



Complete Agenda

Corporate Leadership Team
Council Offices
CAERNARFON
Gwynedd
LL55 1SH

Meeting

THE COUNCIL

Date and Time

2.30 pm, THURSDAY, 3RD OCTOBER, 2019

*** NOTE ***

This meeting will be webcast

https://gwynedd.public-i.tv/core//en_GB/portal/home

Location

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

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(DISTRIBUTED 25/09/19)

**Dilwyn Williams
Chief Executive**

www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru

WEDNESDAY, 25 SEPTEMBER 2019

Dear Councillor,

MEETING OF GWYNEDD COUNCIL – THURSDAY, 3 OCTOBER 2019

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED to attend a meeting of **GWYNEDD COUNCIL** which will be held at **2.30 pm** on **THURSDAY, 3RD OCTOBER, 2019** 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 cursive script, appearing to read 'Dafydd Iwan', written in dark ink.

Prif Weithredwr/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

4 - 18

The Chairman shall propose that the minutes of the previous meeting of the Council held on 18th July, 2019 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. GWYNEDD COUNCIL ANNUAL IMPROVEMENT REPORT 2018-19 19 - 50

To submit the report of the Council Leader (attached).

THE COUNCIL THURSDAY, 18 JULY 2019

Present: Councillor Edgar Wyn Owen (Chair);
Councillor Simon Glyn (Vice-chair).

Councillors: Craig ab Iago, Dylan Bullard, Stephen Churchman, Annwen Daniels, R.Glyn Daniels, Anwen Davies, Elwyn Edwards, Alan Jones Evans, Aled Evans, Dylan Fernley, Peter Antony Garlick, Gareth Wyn Griffith, Selwyn Griffiths, Alwyn Gruffydd, Annwen Hughes, John Brynmor Hughes, Louise Hughes, R.Medwyn Hughes, Judith Humphreys, 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, Gareth Jones, Huw Wyn Jones, Keith Jones, Kevin Morris Jones, Eryl Jones-Williams, Cai Larsen, Beth Lawton, Dilwyn Lloyd, Dafydd Meurig, Dafydd Owen, Dewi Owen, W.Roy Owen, Nigel Pickavance, Dewi Wyn Roberts, Elfed P.Roberts, Gareth A.Roberts, John Pughe Roberts, Mair Rowlands, Paul Rowlinson, Angela Russell, Dyfrig Siencyn, Gareth Thomas, Hefin Underwood, Catrin Wager, Eirwyn Williams, Elfed Williams, Gareth Williams, Gruffydd Williams and Owain Williams.

Also in attendance: Dilwyn Williams (Chief Executive), Iwan Trefor Jones (Corporate Director), Dafydd Edwards (Head of Finance Department), Iwan Evans (Head of Legal Services / Monitoring Officer), Geraint Owen (Head of Corporate Support Department / Head of Democracy Service), Arwel Owen (Assistant Head - Housing and Well-being) (for item 8), Rhun ap Gareth (Senior Solicitor / Deputy Monitoring Officer), Vera Jones (Democracy and Language Service Manager), Dewi Jones (Council Business Service Support Manager) (for item 9) and Eirian Roberts (Member Support Officer).

1. APOLOGIES

Councillors Menna Baines, Freya Bentham, Linda Ann Jones, Sion Jones, Dilwyn Morgan, Linda Morgan, Jason Parry, Rheinallt Puw, Peter Read, Mike Stevens, Ioan Thomas and Cemlyn Williams.

2. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the annual meeting of the Council held on 2 May, 2019 as a true record.

3. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

The following members declared a personal interest in item 8 on the agenda - Housing Strategy, for the reasons noted:

- Councillor Alwyn Gruffydd as he owned an empty property that was being renovated for letting purposes.
- Councillors Berwyn Parry Jones and Cai Larsen as they were members of the Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd Board.

The members were not of the opinion that they were prejudicial interests, and they did not withdraw from the meeting during the discussion on the item.

4. THE CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Condolences were expressed to the family of Eurig Wyn, a former Councillor and a former Member of the European Parliament, who had died recently and the Leader paid tribute to him.

It was also noted that the Council wished to express condolences to everyone within the county's communities who had recently lost loved ones.

The Council stood as a mark of respect.

The following were congratulated:

- Iestyn Tyne, a member of the Council's Translation Team, on winning the Chair at the Urdd Eisteddfod in Cardiff this year and everyone from Gwynedd who had been successful at the Eisteddfod.
- Manon Steffan Ross on winning the "Wales Book of the Year" award.

Best wishes were extended to Iwan Trefor Jones (Corporate Director) following his recent appointment to a post with Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd and the Chief Executive thanked him for his years of service to this Council and the former Dwyfor District Council.

It was noted that confirmation had been received from Guinness World Records that Ffordd Pen Llech in Harlech, which had a gradient of 37.45% at its steepest point, had been recognised as the steepest street in the world. It was explained that the street, which connected the lower part of the town with the castle, had taken the title from Baldwin Street in Dunedin, New Zealand, which had a gradient of 35% at its steepest point.

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 Owain Williams

"The continuous habit by various public bodies, the press and the media of referring to 'North Wales' and 'South Wales' and 'Mid Wales' etc. is creating rifts amongst our nation, at a time where national unity is required. I ask the Leader whether or not he would be willing to contact the Senedd in Cardiff to ask them to intervene in every possible manner in order to influence a change in this habit, which is causing rifts in this nation?"

Response by the Leader, Councillor Dyfrig Siencyn

"I am not sure if I understand the question, or what influence Welsh Government has on the names of our regions, but it is true to say that there is a North Wales Region. It is also true to say that there is a Mid-Wales Region and it is true to say that there is a Cardiff City Region and a Swansea City Region. I fully agree that there is a need for us to be confident as a nation, and united as a nation, but being concerned about this type of observation shows our lack of confidence. Let us continue to name our regions as we see fit. I do not know if the questioner has any suggestions in terms of what we should be naming these places?"

Supplementary Question from Councillor Owain Williams

"I am sure the Leader would agree with me that the union is being fragmented?"

(2) Question from Councillor Kevin Morris Jones

"A large number of events take place at the village of Llanberis, nearly every week. Although this can be a very good thing for the area's economy, the number of events can sometimes be excessive and have a negative impact on the area, the residents and visitors.

I would like to know if the Council is aware of how many people are competing in the events on the day in the Llanberis area and how many races (running, cycling and swimming) are being held and whether or not Gwynedd Council is permitting all of these events?"

Response from the Cabinet Member for Economy and Community, Councillor Gareth Thomas

"As the permission of Gwynedd Council is not required in order to hold all types of events, it is not possible for the authority to be aware of the number of races and events being held in Llanberis, or how many are taking part. Only events being held on Council land, or events that require an entertainment or alcohol licence, require the Council's permission. Therefore, it is problematic. A number of events use Council land and I would be very willing to have a conversation with the Councillor to discuss this type of thing. I am aware of the pressure this places on the community of Llanberis and I have asked officers from the Economy and Community Department to collaborate with relevant officers across Council services and key partners, such as Snowdonia National Park, to support the Councillor and the community to see how we can have better control of events in Llanberis in future."

Supplementary Question from Councillor Kevin Morris Jones

"Is Gwynedd Council willing to open Glyn Rhonwy for every future event, bearing in mind that there is only 1,174 parking spaces in Llanberis?"

Response from the Cabinet Member for Economy and Community, Councillor Gareth Thomas

"There is a working group examining Glyn Rhonwy and the member is a member of that working group, and this is something that is being discussed within that working group. As I reported earlier, I have asked officers from the Department to sit down with the Councillor, the community, officers from the Park and other

officers across the Council to see how we can have better control of the situation. I am aware that it creates problems and I am eager to try to resolve those problems, therefore, I will be working towards this in future."

(3) Question from Councillor Louise Hughes

"During the previous meeting of the Fairbourne Community Council, a topic that comes up often was mentioned, namely overnight camping on the Point. They requested that I asked for guidance from Gwynedd Council regarding the best way of dealing with the matter. I am certain that this is a topic that most of us in the chamber have had to address in our wards at some time or other.

The problem is that people do not stay for one night only. More people are coming here in their camper vans and staying for a week or more. Can the Cabinet Member give any advice on how to deal with this dilemma?"

Response from the Cabinet Member for the Environment, Councillor Gareth Griffith

"The Department is putting forward four options. One of them is a court order, but it is possible that this is not practical, as it is something that cannot be acted upon quickly. The others are parking orders, physical barriers and signage. However, I believe that the point with signage is that it has no powers, and as this is not unique to Fairbourne as it happens in Felinheli and other places as well, I would currently suggest that we get together and get to the bottom of this. There is an argument in favour and against."

Supplementary Question from Councillor Louise Hughes

"Is there a way for us to enforce any parking orders?"

Response from the Cabinet Member for the Environment, Councillor Gareth Griffith

"This is why having the discussion is important. It is becoming more problematic and there are more people with camper vans instead of cars, and they come to Gwynedd, and I believe that it is important to get the balance in terms of what we can do. We welcome people but there is a right way of dealing with this. But as I say, it is important for all of us. We are all affected by this and it is important for us to sit down together and move forward with this. I mentioned to someone this morning to consider scrutinising the matter. I am not sure whether it has been scrutinised, and not proceeded, but it is possible that a piece of work can be done so that councillors can share problems from their areas. I totally accept the point, but I believe that further discussion is needed."

(4) Question from Councillor Elin Walker Jones

"We are living in a time when global warming has reached crisis point, and we desperately need to reduce our carbon emissions.

Gwynedd is also a large and rural geographical area, and travelling from one place to another to attend meetings is expensive, contributes to carbon emissions, and it is a waste of time and resources.

We also realise that it can be difficult to combine work, family responsibilities and to attend meetings. We are eager to attract new members from more varied backgrounds than what we currently have, in order to promote inclusive representation and expand true democracy.

Technology plays an increasingly important part in our 21st century lives. For example, video conferencing can facilitate people's participation at meetings across the County and, in fact, the whole of Wales.

Women or men who look after children can participate in evening meetings remotely.

It is, therefore, our duty to create structures to facilitate participation in meetings by using technology, and reduce the pressure on the environment, reduce the use of cars, reduce the need to travel to meetings, and increase the potential for meaningful contribution by our members, and increase opportunities to be more inclusive. What use does the Council make of technology in the field of democracy and how can we expand this?"

Response from the Cabinet Member for Corporate Support, Councillor Nia Jeffreys

"Thank you very much to Councillor Elin Walker Jones for her comments.

I totally agree with here that there are environmental benefits from using modern technology and to being more inclusive, increasing the potential for participation and attracting more individuals from different backgrounds to Local Government, and to also save money.

I note that the Council has increased its use of technology, but there is an opportunity to expand that and I will continue to emphasise this in our performance challenge meetings and at my regular meetings with the Head of Department.

✓ Most of us here today read our committee documents electronically; we have now become used to this and think nothing of it.

✓ We tend to communicate with our constituents electronically (e-mail, social media, etc.).

✓ Skype provision is available to all members in order to contact each other electronically and remember that a brief training session on using Skype is available if you want to learn more.

✓ The Council also uses video conferencing facilities for smaller meetings. I would like to see this being extended over the coming months and I will discuss this with the Head of Department.

But there is room for improvement and the Democratic Services Committee is looking at developments in the field.

I understand that due consideration must be given to matters such as simultaneous translation, the ease of use of the technology, chairing multi-location meetings whilst ensuring that everyone is treated fairly, and protocol when any faults arise with the technical provision - but in my opinion, these considerations are not obstacles for the Council and Councillors to take full

advantage of the technology available in Gwynedd Council, and that are now common in many workplaces.

There are opportunities for us to trial different methods, perhaps not all will be successful, but there are opportunities for us to try things in future.

On the other hand, we all have a responsibility to consider the environment when organising meetings and participating in them, and I encourage us all to think before travelling. In the meantime, I will continue to place pressure on the service to proceed with arrangements to make it as easy as possible for Councillors to take advantage of modern technology in their work.

I hope to see real progress in the use of technology over the coming year and I look forward to updating Councillor Walker Jones on the developments."

Supplementary Question from Councillor Elin Walker Jones

"Is there a specific timetable for this?"

Response from the Cabinet Member for Corporate Support, Councillor Nia Jeffreys

"No, there is no specific timetable, but that is a great idea, therefore, I will take that on board."

(5) Question from Councillor Nia Jeffreys

"We know that there is an intention for the National Eisteddfod to visit Gwynedd in 2021 and, therefore, what input has the Council had so far in the process of identifying a suitable hosting location?"

Response from the Leader, Councillor Dyfrig Siencyn,

"Last year, the Council received a request for assistance from the National Eisteddfod to identify sites, and our Property Department has been busy travelling across the county to see what sites are suitable to host the Eisteddfod. Believe me, regulations in terms of finding suitable sites for the Eisteddfod in this day and age are very substantial, where the Eisteddfod has all types of requirements. As you can see, no request was received from the Eisteddfod to look for sites in Meirionnydd. I do not know whether that is because the Eisteddfod has been very successful in Meirionnydd many times, and we are very proud of that - you will remember that it visited Bala of course in 2009. As you can see in the written response, one of the factors considered was the available surface area. I believe we are talking about approximately 150 acres of flatland. Transport matters along with electricity and water availability are a consideration, and a short list of four sites of the 30 sites considered was drawn up for a further discussion. Detailed technical studies have been commissioned and discussions are ongoing with the owners of these sites. Therefore, to confirm, the Council only has a supporting role in this process and the final decision will be in the hands of the Eisteddfod itself. Following consideration of all relevant information by their Technical Committee, the Board and Council of the Eisteddfod, I understand there will be an announcement on Friday at the Eisteddfod regarding the location of the Eisteddfod in Gwynedd, and we look forward and welcome the Eisteddfod to wherever it will visit."

8. HOUSING STRATEGY

Submitted - a report by the Cabinet Member for Housing requesting that the Council approve the Housing Strategy 2019-2024, confirming the direction and priorities in the field of housing.

During the discussion, the following observations were submitted by individual members:

- The report did not note what proportion of the additional tax collected through the premium on second homes and long term empty properties was being reinvested in order to make a difference in the housing field.
- The reluctance of the Planning Department to allow young people to construct homes in their own villages hindered the Council's vision of supporting all Gwynedd residents to prosper and to live full lives in their communities.
- It would be a good thing for the Council to start constructing social housing once again.
- The fact that the Cabinet Member had taken note of all matters raised by the Care Scrutiny Committee and had incorporated them into the Strategy was welcomed.
- A reference in the Strategy to a construction plan was recognition of the disgraceful decision that had been made to transfer 3,500 Council houses to a private company for free.
- The Cabinet Member was asked to reconsider the following aspects that were missing from the Strategy, and to encompass them in the document:
 - Although there was recognition that there would be an increase of 60% in the number of people over 80 years old living in Gwynedd in 20 years, there was no mention of people coming to live here from all parts of the United Kingdom and beyond.
 - There was no mention that the Welsh language was a requirement for a house in some areas.
 - There was no mention of offering mortgages for local people to buy houses, although this was within the Council's rights, and it would be wise to invest in the county's communities rather than investing in arms companies.
- As the grants available for people to upgrade heating systems in older houses were the subject of a means test, people in employment were not eligible, and pressure should be placed on Welsh Government to ensure that these people, who were just above the threshold, were not ignored.
- All members were witnessing people in their wards struggling to obtain houses and living in unsuitable housing, and that the Strategy was a breath of fresh air through the Council which showed the positive things that could be done to improve the situation of Gwynedd residents.

In response to some of the above observations, the following was noted:

- In accordance with the Financial Strategy adopted by the Council in March, 100% of tax yield on second homes / long term empty properties (namely, approximately £2.7m net after collection cost) went towards housing projects.
- There was a need to change the old mind-set and the old ways of doing things and find solutions to planning matters in order to facilitate housing for young people.

- The housing stock was transferred to a private company in accordance with instruction from Welsh Government at the time.
- Although the new letting policy enabled the Council to place more pressure on local connection, it was currently illegal to discriminate on the grounds of language in Wales.
- In terms of observations regarding immigration and mortgages, the new Housing and Property Department would reconsider everything in the coming year.
- The Minister for Housing had mentioned the possibility of introducing an ambitious programme over 30 years to de-carbonise existing residential housing, and should it happen, it would also solve the problem of heating older houses.

RESOLVED to approve the Housing Strategy for adoption.

9. GWYNEDD COUNCIL ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2018/19

Submitted - a report by the Leader requesting that the Council approve and adopt Gwynedd Council's Performance Report 2018/19 as a clear, balanced and accurate picture of the Council's performance in 2018/19.

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

In response to questions from individual members, the following was noted:

- Without additional funding, it would not be possible to allow 80% of non-contact time for school headteachers to focus on leadership issues in the primary sector (Transforming the Schools System project - page 77 of the report), and that this principle, along with other principles of the project, had been raised from the profession itself. Although it would not be practicably possible to realise these principles, they would be a measure to examine the situations as they arose in schools across the county.
- The Reducing the Pay Gap between Women and Men / Women in Leadership Project (page 82 of the report) was the culmination of a desire to try to attract more women to high level jobs. The Council was currently still living with past appointments, but it was greatly hoped that the situation would change within 5-10 years. As part of the project, female managers were being interviewed in order to discover what the barriers were for them to obtain high level jobs within the Council.

A member noted the Council needed to talk more with front line staff when matters were raised at scrutiny committees, or when complaints were received. Also, the Council should establish a careers path for its staff, especially carers, due to the difficulties in recruiting carers across the county.

RESOLVED to approve the report as an accurate, balanced and clear reflection of the Council's performance in 2018/19, and to adopt it.

10. AMENDMENT TO THE COUNCIL'S 2019/20 PAY POLICY

Submitted - a report by the Cabinet Member for Corporate Support requesting that the Council approve the recommendation of the Chief Officer Appointment Committee to establish the salary of the new Head of Housing and Property's post at grade HS2 -

£68,458 - £76,063, and as a result amend the 2019/20 Pay Policy to reflect this addition.

RESOLVED to approve the recommendation of the Chief Officer Appointment Committee to establish the salary of the new Head of Housing and Property's post at grade HS2 - £68,458 - £76,063, and as a result amend the 2019/20 Pay Policy to reflect this addition.

11. ESTABLISHING A SALARY FOR THE POST OF PROGRAMME DIRECTOR: NORTH WALES ECONOMIC AMBITION BOARD

Submitted - a report by the Cabinet Member for Corporate Support requesting that the Council, as the Accountable Body for the North Wales Economic Ambition Board's employment and financial matters, approve the Board's decision to set the salary level for the post of Programme Director at £96,304 - £106,304.

The Leader, who was also the Chair of the Ambition Board, provided an explanation on what the role of the Programme Director would entail.

During the discussion, concerns were expressed by individual members on the following grounds:

- A risk that the North East area would benefit more than the North West area from the Growth Deal.
- The linguistic requirements of the post of Programme Director.
- The immorality of offering a salary of over £100,000 to the post-holder when families in Gwynedd were dependent on food banks.
- Reservations whether or not the Growth Deal would manage to attract a £1bn investment to north Wales, as alleged.

In response to these concerns, the following was noted:

- Appointing someone to the post of Programme Director was not this Council's decision. Instead, it was the cross-party decision of the Economic Ambition Board, namely the Leaders of the six Councils, in consultation with representatives from the private sector and colleges.
- The Constitution of the Ambition Board noted that consensus was required across the six Councils to every decision. As no agreement had been reached on the linguistic matter, it was agreed to compromise that the Welsh language would be 'desirable' for the post, and also an additional skill should two candidates be on a par following an interview.
- Gwynedd Council was the Host Authority for the Ambition Board as it had been established as a Council that did things right. In order to act appropriately in this case, the Council was required to give formal approval to the salary level of the post of Programme Director as it was above £100,000.
- All of the Leaders would be aware of the question regarding high level salaries, but as the Programme Director would be responsible for attracting an additional £1bn investment from the private sector (towards the £280m that would come from both Governments), it was absolutely essential to get the right person to lead this important work of disseminating growth across north Wales.
- Any questions regarding what the Ambition Board did were matters for future discussion.

A registered vote was called for on the proposal.

According to Procedural Rules, the following vote on the motion was recorded:

In favour (45)

Councillors Craig ab Iago, Dylan Bullard, Stephen Churchman, Annwen Daniels, Elwyn Edwards, Alan Jones Evans, Aled Evans, Peter Antony Garlick, Simon Glyn, Gareth Wyn Griffith, Selwyn Griffiths, Annwen Hughes, John Brynmor Hughes, R.Medwyn Hughes, Nia Jeffreys, Peredur Jenkins, Aled Wyn Jones, Anne Lloyd Jones, Berwyn Parry Jones, Charles W.Jones, Elin Walker Jones, Gareth Jones, Huw Wyn Jones, Eryl Jones-Williams, Cai Larsen, Beth Lawton, Dilwyn Lloyd, Dafydd Meurig, Dafydd Owen, Dewi Owen, Edgar Owen, W.Roy Owen, Nigel Pickavance, Dewi Wyn Roberts, Elfed P.Roberts, John Pughe Roberts, Mair Rowlands, Paul Rowlinson, Dyfrig Siencyn, Gareth Thomas, Hefin Underwood, Catrin Wager, Eirwyn Williams, Elfed Williams and Gruffydd Williams.

Against (11)

Councillors Anwen Davies, Alwyn Gruffydd, Louise Hughes, Aeron M.Jones, Elwyn Jones, Eric Merfyn Jones, Kevin Morris Jones, Gareth A.Roberts, Angela Russell, Gareth Williams and Owain Williams.

Abstaining (2)

Councillors R.Glyn Daniels and Judith Humphreys.

The Chair noted that the proposal had been carried.

RESOLVED that the Council, as the Accountable Body for the North Wales Economic Ambition Board's employment and financial matters, approve the Board's decision to set the salary level for the post of Programme Director at £96,304 - £106,304.

12. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE 2018/19

Dr Einir Young, Chair of the Standards Committee, was welcomed to the meeting to submit the committee's annual report for 2018/19.

In presenting the report, Dr Einir Young thanked the Monitoring Officer and his team for their guidance and their consistent and ongoing work with the County Council and the Community Councils.

Members were given an opportunity to ask questions and make observations.

The need for the Public Services Ombudsman was questioned bearing in mind that the threshold for investigating Code of Conduct complaints was now much higher. Submitting a complaint was not a minor issue and a clear message should be sent to the Ombudsman that there was a need to lower the threshold.

In response, it was explained that the number of complaints was very low given the number of town, community and county councillors across Gwynedd, and that this was due to a common pattern of respecting the Code of Conduct. However, it was noted that the code was adopted by all Councils and accepted by all members as a

declaration of their commitment to a high standard of conduct in the eyes of the public. Therefore, each individual involved in the system had a role in maintaining and promoting these standards and to challenge inappropriate conduct, regardless of whether the Ombudsman was involved in the matter or not. This was the message that would be maintained in training.

Dr Einir Young was thanked for her presentation.

13. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT MEMBER TO THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Submitted - a report by the Monitoring Officer requesting that the Council approve the recommendation of the Consultative Panel to appoint Mr Hywel Eifion Jones as an independent member of Gwynedd Council's Standards Committee, to serve for a six-year period.

RESOLVED to appoint Mr Hywel Eifion Jones as an independent member of Gwynedd Council's Standards Committee, to serve for a six-year period.

14. CABINET PORTFOLIOS

Submitted - a report by the Monitoring Officer on amendments to the Constitution in light of the Leader's action to reorganise the Cabinet Member Portfolios, in accordance with Part 5 of the Constitution.

RESOLVED to accept the report.

15. NON-ATTENDANCE OF A MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL

Submitted - a report by the Head of Democratic Services requesting that the Council approve the absence of Councillor Linda Morgan from meetings of the Council because of illness, in accordance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972, enabling her to continue to be a member of Gwynedd Council.

RESOLVED to approve the absence of Councillor Linda Morgan from meetings of the Council because of personal circumstances, in accordance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972, enabling her to continue to be a member of Gwynedd Council.

16. REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S POLITICAL BALANCE

Submitted - a report by the Head of Democratic Services on a review of the Council's political balance, requesting that the Council adopt the allocation of seats in Appendix A of the report and delegated the authority to him to make appointments to the committees on the basis of political balance, and in accordance with the wishes of the political groups.

RESOLVED

- (A) Adopt the seats allocation in accordance with what is noted in the appendix to these minutes.**
- (B) Delegate the authority to the Head of Democratic Services to make appointments to the committees on the basis of political balance and in accordance with the wishes of the political groups.**

17. NOTICES OF MOTION

- (A) Submitted - the following notice of motion by Councillor Nia Jeffreys, in accordance with Section 4.20 of the Constitution, and it was seconded:

"We call upon the Council to call for independence for Wales, and send a clear message that Wales is not too small or poor to stand on its own feet, and that we yearn to make decisions that affect our future in Wales, and not in London."

Individual members expressed their enthusiastic support for the motion on the following grounds:

- Their desire to contribute towards building a better Wales, a new Wales, and a free Wales.
- Their vision for a prosperous, fairer and more democratic Wales; a country where social justice would be at the top of the agenda in all aspects of public life and a country where decisions about Wales were made by the people of Wales.
- Wales was not too small or too poor to be independent, and that some of the world's most prosperous, most equal and happiest of countries were small countries.
- It was common sense to state that all decisions about Wales should be done in Wales, and it would be easier to deal with Welsh issues if the government was a government for Wales and that all attention was on the needs of Wales only.
- We had a duty to campaign for independence for the sake of our young people and future generations.
- As Wales was on a very slippery slope to leave the European Community, there was a real urgent need to obtain more powers for Wales, powers over the natural resources of Wales such as energy generation and water resources, more economic powers, devolving broadcasting, the police and the justice system.
- As the United Kingdom was fundamentally changing with Scotland preparing for a second referendum on independence, and the reconstruction of Ireland a real possibility, it was essentially important that Wales was not left behind.
- The solution to the economic challenges facing Wales was not in London, nor on a British level, and it was clear that the values of Wales were not being reflected in Westminster and that the policies of said government were not being established for the benefit of the people of Wales.
- Other people could not be relied upon to overturn the disastrous situation of our nation, and that everyone had to work together in order to create a better nation.
- 50 countries had left the British Empire over the past 50 years and each one had had the same arguments against independence that were voiced in the case of Wales.
- There was a desire to see a fair and balanced society that would work to support the vulnerable - a society without racism where each individual would get the opportunity to live life to its full potential, whatever their origin, language, religion or wealth.
- With only 40 out of approximately 650 seats, Wales had no opportunity to steer the discussion in Westminster or, for example, to object to the bedroom tax, the sexual violence clause, the imprisonment of immigrants for an indefinite term or universal credit.
- Being a part of the United Kingdom had never worked for Wales and that Wales was poorer than the rest of Britain, with 29% of children in Wales being

brought up in poverty, and 20% of pensioners in Wales and 39% of disabled people in Wales living in poverty.

- 10 of the 11 poorest regions in Europe were in the United Kingdom and the life expectancy of the people of Wales was 7-10 years lower than the richest parts of Britain.
- The Gross Domestic Product of Wales was £22,000 per person while the corresponding figure for Britain was £42,500, and countries such as Ireland and Iceland were above £70,000. This meant that Wales compared with Eastern European countries, and that the situation was likely to get worse once the structural funding received from Europe would disappear.
- Wales was very dependent on the agricultural industry, and more dependent than the rest of Britain on the producing sector, and these sectors would certainly suffer greatly as a result of Britain's departure from the European Union.
- Wales was not a poor country in many respects. It generated twice the amount of electricity than it used; it had a sufficient supply of water and it was also self-sufficient in terms of food. However, Wales did not have powers over its own water and electricity supplies and funding generated in rents by wind turbines on the sea bed around the Welsh coast were lining the pockets of the Queen.
- There was a desire for Wales to be part of Europe's international family, like other small countries such as Latvia, Estonia, Ireland, Lithuania etc.
- The British political system was disintegrating and Wales needed to take advantage of the current wave of curiosity in independence.
- The idea that Wales was not good enough to run its own system was refused and people's lack of confidence in the concept of independence was the result of centuries of British oppression and imperialism.
- It was very much hoped that the 'Yes Cymru' march in Caernarfon on 27 July would motivate young people to take part in this discussion.

Although he was fully supportive of the aims of the 'Yes Cymru' organisation, a member noted that he was of the opinion that the organisers should be appealed to adopt the 'Ie Cymru' slogan as the official slogan, due to a concern that the English slogan weakened our status as a nation.

Although he was also fully supportive of all arguments put forward in favour of the motion, another member noted that it was very well to preach to the converted and that they should preach outside the Chamber door and get people to change their minds.

A few other Members objected to the motion on the following grounds:

- Despite the acknowledgement that Brexit was a complete disaster, care should be taken before rushing into independence as that would create an even worse disaster.
- Wales did not have a production base. The Welsh economy was in tatters and its wealth was superficial and it would be impossible for Wales to survive as a country on its own.
- Should Wales attempt to re-join Europe as an independent nation state, it would not be possible for the country to benefit from the same deal as it currently relished.
- Everyone should come together to fight against Brexit rather than campaigning for Welsh independence.
- Welsh Government had never managed to make a meaningful investment to the north of Merthyr Tydfil, and as independence would certainly lead to the

Government in Cardiff being poorer, there would be even less money to invest across Wales.

- Although it was agreed that more autonomy was required for Wales, along with more devolved services and more powers, breaking away entirely from the rest of Britain would destroy the United Kingdom.
- There were already 60 Assembly Members in Cardiff. Welsh Government was eager to have another 60, along with a Youth Parliament, but where would the money come from for all this?

A member suggested that unity and democracy was required in this Chamber before examining the bigger picture.

Another member noted that she did not believe the Council should be discussing matters like these, and that she had been elected to serve the people of her community and to ensure the best for the people of Gwynedd.

Another member added that he could not vote either way on the motion as he had not received a mandate from the people he represented.

A registered vote was called for on the motion.

According to Procedural Rules, the following vote on the motion was recorded:

In favour (42)

Councillors Craig ab Iago, Dylan Bullard, Annwen Daniels, R.Glyn Daniels, Anwen Davies, Elwyn Edwards, Alan Jones Evans, Aled Evans, Peter Antony Garlick, Simon Glyn, Gareth Wyn Griffith, Selwyn Griffiths, Alwyn Gruffydd, Annwen Hughes, Judith Humphreys, Nia Jeffreys, Peredur Jenkins, Aled Wyn Jones, Berwyn Parry Jones, Charles W.Jones, Elin Walker Jones, Gareth Jones, Huw Wyn Jones, Kevin Morris Jones, Cai Larsen, Dafydd Meurig, Dafydd Owen, Edgar Wyn Owen, Dewi Wyn Roberts, Elfed P.Roberts, Gareth A.Roberts, Mair Rowlands, Paul Rowlinson, Dyfrig Siencyn, Gareth Thomas, Hefin Underwood, Catrin Wager, Eirwyn Williams, Elfed Williams, Gareth Williams, Gruffydd Williams and Owain Williams.

Against (4)

Councillors Stephen Churchman, Dylan Fernley, Louise Hughes and R.Medwyn Hughes.

Abstaining (5)

Councillors Anne Lloyd Jones, Keith Jones, Beth Lawton, Dewi Owen and Nigel Pickavance.

The Chair noted that the motion had been carried.

RESOLVED to adopt the motion.

- (B) Submitted - the following notice of motion by Councillor Elwyn Edwards, in accordance with Section 4.20 of the Constitution and it was seconded:

"That the Council asks the Housing Service to provide information on Waiting Lists for rented housing in order to assess relevant need based on each area, rather than the numbers presented for the whole of Gwynedd for each area."

RESOLVED to adopt the motion.

18. RESPONSES TO PREVIOUS NOTICES OF MOTION

Submitted, for information:

- (A) A letter from Welsh Government, in response to Councillor Sion Jones's notice of motion to the meeting on 7 March, 2019, regarding third party sales of puppies.
- (B) Letters from Welsh Government and the UK Government in response to Councillor Catrin Wager's notice of motion to the meeting on 7 March, 2019, regarding the motion on climate change.

The meeting commenced at 1.00pm and concluded at 3.50pm.

CHAIR

APPENDIX

A	Plaid Cymru	Independent	Llais Gwynedd	United Independent Group for Gwynedd	Individual Member	Total
Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee	10	5	2	1		18
Communities Scrutiny Committee	10	5	2	0	1	18
Care Scrutiny Committee	10	5	1	1	1	18
Audit and Governance Committee	10	5	1	1	1	18

B	Plaid Cymru	Independent	Llais Gwynedd	United Independent Group for Gwynedd	Individual Member	Total
Democratic Services	8	5	1	1		15
Planning	8	4	1	1	1	15
Central Licensing	8	4	1	1	1	15
Language	8	5	1	0	1	15
Chief Officers Appointment	8	5	2	0		15
Employment Appeals	4	2	1	0		7
Number of seats	84	45	13	6	6	154

C	Plaid Cymru	Independent	Llais Gwynedd	United Independent Group for Gwynedd	Individual Member	Total
Pensions	4	2	0	0	1	7
Local Joint Consultative Committee	6	3	1	1		11
SACRE	4	3	0	0		7
Joint Planning Policy Committee	5	2	1	0		8
Total seats	103	55	15	7	7	187

MEETING	FULL COUNCIL
DATE	3 OCTOBER 2019
TITLE	GWYNEDD COUNCIL ANNUAL IMPROVEMENT REPORT 2018-19
PURPOSE	PRESENTATION OF THE REPORT TO THE FULL COUNCIL
AUTHOR	GERAINT OWEN, HEAD OF CORPORATE SUPPORT
CABINET MEMBER	COUNCILLOR DYFRIG SIENCYN COUNCIL LEADER
RECOMMENDATION	ACCEPT THE REPORT

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The 2018-19 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 2018.
- 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 2019-20.
- 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 2019-20".
- 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.

STATUTORY OFFICERS' COMMENTS

Monitoring Officer

I note that the Audit Office has not found it necessary to make formal improvement recommendations to the Council. In the light of the challenges facing the Council, which the report acknowledges this is a positive message.

Head of Finance

You will note the work programme resulting from the risk and assurance assessment. We will co-operate with the auditors as they carry out this work.

The attention given to financial aspects in Indicator 1 on page 6 of the report, and in the Annual Audit Letter in Appendix 2, reflects mainly on the audit of the 2017-18 accounts. By now, the Audit and Governance Committee have scrutinised and approved the 2018-19 accounts and the relevant report from Deloitte Auditors on behalf of the Auditor General for Wales. Whilst the financial information here is historical, it is an encouraging general overview and I believe that this situation remains acceptable, although of course we are planning for the financial challenge that each local authority could face in the medium term.



WALES AUDIT OFFICE
SWYDDFA ARCHWILIO CYMRU

Annual Improvement Report

Gwynedd Council

Issued: August 2019

Document reference: 1358A2019-20

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

Adrian Crompton
Auditor General for Wales
Wales Audit Office
24 Cathedral Road
Cardiff
CF11 9LJ

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

2018-19 performance audit work

- 1 To decide the range and nature of the work we would undertake during the year, we considered how much we already know from all previous audit and inspection work and from other sources of information including Gwynedd Council's (the Council) own mechanisms for review and evaluation. For 2018-19, we undertook improvement assessment work; an assurance and risk assessment project and work in relation to the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act at all councils. At some councils, we supplemented this work with local risk-based audits, identified in the Audit Plan for 2018-19.
- 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 but, as with all councils in Wales, it faces challenges going forward

- 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 2019-20. However, all councils face significant financial pressures which will need continued attention in the short and medium term to enable them to reach a stable and sustainable financial position.

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, 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 2018-19

Exhibit 1: audit, regulatory and inspection work reported during 2018-19

Issue date	Brief description	Conclusions	Proposals for improvement
February 2019	<p>Assurance and Risk Assessment Project to identify the level of audit assurance and/or where further audit work may be required in future years in relation to risks to the Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • putting in place proper arrangements to secure value for money in the use of resources; • putting in place arrangements to secure continuous improvement; and • acting in accordance with the sustainable development principle in setting wellbeing objectives and taking steps to meet them. 	<p>Arising from this project we identified the following topics for inclusion in our audit programme at the council for 2019-20:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assurance and Risk Assessment: to identify the level of audit assurance and/or where further audit work may be required in future years in relation to risks to the Council putting in place proper arrangements to secure value for money in the use of resources; • A review of the Council's financial sustainability (national themed review across 22 councils); • Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 (WFG Act) examinations, focus on Area Teams; • Review of working with others, the Council is involved in several partnerships, joint working, shared services and alternative delivery models; and • Review of Ffordd Gwynedd. To reflect work around how Ffordd Gwynedd is embedded, achievements to date and how the Council is learning from it to help it achieve its aims. 	Not applicable

Issue date	Brief description	Conclusions	Proposals for improvement
June 2019	<p>Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 (WFG Act) examinations</p> <p>Examination of the extent to which the Council has acted in accordance with the sustainable development principle when ‘establishing a new youth service across Gwynedd to support young people to learn and develop skills for personal, emotional, social and educational purposes’ towards meeting its well-being objective - ‘Enjoy happy, healthy and safe lives’.</p>	<p>The Council has acted in accordance with elements of the sustainable development principle, but further work is needed to fully embed the five of ways of working</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has remodelled the youth service to make it more sustainable, but service provision is mostly driven by financial constraints rather than an understanding of long-term service demand. • The Council recognises the preventative benefits that a sustainable and accessible youth service provides, but could do more to understand the root causes of the problems that the service is trying to prevent. • Despite some examples of integration, the Council cannot clearly demonstrate its consideration of how the step contributes to its wider well-being objectives, those of its partners, or the national well-being goals. • There is evidence of increased collaboration at an operational level and in appraising the value of long-standing partnerships, but the allocation of transformation fund monies was reactive and not strategically planned, potentially compromising value. 	<p>The Council elected to undertake a number of actions as a result of the review, these are detailed in our full report.</p>

Issue date	Brief description	Conclusions	Proposals for improvement
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council consulted widely with service users in the remodelling of its youth service but, there was a key weakness in how it informed people of the service change. 	
November 2018	<p>Annual audit letter 2017-18 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 Appendix 2 of this report.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council complied with its responsibilities relating to financial reporting and use of resources; The Auditor General is satisfied that the Council has appropriate arrangements in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources; 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 2018-19 accounts or key financial systems; and The Council has a track record of managing its finances, but the financial challenge will continue over the medium term. 	None
Improvement planning and reporting			
July 2018	<p>Wales Audit Office annual improvement plan audit Review of the Council's published plans for delivering on improvement objectives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council has complied with its statutory improvement planning duties. 	None

Issue date	Brief description	Conclusions	Proposals for improvement
November 2018	<p>Wales Audit Office annual assessment of performance audit</p> <p>Review of the Council's published performance assessment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council has complied with its statutory improvement reporting duties. 	None
Reviews by inspection and regulation bodies			
Estyn	<p>Estyn did not undertake a Gwynedd Council inspection in this period, but several school inspections were carried out. Full details are on Estyn's website https://www.estyn.gov.wales/</p>	Not applicable	Not applicable
<p>Care Inspectorate Wales</p> <p>August 2018</p>	<p>Inspection of Children's services</p> <p>This inspection focused on the effectiveness of local authority services and arrangements to help and protect children and their families.</p>	<p>Overview of Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We found Gwynedd children's services demonstrated significant strengths and has a committed and stable workforce who are responding to an increasing but manageable workload both in terms of complexity and volume. Staff demonstrated dedication and commitment to promoting best outcomes for children and families; The Information Advice and Assistance (IAA) service is an area for ongoing development. The authority had only recently implemented the requirements of the Social Services and Well Being Act (SSWBA) and it recognised that the service needed to be embedded and further developed, informed by learning from 	<p>Areas for Development</p> <p>Access arrangements: Information, Advice and Assistance</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Address recognised gaps in preventative and early intervention and strengthen the proactive offer of support in developing stronger links with community services, strengthen signposting to agencies along with the development of a range of accessible and available services. Recent developments in IAA need to be underpinned by continued work to facilitate appropriate and timely

Issue date	Brief description	Conclusions	Proposals for improvement
		<p>operational practice. Work is required in developing how people are informed about services offered by the department, what they can expect and what's available within the community;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referrals were responded to in a timely manner, and on the whole we saw effective decision making with conversations held by duty workers in respect of eligibility in line with requirement of the SSWBA. An area for further development is the proactive offer of support with focus on strengthening links with 3rd sector and preventative services; • Gwynedd Council's supporting families' strategy is being developed and requires greater identification of need/unmet need within the county. Priority should be given to progress this strategy and strengthen preventative services for young people and families. There were recognised gaps in prevention and early intervention across Gwynedd and a lack of awareness of support services available amongst staff; • Assessments on the whole were timely, responsive to children's emerging needs and of a good quality. We saw examples of assessments which focussed on children's outcomes with clear analysis in balancing risks, strengths and barriers. Where the assessment 	<p>referrals and involvement with partner agencies.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Develop a resource for IAA staff to keep them up to date with local services to enable them to effectively carry out the functions of providing information. 4. Ensure chronologies are used consistently and updated to assist practitioners to access relevant and significant case information in a timely manner to facilitate effective decision making. <p>Assessment</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Assessments must be updated following a significant change in circumstances to enable effective care planning and improved engagement with and outcomes for children and young people. <p>Care and Support and Pathway planning</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Further develop reviewing arrangements for children looked after, and offer consistent opportunities for children and young people to meet

Issue date	Brief description	Conclusions	Proposals for improvement
		<p>identified eligible need, a timely care and support plan was developed. The quality of the care and support plans seen was inconsistent and where there had been a significant change in the individuals or family's circumstances assessments were not routinely updated to assist more effective care planning and support;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social work staff told inspectors that the timeliness and quality of partners' contributions to assessments was generally good. Inspectors saw some effective multi agency partnership working and a commitment to supporting families and maintaining children within their families. We saw examples where the intensive involvement of the children's social worker, the social services edge of care team, and partner agencies had resulted in good outcomes for the child and their family; • We saw evidence of care and support plans regularly reviewed in collaboration with children, families and partner agencies. There is a need to strengthen the care and support plans to enable children, young people and families to have a clearer understanding of decisions made, and in a format which is easy to follow; 	<p>with the independent reviewing officer (IRO) prior to review. Areas to focus upon include the outcomes the child wants to achieve, having regard to a child/young person's wishes in respect of location of the review, and improvements in the recording of the child's needs and direct work already undertaken.</p> <p>7. Further develop care planning and engagement with children, young people and carers to ensure consistently developed co-produced plans. Children, young people and carers need to be supported to understand decisions underpinning care and support plans.</p> <p>8. Strengthen fostering arrangements and adherence to regulations. Priority should be given to recruitment of foster carers to enable improved placement choice.</p> <p>Leadership and Governance</p> <p>9. Develop stronger quality assurance mechanisms across the department to be assured services provided and commissioned for children and families</p>

Issue date	Brief description	Conclusions	Proposals for improvement
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looked after Children’s Reviews were held in line with requirements; however work needs to be undertaken to strengthen reviewing arrangements for children and young people creating improved experiences of reviews. Some children and young people did not view their review or pathway process positively; • Keeping children safe was a high priority for Gwynedd children’s services. Procedures were robust and timely; staff were confident in their application and took pride in the positive outcomes they achieved for children through their work. Gwynedd Council is seeking to further strengthen performance in focusing on their engagement with families in developing an ‘effective child protection model’; • We saw strong leadership and governance in Gwynedd Council. The corporate parenting board is ambitious to develop best outcomes for looked after children with good support from across the council; • The head of service led the children’s services department with confidence, demonstrated strong leadership and commitment to continuous development. Professional social work expertise is located at this tier of the organisation. The senior management team created a positive, ambitious and supportive work culture. Senior managers within children’s 	are timely, of a good quality and deliver good outcomes.

Issue date	Brief description	Conclusions	Proposals for improvement
		<p>services were knowledgeable, experienced and offered stability for the workforce. There had been changes at team manager tier with some managers new to their role;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the whole children, young people and families were positive in respect of the support provided by Gwynedd Council. Young people told us they particularly valued honesty and viewed the role of the personal advisors as key in assisting their transition to adulthood; • The Welsh active offer was fully embedded within the local authority; and • There is a need to strengthen fostering arrangements to ensure children receive consistent positive experiences and improved outcomes when looked after. The availability of foster carers and suitable placements is an area of challenge given the change of profile of Gwynedd's looked after children population with an increase of looked after children living with parents and connected persons and difficulties in finding suitable placements for children with profound needs. 	

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

Reference IH 201718

Date 27/11/2018

Pages 1 of 4

Dear Dilwyn and Dyfrig

Annual Audit Letter – Gwynedd Council 2017-18

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 Gwynedd Council's (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.

The draft financial statements were prepared to a good standard and were supported by comprehensive and timely working papers. The key matters arising from the audit of the financial statements were reported to members of the Audit Committee in my Audit of Financial Statements report on the 27 September 2018.

On 28 September 2018, the Auditor General issued an unqualified audit opinion on the financial statements confirming that they present a true and fair view of the Council's financial position and transactions.

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, and the Joint Planning Policy Joint Committee (JPP). On 28 September 2018:

- 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 JPP Joint Committees was in accordance with proper practices.

The key matters arising from these audits were reported to the relevant committees where appropriate.

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.

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 2018-19 accounts or key financial systems

My ongoing work on the certification of grants claims and returns has not identified any significant issues to date in relation to the accounts or the Council's key financial systems. I will report any key issues to the Council once this year's programme of certification work is complete.

The Council has a track record of managing its finances but the financial challenge will continue over the medium term

In 2017-18, the Council reported an overspend of £0.573m in respect of its net expenditure and decreased its useable reserves by £1.088m. As at 31 March 2018, the Council had useable reserves of £56.220m of which £42.476m was held in earmarked reserves and £4.018m held by schools. Austerity funding remains the most significant challenge facing local government bodies in Wales and these financial pressures are likely to continue for the medium term. In setting its 2018-19 budget, the Council identified the need to make savings of £5.90m. The recent provisional local government funding settlement will see the Council's settlement decrease by 0.8% for the 2019/20 financial year.

To respond to these pressures, the council has had to make tough decisions about where to devote scarce resource and consider new ways to deliver services to people. In its medium term financial plan it has identified the following targets and savings to achieve those targets.

Short Term: To reduce the funding gap of £5.90m through a total of £2.75m of efficiency savings and approved budget cuts and a Council Tax increase of 4.5% creating £3.20m of additional income.

Medium Term: Plans to save £20m over the years from 2018/19 - 2020/21 through continuing with the savings strategy. As part of its medium term plan, the authority expects to apply its usable reserves from a specific fund to finance £1.51m of one-off bids which are required to ensure continuation of basic services but does not intend to use general balances in 2018/19.

The financial audit fee for 2017-18 is expected to be in accordance with the agreed fee set out in the Annual Audit Plan.

Yours sincerely

Ian Howse
For and on behalf of the Auditor General for Wales

Appendix 3

National report recommendations 2018-19

Exhibit 2: national report recommendations 2018-19

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
Page 38 October 2018	<u>Procuring Residual and Food Waste Treatment Capacity</u>	R1 The projections for the three residual waste projects in the Programme assume that, across the 14 councils involved, the overall amount of residual waste will increase through the lifetime of the contracts. If these projections are accurate then something significant would have to occur beyond 2040 to reach zero waste across these council areas by 2050. If the projections are not accurate then there is the risk that councils will pay for capacity they do not need. We recommend that the Welsh Government: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in reviewing the Towards Zero Waste strategy, considers how its ambition of there being no residual waste by 2050 aligns with current projections for residual waste treatment; and • works with councils to consider the impact of changes in projections on the likely cost of residual waste projects and any mitigating action needed to manage these costs.

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		<p>R2 The Welsh Government's programme support to date has mainly focused on project development and procurement. Now that most of the projects are operational, the focus has shifted to contract management. We recommend that the Welsh Government continue its oversight of projects during the operational phase by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • building on its existing model of providing experienced individuals to assist with project development and procurement and making sure input is available to assist with contract management if required; • setting out its expectations of councils regarding contract management; • ensuring partnerships revisit their waste projections and associated risks periodically, for example to reflect updated population projections or economic forecasts; and • obtaining from partnerships basic management information on gate fees paid, amount of waste sent to facilities and quality of contractor service.

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November 2018	<u>Local Government Services to Rural Communities</u>	<p>R1 Socio economic change, poor infrastructure and shifts in provision of key services and facilities has resulted in the residualisation of communities in rural Wales. We recommend that Welsh Government support public bodies to deliver a more integrated approach to service delivery in rural areas by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • refreshing rural grant programmes to create sustainable financial structures, with multi-year allocations; and • helping people and businesses make the most of digital connectivity through targeted and more effective business and adult education support programmes. <p>R2 The role of Public Service Boards is evolving but there are opportunities to articulate a clearer and more ambitious shared vision for rural Wales (see paragraphs 2.2 to 2.9 and 2.28 to 2.31). We recommend that PSB public services partners respond more effectively to the challenges faced by rural communities by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assessing the strengths and weaknesses of their different rural communities using the Welsh Governments Rural Proofing Tool and identify and agree the local and strategic actions needed to support community sustainability; and • ensuring the Local Well-Being Plan sets out a more optimistic and ambitious vision for 'place'

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		<p style="text-align: center;">with joint priorities co-produced by partners and with citizens to address agreed challenges.</p> <p>R3 To help sustain rural communities, public services need to think differently in the future (see paragraphs 3.1 to 3.12). We recommend councils provide a more effective response to the challenges faced by rural communities by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensuring service commissioners have cost data and qualitative information on the full range of service options available; and • using citizens' views on the availability, affordability, accessibility, adequacy and acceptability of council services to shape the delivery and integration of services. <p>R4 To help sustain rural communities, public services need to act differently in the future (see paragraphs 3.1 to 3.12). We recommend councils do more to develop community resilience and self-help by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • working with relevant bodies such as the Wales Co-operative Centre to support social enterprise and more collaborative business models; • providing tailored community outreach for those who face multiple barriers to accessing public services and work;

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enhancing and recognising the role of town and community councils by capitalising on their local knowledge and supporting them to do more; • encouraging a more integrated approach to service delivery in rural areas by establishing pan-public service community hubs, networks of expertise, and clusters of advice and prevention services; • enabling local action by supporting community asset transfer identifying which assets are suitable to transfer, and having the right systems in place to make things happen; and • improving community-based leadership by developing networks of interest, training and coaching, and encouraging volunteering.
November 2018	<u>Waste Management in Wales: Municipal Recycling</u>	<p>R1 Benchmarking work has found that the cost of certain waste management services show surprising variation (paragraphs 1.31-1.39). The Welsh Government should work with councils to understand better the basis of the variation in spending on waste management services that are fundamentally the same and ensure that waste management costs are accounted for in a consistent way.</p> <p>R2 The Welsh Government believes that, if applied optimally, its Collections Blueprint offers the most cost-effective overall means of collecting recyclable resources but is planning</p>

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		<p>further analysis (paragraphs 1.40-1.51). When undertaking its further analysis to understand better the reasons for differences in councils' reported costs, and the impact on costs where councils have adopted the Collections Blueprint, we recommend that the Welsh Government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explores how the cost of collecting dry recyclables may affect the overall cost of providing kerbside waste management services to households; and • compares the actual costs with the costs modelled previously as part of the Welsh Government-commissioned review of the Collections Blueprint for councils that now operate the Collections Blueprint. <p>R3 The Welsh Government has undertaken to consider alternatives to the current weight-based recycling targets which can better demonstrate the delivery of its ecological footprint and carbon reduction goals (paragraphs 2.38-2.45). We recommend that the Welsh Government replace or complement the current target to recycle, compost and reuse wastes with performance measures to refocus recycling on the waste resources that have the largest impact on carbon reduction, and/or are scarce. We recognise that the Welsh Government may need to consider the affordability of data collection for any alternative means of measurement.</p>

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		<p>R4 In refreshing Towards Zero Waste, the Welsh Government needs to show that wider sustainability benefits sought through municipal recycling offer value and cannot be more readily attained in other ways and at lower cost including, but not necessarily limited to, other waste management interventions (paragraphs 2.52-2.53). The Welsh Government should demonstrate in the revised waste strategy that not only is it possible to recycle a greater proportion of municipal waste, but how doing so maximises its contribution to achieving its sustainable development objectives.</p>
November 2018	<p><u>Provision of Local Government Services to Rural Communities: Community Asset Transfer</u></p>	<p>R1 Local authorities need to do more to make CATs (Community Asset Transfers) simpler and more appealing, help build the capacity of community and town councils, give them more guidance in raising finance, and look to support other community development models such as social enterprises that support social value and citizen involvement. In addition, we recommend that local authorities monitor and publish CAT numbers and measure the social impact of CATs.</p> <p>R2 Local authorities have significant scope to provide better and more visible help and support before, during, and after the community asset transfer process. We conclude that there is considerable scope to improve the business planning, preparation, and aftercare for community asset transfer. We recommend that local authorities:</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify community assets transfer's role in establishing community hubs, networks of expertise and clusters of advice and prevention services; • work with town and community councils to develop their ability to take on more CATs; • identify which assets are suitable to transfer, and clarify what the authority needs to do to enable their transfer; • ensure their CAT policy adequately covers aftercare, long term support, post transfer support, signposting access to finance, and sharing the learning about works well; and • support community-based leadership by developing networks of interest, training and coaching, and encouraging volunteering.
December 2018	<u>The maturity of local government in use of data</u>	<p>R1 Part 1 of the report highlights the importance of creating a strong data culture and clear leadership to make better use of data. We recommend that local authorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have a clear vision that treats data as a key resource; • establish corporate data standards and coding that all services use for their core data; • undertake an audit to determine what data is held by services and identify any duplicated records and information requests; and

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create a central integrated customer account as a gateway to services. <p>R2 Part 2 of the report notes that whilst it is important that authorities comply with relevant data protection legislation, they also need to share data with partners to ensure citizens receive efficient and effective services. Whilst these two things are not mutually exclusive, uncertainty on data protection responsibilities is resulting in some officers not sharing data, even where there is agreement to provide partners with information. We recommend that authorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide refresher training to service managers to ensure they know when and what data they can and cannot share; and • review and update data sharing protocols to ensure they support services to deliver their data sharing responsibilities. <p>R3 In Part 3 of our report, we conclude that adequate resources and sufficient capacity are ongoing challenges. However, without upskilling staff to make better use of data, authorities are missing opportunities to improve their efficiency and effectiveness. We recommend that authorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify staff who have a role in analysing and managing data to remove duplication and free up

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		<p>resources to build and develop capacity in data usage; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • invest and support the development of staff data analytical, mining and segmentation skills. <p>R4 Part 4 of our report highlights that authorities have more to do to create a data-driven decision-making culture and to unlock the potential of the data they hold. We recommend that local authorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set data reporting standards to ensure minimum data standards underpin decision making; and • make more open data available.

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