliance on the work completed under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009. The Auditor General will highlight areas where the effectiveness of these arrangements has yet to be demonstrated or where improvements could be made when he publishes his Annual Improvement Report.

The Auditor General issued a certificate confirming that the audit of the accounts has been completed on 29 September 2017.

To date my work on behalf of the Auditor General on the certification of grant claims and returns has not identified significant issues that would impact on the 2017-18 accounts or key financial systems.

The financial audit fee for 2016-17 is expected to be in accordance with the agreed fee set out in the Annual Audit Plan.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "I C Howse".

**Ian Howse**

**For and on behalf of the Auditor General for Wales**

## Appendix 3 – National report recommendations 2017-18

### Exhibit 2: national report recommendations 2017-18

Summary of proposals for improvement relevant to local government, included in national reports published by the Wales Audit Office, since publication of the last AIR.

Date of report	Title of review	Recommendation
June 2017	<a href="#"><u>Savings Planning in Councils in Wales</u></a>	The report did not include any recommendations or proposals for improvement, although proposals for improvement were included in local reports issued to each Council.
October 2017	<a href="#"><u>Public Procurement in Wales</u></a>	<p>The report contained seven recommendations. Six of the recommendations were for the Welsh Government, one of the recommendations was for public bodies:</p> <p>R3 It was clear from our sampling that some procurement strategies are out of date and there has also been a mixed response to new policy and legislation, such as the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. We recommend that public bodies review their procurement strategies and policies during 2017-18 and on an annual basis thereafter to ensure that they reflect wider policy and legislative changes and support continuous improvement.</p>
October 2017	<a href="#"><u>Good governance when determining significant service changes – National Summary</u></a>	The report did not include any recommendations or proposals for improvement, although proposals for improvement were included in local reports issued to each Council. The report was designed primarily to provide insight, share existing practice and prompt further conversations and discussions between councils and other organisations.
December 2017	<a href="#"><u>Local Government Financial Reporting 2016-17</u></a>	The report did not include any recommendations or proposals for improvement.

Date of report	Title of review	Recommendation
January 2018	<a href="#"><u>How Local Government manages demand – Homelessness</u></a>	<p>R1 Implementing the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 requires local authorities to develop services which are focussed on preventing homelessness and reducing demand. These are very different to traditional casework led homelessness services, and prevention work requires new skills and early interaction with users and potential users. We found local authorities' progress in revising and strengthening services is variable (paragraphs 1.12 to 1.20). <b>We recommend that local authorities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure their staff are sufficiently skilled to deal with the new demands of mediating, problem solving, negotiating and influencing with homeless people; and</li> <li>• review and reconfigure their services to engage more effectively with homeless and potentially homeless people to prevent homelessness.</li> </ul> <p>R2 The Welsh Government provided funding to support local authorities to implement the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 and this funding has been critical in enabling new preventative services to be developed. The funding is in place until 2019-20 but authorities need to ensure they use headspace provided by these resources to revise their services to deliver their responsibilities in the future (paragraphs 1.21 to 1.28). <b>We recommend that local authorities review their funding of homelessness services to ensure that they can continue to provide the widest possible preventative approach needed. Reviews should consider use of Supporting People as well as General Council fund monies to support delivery of the authority's homelessness duties.</b></p> <p>R3 How services are configured and managed at the first point of contact can significantly influence how effective local authorities are in managing and reducing demand. Easy to access services which maximise usage, avoid gate keeping and focus on early solutions can significantly improve the prospects for successful homelessness prevention. We found that some authority point of entry systems are poorly designed which reduces the authority's prospects for early intervention to prevent homelessness from occurring (paragraphs 2.4 to 2.11). <b>We recommend that local authorities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• design services to ensure there is early contact with service users;</li> <li>• use 'triage' approaches to identify and filter individuals seeking help to determine the most appropriate response to address their needs; and</li> <li>• test the effectiveness of first point of contact services to ensure they are fit for purpose.</li> </ul>

Date of report	Title of review	Recommendation
January 2018	<a href="#"><u>How Local Government manages demand – Homelessness</u></a>	<p>R4 Establishing clear standards of service that set out what the authority provides and is responsible for is critical to ensuring people know what they are entitled to receive and what they need to resolve themselves. We found that authorities are not always providing clear, concise and good quality information to help guide people to find the right advice quickly and efficiently (paragraphs 2.12 to 2.17). <b>We recommend that local authorities publish service standards that clearly set out what their responsibilities are and how they will provide services to ensure people know what they are entitled to receive and what they must do for themselves. Service standards should:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be written in plain accessible language.</li> <li>• be precise about what applicants can and cannot expect, and when they can expect resolution.</li> <li>• clearly set out the applicant's role in the process and how they can help the process go more smoothly and quickly.</li> <li>• be produced collaboratively with subject experts and include the involvement of people who use the service(s).</li> <li>• effectively integrate with the single assessment process.</li> <li>• offer viable alternatives to the authority's services.</li> <li>• set out the appeals and complaints processes. These should be based on fairness and equity for all involved and available to all.</li> </ul> <p>R5 Local authorities need to design services to engage with service users effectively and efficiently, but current standards are too variable to ensure service users are getting access to the advice they need (paragraphs 2.18 to 2.24). <b>To improve current performance we recommend that local authorities make better use of their websites to help manage demand by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• testing the usability and effectiveness of current website information using our lines of enquiry set out in Appendix 5;</li> <li>• increasing and improving the range, quality and coverage of web based information; making better use of online applications; and</li> <li>• linking more effectively to information from specialist providers and advice specialists, such as Citizens Advice.</li> </ul> <p>R6 The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 introduces a new duty on social services and housing associations to collaborate with local authority homelessness services in preventing homelessness. We found that these arrangements are not operating effectively and service responses to prevent homelessness and assist homeless people are not always being provided, nor are they consistently effective (paragraphs 3.13 to 3.25). <b>We recommend that local authorities set out and agree their expectations of partners identifying how they will work together to alleviate homelessness. The agreement should be reviewed regularly and all partners' performance reviewed to identify areas for improvement.</b></p>

Date of report	Title of review	Recommendation
January 2018	<a href="#"><u>How Local Government manages demand – Homelessness</u></a>	<p>R7 Local authorities monitoring systems and evaluation approaches to ensure compliance with their responsibility under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty are not working as well as they should (paragraph 3.35 to 3.39). <b>We recommend that local authorities address weaknesses in their equalities monitoring, and ensure that their homelessness service accurately records and evaluates appropriate data to demonstrate equality of access for all service users that the local authority has a duty towards.</b></p> <p>R8 Managing demand can be challenging for local authorities. There are some clear lessons to be learnt with regard to the implementation of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 and homelessness prevention duties that can be applied to managing demand in other services (paragraphs 4.24 to 4.27). <b>We recommend that local authorities use the checklist set out in Appendix 10 to undertake a self-assessment on services, to help identify options to improve how they can help manage demand.</b></p>



Date of report	Title of review	Recommendation
February 2018	<a href="#">Housing Adaptations</a>	<p>The report contained nine recommendations. One of the recommendations was for the Welsh Government, eight of the recommendations were for local authorities and/or delivery organisations:</p> <p>R1 There are many sources of funding and policies for adaptations, which results in disabled and older people receiving very different standards of service (paragraphs 1.5 to 1.9). To address these discrepancies <b>we recommend that the Welsh Government set standards for all adaptations to ensure disabled and older people receive the same standard of service irrespective of where they live, who their landlord is and whether they own their own home.</b></p> <p>R2 Most public bodies are clear on how their work on adaptations can positively impact on disabled and older people, and have set suitable aims that provide focus for action. For adaptations, having the right strategic goals also establishes a clear basis for decision-making on who should be prioritised for services and how and where to use resources. However, we found that current policy arrangements have a number of deficiencies and public bodies are not maximising the benefit of their investment (paragraphs 3.8 to 3.15). <b>We recommend that local authorities work with partner agencies (health bodies, housing associations and Care and Repair) to strengthen their strategic focus for the provision of adaptations by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• setting appropriate strategic objectives for adaptations that focus on wellbeing and independence;</li> <li>• improving the quality of information on the demand for adaptations by using a wide range of data to assess need including drawing on and using information from partners who work in the local-authority area; and</li> <li>• linking the system for managing and delivering adaptations with adapted housing policies and registers to make best use of already adapted homes.</li> </ul> <p>R3 Ensuring that all those who might need an adaptation have all the information they need in order to apply for and receive an adaptation is important. Good-quality and accessible information is therefore essential for delivery organisations to demonstrate fair access and transparency. However, we identified weaknesses in the quality and coverage of public information relating to housing adaptations (paragraphs 2.6 to 2.15). <b>We recommend that delivery organisations provide information on housing adaptations in both Welsh and English, and accessible formats including braille, large fonts, audio versions and other languages. Information should be promoted widely via a range of media including social media, websites and published information, and also through key partners. Preferably, information should be produced jointly and policies aligned between delivery bodies to improve coverage and usage.</b></p>

Date of report	Title of review	Recommendation
February 2018	<a href="#">Housing Adaptations</a>	<p>R4 Given the wide number of routes into services, delivery organisations need to ensure they have robust systems to deal effectively and quickly with applications. However, we found that the processes used by delivery organisations vary widely and often create difficulties for disabled and older people seeking assistance (paragraphs 2.16 to 2.19). <b>We recommend that delivery organisations streamline applications by creating single comprehensive application forms covering all organisations within a local-authority area that are available via partners and online.</b></p> <p>R5 Delivery of adaptations can be delayed by a variety of factors (paragraphs 2.20 to 2.33). To improve timeliness in delivery <b>we recommend that:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Welsh Government reviews whether local authorities should continue to use the means test for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs);</li> <li>• local authorities provide or use home improvement agency services to support disabled and older people to progress their DFG applications efficiently;</li> <li>• delivery organisations work with planning authorities to fast track and streamline adaptations that require approvals;</li> <li>• delivery organisations use Trusted Assessors to undertake less complex adaptation assessments; and</li> <li>• the Welsh Government streamlines its approval processes for Physical Adaptation Grants (PAGs).</li> </ul>

Date of report	Title of review	Recommendation
February 2018	<a href="#">Housing Adaptations</a>	<p>R6 Most local authorities, housing associations and Care and Repair agencies have established processes to appoint, oversee and manage builder and/or contractor performance. However, we found wide variations in how delivery organisations arrange, contract and deliver building works (paragraphs 2.37 to 2.44). <b>We recommend that delivery organisations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• introduce formal systems for accrediting contractors to undertake adaptations. These should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– standards of customer care such as keeping to appointments, keeping the site tidy, controlling noise etc;</li> <li>– vetting of financial standing, tax and VAT status;</li> <li>– promoting good health and safety practices;</li> <li>– requiring the use of warranty schemes;</li> <li>– ensuring that adequate insurance is held; and</li> <li>– requiring references.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• use framework agreements and partnered contracts to deliver adaptations;</li> <li>• address weaknesses in the contracting of adaptations, updating Schedule of Rates used to tender work and undertaking competitive tendering to support value for money in contracting;</li> <li>• develop effective systems to manage and evaluate contractor performance by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– setting an appropriate range of information to judge performance and delivery of works covering timeliness of work; quality of work; applicant/tenant feedback; cost of work (including variations); health and safety record; and customer feedback;</li> <li>– regularly reporting and evaluating performance to identify opportunities to improve services; and</li> <li>– providing formal feedback to contractors on their performance covering key issues such as client satisfaction, level and acceptability of variations, right first-time work, post-inspection assessment and completion within budget and on time.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Date of report	Title of review	Recommendation
February 2018	<a href="#">Housing Adaptations</a>	<p>R7 Maximising impact and value for money in provision of adaptations requires effective joint working between housing organisations and health and social care services to ensure the needs of often very vulnerable people can be met, and their quality of life improved. However, our findings highlight that delivery organisations continue to have a limited strategic focus on adaptations, concentrating on organisational specific responses rather than how best collectively to meet the needs of disabled or older people (paragraphs 3.16 to 3.21). <b>We recommend that local authorities work with partner agencies (health bodies, housing associations and Care and Repair) to develop and improve joint working to maximise both take-up and the benefits of adaptations in supporting independence by pooling of resources, co-locating staff and creating integrated delivery teams</b></p> <p>R8 Most public bodies recognise the value of adaptations in reducing the risk of falls, preventing hospital admissions and speeding up discharge from hospital. However, the importance of adaptations is not always reflected in local partnership arrangements and outside of Occupational Therapists, health professionals noted that the different local-authority and housing-association systems for administering, approving and delivering adaptations are difficult to navigate (paragraphs 3.22 to 3.24). <b>To enhance take-up and usage of adaptations with health bodies we recommend that delivery organisations jointly agree and publish joint service standards for delivery of adaptations within each local-authority area. The service standards should clearly set out how each agency approaches delivery of adaptations and how they will provide services to ensure people know what they are entitled to receive. Service Standards should:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be written in plain accessible language;</li> <li>• be precise about what people can and cannot expect to receive;</li> <li>• be produced collaboratively to cover all adaptations services within an area;</li> <li>• set out the eligibility for the different funding streams, application and assessment processes, timescales and review processes; and</li> <li>• offer the viable options and alternatives for adaptations including linking with adapted housing registers to maximise use of already adapted homes.</li> </ul>

Date of report	Title of review	Recommendation
April 2018	<a href="#"><u>Speak my language: Overcoming language and communication barriers in public services</u></a>	<p>Ensuring that people who face language and communication barriers can access public services</p> <p>R1 Public bodies are required to ensure that people can access the services they need. To take account of the requirements of the 2010 Equality Act and other legislation, <b>we recommend that public bodies regularly review the accessibility of their services to people who do not speak English or Welsh as a main language including Deaf people who use sign language. This assessment can include using our checklist.</b></p> <p>Developing interpretation and translation services in Wales</p> <p>R2 Our work with public bodies, interpretation and translation service providers and service users has identified some challenges for interpretation and translation services. <b>We recommend that the Welsh Government work with public bodies, representative groups and other interested parties to make sure that:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the supply of interpreters is sufficient especially for languages in high demand such as BSL and Arabic;</li> <li>• interpreters with specialist training are available to work in mental health services and with people who have experienced trauma or violence; and</li> <li>• quality assurance and safeguarding procedures are in place.</li> </ul>
May 2018	<a href="#"><u>Reflecting on Year One: How Have Public Bodies Responded to the Well-being of Future Generations</u></a>	The report did not include any recommendations or proposals for improvement.

Date of report	Title of review	Recommendation
May 2018	<a href="#"><u>Strategic Commissioning of Accommodation Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities</u></a>	<p>R1 People with a learning disability have a right to live independently. The last 50 years have seen significant changes in the provision of accommodation and support. Service provision has moved to a model that enables people to live in the community in ordinary houses throughout Wales (paragraphs 1.3 to 1.10). <b>We recommend that local authorities continue to focus on preventing people becoming dependent on more expensive placements in care homes by providing effective support at home and a range of step up accommodation by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improving the evaluation of prevention activity so local authorities understand what works well and why.</li> <li>• utilising the mapping of prevention services under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 that covers other agencies and service providers.</li> <li>• improving the signposting of additional help so carers and support networks can be more resilient and self-reliant. This should include encouraging carers to make long-term plans for care to maintain and protect their dependants' wellbeing.</li> <li>• sharing risk analysis and long-term planning data with other local authorities, service providers, and partners to agree a shared understanding of the range of options.</li> </ul> <p>R2 Population projections show that the number of people with a learning disability will increase in the future, and those aged over 65 and those with a moderate or severe learning disability will rise significantly (paragraphs 1.3 to 1.10). <b>We recommend that local authorities improve their approach to planning services for people with learning disabilities by building on the Regional Partnership Boards' population assessments for people with learning disabilities and agreeing future priorities.</b></p>

Date of report	Title of review	Recommendation
May 2018	<a href="#"><u>Strategic Commissioning of Accommodation Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities</u></a>	<p>R3 The Welsh Government produced guidance to local authorities, entitled 'developing a commissioning strategy for people with a learning disability' to support authorities in producing strategic plans for the commissioning of learning disability services. In conjunction with codes of practice developed following the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, the Welsh Government requires local authorities to develop integrated commissioning options with Local Health Board services. The aim is to provide a joined-up and cost-effective approach to the commissioning of services but our review highlighted weaknesses in current arrangements (paragraph 2.4 to 2.12). <b>We recommend that local authorities do more to integrate commissioning arrangements with partners and providers and take account of the work of the National Commissioning Board by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understanding the barriers that exist in stopping or hindering further integration;</li> <li>• improving the quality of joint strategic plans for learning disability services (see also paragraphs 3.11 to 3.14);</li> <li>• establishing investment models and sustainable financial structures, joint workforce planning and multi-year budgeting; and</li> <li>• developing appropriate governance and data sharing frameworks with key local partners that include a clear process for managing risk and failure.</li> </ul> <p>R4 Local authorities' engagement with people with learning disabilities and their carers is variable. Whilst many authority services have positive relationships with advocacy groups, some are less successful in involving these groups and carers in evaluating the quality of services (paragraph 2.18 to 2.20). <b>We recommend that local authorities do more to involve people with learning disabilities and their carers in care planning and agreeing pathways to further independence by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consistently including people with learning disabilities and their carers in the writing, monitoring and development of care plans;</li> <li>• systematically involving carers and advocacy groups in evaluating the quality of services;</li> <li>• involving people with learning disabilities in procurement processes; and</li> <li>• ensuring communications are written in accessible and appropriate language to improve the understanding and impact of guidance and information.</li> </ul>

Date of report	Title of review	Recommendation
May 2018	<a href="#"><u>Strategic Commissioning of Accommodation Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities</u></a>	<p>R5 Local Authorities could do more to involve service providers in commissioning and make the tendering process more effective by making it easier to navigate and more outcome focused. However, providers are not as effectively engaged as they should be (paragraphs 2.28 to 2.38). <b>We recommend that local authorities collaborate with providers, the third sector and suppliers in understanding challenges, sharing data, and pooling expertise by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>improving the quality, range, and accessibility of tendering information; and</li> <li>working with providers to shape local markets by coming to a common understanding of the opportunities, risks, and future priorities in providing learning disabilities services.</li> </ul> <p>R6 Most local authorities do not have effective arrangements to monitor and evaluate their commissioning of learning disability services (paragraphs 3.3 to 3.15). <b>We recommend that local authorities develop a more appropriate set of performance indicators and measures of success that make it easier to monitor and demonstrate the impact of service activity by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>co-designing measures, service and contract performance indicators with service providers, people with learning disabilities and their carers;</li> <li>ensure commissioners have sufficient cost and qualitative information on the full range of placement and care options available;</li> <li>equipping commissioners with data to demonstrate the long-term financial benefits of commissioning choices, this includes having the right systems and technology;</li> <li>integrating the outcomes and learning from reviews of care plans into performance measures;</li> <li>evaluating and then learning from different types of interventions and placements; and</li> <li>including learning disability services in local authority scrutiny reviews to challenge performance and identify improvements.</li> </ul>





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<b>Meeting</b>	<b>The Full Council</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>4 October 2018</b>
<b>Subject</b>	<b>Annual Report of the Standards Committee 2017/18</b>
<b>Author</b>	<b>Dr. Einir Young, Chair of the Standards Committee</b>
<b>Relevant Officer</b>	<b>Iwan Evans, Monitoring Officer</b>

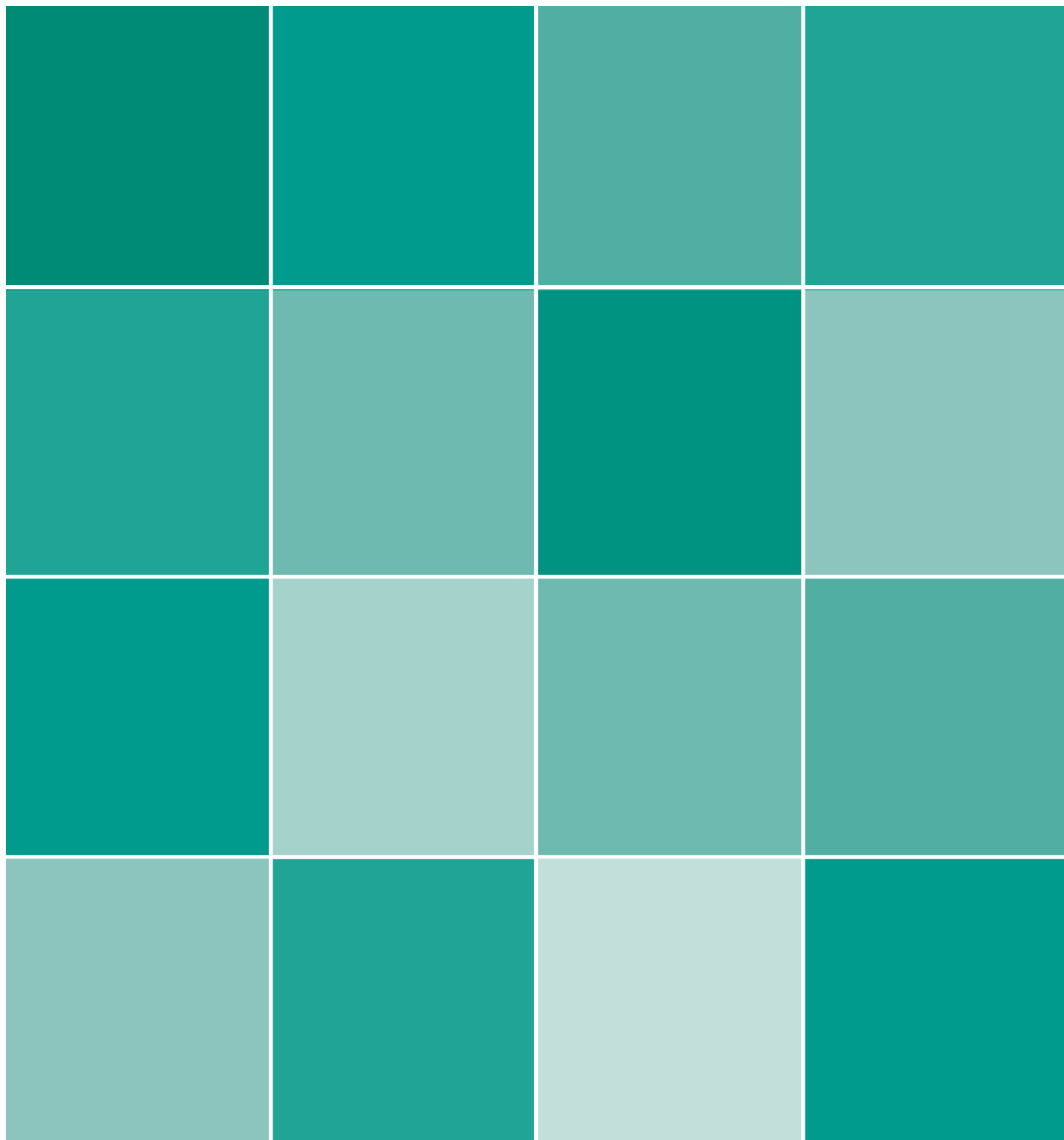
## **Background**

- 1.** The Standards Committee is a statutory committee, which has been established to to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by the councillors and co-opted members of Gwynedd Council, and community and town councils in Gwynedd.
- 2.** To this end the Committee has decided to publish an annual report in order to explain it's and promote its work. The Committee also decided that the report should be presented formally to a meeting of the full Council.
- 3.** The Committee therefore presents this report for the Council's attention. The report will also be circulated to all the community and town councils.

## **Recommendation**

- 4.** To accept the report

# ANNUAL REPORT OF THE GWYNEDD COUNCIL STANDARDS COMMITTEE 2017 - 2018



## FOREWORD BY THE CHAIR

Over the last two years we have been subjected daily to the after-shocks of the political earthquake that is Brexit. We are facing the unknown. Will our departure from the European Union be 'soft' or 'hard'? Is it going to be 'deal' or 'no-deal'. Attitudes are hardening on both sides of the leave-remain fault-line. In the midst of this uncertainty Gwynedd's residents, councillors and the Local Authority itself are required to pursue business as usual.

As an unwelcomed addition to the already onerous challenges some of those in authority, who should know better, are stirring a hornet's nest with their provocative views designed to feed prejudices and providing opportunity for the mass media to heap coals on the fire of hate and bigotry. The distinction between truth and untruths is blurring in new and alarming ways. How does society respond to statements such as 'truth isn't truth – facts are in the eye of the beholder'?

This is the storm that Cyngor Gwynedd and the Standards Committee has to navigate through.

The report presented this year is another short one. The Code of Practice was not breached. Some cases were referred to the Ombudsman but there were no hearings.

The committee is looking forward to another full programme of work over the coming year. We are fortunate to have four new members: three representing the Local Authority – Councillors Beth Lawton, Anne Lloyd-Jones and Dewi Roberts and one representing the Community Councils, Councillor Richard Parry Hughes. In the meantime we're sad to lose Jacqueline Hughes and thank her for her contribution since 2015.

It is not possible to end without thanking the Monitoring Officer and his team for their guidance and their ongoing work with the Local Authority and Community Councils.

*Dr Einir Young*  
*Chair of the Standards Committee*

## FOREWORD BY THE MONITORING OFFICER

The report again conveys a picture that most County, Town and Community councillors maintain a high standard of behaviour in Gwynedd. This is the face of a difficult context in terms of decisions and resources. Although there is a list of complaints made to the Ombudsman, it must be borne in mind that this is to be evaluated against not only Gwynedd Council but also all the Town and Community councils (64). Naturally, maintaining this system requires work, and a programme of raising awareness and training is in place, together with a team that is available to provide advice and support. One aspect to highlight in respect of complaints made to the Ombudsman, is the impact of implementing a public interest test on decisions to investigate. This means that the threshold for starting an investigation has, in practice, been raised, and that to justify further interference, there needs to be shown, for example, particular severity of behaviour, a particular consequence or impact, or a pattern of impropriety. Here the challenge is to communicate with, and support complainants, and to ensure that the appropriate standard of conduct expected from their elected representatives is maintained whether or not there is an investigation.

*Iwan Evans  
Monitoring Officer  
Gwynedd Council*

# INTRODUCTION

The Committee was established in 2001 under the Local Government Act 2000. The main role of the Committee is to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by the councillors and co-opted members of Gwynedd Council, and community and town councils in Gwynedd. It does so in many ways:

- Assisting the councillors and co-opted members to follow the Members' Code of Conduct
- Advising the authority regarding adopting or amending the Members' Code of Conduct
- Monitoring the implementation of the Members' Code of Conduct
- Advising, training or arranging training for councillors and co-opted members on matters relating to the Code of Conduct
- Determining complaints referred to it by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales that members have breached the Code of Conduct
- Considering applications made by members for dispensations to allow them to participate in discussions despite them having a prejudicial interest under the Code
- Considering complaints referred to it under Gwynedd Council's local resolution procedure.
- Overseeing the Gwynedd Council Members Gifts and Hospitality Policy.

## MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Though the Standards Committee is one of the committees of Gwynedd Council, the majority of its membership does not have any connection with the Council or local government ('Independent Members'). It also has a member who represents the interests of the community councils ('Community Committee Member'), as well as three elected members from Gwynedd Council. The Chair and Vice-chair of the Committee must be Independent Members.

### Independent Members



**Margaret E Jones (member since 2012)**

Originally from Llandrillo yn Rhos, Margaret has spent most of her life in Chwilog. She taught at Ysgol Abersoch for 32 years, including 14 as headmistress. She is a deacon in Eglwys yr Annibynwyr Siloh, Chwilog, was Chairman of the Council of the Union of Welsh Independents for 3 years and is also a former President of the Union. She was a member of Gwynedd Community Health Council and Vice Chairman until the reorganisation in 2010. She is an active member of the Chwilog Eisteddfod and in charge of the

Chairing Ceremony.



**Dr Einir Young (member since 2012)**

Born in the Rhondda and raised in Llanelli and Cwmtwrch Einir has been living in Gwynedd for almost thirty years. She lived in California for a while and has travelled extensively in Africa mainly, working with marginal communities in semi-arid regions. Wales is her current priority but the challenges faced by communities are similar. We need a long term vision and plan, to ensure that the actions we take are for good or prevent things from getting worse. Integration and collaboration is critical and possibly more important of all to

involve everyone. These are the principles are encapsulated in the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act and as Bangor University's Director of Sustainability Einir and her Sustainability Lab team are promoting the ways of working promoted in the Act across the institution and beyond. Maintaining standards is as important to sustainability as recycling and saving energy and Einir Welcomes the opportunity to contribute to and chair Gwynedd's Standards Committee.

Amongst her many interests Einir is a passionate walker and she, her sister and her dog are currently walking the Wales Coastal Path and has reached Aber Llydan in Pembrokeshire. They are also walking the Snowdonia Slate Trail.





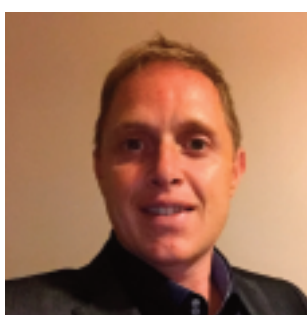
**Jacqueline Hughes (member since 2015)**

Jackie lives in Nantlle with her husband Ian, 3 daughters, grand daughter and a very lively dog. Originally from the Wirral, she qualified as a diagnostic radiographer in 1987 after studying at Guys Hospital School of Radiography. After settling in North Wales with her young family, she joined the staff at Ysbyty Gwynedd. Jackie's career in Bangor has advanced both as a radiographer and as an industrial relations representative. She is currently the Staff Side Chair for the Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board as well as being the local society representative for most of the radiographers in North Wales. She has been President of the Society and College of Radiographers and was instrumental in developing the response to the Francis Report, and subsequently a new code of conduct for radiographers. She believes that any one working in public life must maintain a high level of personal standards in order to be credible to the public.



**David Wareing (member since 2015)**

In 2014 David relocated from Lancashire to Groeslon following his retirement from Merseyside Police. He served for 26 years in a variety of roles with his last posting being to the Force Operations Department at HQ. This position involved the planning and delivery of large-scale public events, public safety during major Police operations and the reduction of police support to outside agencies through greater partnership working. David specialised in risk assessment and ensuring compliance of relevant Health and Safety legislation working within the legal framework. David represented Merseyside Police on all five Safety Advisory Groups that covered the Force Area. He firmly believes that the actions of those in public office must be both transparent and accountable.



**Aled Jones (member since 2016)**

Aled is originally from Lampeter, Ceredigion. He read Welsh and Geography at Aberystwyth University. Having graduated in 1999, he moved to Caernarfon to work for Cymen translation company. He became a joint-owner of the company in 2007 and now heads a team of 20 members of staff and employs over 15 other freelance translators. He lives in Bangor with Tegwen, and their two children Cai and Beca. He has a keen interest in sport and can often be seen on the touchline supporting Bethesda Rugby Club and Bangor City Football Club. As a result of his work as a simultaneous translator he is privy to observe conduct and standards at all levels of governance and to identify best practice.

## Community Committee Member

### Councillor Richard Parry Hughes (member since 2017)



Richard was educated at Llanaelhaearn farm and went to Pwllheli Grammar School, Glynllifon Agricultural College, and Seale Hayne College (Plymouth University). He has a degree in Farm Management. He worked for a vet partnership in Chwillog for three years and as a part-time lecturer at Glynllifon College, before buying the Upper Penfras Llwyndyrys farm where his family had been tenants for over three hundred years. He is married to Eleri and they have three sons. A former leader of Gwynedd Council, he still farms. He has extensive experience of committees, holding positions as chair of the Wales Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs before being elected as a member of public bodies. He served as a member of Gwynedd County Council from

1992 to 1996 and was a member of Gwynedd Council from 1996 to 2008. He led Gwynedd Council from 2003 to 2008 and was the Welsh Local Government Association spokesman on Environment and Planning during this period. He is an enthusiastic member of the Llwyndyrys Drama Company and a supporter of many other local societies such as Antur Aelhaearn and Friends of Carnguwch Church. He works as a voluntarily as a caseworker for the Farm Community Network. He is a member of Llannor Community Council since 1992.

## Gwynedd Council Members

### Councillor Dewi Roberts (member since 2017)



Dewi lives in Llanengan near Abersoch with his wife Bethan, and they have 5 children who are all grown up. He was an engineer and a lectured in engineering at Bangor Technical College before joining North Wales Police. There he worked as a Detective, locally, regionally and nationally, before retiring after 29 years of service.

He was elected in May 2017 as gwynedd Councillor representing Abersoch. Since his election he has chaired the Democratic Service Committee, is Vice Chair of the Care Scrutiny Committee, Chair of the Dwyfor Area Committee, a member of the Audit and Governance Committee and Vice Chair of the Gwynedd Community Health Council.

As well as being a member of the Standards Committee, he is also a member of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education, the Warden of Llanengan Church and sits on the Church Parish Council. He also serves as Governor of Ysgol Abersoch and Ysgol Botwnnog.



#### **Councillor Beth Lawton (member since 2017)**

Beth lives in Brynchrug and owns a local factory. She is a County Councilor for the Brynchrug / Llanfihangel area which includes the village of Brynchrug and Abergynolwyn. She is also a Community Councillor and chair of the School Governors of Craig y Deryn. She is active on several community-based committees including the Abergynolwyn Carnival, Brynchrug Rural Fair, Tywyn Hospital Appeal Committee and many others. She is chair of the Gwynedd Council Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee and is a director of the new leisure company.



#### **Councillor Anne Lloyd-Jones (member since 2017)**

Anne lives and runs a farm tourism business in Tywyn and has represented Tywyn on Gwynedd Council since 1995 and prior to that was a member of Meirionnydd District Council for eight years. She was first elected as a member of Tywyn town Council in 1985 and became the first Lady Mayor in 1991, and again in 2004, and was Chairman of Gwynedd Council in 2009. She is the former Chairman of Gwynedd Council's Planning Committee and is a founder member of the management Board of Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd. She was a member of Meirionnydd Community Health Council, and is the present

Chairman of Tywyn and District Hospital Appeal Fund.

She is a member and past Chairman of Ysgol Penybryn and a member on the Governing body of Ysgol Uwchradd Tywyn.

Anne was Chairman of Mid Wales Tourism from 2001-2016, was a founder member and past President and Treasurer of the Tywyn Inner Wheel Club and has been the Treasurer of the local branch of the NSPCC since 1989.

Anne is married to John and they have three daughters and twin granddaughters.

## **The Monitoring Officer**

The Council's Monitoring Officer, Iwan Evans, along with officers from the Legal Service and the Democratic Service support the Standards Committee in its work. The Monitoring Officer has a statutory role to ensure that the Council, its members and its officers act appropriately and lawfully.

#### **Contact Details**

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# THE COMMITTEE'S WORK DURING 2016-2017

The Committee's work over the year has included the following (the Committee's full work programme can be seen in **Appendix 1**):

## **Cases heard by the Standards Committee**

No complaints that elected members had breached the Code of Conduct were referred to the Committee during the year

## **Other Complaints**

The Committee is also informed of those complaints not referred to it for decision. Summaries can be found in **Appendix 2**.

## **Dispensations**

The Code of Conduct for Members provides that a councillor cannot participate in a discussion if he/she has a 'prejudicial interest'. However, a member has a right to apply to the Committee for permission to participate despite having this interest, i.e. dispensation.

The Committee considered three applications for dispensation during this period from members of Gwynedd Council. All three were granted.

## **Training on the Code of Conduct**

The Committee considered whether there were alternative methods of providing training for town and community councils. It decided to pilot a scheme that would mean offering to provide a trainer to hold a session on the Code of Conduct locally to councils, rather than centralise sessions at the main centres only.

The Committee also decided that a handout could be included in the induction pack provided for new town / community council members to summarise the main points of the Code of Conduct.

## **North Wales Standards Committee Forum**

The North Wales Standards Committee Forum gives representatives of all north Wales authorities' standards committees the opportunity to meet. The purpose of the forum is to enable the area's standards committees to discuss and share ideas, good practices and resources and also provide a joint opinion on a national level. The Chair and Vice—chair of the Committee attend the meetings.

Ceredigion and Powys Standards Committees are by now also members of the Forum.

# THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE'S WORK PROGRAMME 2017-18

## **10 July 2017**

- Undertaking Self-Assessment and formulating a Work Programme for the upcoming year
- Consideration of One Voice Wales' local dispute resolution procedure for community councils
- Consideration of the Annual Report of the Adjudication Panel for Wales

## **2 October 2017**

- Consideration of Gwynedd Council's Protocol for Member / Officer Relations
- Consideration of Gwynedd Council's Gifts and Hospitality Protocol for Members
- Deciding on applications for dispensations
- Consideration of the Annual Report of the Ombudsman

## **12 March 2018**

- Consideration of the arrangements for the provision of training to community councils
- Overview of the role and functions of the Standards Committee

## Appendix 2

The Committee was informed of the following decisions by the Ombudsman in relation to allegations that county and community and town councillors had breached the Code of Conduct:

Allegation	Decision
That a community councillor had brought his position or the authority into disrepute and had used his position improperly whilst serving on a local committee.	No investigation. The member served on the committee in a personal and private capacity and not as an elected councillor.
That a councillor had made comments on his Facebook page that were defamatory and brought his office and authority into disrepute,	No investigation. It was unclear whether the comments were wholly public and if he had made them as an elected member. The Ombudsman however intended to write to the member to remind him that the provisions of paragraph 6(1)(a) (disrepute) applied at all times and in any capacity. An allegation of libel was a legal matter that should be resolved through the courts.
Complaints against four community councillors in connection with non-declaration of interests.	No investigation in three cases. Investigation into two complaints against the same councillor. Whilst the conclusion was that there had been a breach, no further action required.
A complaint by a town councillor that a fellow councillor had failed to disclose a close personal connection with a person who was in dispute with the council; that said connection formed a prejudicial interest; that she had concealed the fact in order to gain financial advantage. It was also alleged that the member had instructed the Clerk not to record and/or circulate minutes regarding the matter.	<p>The Ombudsman investigated the complaint and reached the following conclusions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There was no evidence that a close personal connection existed</li><li>• There was no evidence that the member had sought to conceal interest or gain personal advantage</li><li>• While there had been problems with the council's minutes in the past, there was no evidence that the member had instructed the Clerk not to prepare minutes and circulate them.</li></ul>

## Allegation

## Decision

A complaint by a member of the public that a town councillor, by virtue of his position as chair of a local organisation, had made threatening comments towards him in relation to provision for disabled visitors to the organisation.

The Ombudsman resolved not to investigate the complaint for the following reasons:

- It appeared that the councillor was acting as a private individual at the time not as a councillor. The circumstances of the case meant that the Code of Conduct was not relevant to the member's conduct as an individual.

A complaint by a member of the public that a town councillor had made sexist and misogynistic comments on his Facebook page.

The Ombudsman resolved not to investigate the complaint for the following reasons:

- It appeared that the councillor was using a personal Facebook account at the time. The Ombudsman did not see any reference to his status as a councillor or suggestion that he was acting as one at the time.
- Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights protected people's right to say some things despite the fact that they could be unacceptable to others.
- No individual or company was named in the comments
- The Ombudsman did not condone the comments and it could be said that they did bring him as an individual into disrepute
- Nevertheless, in the absence of a reference to a specific individual, the comments were not sufficiently offensive so as to bring the council or the role of councillor into disrepute.

Complaint by a member of the public that a member had been part of a decision to release confidential information

The Ombudsman decided not to investigate for the following reasons:

- There was insufficient evidence that the member was implicated in releasing the information



Allegation	Decision
Complaint by a member of a town council that a fellow member had made a vexatious complaint against her to the Ombudsman.	<p>The Ombudsman decided not to investigate for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Ombudsman had accepted the complaint for investigation and could not conclude that the complaint was vexatious</li> </ul>
A complaint that a member had used his position as an elected member in relation to a complaint of harassment.	<p>The Ombudsman decided not to investigate for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The member was not acting as an elected member at the time but as a private individual.</li> <li>The comments made by the member did not damage the reputation of the Council.</li> </ul>
Complaint by a member of the public that a councillor had refused to engage with him in relation to issues relating to his property and to a dispute with the council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is a matter for a councillor to decide whether to meet or correspond with a member of the public. The principal duty of members is to represent residents in their constituencies, but there is no obligation to deal with each individual matter reported to them.</li> </ul>

## Breakdown of the Complaints Against Members

### Member against whom complaint was made

Member of community council	9
Member of Gwynedd Council	3
Member of Gwynedd Council and community council	3

### Nature of complainant

Councillor	9
Member of public	6
Officer	0

### Natur of allegation

General behaviour	9
Declaration of interests	6

### Result

No investigation	11
Investigation	4
Reference to Standards Committee	0
Reference to Adjudication Panel for Wales	0



<b>MEETING</b>	COUNCIL
<b>DATE</b>	4 October 2018
<b>SUBJECT</b>	Member Officer Relations Protocol
<b>CABINET MEMBER</b>	Councillor Nia Jeffreys
<b>AUTHOR</b>	Iwan Evans – Monitoring Officer
<b>REPORT PURPOSE</b>	Adopt Revisions to the Member Officer Relations Protocol

## **Background**

As part of the process of reviewing Proprietary Protocols the Standards Committee expressed a wish to review this specific Protocol identifying minor changes in relation to meaning and interpretation which required consideration.

Following the decision to undertake a review consultation took place with the Democratic Services Committee, Heads of Service and Senior Managers in the Council. This has resulted in a number of proposed amendments which are highlighted in the attached document.

The key proposed changes are around strengthening the provision about bullying and harassment, clarifying the provision which relates to familiarity between officers and members and response to correspondence. Although the changes are not of themselves significant in terms of the direction of the document they are considered to provide better and clearer guidance.

It should be noted that the provision in relation to correspondence reflects separate work undertaken and guidance already provided to staff in relation to dealing with members' correspondence.

The Standards Committee resolved to recommend the revision which are shown in the attached document for adoption by the Council.

## **Recommendation**

**That the Council adopts the revisions to the Member Officer Relations Protocol**

Appendix 1

Revised Protocol on Member Officer Relations

Appendix 2

Minutes of the Democratic Services Committee 12 April 2018

Appendix 3

Draft Minutes of Standards Committee 9 July 2018

## **Appendix 1**

### **SECTION 21**

#### **21. PROTOCOL ON MEMBER / OFFICER RELATIONS**

##### **21.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this Protocol is to guide Members and Employees of the Council in their relations with one another.

21.2 Mutual respect between Members and Employees is essential to good local government. However, close personal familiarity between individual Members and Employees can damage this relationship and prove embarrassing to other Members and Employees.

21.3 The relationship has to function without compromising the ultimate responsibilities of Employees to the Council as a whole, and with due regard to such technical, financial, professional and legal advice that Employees can legitimately provide to Members. The Protocol seeks to set a framework that assists the working relationships between Members and Employees.

21.4 Members and Employees are subject to their respective Codes of Conduct which are available in this Constitution. This Protocol provides guidance on work relations between Members and Employees. It is essential that both are familiar with the detailed obligations in their individual Codes of Conduct which will be the overriding factor should there be any conflict between the Codes and this Protocol.

##### **21.5 Roles of Members**

Members undertake many different roles. Broadly these are:

21.5.1 Members express political values and support the policies of the party or group to which they belong (if any).

21.5.2 Members represent their electoral division and are advocates for the citizens who live in the area.

21.5.3 Members are involved in active partnerships with other organisations as community leaders.

21.5.4 Members contribute to the decisions taken in Full Council and in its various bodies on which they serve, as well as joint committees, outside bodies and partnership organisations.

21.5.5 Members **work with Officers to** help develop and review policy and strategy.

21.5.6 Members monitor and review policy implementation and service quality.

21.5.7 Members are involved in quasi-judicial work through their Membership of Environment committees.

##### **21.6 Conduct of Members**

Member conduct is controlled by the Code of Conduct for Members which states:

*"You must -*

- (a) undertake your duties and responsibilities by giving due attention to the principle that everyone shall have an equal opportunity regardless of their gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, age or religion;*
- (b) show respect to others and be mindful of them;*
- (c) not behave in a bullying or harassing manner towards any person; and*
- (d) not do anything which compromises or which is likely to compromise the impartiality of those who work for the council or on its behalf."*

## **21.7 Roles of Employees**

Briefly, Employees have the following main roles:

21.7.1 Managing and providing the services for which the Council has given them responsibility and being accountable for the efficiency and effectiveness of those services.

21.7.2 Providing advice to the Council and its various bodies and to individual Members in respect of the services provided.

21.7.3 Initiating policy proposals.

21.7.4 Implementing agreed policy.

21.7.5 Ensuring that the Council always acts in a lawful manner.

## **21.8 Conduct of Employees**

Employee conduct is controlled by the Code of Conduct for Employees which states:

*"Contact with members, the public and other employees.*

- 4. Joint respect between qualified employees and members is essential for good local government, and work relationships should remain on a professional level.*
- 5. The competent employees of the relevant authorities should deal with the public, members and other employees in a sympathetic, efficient and impartial manner."*

## **21.9 Respect and Courtesy**

21.9.1 For the effective conduct of Council business there must be mutual respect, trust and courtesy in all meetings and contacts, both formal and informal, between Members and Employees. This plays a very important part in the Council's reputation and how it is seen in public. It is very important that both Members and Employees remember their respective obligations to enhance the Council's reputation and to do what they can to avoid criticism of other Members, or other Employees, in public places.

### **21.9.2 Undue Pressure**

- (a) It is important in any dealings between Members and Employees that neither should seek to take unfair advantage of their position.*
- (b) In their dealings with Employees (especially junior Employees) Members need to be aware that it is easy for them to be overawed and*

feel at a disadvantage. Such feelings can be intensified where Members hold senior official and/or political office.

- (c) A member should not place officers under inappropriate pressure to act in accordance with the member's wishes and an officer shall retain the right to offer a professional opinion that is contrary to the views of the member.
- (d) A Member should not apply undue pressure on an Employee either to do anything that he is not empowered to do or to undertake work outside normal duties or outside normal hours. Particular care needs to be taken in connection with the use of Council property and services.
- (e) Similarly, an Employee must neither seek to use undue influence on an individual Member to make a decision in his favour, nor raise personal matters to do with their job, nor make claims or allegations about other Employees. *(The Council has formal procedures for consultation, grievance and discipline, and Employees have the right to report possible wrongdoing under the Council's Confidential Reporting Code.)*

#### 21.9.3 Bullying or harassment

**"Harassment is repeated behaviour which upsets or annoys people. Bullying can be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious, insulting or humiliating behaviour. Such behaviour may happen once or be part of a pattern of behaviour directed at a weaker person or person over whom you have some actual or perceived influence. Bullying behaviour attempts to undermine an individual or a group of individuals, is detrimental to their confidence and capability, and may adversely affect their health. This can be contrasted with the legitimate challenges which a member can make in questioning policy or scrutinising performance."** (Public Service Ombudsman)

It is unacceptable for a member to bully or harass an officer. Any act against an officer is deemed to be bullying or harassment if it was intended to have an inappropriate or unfair influence on his/her views or actions.

There is no room for disparaging personal remarks during discussions between members and officers and it is not considered appropriate for either party to voice a complaint against the other publically in a committee or in the press, without first referring to the Council's internal procedure in an attempt to resolve that complaint.

**( It is possible to refer to the Councils internal policies in relation to bullying and harassment for more information)**

#### 21.9.4 Familiarity

**A good working relationship between Officers and Members can be a means of creating an effective working relationship. However, they should exercise care in developing close personal friendships. The mutual respect and expectation and appearance that Officers provide objective and un-biased advice to members should not be undermined.**

- (a) — Close personal familiarity between individual Members and Employees can damage the principle of mutual respect. It could also, intentionally or accidentally, lead to the passing of confidential information or

~~information which should not properly be passed between them, such as personal details.~~

~~(b) — Such familiarity could also cause embarrassment to other Members and/or other Employees and even give rise to suspicions of favouritism.~~

~~(c) — For these reasons close personal familiarity must be avoided.~~

#### **21.10 Provision of Advice and Information and Dealing With Correspondence to Members**

21.10.1 Employers are employed by the Council as a whole. They service the Council and are accountable to the Chief Executive and their relevant Director/Heads of Service and not to individual members of the Council whatever their role.

21.10.2 Members are free to approach Employees of the Council to provide them with such information and advice as they may reasonably need in order to assist them in discharging their role as a Member of the Council. This can range from a request for general information about some aspect of the Council's activities to a request for specific information on behalf of a constituent.

21.10.3 Employees should always endeavour to respond to requests for information **and correspondence** as promptly **as possible** and should in any event inform the Member if there is likely to be any appreciable delay in dealing with an enquiry. As a minimum the timescale for responding to correspondence should be observed i.e. either a full response **within five working days** or, if this is not possible, an acknowledgement that fully explains what is happening within five working days of the receipt of the enquiry **and keep in contact on progress.**

21.10.4 The legal rights of Members to inspect Council documents are covered partly by statute and partly by common law.

21.10.5 The Access to Information Procedure Rules of this Constitution explain the position with regard to access to papers relating to the business of a Council body.

21.10.6 The exercise of the common law right depends upon a Member's ability to demonstrate a "need to know". In this respect a Member has no right to "a roving commission" to examine any documents of the Council. Mere curiosity is not sufficient.

21.10.7 The information sought by a Member should only be provided by the respective Service as long as it is within the limits of the Service's resources. For their part, Members should seek to act reasonably in the number and content of the requests they make.

21.10.8 It is important for Services and their staff to keep Members informed both about the major issues concerning the Council and, more specifically, about issues and events affecting the area that he represents. Local Members should be informed about proposals that affect their electoral division and should also be invited to attend Council initiated events within their electoral division.

21.10.9 If a Member asks for specific information relating to the work of a particular Service, and it appears possible or likely that at a subsequent meeting an issue could be raised or question asked on the basis of the information

provided, then the appropriate Cabinet Member or Committee Chair concerned should be advised about the information provided.

- 21.10.10 Officers have to advise Members from time to time that a certain course of action cannot be carried out. Members sometimes assume that this is a case of Officers deliberately obstructing the wishes of politicians. In fact this is hardly ever the case. Officers are employed to give unbiased professional advice even if it is not what Members want to hear. They do this as much for the protection of Members as for any other reason. However, the mark of an effective Officer is that if they do have to give negative advice, this will be accompanied by suggestions as to how Members might achieve some or all of their objectives in other ways. Such Officers are invaluable to any Council.
- 21.10.11 Members may be entitled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to receive information which falls outside their common law rights based on the “need to know”. Employees are encouraged to supply documents to Members without the need for a formal FOI request if it is apparent from the Member’s enquiry that any individual would be entitled to receive such documentation. The Council’s Information Manager will be able to advise in consultation if necessary with the Monitoring Officer on whether any request would fall within the Freedom of Information Act.
- 21.10.12 It is important to have a close working relationship between the Council Leader, Cabinet Member and the director, heads of service and the senior officers of any department that deals with the relevant portfolio. Nevertheless, these relationships should never be allowed to develop to be too close, or to appear that way, so that it throws doubt on the officer’s ability to deal impartially with other members and other political groups.
- 21.10.13 It must be borne in mind that officers are accountable to their head of service and although officers should always seek to assist the chair, portfolio leader (or indeed any member), in doing so they must not venture beyond the limits of whichever authority they have been granted by their chief officer.

## **21.11 Confidentiality**

- 21.11.1 In accordance with the Code of Conduct for Members, a Member must not disclose information given to him/her in confidence by anyone, or information acquired which he/she believes, or ought reasonably to be aware, is of a confidential nature, except where:
- (a) he/she has the consent of a person authorised to give it;
  - (b) he/she is required by law to do so;
  - (c) the disclosure is made to a third party for the purpose of obtaining professional advice provided that the third party agrees not to disclose the information to any other person; or
  - (d) the disclosure is:
    - (i) reasonable and in the public interest; and
    - (ii) made in good faith and in compliance with the reasonable requirements of the authority.
- 21.11.2 Confidential Committee papers (pink papers) are to be treated as confidential information unless the relevant Committee resolves not to exclude press and public. Members are reminded that the author of the

report makes the initial decision as to whether or not the papers are to be treated as confidential. The decision as to whether they remain confidential is for the Committee. Other information may be confidential because to disclose it would be against the Council's or the public interest. Information may also be confidential because of the circumstances in which it was obtained.

- 21.11.3 Information and correspondence about an individual's private or business affairs will normally be confidential.
- 21.11.4 Officers should make it clear to Members if they are giving them confidential information. If a Member is not sure whether information is confidential, he or she should ask the relevant Officer, but treat the information as confidential in the meantime.
- 21.11.5 Any Council information provided to a Member must only be used by the Member in connection with the proper performance of the Member's duties as a Member of the Council.
- 21.11.6 If a Member receives confidential information and considers it should be disclosed to another person because it is reasonable and in the public interest to do so then he or she must first consult with the Monitoring Officer and shall not disclose the information without having regard to any advice given by that Officer.

## **21.12 Provision of Support Services to Members**

- 21.12.1 The only basis on which the Council can lawfully provide support services (eg stationery, word processing, printing, photocopying, transport, etc) to Members is to assist them in discharging their role as Members of the Council. Such support services must therefore only be used on Council business. They should never be used in connection with party political or campaigning activity or for private purposes.
- 21.12.2 Correspondence

Official letters on behalf of the Council should be sent in the name of the appropriate Employee, rather than over the name of a Member. There are circumstances where a letter sent in the name of a Member is perfectly appropriate, for example, in response to a letter of enquiry or complaint sent direct to that Member. Letters which, for example, create obligations or give instructions on behalf of the Council should never be sent out in the name of a Member.
- 21.12.3 Usually, an officer should not send a copy of correspondence between an individual member and that officer to any other member. When there is a specific case where a copy of correspondence needs to be sent to another member, this should be explained clearly to the original member. In other words, a system of "blind carbon copies" should not be used.
- 21.12.4 Media

Communication with the media can be an important part of a Member's workload. In general, Members provide comment and views while Employees provide factual information. If a Member is unsure about the circumstances of a particular issue he should contact the appropriate Director or Head of Service concerned or ask the Press Office to do so.

### **21.13 The Council's Role as Employer**

In their dealings with Officers, Members should recognise and have regard to the Council's role as employer. Members should be aware that Officers could rely on inappropriate behaviour of a Member in an employment case against the Council.

### **21.14 Political Activity**

21.14.1 There are a number of constraints that apply to an employee who occupies a post that is designated as "politically restricted" under the terms of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

21.14.2 In summary, such employees are prevented from:

- (a) being a Member of Parliament, European Parliament or local authority;
- (b) acting as an election agent or sub-agent for a candidate for election as a Member of any the bodies referred to in;
- (c) being an Officer of a political party or any branch of a political party or a Member of any committee or sub-committee of such a party or branch, if his duties would be likely to require him to:
  - (i) participate in the general management of the party or branch; or
  - (ii) act on behalf of the party or branch in dealings with persons other than Members of the party;
- (d) canvassing on behalf of a political party or a candidate for election to any the bodies referred to in;
- (e) speaking to the public with the apparent intent of affecting public support for a political party; and
- (f) publishing any written or artistic work of which he is the author (or one of the authors) or acting in an editorial capacity in relation to such works, or to cause, authorise or permit any other person to publish such work or collection - if the work appears to be intended to affect public support for a political party.

21.14.3 Officers will provide advice to committees, member forums etc., rather than to political groups. Nevertheless, from time to time it may be unavoidably necessary to advise a political group. In such circumstances, it is appropriate for political groups to call on Employees to assist and contribute to their considerations provided that they maintain a stance that is politically impartial. Employees are employed by the Council as a whole. They serve the Council and are responsible to the Chief Executive and their respective Directors/Heads of Service, and not to individual Members of the Council whatever office they might hold.

21.14.4 Both Members and Employees are subject to their own Codes of Conduct which can be found in the Constitution. This Protocol provides guidance on working relationships between Members and Employees. It is essential that both are familiar with the detailed obligations in their respective Codes of Conduct which will prevail in the event of any conflict between the Codes and this Protocol. You should always register with the Monitoring Officer each occasion when an officer (except for the political assistant) attends a meeting of a political group.



#### **21.15 Breach of the Protocol**

- (a) If a Member is of the opinion that he/she has not been treated with appropriate respect or courtesy he/she may raise the matter with the line manager of the employee. If direct discussion with the manager does not resolve the complaint, it should be redirected to the Head of Service or the Director who has responsibility for the employee in question. A breach of the Protocol could lead to disciplinary action against the employee if the circumstances justify that.
- (b) If an employee is of the opinion that a Member has breached the Protocol he/she should consult with the Head of Service or the Director if required. In some cases a case of breaching the Protocol would also involve a breach of the Code of Conduct for Members. If the matter is serious enough there may be justification for redirecting the matter to the Monitoring Officer as a complaint to be considered under the local resolution procedure which could ultimately lead to a hearing before the Standards Committee. It will be possible to resolve many complaints informally. The Monitoring Officer or the Chief Executive will assist with this process if required.

#### **21.16 Conclusion**

It is hoped that, by following good practice and securing sensible and practical working relationships between Members and Employees, we can provide one of the cornerstones of a successful local authority and thereby enhance the delivery of high value quality services to the people of the area. Mutual understanding, openness and respect are the greatest safeguard of the integrity of the Council, its Members and Employees.

## **Appendix 2 – Democratic Services Committee**

### **6. MEMBER-OFFICER PROTOCOL**

Submitted - the report of the Monitoring Officer, noting that the Protocol had been established for some time, defining the role and expectations as members contacted officers. He noted that it was timely to review the Protocol to ensure that it continued to fulfil its purpose and to promote it. The protocol would also be submitted to the Standards Committee before it would go to the full Council to be adopted as a change to the constitution. The main changes were to better convey the principle that was behind clause 29.9.4 (familiarity) and to reflect the staff guidelines in clause 21.10.

In response to a question about familiarity and its relevance to 'friends' on websites such as Facebook, the Monitoring Officer noted that the nature of 'friends' on such websites was different to relationships and familiarity in the real world. He also reminded the Members of the social media guidelines that had been distributed. He also noted, in response to a question, that in cases of familiarity before the election of a Member, the matter should be dealt with like any other declaration of personal interest.

It was asked how strong the protocol was, and what was its status. In response, the Monitoring Officer noted that the Protocol defined the internal process, and whilst it was possible for cases to go before the Standards Committee, it did not have a statutory basis. Other observations arising from the discussion:

- That local members were often unaware of what the Council was doing in their wards, and that it caused concerns that Members were receiving information from their electors.
- What steps should a Member follow if they received a complaint of bullying.

In response, the Monitoring Officer noted that the Protocol referred to cases of officers being bullied by Members. The Head of Democratic Services added that the internal bullying policy existed in order to address such matters.

**RESOLVED to accept the report and to send the Committee's observations to the Standards Committee**

**7.      PROTOCOL ON MEMBER OFFICER RELATIONS**

Submitted – the report of the Monitoring Officer inviting the committee to:-

- consider a series of proposed amendments to the Member Officer Relations Protocol in light of the members' wish to review the Protocol and consultation with the Democratic Services Committee, heads of departments and the Council's senior managers; and
- recommend the adoption of the Protocol to the Council.

Copies of Appendix 2 to the report (namely, item 6 from the minutes of the Democracy Services Committee meeting held on 12 April 2018) were circulated at the meeting as the document had been omitted from the agenda in error.

The Protocol was praised based on the fact that it provided clear guidance for members and officers on their relations with each other.

Referring to section 21.6 (a) of the protocol, which referred to the principle that there should be equal opportunities for all, it was noted that the Equality Act 2010 listed nine protected characteristics compared to six that had been listed here. The Monitoring Officer explained that characteristics were in accordance with what was included in the Code of Conduct, but that he would verify in case the Code required an amendment.

**RESOLVED to recommend the adoption of amendments to the Member and Officer Relations Protocol to the full Council on 4 October, with the following addition:-**

- **Section 21.9.3 – Bullying or harassment – note that it is possible to refer to the Council's internal Bullying Policy for further information.**