

Complete Agenda

CABINET

CYNGOR GWYNEDD

DATE	Tuesday, 21st January, 2025
TIME	1.00 pm
LOCATION	Hybrid Meeting - Siambr Hywel Dda, Council Offices, Caernarfon LL55 1SH and on Zoom This Meeting will be webcast https://gwynedd.public-i.tv/core/portal/home
CONTACT POINT	Sioned Mai Jones 01286 679665 / cabinet@gwynedd.llyw.cymru

GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET MEMBERS

Members	
Nia Wyn Jeffreys	Council Leader
Menna Trenholme	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children and Supporting Families
Dilwyn Morgan	Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing
Paul John Rowlinson	Cabinet Member for Housing and Property
June Jones	Cabinet Member for Highways, Engineering and Ymgynghoriaeth Gwynedd Consultancy
R Medwyn Hughes	Cabinet Member for Economy and Community
Dewi Jones	Cabinet Member for Education
Huw Wyn Jones	Cabinet Member for Finance
Llio Elenid Owen	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Legal
Craig ab Iago	Cabinet Member for Environment

AGENDA

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THE CABINET TUESDAY, 17 DECEMBER 2024

Present -

Councillors: Nia Jeffreys, Menna Trenholme, Craig ab Iago, Huw Wyn Jones, June Jones, Dilwyn Morgan, Llio Elenid Owen, Paul John Rowlinson and R. Medwyn Hughes.

Also present -

Dafydd Gibbard (Chief Executive), Geraint Owen (Corporate Director), Iwan Evans (Monitoring Officer), Dewi Morgan (Head of Finance Department) and Rhodri Jones (Democracy Services Officer).

Item 6: Ian Jones (Head of Corporate Services Department) and Catrin Love (Assistant Head – Corporate Services).

Item 7: Ian Jones (Head of Corporate Services Department) and Meinir Griffiths (Service Improvement Officer).

1. APOLOGIES

The Cabinet Members and the Officers were welcomed to the meeting by the Leader of the Council.

Gratitude was conveyed to all Council staff who worked to ensure that Gwynedd residents were protected and safe during the recent severe weather caused by storm Darragh. It was reported that there were a number of road closures due to storm damage and a large number of homes and some care homes were affected by power cuts. The care services were thanked, as members of staff worked extended hours to ensure that Gwynedd's most vulnerable individuals continued to receive a service, despite the extreme weather.

Disappointment was expressed that Cyngor Gwynedd had only received a 3.2% increase on last year's budget, following the Welsh Government's announcement of the settlement. It was confirmed that this meant that Cyngor Gwynedd was one of the three Local Authorities in Wales that received the smallest proportion of the settlement for the coming year.

An apology was received from Councillor Dewi Jones.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

There were no declarations of personal interest.

3. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

There were no matters arising from overview and scrutiny.

5. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 November 2024 were accepted as a true record.

6. STAFF WELL-BEING STRATEGY

The report was submitted by Cllr Llio Elenid Owen.

DECISION

To accept the Well-being Plan as a plan for supporting and promoting the well-being of staff over the next few years.

DISCUSSION

Members were reminded that a Staff Well-being Plan was operational and had received a Gold Level Award from the Welsh Government a number of times for the Corporate Health Standard. However, it was explained that the Covid era had led to a number of changes to staff well-being and needs were now quite different to pre-pandemic expectations. It was explained that it was timely to review the Plan in full to ensure that it was up to date and fit for purpose for the future.

It was reported that the Well-being Plan covered a number of duties such as the moral duty to protect the health and well-being of staff. The Plan was also said to address legal duties to protect the safety, health and well-being of staff. It was also explained that there were financial duties within the Well-being Plan to ensure that staff were healthy and content. The costs of sickness absences over the past year had been confirmed at £5.7m.

'A Healthy and Satisfied Workforce' was confirmed as a work stream within the Ffordd Gwynedd Plan as it was a method of attracting new employees, retaining existing employees, lowering sick leave rates and improving the performance and development of Council staff. There was pride in the fact that an entire section of this year's 'Llais Staff' questionnaire focused on staff well-being, the results of which had been input into the plan.

The new Plan was explained as having three foundations, namely 'Leadership and Management', 'Sustainable Support' and 'Work Environment'. It was explained that the 'Leadership and Management' foundation involved the development of Leaders and Managers to better support staff well-being with an emphasis on the core role of Managers to support well-being. It was elaborated that the 'Sustainable Support' foundation ensured that the arrangements that were in place such as counselling offers, physiotherapy, health checks and Occupational Health Unit support continued to offer mental, physical, social and financial well-being support. It was pointed out that the 'Work Environment' foundation focused on workplaces within the Council to ensure that the buildings promoted well-being while also supporting teams if patterns of absences arose.

It was confirmed that the Well-being Plan had followed a consultation process prior to being submitted to the Cabinet as it had received input from the Corporate Management Team, the Health, Safety and Well-being Forum, the Health, Safety and Well-being

Panel, the Management Network and Council staff through the 'Llais Staff' questionnaire.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- It was asked whether the sick leave costs were high compared to other Authorities.
 - In response to the question, the Head of Corporate Services Department confirmed that not all Local Authorities reported these numbers. However, Cyngor Gwynedd's costs were confirmed to be the second lowest given the figures from the 13 Local Authorities disclosing the information.
- The Plan was supported as it led to very important Preventative work. It was emphasised that promoting activities and the support available was vital to the health and well-being of staff. It was added that it was important to receive feedback from staff on these proposals and the Department was thanked for including it within the 'Llais Staff' questionnaire.
- The 'Leadership and Management' foundation was considered to be very important and there was pride that it was a key part of the Plan following the review. It was asked whether the change in attitude and the success of this foundation would be measured as it was a new foundation for the Plan.
 - It was explained that the Well-being Plan was now part of the Ffordd Gwynedd Plan and it was confirmed that an appraisal process was being implemented as part of the monitoring system for that Plan. It was confirmed that this meant that there was a requirement for each department to appraise their development in this foundation on a regular basis.
- It was asked whether it was possible to identify specific Departments or Services that experienced more staff absences than others.
 - In response to the question, the Head of Corporate Services Department confirmed that this data could be found. It was elaborated that an absence management and reporting policy had been adopted this year using the self-service system in order to support the Departments. It was confirmed that this had led to a complete picture of the challenges of staff absences. It was emphasised that further work was underway to identify further interventions and solutions for any services experiencing high absence challenges.

The Head of Department and Assistant Head were thanked for their work in leading the development of the Well-being Plan. Councillor Menna Trenholme was also thanked for her support to the Department in recent years.

7. COMPLAINTS AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENT REPORT QUARTER 1-2 2024/25

The report was submitted by Cllr Llio Elenid Owen.

DECISION

To accept and note the information in the report.

DISCUSSION

It was explained that the report detailed the Council's performance in handling complaints and improving services, in line with the expectation to provide an update to the Cabinet every six months. The report highlighted successes, challenges and developments over the past six months. Attention was drawn to quantitative and

qualitative data to measure the Council's performance together with comparative information from recent years.

It was confirmed that the number of Formal Complaints and complaints that have gone to the Ombudsman had decreased in the last six months compared to the same period last year. It was elaborated that a trend over a longer period indicated that the number of Formal Complaints had decreased steadily between 2018/19 and 2021/22 until there was a significant increase at that time following the pandemic. It was emphasised that the situation continued to stabilise on an annual basis into the pre-Covid situation.

Pride was expressed in a change of culture within the Council, with the majority of Services accepting that complaints were a positive and constructive opportunity to learn lessons. It was also noted that the timespan before responding to complaints with solutions was gradually decreasing. Pride was expressed that the number of complaints about a lack of response or action had fallen by around 50% so far this year, looking at the comparative data.

The Service Improvement Officer was thanked for her tireless work within this field and for working closely with departments receiving complaints, offering training sessions when appropriate.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- There was pride that the Council's culture now dealt with complaints as a tool to improve services and learn lessons.
- It was pointed out that messages of praise were also received regularly by the Departments.
- Cabinet Members were asked to ensure that discussions took place within their departments to strive to find solutions to all existing complaints.
- Specific attention was drawn to the number of formal complaints received within the last six months, noting that 14 complaints had been received, compared to 27 complaints within the same period last year. Similarly, it was confirmed that eight complaints of errors or incorrect actions were received within the last six months compared to 21 in the same period last year.
- It was confirmed that a further report was being submitted to the Governance and Audit Committee shortly to ensure that complaints procedures allowed individuals to lodge a complaint in an appropriate and convenient manner. It was elaborated that a report on a new Customer Care Charter would be submitted to the Cabinet soon, stating that it would confirm what was expected of Council departments. It was explained that the Customer Care Charter would also place expectations on residents and service users as to how complaints were lodged. It was emphasised that these developments would be addressed as the Department reported on the performance of Complaints and Service Improvement (Quarters 3 and 4) in six months' time.

The meeting commenced at 1.00pm and concluded at 1.35pm.

CHAIR

CYNGOR GWYNEDD CABINET



Report for a meeting of Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet

Date of meeting:	21 January, 2025
Cabinet Members:	Cllr Dilwyn Morgan
Liaison Officers:	Sian Edith Jones, Assistant Head of Older People
Title of Item:	Day care arrangements in the Blaenau Ffestiniog and Cricieth areas

1 THE DECISION SOUGHT

Day care services have not been offered in Y Ganolfan, Blaenau Ffestiniog or at Encil y Coed, Cricieth, since the Covid period. A formal decision is sought to:-

Agree that the Adults, Health and Well-being Department should wind-up the use of Y Ganolfan, Blaenau Ffestiniog and Encil y Coed, Cricieth, to deliver their services.

Support the Department's proposal to continue to collaborate with community groups and the third sector to support individuals in these areas in their homes and by using and supporting the development of alternative services within the communities.

2 THE REASON FOR THE NEED FOR A DECISION

The Social Services and Well-being Act (Wales) 2014 was introduced on 1 April 2016, and it provides a legislative framework for care and support in Wales. The Act changes the way that people are assessed and the way services are provided, promoting a diverse range of support available within the community to reduce the need for formal support. The traditional model of providing Day Care in Gwynedd has not been changed to address the requirements of the Act and ensure what matters to the residents of Gwynedd. The existing model has been focusing on the care provision for people in buildings rather than supporting people who have care and support needs to continue to attend community activities. Our day care services do not always manage to meet the individual and personal needs of individuals and there has been a tendency to 'fit' people into services.

The Welsh Government has been reviewing day and respite services mainly as a result of the Covid-19 crisis. Their conclusions note that the pandemic has led to essential modifications to the provision, and has identified many key issues, moving forward. The model was very unsuitable and posed many risks during the Covid period, and consequently, the centres had to be closed. Bringing a large number of people together to one site would have caused major concern, and there were problems with the standards of some of those buildings as well.

The Gwynedd review has been an opportunity to consider different, more suitable and flexible ways to provide support and quality day services, which also offer value for money.

A report was submitted on the proposal to review day care services to the Care Scrutiny Committee on 23 November 2023. In the context of the need to strive to ensure that quality services are offered

across the County, the committee supported the proposal to hold a full review of the current provision and consider an alternative model. The officers were asked to ensure that the new model provided consistent services across the county, including a service for those living in rural areas. It is proposed to submit a further report to the Committee on the models/provision in each area when timely to do so, in order to give the scrutineers an opportunity to provide further input.

3 INTRODUCTION

The current situation - the traditional model

Over the years, the Council used to provide a programme of traditional day care activities in specific locations in the county for adults who needed support from professional staff. These centres enabled older people to socialise and participate in specific activities and also give their day-to-day carers an opportunity to have some respite. The provision was limited to locations in the main centres, at specific times, with a fairly limited offer of activities. Individuals would have to travel in to these centres, and transport was arranged for them. The access guidance for traditional Council services noted that the individual needed to have personal care needs or needs relating to memory conditions, in order to attend Council services. If low level well-being needs was what was needed, such as companionship, socialising and a meal, it was then expected for community/third sector provision to meet the need.

These were the services provided by Cyngor Gwynedd before the pandemic:

1.	2.	3.	4.
Cyngor Gwynedd Day Centres	Commissioned day care	Short respite provision available	Specialist Dementia Day Care Provision
Bryn Dysynni Tywyn - three times a week. Plas Hedd Bangor x three times a week. Encil y Coed x three times a week. Y Ganolfan, Blaenau Ffestiniog x three times a week.	Day care services at the Council's residential homes. Day care service in private residential homes.	Dementia Support Workers - one-to-one support for individuals and their carers for a few hours a week. Council residential homes providing respite care for up to a fortnight.	Plas Hedd Bangor x twice a week (CG&BCUHB). Hafod Hedd, (Bryn Beryl) x 3 days a week (CG and BCUHB) and Blaenau Ffestiniog Health Centre.

There has been no significant change in the provision noted in columns 2, 3 and 4 of the above table.

It should also be noted that three 'traditional' Day Centres have closed in the pre-Covid years -

- Cysgod y Coleg, Bala, day centre with Age Cymru having developed well-being services in the area
- Noddfa Madog Day Centre, Porthmadog
- Maesincla Day Centre, Caernarfon

The day centres at Plas Hedd (Bangor) and Bryn Dysynni (Tywyn) have reopened since Covid, and day care is now available at Plas Y Don (Pwllheli). However, these services have now been reviewed and

the services offered are under the control of the residential homes, and they are not separate services. Although the provision is slightly more than the provision offered at the Council's other residential homes, the management and governance arrangements are now consistent. It should also be noted that the services across all residential homes are facing obstacles due to staffing problems.

It is important to bear in mind that the day services being provided by the Council are 'care' and 'supervision' services for individuals with intensive care and support needs. It is not an open door and informal provision that anyone can attend. There are specific eligibility criteria, subject to an assessment of needs carried out by a social worker, and this is a statutory arrangement through the Council specifically.

4 THE RATIONALE AND JUSTIFICATION FOR RECOMMENDING THE DECISION

The Encil y Coed and Canolfan Blaenau Ffestiniog provision have not reopened since Covid times.

The response to the challenges that have landed on our front door as a result of Covid-19 has given us an opportunity to reconsider the way that day care is being provided here in Gwynedd. This period has shown how important it is to ensure social opportunities for individuals, and to ensure that unpaid carers have some periods of respite. It is an opportunity to learn from our experiences and the experiences of others, and to move away from services that are based on disability and age, and to look at opportunities for individuals to regain community connections that will also realise our purpose:-

'To help me live my life as I wish.'

The developments of the community hubs across the county have led to opportunities for everyone to work together at a much more local level.

There are many examples of groups/activities that have been developed by the Hubs to address the locally-identified needs. Over the past year/18 months, a pattern of provision development for older people can certainly be seen bearing fruit on a local level in our communities. Many Hubs are offering 'Panad a Sgwrs' (*A Cuppa and Chat*) sessions, lunch clubs and activity groups, specifically for older people in their communities. Where a Hub has a Community Transport scheme, this asset adds to their offer by providing transport services for people to the setting, and back home. There are examples of Hubs collaborating to offer transportation so that people can attend. In addition, close collaboration takes place between the hubs and the Gwynedd Dementia Actif Service. In many areas, the staff at the hub support the provision by being a part of the sessions or providing support with transporting people to the sessions. It must be noted that the hub activities are funded through various grants and these are mainly short-term grants, which poses a risk to the sustainability of the activities.

In Blaenau Ffestiniog, 'Y Dref Werdd' coordinates the Hub. They have been organising a group for older people once a month at the location where the daycare used to be provided in the Community Centre. It is also very exciting to be able to share that there is a very positive development underway and this provision by 'Y Dref Werdd' will be offered two times a month as well as inter-generational work in collaboration with Ysgol y Moelwyn once a month. 'Y Dref Werdd' is also starting a Parkinson's support group offering to support individuals living with the condition and their families.

We are also aware that there is a new hub development set up in Porthmadog very recently and we are very keen to collaborate and learn more about this new development.

The vision for the Adults, Health and Well-being service is for everyone of all ages to receive the support they need in the most suitable and convenient way for them. Since the needs of every

individual and their family / carers are different, in order that they can continue to live their lives as they wish, we must adapt our services to be more closely tailored to the actual needs of those requiring our support. We will also invest to develop a provision to obtain more respite for individuals and their family or carers at our residential centres.

The proposal (and opportunity) here is to ensure that more choice and control is available for people over their care and support, and the hope that this will more likely meet their needs and personal and individual outcomes. This would also encourage and maintain independence and social participation. Personal care and support will be enabled by means of person-centred assessments that are based on strengths. This is also an opportunity to offer a provision of an individual budget through direct payments, so that people can organise a provision of their choice and live their life as they wish.

What is being offered as an alternative provision in the Cricieth and Blaenau Ffestiniog areas?

As part of the review, the service is continuing to engage on day care provision arrangements in Gwynedd and is in regular discussions with the Commissioning Unit and the Health and Well-being Support Manager on mapping local social provisions in both areas.

The Community Resources Teams have made direct contact with the people who used to attend the Cricieth and Blaenau Ffestiniog centres and confirmed that the circumstances of the majority of original attendees have now changed and some have passed away.

In the context of the proposals for Encil y Coed, Cricieth, a meeting was held with the local Councillor in November 2024. A discussion was held on the fact that individuals and their carers favoured more bespoke support instead of attending a centre with traditional activities. Very positively, the community of Cricieth is managing to hold its own activities and it appears that there is not as much of a demand for a traditional day care provision there by now. There is a feeling that there is a greater need for a local information hub in Cricieth, to enable people to gain easy access to information about support services in the area. Work is underway with the local community to look at how a provision or convenient information system can be established for the people of Cricieth, within the area's existing resources. This also provides an opportunity to discuss partnership options with the third sector, Grŵp Cynefin and Internal Provider, to make use of the Hafod y Gest Extra Care Housing site in Porthmadog.

In the context of Canolfan Blaenau Ffestiniog, some months ago, a conversation was held with the local member and discussions were held during November 2024 with the members of the Trust/Blaenau Ffestiniog Community Centre Committee. Some concerns were expressed about the potential impact on the residents of the Ffestiniog area, specifically so on vulnerable individuals who were experiencing loneliness and a lack of social provision for them. It was noted that Y Dref Werdd was offering a social provision for residents in the area who were faced with loneliness.

Further discussion will be held with members of the Trust early in 2025, following their discussions with the Community Support Teams on the centre's situation for the future. Based on this full picture, there will be an opportunity to consider options on the support that the Council can offer, including facilitating the ability to collaborate with local enterprises to establish their own community/social provision.

The Department is also continuing to strive to recruit and strengthen services at Bryn Blodau in the hope of recommencing some day care provision on some weekdays.

General

Currently, alternative support to day care is being offered in both areas through a combination of domiciliary care services, dementia support service, specialist day care from Health (Blaenau Ffestiniog Health Centre and Hafod Hedd, Bryn Beryl), Dementia Actif weekly activities, sessions by Y Dref Werdd and Age Cymru.

It can also be confirmed that a new local enterprise has been in contact recently. They hope to offer day activities for people aged over 65 years with dementia, or a long-term health condition, in the Llŷn and Eifionydd area. They intend to use facilities that are already available at local community hubs, at Hwb Heli in Pwllheli, and Y Traeth Football Club, Porthmadog. They are prepared to provide day activities in different settings and on different days in many local communities. Further discussions will be held with them early in the new year.

The financial context.

It is important to emphasise again that the financial context is not the main reason for the recommendations to change day services in the Cricieth and Blaenau Ffestiniog areas. The introduction in this report clearly outlines the legislative, well-being, service quality and moral rationale behind the proposed changes. However, the financial context cannot be disregarded either. In general, day services are facing budgetary challenges, mainly attributed to the savings that need to be found and the cuts to be made, due to the shrinking local authority budgets, the modernisation challenges and the increasing demand. The Llechen Lân report submitted to the Cabinet in the Autumn and which has been given considerable attention in the national press recently, has highlighted these challenges for older people care services in particular.

Acting on the recommendation to bring to an end the use of Y Ganolfan, Blaenau Ffestiniog and Encil y Coed, Criccieth to deliver day care Services for older people would confirm a sum of up to £182,690 towards savings to be found.

Whilst this would appear to be a blow which would cause further problems to older people services, it is believed that the recommendation in this report is one of those rare occasions that offers a better service provision and offers more choice for individuals, whilst also contributing to the response to the financial challenges.

5 NEXT STEPS AND TIMETABLE

The day centres at Cricieth and Blaenau have not been open for five years, and the individuals requiring support are receiving alternative services and/or support. The services will formally cease following the Cabinet's decision. The Council will identify and develop further opportunities to collaborate further with other partners, and offer a range of different services. The focus would be on building on the strengths of those attending, strengthening skills and learning new skills and giving them a flavour of new experiences.

The Council will continue to use local resources and services and work with the communities and third sector to support the development of hubs and enterprises that can strengthen the provision of services that can support people to live their best lives in their communities.

The Council will also continue with the effort to seek to ensure that the provision of services and opportunities which support older people, are balanced across the County.

6 VIEWS OF THE STATUTORY OFFICERS

Chief Finance Officer

"I note the author's comments that the objectives of the decisions sought are not to achieve financial savings. Despite this, the financial challenges and pressures on the care services are well-known to Cabinet members; I am satisfied that the decisions sought are reasonable under the circumstances and I have no objections to them."

Monitoring Officer

"The report confirms the situation which stems directly from the circumstances of 2020. The proposal gives the Cabinet an opportunity to review this and come to a decision on the situation."

7 APPENDICES

1. Impact Assessments on Equality Characteristics, the Welsh Language and Soci-Economic Disadvantage.
2. Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Assessment

Asesu'r Effaith ar Bobl Gwynedd

This document assesses what impact the policy, procedure, plan etc. will have on the population of the county and operates based on a number of legislations.

- **Equality Act 2010.** It places a duty on public organisations to give due attention to the impact of any new policy, procedure or plan etc. (or in the process of adapting them) on people with protected characteristics. We are required to
 - eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act.
 - advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

In Wales, the specific duty notes the need to undertake an impact assessment following specific guidelines to consider the impact that any changes in any policy or procedure (or the creation of a new policy or procedure), will have on people with protected equality characteristics. A timely assessment should be made before any decision is taken on any relevant change (i.e. that affects people with protected equality characteristics).

- **Socio-economic Duty.** Wales has implemented this further duty which is part of the Equality Act 2010 and places a duty to address socio-economic disadvantages in strategic decisions.
- **Welsh Language Standards (Section 44 Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011).** The Council is required to consider the impact that any change in any policy or procedure (or the creation of a new policy or procedure), will have on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and to ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favourable than English. This document therefore ensures that these decisions safeguard and promote the use made of the Welsh language.
- **Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015.** The Council has a duty to put the five ways of working in place and to respond to the seven national well-being goals.
- **Armed Forces Act 2021.** Councils must give due attention to the impact of this proposal on those who serve or who have served in the Armed Forces, as well as their families.

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Author: Sian Edith Jones (ADULTS)

Date: 9/1/2025 12:00:00 AM

Version: Number 1

STEP 1 - Main Aims and Objectives of the Policy or Practice

1. What is the objective of what is being assessed?

- New and revised policies, practices or procedures (which modify service delivery or employment practices)

2. What are the overall aims, objectives and intended outcomes of the policy or practice?

In the context of the need and the effort to ensure that quality services are offered across the County, the committee supported the proposal to undertake a review of the day care provision in Blaenau Ffestiniog and Cricieth and to consider an alternative model. The officers were asked to ensure that the new model provided a consistent service across the county, including a service for those living in rural areas.

3. Who are the main consultative groups (stakeholders)?

Service users and their families/carers in the areas of Blaenau Ffestiniog and Cricieth

Blaenau Ffestiniog and Cricieth's elected members

STEP 2 - Engagement Data and Assessing the Impact

4. Has any effort been made to comply with the duty to engage in accordance with what is described above and has enough information been gathered to move forward?

Yes

The engagement details. Note any consultation or engagement you have conducted or intend to conduct.

Action	Dates	Information
Local Social Work teams have engaged with service users and their families who used to attend the two day centres	2023-2024	The needs of the relevant individuals have changed and no longer require day care

Meet with Blaenau Ffestiniog and Cricieth's elected members	October and November 2024	The situation has been shared with them
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5. What information is available about the impact on each of the following characteristics and subjects?

Race	No data identified	No impact identified
Disability	<p>From the group that used to attend, they had a variety of needs, including physical impairments, dementia, hearing problems, long-term health conditions.</p> <p>The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 was introduced on 1 April 2016, and it provides a legislative framework for care and support in Wales. The Act changes the way that people are assessed and the way services are provided, promoting a diverse range of support</p>	<p>The individuals who have care and support needs deriving from the physical impairments above receive support through a variety of provisions by now e.g. support services, domiciliary care, a sitting service, attending third sector and health activities.</p> <p>A positive impact in terms of the emphasis on offering more provision choice to people.</p>

	available within the community to reduce the need for formal support.	
Gender	No relevant data identified	No impact identified
Age	<p>From the group that used to attend, they had a variety of needs, including physical impairments, dementia, hearing problems, long-term health conditions. The majority were over 55 years old.</p> <p>The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 was introduced on 1 April 2016, and it provides a legislative framework for care and support in Wales. The Act changes the way that people are assessed and the way services are provided, promoting a diverse range of support available within the community to reduce the need for formal support.</p>	<p>The individuals who have care and support needs deriving from the physical impairments above receive support through a variety of provisions by now e.g. support services, domiciliary care, a sitting service, attending third sector activities and health services.</p> <p>A positive impact in terms of the emphasis on offering more provision choice to people.</p>
Religion and Belief	No data identified	No impact identified
Sexual Orientation	No data identified	No impact identified
Gender reassignment	No data identified in this group	No impact identified in this group
Marriage and Civil Partnership	No data identified	No impact identified
Pregnancy and Maternity	No data identified	No impact identified
The Welsh Language	The alternative services offer provision in the individual's chosen language	The alternative services offer provision in the individual's chosen language

Socio-economic Considerations	There is effort to offer alternative services locally and within the individual's financial ability	It is possible that some individuals may have to travel outside of their home area to gain access to some alternative services; transport is a matter that is being considered separately with an amended transport policy.
Those Who Serve or Who Have Served in the Armed Forces, As Well As Their Families	No data identified	No impact identified in this group but the teams are aware that this is considered when planning care
Human Rights	No data identified	A positive impact in terms of the emphasis on offering a greater choice of provision to people
Other	Engagement with unpaid carers/families for the previous attendees has already been undertaken, further needs have changed with this group, but the need to engage with the area's current unpaid carers regarding their care and support needs has to be acknowledged, this happens through the usual arrangements of a care and support assessment under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.	A positive impact in terms of the emphasis on offering more provision choice to individuals and their carers. The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 was introduced on 1 April 2016, and it provides a legislative framework for care and support in Wales. The Act changes the way that people are assessed and the way services are provided, promoting a diverse range of support available within the community to reduce the need for formal support.

6. Are there any data or information gaps and if so, what are they and how do you intend to address them?

No, we operate in accordance with the act and now offer more choice to the individuals and their families who receive care and support.

7. What is the cumulative impact of this proposal on different protected groups when considering other key decisions?

No impact identified

8. What does the proposal include to demonstrate you have given due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty (to advance equality of opportunity; help to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, or victimisation and foster good relations and wider community cohesion; as covered by the 3 aims of the General Duty in the Equality Act 2010)?

- a) Irrelevant
- b) Offer a greater choice of provision
- c) more open, flexible and community provisions

9. How does the proposal show that due regard has been given to the need to address inequality due to socio-economic disadvantage? (Note that this relates to closing the inequality gap, rather than just improving outcomes for everyone).

Not relevant

10. How does the proposal show implementation in line with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011), to ensure the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than the English language, and to ensure opportunities for people to use the Welsh language? Also, how does the proposal operate in accordance with the requirements of the Council's Welsh Language Strategy to take advantage of every opportunity to promote the Welsh language (beyond providing bilingual services) and increase opportunities to use and learn the language in the community?

We offer provisions in the individual's chosen language

11. How does this proposal meet the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act by implementing the five ways of working, and respond to the seven national well-being goals, including creating a More Equal Wales?

The proposal reinforces future services, it is long-term, it integrates and promotes community partnerships, people are included and encouraged to choose.

STEP 3 - Procurement and Partnerships

12. Will this policy or practice be carried out wholly or partly by contractors or in partnership with another organisation(s)?

Yes

STEP 4 - Dealing with Adverse or Unlawful Impact and Strengthening the Policy or Practice

13. When considering proportionality, does the policy or practice have a significantly positive or negative impact or create inequalities of outcome resulting from socio-economic disadvantage? (A summary of the impact identified above)

Significantly Positive Impact:

Offer more choice for people and their families/unpaid carers

Significantly Negative Impact:

No significantly negative impact identified

14. Explain any intentional negative impact and why it is believed that there is justification for operating in this way (for example, on the grounds of improving equal opportunities or developing good relationships between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, due to objective justification or positive action

N/A

15. Will any of the negative impacts identified count as unlawful discrimination albeit they are unavoidable (e.g. budget cuts)?

No

Note the reason for stating this and the justification for proceeding

As we continue to offer provision which gives more choice

16. What other measures or changes could be included to strengthen or change the policy/practice to demonstrate that due regard has been given to equal opportunity; help to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, or victimisation; and foster good relations and wider community cohesion; as covered by the improvement aim of the General Duty in the Equality Act 2010?

None, we directly discuss with the individuals and their families and identify their personal/individual needs

17. What measures or other changes could be included to strengthen or change the policy / practice to demonstrate that due regard has been given to the need to reduce inequalities of outcome as a result of socio-economic disadvantage?

N/A

18. What other measures or changes could be included to strengthen or change the policy/practice to demonstrate that due regard has been given to the need to increase opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and in treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language as set out in the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and to reduce or prevent any adverse effects that the policy/practice may have on the Welsh language?

N/A

19. Was there enough information to make a balanced judgement and to proceed?

We believe that there is enough information

STEP 5 - Decision to Proceed

20. Given the information gathered in Steps 1 – 4 above, is it possible to move forward with the policy or practice or not, and if so, on what basis?

Choice of:

Continue with policy or practice in its current form

STEP 6 - Actions and Arrangements for Monitoring Outcomes and Reviewing Data

The EqIA process is an ongoing one that doesn't end when the policy/practice and EqIA is agreed and implemented. There is a specific legal duty to monitor the impact of policies/practices on equality on an ongoing basis to identify if the outcomes have changed since you introduced or amended this new policy or practice. If you do not hold relevant data, then you should be taking steps to rectify this in your action plan. To review the EHRC guidance on data collection you can review their [Measurement Framework](#)

21. What action steps noted in Steps 1-5 or any additional data collection work would help to monitor the policy / practice when implemented:

Action	Dates	Timetable	Lead Responsibility	Add to the Service Plan
Continue to operate and commission in line with needs of the local population	ongoing	open	Sian Edith Jones	No

22. What arrangements to monitor and review the ongoing impact of this policy or practice will be implemented, including timeframes for when it should be formally reviewed:

Monitoring and Review Arrangements (including where outcomes will be recorded)	Timeframe and Frequency	Lead Responsibility	Add to the Service Plan
Respond to local matters as they arise	ongoing/open	Sian Edith Jones	No

ATODIAD 2 – APPENDIX 2

Asesiad Deddf Llesiant Cenedlaethau'r Dyfodol (Cymru) 2015

Mae Deddf Llesiant Cenedlaethau'r Dyfodol (Cymru) 2015 ynglŷn a gwella llesiant cymdeithasol, economaidd, amgylcheddol a diwylliannol Cymru. Mae'r ddeddf yn gosod dyletswydd llesiant ar gyrff cyhoeddus sydd wedi ei anelu at gyflawni 7 o nodau lleisant sef Cymru sydd yn lewyrchus, gydnherth, iachach, mwy cyfartal gyda cymunedau cydynus a diwylliant bywiog lle mae'r Gymraeg yn ffynnu a sy'n gyfrifol ar lefel byd eang. Mae'r argymhellion wedi ei baratoi gan ddal sylw at y gofynion yma ac unol a'r 5 ffordd o weithio.

Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act places a 'well-being duty' on public bodies aimed at achieving 7 national well-being goals for Wales - a Wales that is prosperous, resilient, healthier, more equal, has cohesive communities, a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language and is globally responsible. The recommendations have been prepared having regard to these requirements and in accordance with the 5 ways of working.

CYNGOR GWYNEDD – Report to Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet

	Revenue Budget 2024/25 – End of November 2024 Review
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Huw Wyn Jones, Cabinet Member – Finance
Relevant officer:	Ffion Madog Evans, Assistant Head of Finance Department – Accountancy and Pensions
Date of meeting:	21 January 2025

1. Decision sought

- 1.1 Noting that there are projections of £8.3 million of overspend by Council departments, with 83% of it relating to adult and child care, to accept the report on the end of November 2024 review of the revenue budget and support the steps the Chief Executive has introduced to address the significant overspend by the Adults, Health and Well-being Department, the Children and Families Department, the Highways, Engineering and YGC Department and the Environment Department.
- 1.2 Delegate the right to the Head of Adults, Health and Wellbeing in consultation with the Head of Finance and the relevant Cabinet Members to make a number of necessary budget transfers, without limitation on the value, within services budgets in the Adults, Health and Well-being Department to reflect the current pressures, including in the field of Learning Disability, Older People, Physical Disability and Mental Health.
- 1.3 Approve additional financial support above the £201k contractual payment to Cwmni Byw'n Iach to be funded from the transformation fund, and to delegate the right to the Cabinet Member for Economy in consultation with the Finance Cabinet Member, Chief Executive and Head of Finance to agree the amount of final financial support above the contractual payment to Cwmni Byw'n Iach at the end of the financial year.
- 1.4 To approve the transfer of £4,409k of underspend on corporate budgets to the Council's Financial Strategy Reserve.
- 1.5 Exclude clause 16.3.1.(C) of the Financial Regulations and not allow departments to carry any underspend into the next financial year.

2. The reason why the Cabinet needs to make the decision

- 2.1** It is the Cabinet's responsibility to take action, as necessary, to secure appropriate control over the Council's budgets (e.g., approval of significant virements or supplementary budgets).

3. Introduction and Rationale

Background / Introduction

- 3.1** The end of November report is submitted on the latest review of the Council's revenue budget for 2024/25, and a summary of the situation per Department is outlined in **Appendix 1**. The current projections suggest that five of the departments will overspend by the end of the year. Significant overspend is anticipated by the Adults, Health and Well-being Department, the Children and Supporting Families Department, the Highways, Engineering and YGC Department and the Environment Department.

- 3.2** In **Appendix 2**, further details are provided relating to the main issues and the budget headings where significant variances are anticipated, along with specific recommendations where appropriate.

4. The reasoning and justification for recommending the decision

The Savings Situation

- 4.1** In the 2024/25 Budget report to the Full Council on 7 March 2024, it was reported that £5,648,890 worth of savings were required to assist in closing the 2024/25 financial deficit. The budgets have been reduced by this amount; therefore, the situation is reported upon after considering the savings.
- 4.2** In recent years, we have reported on risks to achieving savings. Savings schemes to the value of £2 million were removed during 2023/24. In terms of the remaining schemes, there are risks relating to the delivery of some of the schemes.
- 4.3** The latest situation in terms of savings is that £42 million, namely 90% of the amended savings schemes since 2015, have now been realised.

5. Council Departments

5.1 Adults, Health and Well-being Department

After the Department received an additional permanent budget allocation of over £3.2

million this year to meet pressures in various fields, the latest projections suggest that there will be an overspend of £3.3 million by the end of the year (compared with £3.9 million in 2023/24). The overspending is the result of a combination of different factors, including an increase in the pressures on the domiciliary care provision, with higher staffing costs, sickness levels and high rates of non-contact hours within the internal provision. The other main issues include direct payments, which overspend £1.5 million in the older people service, and supported accommodation in the learning disabilities service.

After work was commissioned by the Chief Executive last year to look at the department's financial position, the work is now being addressed.

5.2 Children and Families Department

The department's financial position has worsened substantially since the 2023/24 situation, when an overspend of £2.6 million was reported, but this has now further increased to £3.7 million, mainly because of an increase in out-of-county placement costs. The department had seen the complexity of packages increasing, and recent increasing use of unregistered placements.

As a result of the exceptional overspending by the Children and Families Department, the Chief Executive has already commissioned work to explain the detail in Children's care, to obtain a better understanding of the issues and a clear programme of response. The work is led by the Statutory Director of Social Services.

5.3 Education Department

Following a £1.5 million overspend in the 2023/24 financial year on school transport, the field received an additional budget allocation this year of £896k on a permanent basis and a further £896k for just one year, to address the pressure on the school buses and taxis field following the re-tendering of contracts. A combination of grant receipts and cutting back on spending means that an underspend is anticipated by the department.

5.4 Byw'n Iach

Over the past few years, as the income levels of Byw'n Iach were disrupted by Covid, the company has received annual financial support from the Council which was £550k in 2022/23 and £308k in 2023/24, which was above the contractual payment of the delivery contract, to enable them to maintain their services. The financial support continues this year, and the required sum is now £201k. Cabinet approval is sought for the amount above the contractual payment, delegating the right to the Cabinet Member for Economy in consultation and the Finance Cabinet Member, Chief Executive and Head of Finance to agree the of final amount of support at the end of the financial year.

5.5 Highways, Engineering and YGC Department

An overspend of £699k is anticipated by the department, a reduction was seen in the work being commissioned by external agencies which is having a negative impact on the income of the highways services. In municipal, there is a combination of factors, including additional pressure on the budgets of staff responsible for street cleaning and cleaning public toilets. Income losses are issues for land maintenance and public toilets, but there are projections of higher income by the bereavement services. An improvement was also seen in the income projections for Gwynedd Consultancy.

5.6 The Environment Department

An overspend of £970k is anticipated, with the annual trend of overspending in the field of waste collection and recycling continuing, and accounting for £667k of the overspend. Employment costs and levels of sickness and overtime were problematic in the field; but the matter is being addressed and therefore seems to be reducing. Additional fleet costs, in terms of vehicle hire, is another matter. Lack of parking income was also evident this year. Several savings schemes are also slipping, which is part of the picture.

5.7 Housing and Property

The trend of significant pressure on the emergency accommodation service continues, with projections that spending in this field will be £5 million this year, compared with £6.8 million last year. The reported financial situation is after taking into account an additional budget of £3m allocated from the council tax premium and also a one-off additional budget of £0.9 million allocated as part of the bids procedure for 2024/25 to assist with the extra pressures. It is anticipated that the department as a whole will underspend (£303k).

5.8 Corporate

Underspend on corporate because of additional tax yield and prudent projections when setting the 2024/25 budget. Following a recent national pay settlement, the council received a grant late in the year towards the additional pressure. The reported underspend is reduced as there is a need to bridge the required savings which were part of the Council's financial strategy for 2024/25.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1** It is anticipated that many Council departments will overspend by the end of the year, with overspending in adults and children care accounting for 83% of departmental overspend.

There are significant overspending projections for the Adults, Health and Well-being Department, the Children and Families Department, the Highways, Engineering and YGC Department and the Environment Department this year. In light of the exceptional overspending projections by the Children and Families Department, the Chief Executive has already commissioned work to explain the detail in the area of Children's care, in order to obtain a better understanding of the issues and a clear programme of response. This is consistent with the arrangements that have been implemented in the other departments that substantially overspend.

A Medium-Term Financial Plan report was submitted to the Cabinet on 14 May 2024, which outlined the savings and cuts procedure for responding to the financial position. This included recommending freezing spending during the year, should it become apparent that substantial overspend is likely. This measure is already in force since reporting on the overspend projections in the August Review. Therefore, a combination of freezing expenditure arrangements, as well as making use of the Council's reserves is needed to fund the anticipated financial deficit for 2024/25.

The Council's financial regulations allow the departments to keep underspends of up to £100k. But, given the current financial situation and in line with regulations, I recommend that Cabinet decide not to allow this this year.

Earlier this year, the Council received a one-off reimbursement to all councils from the returns of re-funding Parc Adfer, in Deeside. The contribution has been placed in a fund, with the first call on it to be used to fund the overspending in the waste field.

7. Next steps and timetable

- 7.1** To act on the recommendations submitted and present a follow-up report to the Cabinet in May on the situation at the end of the financial year.

8. Views of the Statutory Officers

8.1 Chief Finance Officer

I have worked with the Cabinet Member to prepare this report and I confirm the content.

8.2 Monitoring Officer

No comments to add in terms of propriety.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Summary of departmental budgets' net positions

Appendix 2 – Details of budgets and the significant variances

Revenue Budget 2024/25 - Summary of the position per Department

	End of November Review				<i>End of August Over / (Under) Spend Position 2024/25</i>
	2024/25 Proposed Budget	Gross Estimated Over / (Under) Spend 2024/25	Recommended Adjustments	Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2024/25	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Adults, Health and Well-being	78,657	3,349	0	3,349	2,673
Children and Families	23,374	3,683	0	3,683	3,205
Business Service and Care Commissioning	2,572	(100)	0	(100)	(97)
Education	117,374	(145)	0	(145)	(60)
Economy and Community	5,922	440	(201)	239	127
Highways, Engineering and YGC	18,449	699	0	699	649
Environment	17,323	970	0	970	1,083
Housing and Property	12,768	(303)	0	(303)	126
Corporate Management Team and Legal	2,748	(61)	0	(61)	(63)
Corporate Services	8,020	(33)	0	(33)	(23)
Finance (and Information Technology)	8,474	(4)	0	(4)	(18)
Corporate Budgets (Differences only)	*	(4,409)	4,409	0	0
Totals (net)	304,155	4,086	4,208	8,294	7,602

REVENUE BUDGET 2024/25 - END OF NOVEMBER REVIEW						
Adults, Health and Well-being Department	2024/25 Proposed Budget	2024/25 Estimated Position	Estimated Over / (Under) Spend 2024/25	Use of Other Sources or Other Adjustments Recommended	Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2024/25	Estimated August Review Over / (Under) Spend 2024/25
Field:-	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<u>Adults Services</u>						
Older People's Services						
Residential and Nursing - Homes	24,394	23,174	(1,220)		(1,220)	(874)
Domiciliary Care	10,163	11,785	1,622		1,622	1,221
Physical Disabilities Services	3,472	2,593	(879)		(879)	(979)
Others	3,711	5,083	1,372		1,372	911
	41,740	42,635	895	0	895	279
Learning Disabilities Services	30,098	30,253	155		155	364
Mental Health Services	5,197	5,160	(37)		(37)	(144)
Department Management	579	498	(81)		(81)	(123)
<u>Adults Services Total</u>	77,614	78,546	932	0	932	376
<u>Provider Services (shows net budget)</u>						
Residential Care	(75)	314	389		389	211
Day Care	(13)	(19)	(6)		(6)	14
Community Care	157	1,692	1,535		1,535	1,622
Others	(7)	37	44		44	10
<u>Provider Services Total</u>	62	2,024	1,962	0	1,962	1,857

REVENUE BUDGET 2024/25 - END OF NOVEMBER REVIEW						
Adults, Health and Well-being Department	2024/25 Proposed Budget	2024/25 Estimated Position	Estimated Over / (Under) Spend 2024/25	Use of Other Sources or Other Adjustments Recommended	Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2024/25	Estimated August Review Over / (Under) Spend 2024/25
Field:-	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<u>Other Services</u>						
Departmental Central Services (including Department savings)	981	1,436	455		455	440
<u>Other Services Total</u>	981	1,436	455	0	455	440
<u>Adults, Health and Well-being Total</u>	78,657	82,006	3,349	0	3,349	2,673

Adults, Health and Well-being

Older People - in residential and nursing, higher fee costs from private providers continue but the use of an independent national care fees system has been effective in giving the Council assurance of value for money. The arrangements relating to deferred payments due for residents are also more effective. A permanent additional budget of £600k was given to this field for 2024/25, therefore an underspend is anticipated by the end of the year. A further increase in the pressures on the domiciliary care budget and reduction in anticipated income and therefore an overspend of £1.6 million is projected. In the physical disabilities field, the trend is that there is less demand for domiciliary care but continued increasing pressure on direct payments. In 'Other', an overspend of £1.5 million on direct payments but this is slightly reduced by an underspend on day services.

Learning Disability - following an overspend of £2m in this field in 2023/24, the service received an additional budget allocation of £1.68 million on a permanent basis for 2024/25 onwards, it is estimated that there will be an overspend of £155k this year. The pressure remains on supported accommodation, and field worker posts above the organisation is contributing to the overspending.

Mental Health - the service received a permanent additional budget allocation of £419k for 2024/25, which has transformed the financial projection of the overspend position reported last year. It is anticipated that residential and nursing and field workers will underspend but there is pressure on the supported accommodation element.

Department Management - an underspend on salaries, travelling and the legal budget.

Provider Services - overspend on staff in residential care, which includes the use of agency staff. Despite an additional budget of £0.5 million being permanently invested in domiciliary care in 2024/25, higher staffing costs, with sickness levels and high non-contact hour rates continue and account for £1.5 million of the overspend. The day care provision has reduced over recent years, however there are residual running costs for some of the buildings.

Departmental Central Services - posts above the structure, pressure on the bad debts provision and failing to realise savings are responsible for the £455k overspend.

Savings - in terms of the situation of realising savings for the department, savings to the value of £356k from previous years (after deleting savings amounting to £1.5 million in 2023/24), as well as £1.44 million in new savings for 2024/25, therefore a total of £1.8 million. The latest projections show that it will not be possible for 85%, namely £1.5m of these savings, to be realised this year.

In light of the exceptional overspend by the Adults, Health and Well-being Department in 2023/24, the Chief Executive commissioned work earlier on in the year to explain the complex detail in Adults care, in order to gain a better understanding of the issues and a clear agenda to respond. The work is being addressed and is being led by the Statutory Director of Social Services, with the intention to report on the findings soon.

It is recommended that a number of substantial budget transfers are implemented before the end of the financial year within the Adults, Health and Well-being Department to reflect the current pressures, including in the field of Learning Disability, Older People, Physical Disability and Mental Health.

REVENUE BUDGET 2024/25 - END OF NOVEMBER REVIEW						
Children and Families Department	2024/25 Proposed Budget	2024/25 Estimated Position	Estimated Over / (Under) Spend 2024/25	Use of Other Sources or Other Adjustments Recommended	Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2024/25	Estimated August Review Over / (Under) Spend 2024/25
Field:-	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Service Management	674	662	(12)		(12)	(43)
Operational	2,598	3,029	431		431	319
Placements						
Out-of-County Placements	5,831	7,838	2,007		2,007	1,821
Small Group Homes	0	0	0		0	0
Fostering through an Agency	1,917	1,529	(388)		(388)	(269)
Fostering - Internal	3,057	2,816	(241)		(241)	(219)
Support Services and Others	2,086	2,497	411		411	385
	12,891	14,680	1,789	0	1,789	1,718
Post-16	1,703	1,768	65		65	2
Derwen Service	2,614	3,992	1,378		1,378	1,139
Youth Justice	283	243	(40)		(40)	(41)
Early Years	168	92	(76)		(76)	(36)
Workforce Development Unit	186	186	0		0	0
Others	2,257	2,405	148		148	147
Children and Families Total	23,374	27,057	3,683	0	3,683	3,205

Children and Families

Service Management - grants receipt but a reduction in the amount that funds core spending.

Operational - the overspending trend continues as a result of substantial pressure on support from support plans, as well as staffing above the budget for field workers.

Placements - a further increase was seen in the average number of out-of-county placements again this year to 35.1 (32.5 in 2023/24, 25.7 in 2022/23), and therefore an increase in the overspend since the 2023/24 position, with an overspend projection of £2 million for the year. Although £240k is the average cost of the placements, there are six exceptional placements this year, which cost between £488k and £800k each. An increase was seen in the costs due to the complexities of packages and recent increased use of unregistered placements, which are more costly.

Average numbers of Fostering through an Agent and Internal Fostering consistent with 2023/24 numbers but as there are several unaccompanied asylum seekers receiving a service, the income receipt from the Home Office for them has resulted in an underspend. In the support service and others, there are increasing pressures on the budget of the placements team and support workers.

Small Group Homes - in the process of being established in Gwynedd, which are in-house provisions which will mean that children can be placed in-house, instead of with external out-of-county providers, which in turn will reduce the existing overspending on placements.

Derwen - the overspend trend continues, and has intensified, with the costs of support plan workers and specialist support now overspending by £1.1 million. There was a change in the emphasis in terms of how the service is provided, with more emphasis on direct payments which is responsible for £195k of the overspend. Increased use of placements that are long-term in their nature in the Short Break Unit, thus leading to an increase in the pressure on the budget.

Post-16 - staffing above the social worker budget, but a contribution from the Home Office towards asylum seekers reduces the overspending.

Youth Justice - staff turnover and a reduction in the Council's contribution towards the partnership's running costs this year.

Early Years - grants available to fund core spending, leading to a projected underspend.

Others - a combination of factors including overspending on staffing, specialist service fees and on the contributions of joint services.

As a result of the exceptional overspending by the Children and Families Department, the Chief Executive has already commissioned work to explain the detail in the area of Children's care, in order to obtain a better understanding of the issues and a clear programme of response. The work will be led by the Statutory Director of Social Services.

REVENUE BUDGET 2024/25 - END OF NOVEMBER REVIEW

Business and Care Commissioning Service	2024/25 Proposed Budget	2024/25 Estimated Position	Estimated Over / (Under) Spend 2024/25	Use of Other Sources or Other Adjustments Recommended	Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2024/25	Estimated August Review Over / (Under) Spend 2024/25
Field:-	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Support and Commissioning	1,586	1,472	(114)		(114)	(151)
Income and Finance	757	778	21		21	(70)
Preventative Services	229	222	(7)		(7)	124
<u>Business and Care Commissioning Service Total</u>	2,572	2,472	(100)	0	(100)	(97)

Business and Care Commissioning Service

The Business and Care Commissioning Service has been moved from the Adults, Health and Well-being Department during the year to be accountable to the Statutory Director of Social Services, since their work field includes the care of adults and children.

Support and Commissioning - underspend on a number of budget headings, including staff costs, travelling, printing and services and supplies, but one-off costs on systems reduces the reported underspend.

Income and Finance - one-off employment costs, as well as unfound savings, mean that further overspend is anticipated by the end of the financial year.

Preventative Services - the telecare plan is underspending (£14k) as a result of improvement in the contributions projections which is now above the target, as well as receiving a grant to fund a post. An additional grant receipt was also seen for other preventative services, therefore an underspend of (£7k) is anticipated.

REVENUE BUDGET 2024/25 - END OF NOVEMBER REVIEW						
Education Department	2024/25 Proposed Budget	2024/25 Estimated Position	Estimated Over / (Under) Spend 2024/25	Use of Other Sources or Other Adjustments Recommended	Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2024/25	Estimated August Review Over / (Under) Spend 2024/25
Field:-	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Devolved Schools	97,325	97,325	0		0	0
Schools Quality Services	(1,357)	(1,369)	(12)		(12)	(13)
Infrastructure and Support Services						
Transportation	8,511	8,511	0		0	0
Ancillary Services	1,145	1,083	(62)		(62)	(28)
Others	2,928	2,893	(35)		(35)	(23)
	12,584	12,487	(97)	0	(97)	(51)
Leadership and Management	2,620	2,600	(20)		(20)	(24)
Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion	5,194	5,209	15		15	48
Youth Service	1,008	977	(31)		(31)	(20)
Education Total	117,374	117,229	(145)	0	(145)	(60)

Education

Schools Quality Service - a combination of income receipt and an increase in the use of grant funding to fund core spending.

Transport - following an overspend of £1.5 million during the 2023/24 financial year, the field received an additional budget allocation this year of £896k on a permanent basis, and a further £896k for one year only to address the pressure on the school bus and taxi field, following the re-tendering of contracts. Therefore, at present, it is anticipated that the financial position will be balanced.

The transport field continues to be the subject of a strategic review to try to control the increase in the expenditure, so that it is possible to reduce overspending and take advantage of opportunities for efficiencies.

Infrastructure and Support Services - Ancillary Services - higher income for catering following a grant receipt for primary schools' free school meals. Overspending on staffing costs are issues in school cleaning and caretaking. The care element of the breakfast clubs also continues to overspend, with a projected overspend of £94k as a result of higher staff costs and lack of income.

Infrastructure and Support Services - Others - underspend on a number of various budgets.

Leadership and Management - staff turnover and grant allocations, as well as savings deriving from a system change.

Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion service - a mixed picture which is a combination of staff turnover and grant receipt, however, pressure on a number of other various headings. The circumstances relating to one specific centre remain and is responsible for an overspend of £135k.

Youth Service - realising the 2025/26 savings scheme relating to staffing in advance.

REVENUE BUDGET 2024/25 - END OF NOVEMBER REVIEW						
Economy and Community Department	2024/25 Proposed Budget	2024/25 Estimated Position	Estimated Over / (Under) Spend 2024/25	Use of Other Sources or Other Adjustments Recommended	Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2024/25	Estimated August Review Over / (Under) Spend 2024/25
Field:-	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Management	431	425	(6)		(6)	0
Community Regeneration and Support Programmes	464	454	(10)		(10)	(10)
Maritime and Country Parks	(163)	18	181		181	128
Byw'n Iach and Other Leisure Contracts	2,100	2,408	308	(201)	107	59
Economic Development Programmes	(77)	(182)	(105)		(105)	(75)
Marketing and Events	295	285	(10)		(10)	(40)
Gwynedd Libraries	1,824	1,776	(48)		(48)	(60)
Gwynedd Museums, Arts and Archives	995	1,178	183		183	178
Use of the Department's Underspend Fund	53	0	(53)		(53)	(53)
Economy and Community Total	5,922	6,362	440	(201)	239	127

Economy and Community

Community Regeneration and Support Programmes - grant money is funding core spending.

Maritime and Country Parks - the impact of poor weather over the summer disrupted income levels, which has led to a lack of income at beaches and has contributed to a reduction in the income of Hafan Pwllheli. Higher spending and spending above the budget are also issues at Hafan Pwllheli and Victoria Dock, Caernarfon. Better projections with the Country Parks with an underspend of (£65k) as a result of a one-off income receipt from Netflix at Parc Padarn and a combination of grant receipts and higher income at Glynllifon.

Byw'n Iach and Other Leisure Contracts - the leisure provision was transferred to the Byw'n Iach Company in April 2019, but responsibility for the running costs of properties remained with the Council. Over the past few years, as the income levels of Byw'n Iach have been disrupted by Covid, the company has received annual funding support from the Council which was £550k in 2022/23 and £308k in 2023/24, which was above the contractual payment of the delivery contract, to enable them to maintain their services. The financial support continues this year and the required sum is £201k.

Furthermore, there is an overspend of £135k on the Economy and Community Department budget on leisure properties running costs.

Economic Development Programmes - success in attracting grants which releases the Council's core budget.

Marketing and Events - job saving in advance which is part of the 2025/26 savings schemes.

Gwynedd Libraries - vacant post which is a part of the 2025/26 savings schemes, as well as less spending on many budget headings.

Gwynedd Museums, Arts and Archives - overspend mainly because lack of income are issues at Neuadd Dwyfor £147k, Storiel £41k and Lloyd George Museum £3k.

In order to reduce the overspend reported, the department will use its departmental underspend fund in full, which is £53k this year.

It is recommended that the Cabinet approves financial support to the value of £201k to Byw'n Iach.

REVENUE BUDGET 2024/25 - END OF NOVEMBER REVIEW

Highways, Engineering and YGC Department (including Trunk roads)	2024/25 Proposed Budget	2024/25 Estimated Position	Estimated Over / (Under) Spend 2024/25	Use of Other Sources or Other Adjustments Recommended	Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2024/25	Estimated August Review Over / (Under) Spend 2024/25
Field:-	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Services:						
Highways (including Trunk roads)	12,122	12,350	228		228	228
Engineering	507	499	(8)		(8)	(3)
Municipal	5,698	6,187	489		489	391
Gwynedd Consultancy	122	112	(10)		(10)	33
Highways, Engineering and YGC Total	18,449	19,148	699	0	699	649

Highways, Engineering and YGC (including Trunk roads)

Highways Services - less work being commissioned by external agencies which therefore has a negative impact on the projected income, as well as increasing pressure on the lighting budget. Underspend on staff costs reduces the overspend reported.

Engineering Services - underspend on various headings.

Municipal Services - a mixed picture which is a combination of factors, additional pressure on the budgets of street cleaning staff and cleaning public toilets. Income losses are issues for land maintenance and public toilets. An increase was seen in the expenditure projections since the August Review which worsens the financial situation. Higher income projections by the bereavement services, and staffing underspend in a number of fields is assisting the financial position.

Gwynedd Consultancy - improvement in the income projections from external organisations such as other councils and the Welsh Government in the roads and engineering field, but income shortfall is still anticipated in the construction service.

REVENUE BUDGET 2024/25 - END OF NOVEMBER REVIEW						
Environment Department	2024/25 Proposed Budget	2024/25 Estimated Position	Estimated Over / (Under) Spend 2024/25	Use of Other Sources or Other Adjustments Recommended	Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2024/25	Estimated August Review Over / (Under) Spend 2024/25
Field:-	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Department Management	717	930	213		213	219
Planning and Building Control Service	602	834	232		232	235
Street Care and Transport Services						
Network Management (Transportation)	256	(212)	(468)		(468)	(539)
Parking and Parking Enforcement	(2,286)	(1,682)	604		604	695
Integrated Transport	2,583	2,547	(36)		(36)	53
	553	653	100	0	100	209
Countryside and Access	706	683	(23)		(23)	(34)
Public Protection	2,048	1,829	(219)		(219)	(210)
Waste	14,476	15,143	667		667	664
Parc Adfer Refinance Gain Share	(1,779)	(1,779)	0		0	0
Environment Total	17,323	18,293	970	0	970	1,083

Environment

Department Management - a delay in realising savings schemes to the value of £200k as well as an overspend on staff and travelling costs.

Planning and Building Control Service - lack of income is an issue in Building Control, Development Control and Land Charges, but is reduced by an underspend on staffing costs.

Street Care and Transport Services

Network Management (Transportation) - exceeding the streetworks fees income, as well as vacant posts and underspend on many of the budget's headings.

Parking and Parking Enforcement - the projected deficit in the parking income has increased to £679k, but its impact is reduced by an underspend on other budgets.

Integrated Transport - an additional one-off budget of £400k was allocated for 2024/25 following the additional pressures after re-tendering public bus contracts. A higher grant receipt from Transport for Wales is also helping to ease the situation. It is suggested that the review into the transport provision should continue.

Public Protection - vacant posts and reduced expenditure on a number of the budget headings, including food and water samples, services and supplies. Projected income is down for the areas of licensing, markets, taxi licensing and food and water safety, but is more promising for trading standards following grant receipts.

Waste - the work of introducing changes to the field continues, and therefore there is a reduction in the overspend projections from the 2023/24 levels, with £667k projected by the end of the financial year. There are a number of matters responsible for the overspend, but mainly waste collection and recycling. Overspend also evident in the running costs of recycling centres. Employment costs and sickness and overtime levels are problematic; however, the matter is being addressed and therefore seems to be reducing. Additional fleet costs, in terms of vehicle hire, is another issue. A number of savings schemes slipping are also a part of the picture.

Reclaiming the Shared Returns of Parc Adfer - One-off saving to all councils from the returns of re-funding Parc Adfer. The contribution has been placed in a fund, with the first call on it to be used to fund the overspending in the waste field.

REVENUE BUDGET 2024/25 - END OF NOVEMBER REVIEW						
Housing and Property Department	2024/25 Proposed Budget	2024/25 Estimated Position	Estimated Over / (Under) Spend 2024/25	Use of Other Sources or Other Adjustments Recommended	Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2024/25	Estimated August Review Over / (Under) Spend 2024/25
Field:-	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Management	543	534	(9)		(9)	(52)
Housing Services						
Homelessness	6,184	5,915	(269)		(269)	227
Private Sector Housing	403	353	(50)		(50)	(38)
Others	360	349	(11)		(11)	(38)
	6,947	6,617	(330)	0	(330)	151
Property Services						
Property	5,279	5,299	20		20	14
Caretaking, Catering and Cleaning	(1)	15	16		16	13
	5,278	5,314	36	0	36	27
Housing and Property Total	12,768	12,465	(303)	0	(303)	126

Housing and Property

Management - underspend on staffing costs and on services and supplies.

Homelessness - the trend of significant pressure on the emergency accommodation service continues, with projections that spending in this field will be £5 million this year, compared with £6.8 million last year. Following consideration of an additional budget for emergency accommodation, namely £3m allocated from the council tax premium and also £0.9 million from an additional one-off budget allocated as part of the bids procedure for 2024/25 to assist with the extra pressures.

Private Sector Housing - staff turnover and an underspend on supplies and services but a deficit in the disabled facilities grant income.

Housing Services, Others - a grant receipt and an underspend on staffing costs, which is reduced by a shortfall in the contributions from housing associations.

Property Services - pressures on the services and supplies budget in Property and on vehicle costs in Pest Control, a one-off income receipt reduces the overspend.

Caretaking, Catering and Cleaning - overspend on staffing costs which is reduced by an income receipt that is higher than the target.

REVENUE BUDGET 2024/25 - END OF NOVEMBER REVIEW						
Central Departments	2024/25 Proposed Budget	2024/25 Estimated Position	Estimated Over / (Under) Spend 2024/25	Use of Other Sources or Other Adjustments Recommended	Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2024/25	Estimated August Review Over / (Under) Spend 2024/25
Field:-	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Corporate Management Team and Legal	2,748	2,687	(61)		(61)	(63)
Finance (and Information Technology)	8,474	8,470	(4)		(4)	(18)
Corporate Services	8,020	7,987	(33)		(33)	(23)
Central Departments Total	19,242	19,144	(98)	0	(98)	(104)

Central Departments

Corporate Management Team and Legal - attempt to keep posts vacant in various fields as well as projected income being above target (£50k) by the legal service. Additional pressures of £17k on the Gwynedd element of the Coroner's budget, reduces the underspend reported.

Finance (and Information Technology) - staff turnover, which is reduced by higher software costs in Information Technology and the Taxation, Benefits, Income and Payments Units. It is not anticipated that income targets will be met in several fields across the department by the end of the financial year. One-off spending on CIPFA Consultation reduces the anticipated underspend.

Corporate Services - a combination of reasons responsible for the situation, including staff turnover and an attempt to keep posts vacant. Realising the 2025/26 savings in advance is also evident. The latest income projections of the Print-room suggest that the income target will be met, however, a deficit is projected in Customer Contact. A permanent bid was allocated for 2024/25 to address the added pressures on the counselling and physiotherapy budget, and therefore this has cancelled out the associated overspend.

REVENUE BUDGET 2024/25 - END OF NOVEMBER REVIEW						
Corporate (Reflects variances only)	2024/25 Proposed Budget	2024/25 Estimated Position	Estimated Over / (Under) Spend 2024/25	Use of Other Sources or Other Adjustments Recommended	Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2024/25	Estimated August Review Over / (Under) Spend 2024/25
Field:-	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Council Tax	*	*	(1,800)	1,800	0	0
Council Tax Reductions	*	*	0	0	0	0
Interest	*	*	82	(82)	0	0
Pay Inflation Pressure Above Demand	*	*	(948)	948	0	0
Government Grant - Additional Pay Pressure	*	*	(2,179)	2,179	0	0
Savings Provision	*	*	0	0	0	0
Budgets / Bids Returned	*	*	(691)	691	0	0
Bridging Savings	*	*	2,991	(2,991)	0	0
Others	*	*	(1,864)	1,864	0	0
Corporate Total	*	*	(4,409)	4,409	0	0

Corporate

Council Tax - additional council tax returns as a result of prudent projections when setting the 2024/25 budget. Although a reduction of 239 was seen in the numbers of second home premiums in 2023/24; there has been an increase of 287 in the numbers to date this year. Furthermore, we saw 362 properties transferring from non-domestic rates to Council Tax up to the end of November (381 in 2023/24). However, on the other hand, the Valuer's Office permitted 145 properties to transfer from Council Tax to non-domestic rates, which is lower than in previous years (193 in 2023/24, 452 in 2022/23, 469 in 2021/22 and 506 in 2020/21). In 2024/25, £6m of Council Tax Premium has been earmarked for the Housing Strategy and a further £3m for the field of Homelessness.

Council Tax Reductions - following a campaign to target different groups to increase the number of applications, an increase was seen in the number who claim the reduction in Gwynedd this year compared with the trend in previous years.

Interest - balance levels in the bank to invest are lower than expected as we set the budget and therefore means that the interest receipts are underachieving.

Pay Inflation Above the Requirement - following the recent pay settlement, a combination of prudent budgeting, as well as additional funding from the Government for an element of teachers' pay inflation.

The Government Grant - Additional Pay Pressures - received an additional grant in December from the Government towards additional pay pressures facing councils.

Budgets / Bids Returned - the pressures on some budgets not as much as provided for in the budget, including gas budgets.

Bridging Savings - make use of corporate underspend to fund the required savings transition which was part of the Council's financial strategy for 2024/25.

Others- the demand on the provision was not as high as projected when setting the budget.

It is recommended that £4.409 million is transferred to the Council's Financial Strategy Reserve, so that it is available to assist in funding the financial deficit.

CYNGOR GWYNEDD – Report to Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet

Item Title:	Capital Programme 2024/25 – End of November Review (30 November 2024 position)
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Huw Wyn Jones, Finance Cabinet Member
Relevant Officer:	Ffion Madog Evans, Assistant Head of Finance
Meeting Date:	21 January 2025

1. Decision Sought:

- To accept the report on the end of November review (30 November 2024 position) of the capital programme.
- Approve the revision to the Capital Budget approved on 7 March 2024 and revised on 15 October 2024 from the programme’s financing perspective (as shown in part 3.2.3 of the report), that is:
 - an increase of £166,000 in the use of borrowing
 - an increase of £4,112,000 in the use of grants and contributions
 - an increase of £420,000 in the use of the revenue
 - an increase of £697,000 in the use of renewal and other reserves.

2. The reason why the Cabinet needs to make the decision:

It is the Cabinet’s responsibility to act, as necessary, to secure appropriate control over the Council’s budgets. It is necessary to ensure appropriate financing arrangements for the Council’s plans to spend on capital. The Cabinet has the authority to adapt the capital programme. Approval is sought for the proposed programme (part 3.2.2) and financing (part 3.2.3).

These are recommended steps to ensure definite sources of funding for the 2024/25 – 2026/27 capital schemes.

3. Introduction and Rationale

3.1 Background/ Introduction

This technical report is presented as part of the 2024/25 budget review. The main purpose of the report is to present the revised capital programme and to approve the relevant financing sources. The structure of Part 3.2 of the report (The rationale and justification for recommending the decision) is as follows:

- Part 3.2.1: Main Findings

- Part 3.2.2: Analysis by Department of the £175.124m capital programme for the 3 years 2024/25 – 2026/27.
- Part 3.2.3: The sources of finance for the net increase of approximately £5.395m since the last review.
- Part 3.2.4: Detail of additional grants since the last review.
- Part 3.2.5: Analysis of the capital prudential indicators.

The Cabinet has a role in formally approving the incorporation of grant funding into the capital budget, but it is also necessary to deal with situations where there has been a change in expenditure profiles between years and the value of contributions and capital receipts.

These are technical issues regarding the financing of schemes and relevant implications and debates have already been addressed when the individual schemes were adopted.

3.2 The rationale and justification for recommending the decision

3.2.1 Main Findings

The main findings that arise from the revised position are:

- Clear plans are in place to invest approximately £102.7m in 2024/25 on capital projects, with £51.1m (50%) of it being financed by attracting specific grants.
- An additional £19.7m of proposed expenditure has been reprofiled from 2024/25 to 2025/26 and 2026/27, but no loss of funding was caused to the Council where schemes have slipped.

3.2.2 Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2026/27

See below the revised capital programme as at the end of November 2024:

Department	END OF AUGUST REVIEW				Increase/(Decrease) since the Last Review £000
	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	Total £000	
Education	19,937	12,443	2,795	35,175	185
Environment	6,325	3,725	1,742	11,792	205
Corporate Services	74	-	-	74	24
Finance	2,263	498	609	3,370	11
Economy and Community	29,952	13,792	1,975	45,719	2,181
Housing and Property	25,652	11,472	6,850	43,974	667
Adults, Health and Wellbeing	2,556	4,565	-	7,121	21
Children and Supporting Families	2,337	320	-	2,657	762
Highways, Engineering and Consultancy	10,241	6,059	4,552	20,852	1,939
Corporate	3,390	500	500	4,390	(600)
TOTAL	102,727	53,374	19,023	175,124	5,395

3.2.3 Changes to the Sources of Finance

The budget for the three year programme shows an increase of £5.395m since the last review. The proposed sources of financing for this are noted below :

Source of Finance	END OF NOVEMBER REVIEW				Increase/(Decrease) since the Budget £000
	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	Total £000	
Supported Borrowing	4,057	4,057	4,057	12,171	-
Other Borrowing	12,094	4,378	4,119	20,591	166
Grants and Contributions	55,219	22,416	6,512	84,147	4,112
Capital Receipts	129	-	-	129	-
Departmental & Corporate Revenue	1,582	-	-	1,582	420
Capital Fund	9,576	11,266	307	21,149	-
Renewals & Other Funds	20,070	11,257	4,028	35,355	697
TOTAL	102,727	53,374	19,023	175,124	5,395

**The General Capital Grant from the settlement is shown on the Grants row rather than as part of the Borrowing/Settlement as in the 2024/25 budget.*

3.2.4 Additional Grants

Since setting the original budget, the Council succeeded in attracting additional grants totalling £4,107k, the largest of which are listed below. Several additional adjustments brings the total movement to £4,112k (see Appendix 1 for more information):

- £1,626k Adjustment to the Grant from the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund
- £725k Welsh Government grant towards the North Prom scheme at Barmouth
- £710k Childcare Capital Grant from the Welsh Government

- £406k Grant from Cymru Football Foundation towards two football pitch schemes
- £185k Sustainable Communities for Learning Grant
- £149k Grant from Welsh Government's Regional Integrated Fund (RIF)
- £117k ARFOR 2 grant from Welsh Government Grant

3.2.5 Capital Prudential Indicators

The CIPFA Prudential Code notes the need to report these Prudential Indicators (see Appendix 4 for more information).

3.3 Next Steps

To implement the recommendations to finance the programme.

4. Comments by Statutory Officers

4.1 Principal Finance Officer

I have collaborated with the Cabinet Member in the preparation of this report and I confirm the content.

4.2 Monitoring Officer

No observations in relation to propriety.

Appendices List:

Appendix 1 – Details of Main Changes

Appendix 2 – Details of Budget Reprofileing

Appendix 3 – Capital Expenditure First 8 months 2024/25

Appendix 4 – Capital Prudential Indicators 2024/25

Background Documents List:

2024/2025 Budget : [Annual budgets \(llyw.cymru\)](#)

Capital Strategy 2024/25 : Full Council 07/03/24 : [Item 12 - Capital Strategy 2024-25 including Investment and Borrowing Strategies.pdf \(llyw.cymru\)](#)

Details of Main Changes

See below the relevant schemes that have caused the main changes to the sources of finance since the original budget:

	2024/25	2025/26- 2026/27
	£'000	£'000
Other Borrowing		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vehicles for use in the areas of waste and Recycling; and information technology equipment (<i>Environment; Finance Departments</i>). 	166	
Grants and Contributions		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable Communities for Learning Grant – adjustments and the addition of various schemes (<i>Education Department</i>). 	185	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ARFOR 2 Grant from Welsh Government towards developing enterprising communities (<i>Economy and Community Department</i>). 	117	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct Food Assistance Grant from Welsh Government (<i>Economy and Community Department</i>). 	32	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adjustment to the Grant from the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund - a sum is paid to Cyngor Gwynedd to be distributed across the counties of north Wales (<i>Economy and Community Department</i>). 	1,626	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grant from Cymru Football Foundation towards two football pitch schemes (<i>Economy and Community Department</i>). 	406	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Childcare Capital Grant from the Welsh Government (<i>Children and Supporting Families Department</i>). 	710	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Care Homes Fund Grant for children's homes from the Welsh Government (<i>Children and Supporting Families Department</i>). 	52	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Integrated Fund (RIF) – additional grant from Welsh Government towards adapting establishments as well as facilitating joint working arrangements with other agencies (<i>Adults, Health and Wellbeing Department</i>). 	149	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welsh Government grant towards the North Prom scheme at Barmouth (<i>Highways, Engineering and Consultancy Department</i>). 	725
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grant from the Land and Buildings Development Fund from Welsh Government towards the feasibility of schemes (<i>Housing and Property Department</i>). 	50
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leasing Scheme Wales Grant from the Welsh Government (<i>Housing and Property Department</i>). 	55
Departmental and Corporate Revenue	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revenue contributions towards several environmental schemes (<i>Environment Department</i>). 	21
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revenue contributions towards Capitalised Repairs and Maintenance (<i>Housing and Property Department</i>). 	400
Renewals and Other Funds	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vehicle and Equipment renewals from departmental funds (<i>Highways, Engineering and Consultancy; Environment Departments</i>). 	627
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribution from the Climate Fund towards a renewals scheme to move to electric vehicles (<i>Highways, Engineering and Consultancy; Corporate Services Departments</i>). 	40
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribution towards works carried out in Block J, Headquarters (<i>Housing and Property Department</i>). 	30

Details of Budget Reprofileing

See below the main schemes that have been reprofiled since the original budget:

	2024/25	2025/26 - 2026/27
	£'000	£'000
Schools' Schemes (Sustainable Communities for Learning and Others) (<i>Education Department</i>)	(7,863)	7,863
Economic Stimulus Schemes and Industrial Units (<i>Economy and Community Department</i>)	(2,652)	2,652
Levelling Up Fund (<i>Economy and Community Department</i>)	(9,745)	9,745
Maritime, Country Parks and Leisure schemes (<i>Economy and Community Department</i>)	(167)	167
Children's establishments including the Maesgeirchen Integrated Centre scheme (<i>Children and Supporting Families Department</i>)	(320)	320
Penygroes Health and Care Hub (<i>Adults, Health and Wellbeing Department</i>)	(2,400)	2,400
Residential Establishments, Day Care and other schemes in the Adults area (<i>Adults, Health and Wellbeing Department</i>)	(2,165)	2,165
Highway schemes and purchase of burial land (<i>Highways, Engineering and Consultancy Department</i>)	497	(497)
Vehicle and Equipment Renewals (<i>Highways, Engineering and Consultancy; Environment Departments</i>)	(5,807)	5,807
Coastal Risks and Flood Prevention schemes (<i>Highways, Engineering and Consultancy</i>)	(1,368)	1,368
Transport schemes and Urban Improvements (<i>Environment Department</i>)	(309)	309
Car Parks – Resurfacing (<i>Environment Department</i>)	(119)	119
Environment Department Specialist IT systems (<i>Environment Department</i>)	(48)	48
Waste and Recycling Schemes (<i>Environment Department</i>)	(174)	174
Housing Grants and Other Schemes (<i>Housing and Property Department</i>)	(745)	745

Disabled Adaptation and Offices Schemes (<i>Housing and Property Department</i>)	(154)	154
Council's Carbon Management and Solar Panel Schemes (<i>Housing and Property Department</i>)	(2,500)	2,500
Asbestos Disposal Schemes (<i>Housing and Property Department</i>)	(200)	200
Heating Decarbonisation Schemes (<i>Housing and Property Department</i>)	(600)	600

Note:

The above reprofiling will not result in any loss in grant.

There are a variety of valid reasons behind the reprofiling in many cases, but the delay prior to implementing these schemes can mean that the services must cope for longer with current assets which have not been improved.

Capital Expenditure First 8 Months 2024/25

SUMMARY	CAPITAL PROGRAMME FULL YEAR (reviewed November) 2024/25 £'000	ACTUAL EXPENDITURE FOR THE 8 MONTHS TO 30/11/2024 £'000
Education	19,937	5,782
Environment	6,325	3,485
Corporate Services	74	74
Finance (and Information Technology)	2,263	641
Economy and Community	29,952	10,774
Housing and Property	25,652	6,844
Adults, Health and Wellbeing	2,556	214
Children and Supporting Families	2,337	1,403
Highways, Engineering and Consultancy	10,241	4,746
Corporate	3,390	-
TOTAL	102,727	33,963

Note:

The percentage spent this year (33%) is higher than the position this time last year (amount spent in 8 months in 2023/24 was 27%), but lower than two years ago (40% in 2022/23).

Capital Prudential Indicators 2024/25

The Council measures and manages its capital expenditure and borrowing with references to the following indicators.

It is now a requirement of the CIPFA Prudential Code that these are reported on a regular basis.

The latest position and information are reflected here.

Capital Expenditure

The Council has undertaken and is planning capital expenditure as summarised below.

	2023/24 Actual £m	2024/25 Forecast £m	2025/26 Budget £m	2026/27 Budget £m
General Fund Services	56.9	103.1	53.7	19.4
Leasing General Fund *	0.0	5.0	0.0	0.0
TOTAL	56.9	108.1	53.7	19.4

* Capital Expenditure for 2024/25 includes £5m due to a change in the accounting for leases and does not represent cash expenditure.

The main General Fund capital projects in 2024/25 include (see the review reports for reprofiling details as applicable) :

- Housing Schemes/Strategy - £17.9m
- Shared Prosperity Fund Schemes - £16.4m
- Sustainable Communities for Learning Schemes - £16.1m
- Levelling Up Fund Schemes - £10.1m
- Coastal Flood Protection - £3.9m
- Property Schemes - £3.7m

Capital Financing Requirement

The Council's cumulative outstanding amount of debt finance is measured by the capital financing requirement (CFR). This increases with new debt-financed capital expenditure and reduces with Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) and capital receipts used to replace debt.

	31.3.2024	31.3.2025	31.3.2026	31.3.2027
	Actual	Forecast	Budget	Budget
	£m	£m	£m	£m
General Fund Services *	173.5	189.2	191.7	193.7

* The Capital Financing Requirement for 2024/25 and subsequent years includes a £5m increase due to a change in the accounting for leases.

Gross Debt and the Capital Financing Requirement

Statutory guidance is that debt should remain below the capital financing requirement, except in the short-term. The Council has complied and expects to continue to comply with this requirement in the medium term as is shown below.

	31.3.2024	31.3.2025	31.3.2026	31.3.2027	Debt at 30.11.2024
	Actual	Forecast	Budget	Budget	£m
	£m	£m	£m	£m	
Debt (including Private Finance Initiative (PFI) and leases)	101.3	98.7	94.0	88.6	100.0
Capital Financing Requirement	173.5	189.2	191.7	193.7	

Debt and the Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary

The Council is legally obliged to set an affordable borrowing limit (also termed the authorised limit for external debt) each year. In line with statutory guidance, a lower “operational boundary” is also set as a warning level should debt approach the limit.

	Maximum Debt 2024/25 £m	Debt at 30.11.2024 £m	2024/25 Authorised Limit £m	2024/25 Operational Boundary £m	Complied ?
Borrowing	94.3	94.3			
Private Finance Initiative (PFI) and Finance Leases	5.7	5.7			
Total Debt	100.0	100.0	200	190	Yes

Since the operational boundary is a management tool for in-year monitoring it is not significant if the boundary is breached on occasions due to variations in cash flow, and this is not counted as a compliance failure.

Proportion of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream

Although capital expenditure is not charged directly to the revenue budget, interest payable on loans and Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) are charged to revenue. The net annual charge is known as financing costs; this is compared to the net revenue stream i.e. the amount funded from Council Tax, National Non-Domestic Rates and general government grants.

	2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Budget	2026/27 Budget
Financing Costs * (£m)	7.1	9.1	9.5	10.2
Proportion of Net Revenue Stream (%)	2.2%	2.8%	2.8%	3.0%

* Financing costs for 2024/25 and subsequent years includes a £0.7m increase due to a change in the accounting for leases.

Treasury Management Indicators

These indicators (Liability Benchmark, Maturity Structure of Borrowing, Long-Term Treasury Management Investments) are reported separately as part of the Treasury Management Report for the period under review.

CYNGOR GWYNEDD – Report to Cyngor Gwynedd’s Cabinet

Subject:	Savings Overview: Progress Report on Realising Savings Schemes
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Huw Wyn Jones, Cabinet Member for Finance
Contact officer:	Ffion Madog Evans, Assistant Head of Finance - Accounting and Pensions
Date:	21 January 2025

1. The decision sought

- 1.1 To accept the information in the report and to note the progress towards realising the savings schemes for 2024/25 and previous years.
- 1.2 Approve the deletion of one savings scheme worth £146,910 relevant to 2025/26 in the waste area in the Environment Department, using the provision set aside in the budget in order to do so.

2. The reason why it is necessary that the Cabinet makes the decision

- 2.1 Realising the individual schemes is the responsibility of relevant Cabinet members, who challenge the performance of the departments including the progress of the savings schemes. It is the responsibility of the Cabinet Member for Finance to keep an overview of the whole picture.

3. Introduction and Rationale

Background / Introduction

- 3.1 This report provides an overview of the Council's savings' situation for 2024/25 and previous years following a review of the situation at the end of November 2024.
- 3.2 In the 2024/25 Budget report to the Full Cabinet on 7 March 2024, it was reported that savings totalling £5,648,890 were required for the 2024/25 financial year to help close the 2024/25 funding gap. The savings were a combination of £3,668,130 previously approved in Cabinet 14 February 2023 for the 2023/24 budget, a £15,000 scheme that has been deferred which received Cabinet approval on 19 February 2019, along with new savings approved in Cabinet on 20 February 2024 worth £1,956,760.

4. Rationale and justification for recommending the decision

The Council has financial planning arrangements that have already identified significant efficiency savings in recent years to reduce service cuts for Gwynedd residents. Recent years have seen difficulties in realising savings in some areas and so during 2023/24 £2m worth of savings were deleted.

5. Historical Departmental Savings Schemes 2015/16 – 2024/25

5.1 Appendix 1 summarises the achievement of each department based on the November 2024 review, against the revised savings target that has been set for them, **which totals over £34m. It can be reported that £33.8m worth, or 98% of these schemes have been realised**, but the risk of realising the savings on some of the schemes remains.

5.2 There are 5 schemes worth £368k that face risks of delivering; 3 schemes from the Adults, Health and Wellbeing Department (total of £223k) and 2 schemes from the Economy and Community Department (total of £145k).

5.3 4 schemes totalling £164k have slipped but the departments do not foresee a problem in realising them.

6. New Departmental Savings Schemes 2023/24 – 2024/25

6.1 In the full Council on 7 March 2024 the 2024/25 Budget report was approved which included efficiency savings schemes and cuts worth £5.2m, with £2m of it to be implemented to fund the 2024/25 funding gap.

6.2 Appendix 2 summarises the achievement of each department based on the November 2024 review against the savings target set for them, **totalling over £12m. It can be reported that over £8m, or 67% of these schemes have already been realised, with a further £791k or 6% on track to deliver fully and in a timely manner.**

6.3 The Corporate Services Department has identified that £14k worth of savings can be achieved on the Learning and Development of the Organisation - cutting supplies budgets scheme, worth £41.6k. However, there are significant risks to realise the remaining savings of £27.6k and the department is looking at how it can be realised.

6.4 It is currently anticipated that there are some risks of realising almost £544k worth of savings schemes which includes 1 scheme from the Education Department (£41k), 4 from the Environment Department (£388k), 1 from the Finance Department (£38k) and 1 from the Highways and Engineering Department (£60k).

6.5 There is a slippage on some schemes totalling £536k which were profiled to be realised in 2023/24 and there is some delay in realising schemes worth £2.141k in 2024/25, thus a total of £2.677k, but the departments do not foresee a problem to realise them. Most of this amount includes savings from the Adults, Health and Well-being Department (total of £1.2m) and £444k from schools, which is slipping as schools work within an academic year and so the realisation will slip into the next financial year.

7. Departmental Savings Schemes 2025/26 onwards

7.1 Due to the prospects for a poor financial settlement and the current challenging economic climate, it is inevitable that Local Authorities must look at savings and cuts to support the financial situation. Additional savings schemes and cuts for 2025/26 are already under consideration by the Council. A public consultation to establish what is important to the people of Gwynedd has recently been held which will be considered when looking at the required savings. The savings will be subject to a report shortly.

7.2 The current savings for 2025/26 onwards, worth £3.7m are listed by department in **Appendix 3**, the historical savings worth £200k in Table 1 and the new savings worth £3.5m in Table 2, but it is currently premature to report on the status of these schemes.

8. Savings realisation review

8.1 Following a recent review by the Chief Executive of waste area savings schemes by the Environment Department, it was concluded that there is a need to:

- merging three savings schemes in the commercial waste field.
- that two savings schemes have been approved, namely The modification of the current arrangements for nappy collection and Collecting residual waste every 4 weeks, as both schemes cannot be realised, it is proposed that the nappy collection scheme worth £146,910 which has been profiled for 2025/26 is deleted.
- there are great risks to achieving the savings of the £400k Waste Agreement Review scheme in 2025/26 and therefore the saving is to be reduced to £100k with the Environment Department implementing two alternative schemes for the remaining £300k.

9. Conclusion

9.1 It can be reported that a total of £42 million of savings have been realised since 2015/16, which is 90% of the required £46.6m over the period. It is inevitable that realising the savings has been challenging and I am grateful to all the departments and Cabinet Members for ensuring this success.

9.2 The table below summarises the latest position of the savings schemes since April 2015 with 90% of all schemes realised.

Table 1: Summary of the status of all savings schemes since April 2015

Status of Savings	Portal	£m	%
Have realised	1	42.0	90.2
On track to achieve savings in full and on time	2	0.8	1.7
Delay, but moving forward	3	2.9	6.1
Some risks to achieve - slip or fail	4	0.8	1.7
Significant risks to realise in full or partially	5	0.1	0.3
Total savings		46.6	100

9.3 Therefore, I ask the Cabinet to note the achievement outlined in this report towards realising the savings schemes. In addition, delete one savings scheme worth £146,910 relevant to 2025/26.

10. Next steps and timetable

10.1 Act on the recommendations stated in this report and submit a follow-up report to the Cabinet following the final situation at the end of the 2024/25 financial year.

11. View of the Statutory Officers

11.1 Head of Finance

I have collaborated with the Cabinet Member in the preparation of this report and I confirm the content.

11.2 Monitoring Officer

No observations to add in relation to propriety.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Overview of Historical Savings Schemes 2015/16 - 2024/25 per Department

Appendix 2 - Overview of New Savings Schemes 2023/24 - 2024/25 per Department

Appendix 3 - Table 1 - Overview of Historical Savings Schemes 2025/26 onwards per Department

- Table 2 - Overview of New Savings Schemes 2025/26 onwards per Department

OVERVIEW OF HISTORICAL SAVINGS SCHEMES FOR 2015/16 TO 2024/25 PER DEPARTMENT

TABLE 1
SCHEMES THAT HAVE REALISED

Department	Total Savings 2015/16 to 2024/25 £	Schemes that have realised £	Percentage of schemes that have realised
Education	1,659,740	1,659,740	100%
Schools	4,331,620	4,331,620	100%
Environment	2,972,463	2,922,463	98%
Corporate Services	2,569,218	2,569,218	100%
Finance	1,881,636	1,881,636	100%
Economy and Community	2,996,422	2,851,422	95%
Adults, Health and Well-being	6,594,981	6,293,051	95%
Children and Supporting Families	2,318,908	2,318,908	100%
Highways, Engineering and Gwynedd Consultancy	6,531,580	6,496,580	99%
Corporate Management Team and Legal	403,240	403,240	100%
Housing and Property	843,230	843,230	100%
Sub-total	33,103,038	32,571,108	98%
Managerial Savings	1,200,360	1,200,360	100%
TOTAL	34,303,398	33,771,468	98%

TABLE 2
SCHEMES YET TO BE REALISED

Adran	2019/20 £	2020/21 £	2021/22 £	2022/23 £	2023/24 £	2024/25 £	Total £
Environment			37,500	12,500			50,000
Economy and Community		45,000		70,000	15,000	15,000	145,000
Adults, Health and Well-being	30,000	136,930	33,750		101,250		301,930
Highways, Engineering and Gwynedd Consultancy		8,750	26,250				35,000
TOTAL	30,000	190,680	97,500	82,500	116,250	15,000	531,930

Department	Head of Finance's comments
Environment	There has been a slippage on one scheme which is To provide electric car charging points in car parks (£50k).
Economy and Community	There are some risks in achieving the savings of 2 schemes; a scheme relating to Neuadd Dwyfor (£100k) and Establish parking fees on Dinas Dinlle beach and increase launching fees across Gwynedd beaches from £10 to £15 (£45k).
Adults, Health and Well-being	There are some risks in achieving savings of 3 schemes namely Improving work processes by undertaking the Ffordd Gwynedd review and using the finance modules of the new IT system within the Adult Department (£40k), Review of Continuing Healthcare packages £47.57k) and Review the operating arrangements within the Adult Department (£135k). The 2 schemes Restructuring the Business Service by reducing support for teams within the Department and the Children's Department (£49k) and Increase income and reduce other costs with a balance of £30k, have slipped but the Department anticipates realising these during 2024/25.
Highways, Engineering and Gwynedd Consultancy	The Barmouth Bridge scheme - not paying Network Rail for the right of way over the bridge (£35k) has slipped but the department is still in discussions with Network Rail.

OVERVIEW OF NEW SAVINGS SCHEMES FOR 2023/24 AND 2024/25 PER DEPARTMENT

Department	Total of new savings for 2023/24 and 2024/25		Realised Schemes		Schemes on track to be completed on time		Schemes slipping and schemes with some risks of achieving the savings		Head of Finance's comments
	£ - number		£ - number		£ - number		£ - number		
Education	1,304,550	31	1,194,510	26	69,040	3	41,000	2	There is a delay on 2 schemes which have been profiled in 2024/25 namely <i>Cut 25% of the Key Stage 4 Behaviour hubs' budget</i> (£18k) and <i>Delete one level 3 assistant post in the Inclusion Team</i> (£23k). There are 2 schemes on track to deliver in a timely manner.
Schools	1,966,100	1 *	1,522,020	1	-		444,080	*	There has been a delay on part of the <i>school efficiency savings</i> scheme mainly because schools work within an academic year and therefore the remaining amount will materialise in 2025/26.
Environment	1,197,750	32	372,740	19	35,510	1	789,500	12	The department anticipates some risks of realising the savings of 4 schemes worth a total of £388k - <i>Rationalisation of departmental support arrangements</i> (£150k), <i>Increase income by collecting Commercial Waste from holiday accommodation</i> (£120k), <i>Parking and Streetworks - Extension of Parking Enforcement Hours at Council Short Stay Car Parks</i> (£38k) and <i>Parking and Streetworks - Adjustment to Band 2 Long Stay Fee Structure</i> (£80k). There is a slippage/delay on 8 schemes worth a total of £402k but they are moving forward. There is 1 further scheme on track to deliver in a timely manner.
Corporate Services	517,790	20	449,260	17	26,920	2	41,610	1	The service has recognised that £14k worth of savings can be achieved on the savings of the <i>Establishment's Learning and Development scheme - cutting supplies budgets</i> worth £41.6k. However, there are significant risks of realising the remaining savings of £27,610 and the department is looking at how it can be realised. It is anticipated that 2 schemes will be realised in a timely manner.
Finance	665,100	17 *	322,810	12	138,720	2 *	203,570	3 *	There has been a slippage from 23/24 on 3 schemes worth a total of £166k, included here is the <i>departmental scheme - Increase income targets to be proportionate to the work</i> that is at risk to achieve a 24/25 target worth £38k. A further 2 schemes are on track to materialise fully and in a timely manner.
Economy and Community	513,760	36	483,120	32	9,530	1	21,110	3	There are some risks of delivering £3k of savings on the <i>Marketing & Events scheme - increasing advertising income on the Eryri/Snowdonia Mountain and Coast website</i> . There is a delay on 2 schemes totalling £18k but 1 scheme is moving forward and on track to deliver in a timely manner.

Adults, Health and Well-being	1,575,650	20	82,150	5	266,090	8	1,227,410	7	There has been a slippage from 2023/24 on 4 schemes; <i>Client Asset Management Unit: Charge property management fee in line with Court of Protection practice guidance</i> (£9k), <i>Make use of a national reimbursement scheme to fund 25% of support costs in substance misuse</i> (£25k), <i>Achieve efficiency savings by making better use of equipment/technology in supported accommodation for individuals with physical disabilities</i> (£10k) and <i>Mental Health, Protection and Quality Assurance: Achieve efficiency savings by making better use of equipment/technology in supported accommodation</i> (£10k). There is a delay in 2024/25 on 3 schemes totaling £1.173k and a further 8 schemes on track to realise in a timely manner.
Children and Supporting Families	238,140	6 *	80,180	5 *	157,960	1 *	-	-	£158k on track to realise in a timely manner.
Highways, Engineering and Consultancy	1,025,440	18	606,940	9	87,500	2 *	331,000	7	The department anticipates risks of realising 1 scheme namely <i>Improving efficiency/rationalisation of highway depot sites</i> scheme (£60k). There was a slippage from 2023/24 on 2 schemes namely <i>Stop lamp inspection work over the summer</i> (£5k) and <i>Raising CCTV service contributions to reflect the true cost</i> (£5k) with the remaining £10k to realise this year. There is a delay on 4 schemes this year with a total of £261k but they are moving forward and 2 further schemes with a total of £77.5k on track to realise in a timely manner.
Corporate Management Team and Legal	131,190	7	131,190	7	-	-	-	-	All schemes of the period have been achieved.
Housing and Property	760,350	13	610,850	11	-	-	149,500	2	There has been a delay on 2 schemes namely <i>Internalise more technical work on Disabled Facilities Grants schemes</i> (£54k) and <i>Reducing our office space due to new ways of working</i> (£95.5k), but they are moving forward.
Managerial Savings	2,400,000	1	2,400,000	1	-	-	-	-	The one scheme of the period has been achieved.
TOTAL	12,295,820	202	8,255,770	145	791,270	20	3,248,780	37	In financial terms (£), 67% of the new 2023/24 and 2024/25 savings schemes have already been realised and a further 6% are on track to be delivered on time by the end of the financial year.

* schemes with different status splits in the years they have been profiled

TABLE 1

OVERVIEW OF HISTORICAL SAVINGS SCHEMES 2025/26 ONWARDS PER DEPARTMENT

Department	2025/26	2026/27	Total 2025/26 and 2026/27 Savings	
	£	£	£ - number	
Adults, Health and Well-being	200,000	-	200,000	1
HISTORICAL SCHEMES TOTAL	200,000	0	200,000	1

TABLE 2

OVERVIEW OF NEW SAVINGS SCHEMES 2025/26 ONWARDS PER DEPARTMENT

Department	2025/26	2026/27	Total 2025/26 and 2026/27 Savings	
	£	£	£ - number	
Education	151,960	-	151,960	5
Environment	949,630	200,000	1,149,630	11
Corporate Services	248,620	-	248,620	7
Finance	292,540	-	292,540	8
Economy and Community	135,020	-	135,020	5
Adults, Health and Well-being	923,120	143,090	1,066,210	12
Highways, Engineering and Consultancy	462,500	-	462,500	5
NEW SCHEMES TOTAL	3,163,390	343,090	3,506,480	53
TOTAL	3,363,390	343,090	3,706,480	54

CYNGOR GWYNEDD – Report to Cyngor Gwynedd’s Cabinet

Item title:	Response to offending Plan
Cabinet Member:	Cllr. Nia Jeffreys, Council Leader
Relevant officer:	Dafydd Gibbard, Chief Executive
Meeting date:	21 January 2025

1. Decision Sought:

- 1.1 Approval and adoption of the Response Plan in Appendix 1.
- 1.2 Call on the Welsh Government to establish a Public Inquiry into all the circumstances surrounding this serious offending.
- 1.3 Commission the Chief Executive to make arrangements to implement the contents of this Response Plan including establishing a specific Programme Board and to regularly report progress to the Cabinet.
- 1.4 Authorise the Chief Executive to establish and organise temporary resources and necessary staffing capacity to realise the contents of this Plan to be funded from reserves.
- 1.5 Note that the Response Plan is a working plan that will need to be reviewed regularly and in that context ask the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise the Plan as part of their work programme.
- 1.6 Delegate the right to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, the Education Cabinet Member and the Children's Cabinet Member, to make minor editorial adjustments as required.

2. The reason why Cabinet needs to make the decision:

- 2.1 Although a number of the work streams set out in the attached Response Plan are already underway, the Cabinet is asked to formally adopt the Response Plan to provide assurance and clarity that our response to the offending of the former head of Ysgol Friars is being properly addressed and is a main priority for the Council.

- 2.2 The essence of a Response Plan such as this is that it is formal in nature, as it refers to a number of organisational issues. But, we cannot for a moment forget about the most important ones in the midst of this, namely the girls who should have been safe in their school. The whole purpose of this Response Plan and every action we take is to do everything possible to ensure that no one suffers in the same way ever again, and that should always be at the top of our considerations.

3. Response Plan

- 3.1 The Response Plan set out in Appendix 1 is a document that collates all support, reviews, audits and other work streams relating to the response to the offending.
- 3.2 All work streams relating to the case are presented in one public document to give clarity and confidence to all stakeholders that Cyngor Gwynedd is doing all it can to ensure that such a situation does not happen again.
- 3.3 The following is outlined in the Plan:
- Background to the situation
 - statement of the Council's position,
 - the objectives of the Plan setting out how the Council will go about achieving its objectives,
 - details of all existing workstreams, and identification of further work streams that requires implementation.
- 3.4 The Response Plan also establishes governance arrangements for formally monitoring and challenging the progress of the work streams.
- 3.5 It is essential that neither this Response Plan nor any issue that feeds into any part of this Plan undermines any other work, such as the Children's Practice Review set up by the North Wales Safeguarding Board chaired by Jan Pickles.
- 3.6 In setting up the Plan, comments were invited from a number of relevant external agencies - the Children's Commissioner, the Welsh Government, the Chair of the Child Practice Review, and Estyn. We are grateful to them all for taking the time to consider the content and direction and are delighted that they have welcomed the Plan and provided very positive feedback.

Implementation and governance

- 3.7 While many of the work streams that make up this Plan are already underway, or about to commence, there is significant work ahead to realise the content of the Response Plan as a whole.
- 3.8 It is recommended that a dedicated Programme Board with an agreed Terms of Reference be established to co-ordinate and ensure appropriate and timely progress, and that the Programme Board should invite input from relevant external bodies such as Estyn, the Welsh Government and the Children's Commissioner. It is recommended that an Independent Chair or Critical Friend from outside the Council is appointed to the Programme Board, who has the relevant background and experience to enable the delivery and implementation to be challenged. The Chief Executive with the assistance of the Programme Board will report to Cabinet at regular intervals, to be confirmed in the agreed Terms of Reference referred to above.

Resources to implement the Plan

- 3.9 To date, the task of responding to this whole situation has been taken on a small number of officers and it is fair to say that that has resulted in a significant burden while also trying to continue to carry out their day-to-day work.
- 3.10 At times, it has meant that responding in a timely manner has been difficult and has created risks elsewhere as some of the Council's main issues have to receive a lower priority. It has also resulted in a disproportionate burden being placed on the shoulders of several officers.
- 3.11 If the appropriate and timely attention this matter merits is to be given, and to be able to fully realise the contents of this Response Plan, as well as being able to properly address the management of risks tied to the Council's other priorities, it will be necessary to appoint an additional resource on an interim basis as it is not sustainable to continue with the status quo over the coming period.
- 3.12 It is therefore recommended that the Chief Executive put temporary arrangements in place to ensure that as soon as possible, funding out of appropriate funds.

4. Public Inquiry

- 4.1 The Leader of the Council has already publicly stated the call for a Public Inquiry into all these circumstances. This Response Plan restates that call and the adoption of the recommendations of this report formalises that call.

- 4.2 The Council has also declared our support and commitment to the Children's Practice Review (CPR) which is currently underway and this Response Plan also reaffirms that support.
- 4.3 The Welsh Government has the statutory power to establish Public Inquiries and therefore it is for the Government to weigh the rationale for whether or not to hold such an inquiry. We are therefore asking them to reach a timely decision on this.
- 4.4 In the context of this report what is at issue is a statutory Public Inquiry established under the Inquiries Act 2005 (Inquiries Act 2005). In considering calling for a Public Inquiry in this way the Council has weighed up all the factors that a responsible body should consider.
- 4.5 The terms of reference of a Public Inquiry are established to greet its purposes compared to a Children's Practice Review which is limited in scope and period covered. A Public Inquiry would allow a much longer period to be looked at than CPR. However, while speculation is not possible, it is important to recognise that, on average, a Public Inquiry typically takes 3-4 years from its inception to the completion of its final report. As a result findings and lessons to be learned would be subject to a significant delay compared to the order of a Children's Practice Review.
- 4.6 A Public Inquiry can compel evidence and witnesses under oath. This can strengthen the collection and extraction of individuals' evidence. A CPR cannot do this in the same way. Public inquiries are significant and complex processes and take significant resources to establish, prepare and conduct. All participating agencies would have to be attributing resources and staff to the process along with professional representation over the course of the process.
- 4.7 A Public Inquiry would be a formal legal process allowed to take place through lawyers and hearings. It offers a detailed quasi-legal process that can give deep consideration to the details and background of specific events. On the other hand, the CPR process is led by independent individuals who are well-informed and experienced in the field and offers a thorough and inclusive set-up to arrive at findings. A Public Inquiry is a formal legal process that would be allowed to take place through lawyers and hearings rather than discussion and reflection.
- 4.8 There is a possibility that holding a Public Inquiry for a period of several years could lead to a challenging situation for those who would take part, including victims,

the school, staff and the wider community. Different individuals and stakeholders will have various views on this and some may welcome it as an opportunity to ensure detailed investigations into specific historical issues.

- 4.9 Having weighted up the above considerations, the Council remains fully supportive and committed to the Children's Practice Review already underway, but also calls for a Public Inquiry and asks the Welsh Government to reach a timely decision on that.

5. Other considerations

- 5.1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The act imposes a well-being duty on public bodies aimed at achieving 7 well-being goals of a Wales that is prosperous, resilient, healthier, more equal with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture where the Welsh language thrives and is responsible at a global level. The plan was prepared within the principles of the Act and the 5 ways of working.

- 5.2 In accordance with the legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 ("The Act") (including Welsh public sector duties) in decision making the Council must pay due regard to the need to (1) abolish unlawful discrimination (2) promote equality of opportunity and (3) build good relationships on the basis of the protected characteristics together and hold attention to socio-economic impacts. The Plan will be achieved by meeting our requirements under the Act and our responsibilities under the Language (Wales) Measure 2011. We are satisfied that it meets our duties.

6. Next steps

- 6.1 Receiving Cabinet approval for this Response Plan, we will immediately initiate the process of establishing a Programme Board to ensure formal governance of the Response Plan.

7. Comments from Statutory Officers

7.1 Chief Finance Officer

I can confirm that appropriate funds are in place to cope with the financial requirements referred to in paragraph 3.12 above and will advise the Chief Executive on this matter as necessary.

If the Welsh Government agrees to hold a Public Inquiry we will take appropriate steps to estimate the financial cost of that to the Council and put arrangements in place to identify sources of funding.

7.2 Monitoring Officer

I can confirm that both myself and the Legal Service have had the opportunity to provide input into the Plan. The range of actions and responses that are highlighted reflect the extent of the impact and the challenge to the Authority that has resulted from these crimes and how to deal with and respond to the victims, the inevitable questions that have arisen and identify the lessons to be learned. In addition to the plan there are also wider decisions for the Cabinet regarding the call for a statutory public inquiry under the provisions of the Inquiries Act 2005. It is important for the Cabinet, who will make a corporate decision, to have regard to this element of the report when reaching a decision. There are also decisions which, in my opinion set an appropriate framework for moving the plan forward, reporting and scrutinising the progress and keeping it under review. I can therefore confirm that I am satisfied that the decisions sought are appropriate to put before the Cabinet.

Appendices List:

Appendix 1: Response to offending Plan

Response to Offending Plan

"We cannot for a second forget about the most important people in all of this, the girls who should have been safe in their school. The whole purpose of every step that we take is to do everything possible to ensure that no one suffers in the same way ever again and this should be our main consideration at all times."



December 2024

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Summary of the background

Neil Foden, former headteacher of Ysgol Friars in Bangor, was arrested on 6 September 2023, in his workplace following a disclosure by one of the victims. He faced 19 charges, including 12 charges of sexual activity with a child and two charges of sexual activity with a child whilst he was in a position of trust. The criminal proceedings involved five girls over a period of four years.

In May 2024, after a three-week hearing at Mold Crown Court, the offender was found guilty. On 1 July 2024, he was sentenced to 17 years in prison

Following his conviction, the North Wales Safeguarding Board established a Child Practice Review (CPR) under an Independent Chair, Jan Pickles, to establish the circumstances of the whole matter, learn lessons and prevent similar cases in future.

Between September 2023 and May 2024, the investigations into the allegations against the offender took place. This was a criminal investigation led by the Police. With many historical allegations, some of the victims and survivors were now adults and therefore the enquiries about the offences were undertaken by the Police only. For the allegations where the victims and survivors were children at present, these investigations were undertaken in accordance with [Wales Safeguarding Procedures 2020](#). This included interviews and joint investigations between the Children Services and the Police.

In accordance with good practice in such investigations, it was crucial that no action was taken during the criminal investigation which may have undermined the Police's ability to investigate an offence. The investigations were undertaken during the period in accordance with [Part 3](#) and [Part 5](#) of the [Wales Safeguarding Procedures 2020](#). The Council led on the processes under [Part 5](#) of the Procedures to manage and moderate the investigation's activities.

Following the conviction by the Court, in June 2024, the North Wales Safeguarding Board stated immediately that it would open a Child Practice Review. The [North Wales Safeguarding Children Board](#) (NWSCB) is a statutory body under the [Social Services and Well-being Act \(Wales\) 2014](#) and its responsibility is to co-ordinate, monitor and challenge its partner agencies when safeguarding children in North Wales.

The objectives of the NWSCB are to:

- **PROTECT** children in its area who are, or who are at risk of being, abused, neglected or experiencing other types of harm at present, and
- **PREVENT** children who are, or who are at risk of being, abused, neglected or experiencing other types of harm.

The NWSCB notes that its function is to make "Safeguarding everybody's business". The partner agencies are the six local authorities across the region (Cyngor Gwynedd, Isle of Anglesey County Council, Conwy County Borough Council, Denbighshire Council, Flintshire Council and Wrexham County Borough Council), North Wales Police, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, the National Probation Service and the Community Rehabilitation Company.

The Regional Safeguarding Board appointed a Chair to lead the CPR, Jan Pickles, a very experienced individual who has been leading high-profile reviews of this nature and who has specialised in safeguarding children matters for years (further details can be found in part 5 below). Jan Pickles visited Council Members on 11 July 2024 to outline the work ahead of her and the procedure of

fulfilling that work. The CPR is led, without doubt, by an experienced, specialist and passionate individual in the field and we as a Council are pleased about that.

We have benefited greatly from Jan Pickles' advice and guidance over the past months. A CPR of such a serious and complex nature as this is unfamiliar to the majority of Cyngor Gwynedd officers and Members and we are treading new ground on a daily basis. This situation is completely unprecedented therefore receiving the advice of a recognised expert has been invaluable.

It was originally intended for the CPR to aim to reach conclusions within approximately 6 months, which is the usual timeframe for a CPR. However, the scope of the Review has extended considerably since then and its terms of reference are broader and more thorough. It is certainly not a usual CPR and the terms of reference place an expectation on the investigators to consider events dating back to 2017 (two years prior to the arrest would have been normal practice). This is to be welcomed and naturally the timeframe for completing the work has had to be extended as well. We now expect initial conclusions in Spring 2025, with a final report towards the summer.

As a Council, it was considered that the CPR was initially best placed to consider all the facts and reach meaningful conclusions. Consequently, we did not wish to hold our own review or investigation which would not be considered as good as the CPR, or which would cast any shadow over our trust in the statutory and independent process of the CPR. Consequently, the Council did not undertake its own formal reviews or investigations between June and October. Having said that, as outlined in this Response Plan, this did not prevent us from undertaking several steps to ensure that we responded appropriately to the situation.

Following discussions with the Chair of the CPR in the autumn, it was concluded that it was appropriate by then for the Council to move more swiftly with some aspects of our response rather than wait for the findings of the CPR before undertaking our own investigations, for several reasons, including:

- the change in the CPR timeframe in order to extend the scope of the work,
- the substantial work of gathering and presenting the Council's evidence to the investigators of the Review has now been completed,
- new information which came to light as time went on of which we were unaware at the beginning,
- the substantial press coverage, attention on social media and the public interest in the case has led to perceptions which we do not know if they are correct or not.

We stress that we remain completely confident in and fully supportive of the work of the CPR and we benefit greatly from the support and guidance of the Chair. The content of this Response Plan has been checked with the chair of the CPR and she is satisfied that it will not impact their work; indeed, she is of the opinion that several pieces of work will be of assistance to the CPR.

This Response Plan explains what we will do in order to try to fulfil our objectives in relation to all of this.

2. A statement of the Council's position

Before setting out our objectives, it is important that the Council clearly states its position.

The offender's actions have had a deep and shocking impact on the victims and survivors, their families, the school, community, staff and Members of the Council and the entire county.

The essence of a Response Plan such as this is that it is formal in nature, as it refers to several organisational matters. However, we cannot for a second forget about the most important people in all of this, the girls who should have been safe in their school. The whole purpose of this Response Plan and every step that we take is to do everything possible to ensure that no one suffers in the same way ever again and this should be our main consideration at all times.

As a responsible public body, the Council states and recognises that the offences committed were abhorrent and devastating for all the victims and survivors. We wish to apologise to all victims and survivors and wish to assure all concerned that we will do our utmost to discover all the facts and will embrace every lesson that needs to be learned in order to ensure improvement in the interests of future generations.

We will prioritise our resources to support every investigation already underway by us as a Council and the statutory CPR, which is also underway. We will continue to engage with the Children's Commissioner for Wales, and we have invited her to offer input and advice on all our actions.

In addition to the CPR, the Council also calls for a Public Inquiry into all circumstances surrounding this serious offending. It is the Welsh Government who has the statutory power to establish Public Inquiries and we therefore call on them to come to a decision as soon as possible.

We wish to turn every stone and be completely open and transparent. Otherwise, it will be impossible for us to fulfil our objectives effectively.

3. Objectives of this Response Plan

Six main objectives have been identified for this Plan. There may well be additional objectives as the situation becomes clearer after reviews and investigations are completed over time.

We commit to:

1. **Acknowledge** openly and publicly that such offences should never have happened, and that no child should suffer such experiences.
2. **Apologise** sincerely to the victims and survivors and their families for what they have had to suffer.
3. **Support** the victims and survivors, the school and the wider community to seek to recover their situations.
4. **Establish** all the facts of the case, the history around the situation and the wider context.
5. **Learn** all lessons identified as part of the findings and recommendations of all investigations.
6. **Improve** by responding in full and at pace to all findings and recommendations with the aim of giving confidence to the public that we are doing everything possible to ensure that no one will suffer in the same way ever again.

As we go about fulfilling the above, it is crucial that we are open and transparent at all times. In this respect, the Communication Plan in part 7 of this Response Plan is essential in order to ensure that we share information clearly, consistently and in a timely manner with all relevant stakeholders.

4. How do we intend to fulfil our objectives?

To fulfil our objectives in full, we will focus on four work streams as shown below. It is only by taking thorough, complete and timely actions to fulfil all the objectives of this Response Plan that we can have peace of mind that we have done everything possible to ensure recovery.

Work Stream A	Supporting the victims and survivors	Do everything within our ability to support the victims and survivors. Establish a caring relationship with the victims and survivors and ensure that the Council and the victims and survivors are "on the same side"
Work Stream B	Ensuring we have the best possible safeguarding arrangements today so that the public has trust and confidence in them.	Ensure that our safeguarding arrangements are robust and of the best possible standard
Work Stream C	Establish what has happened, learn and improve	Do everything possible to ensure that we fully understand everything that has happened and have identified any weaknesses. Embrace and implement the recommendations in order to learn and improve.
Work Stream Ch	Supporting and stabilising Ysgol Friars	Ensure that the current standard of education continues to be maintained, that staff are confident and that the school's Governing Body leadership is stable and effective.

Later in this Plan, we will explain the governance procedure for monitoring our progress and ensuring that we act in a timely manner. We must acknowledge clearly and openly that we have a long and challenging journey ahead to reach a situation where we are satisfied that we have taken full and appropriate action.

5. The Plan's Work Streams

Work Stream A – Supporting the victims and survivors

What has been achieved up to now?

A1 – Direct support

Following the first disclosure on 6 September 2023, support was provided to the offender's victims and survivors in order to support their direct needs and to give them hope about the next steps. Speedy access was provided to support officers and specialist counsellors, with Police Victim Liaison Officers leading from the first day.

The Police victim liaison officers now sit on the Child Practice Review (CPR), ensuring that the victims and survivors' voices are a core part of any discussion.

The support is ongoing, with this work being monitored continuously by a regional partnership group who run the Wales Victim Contact Scheme, in which the Council plays a key role. The scheme is recognised nationally and is extremely thorough.

Naturally, this support happens discreetly in the background and is tailored specifically for the support needs of individual victims and survivors.

A2 – Wider support in the school

The counselling services at the school were extended by working with organisations such as the Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre (RASASC) North Wales, ensuring specialist support for victims and survivors and other pupils who may have been affected. Regular reviews are held to ensure that the support continues to be suitable and effective. Fortunately, Ysgol Friars collaborated with a local company to create a well-being centre on the site in 2023, as well as qualified staff, which has been beneficial as an appropriate space for recovery and emotional support.

We will continue to review the support regularly and support is available to victims and survivors, pupils and staff.

What else needs to be delivered in order to meet our objectives?

A3 – Acknowledge and Apologise

We have already acknowledged and apologised publicly for what the young women and girls have suffered and part 2 of this Plan formally reaffirms our apology.

However, that is only a public statement, and it is the Council's responsibility and intention to offer a personal apology to each of the victims and survivors. With the support of the Wales Victim Contact Centre and the chair of the CPR, we have started on the journey of establishing how to offer that personal apology.

It must be borne in mind that each of the victims and survivors has suffered and our wish in acknowledging and apologising is to offer support towards their situation. It is essential that this work is led by the victims and survivors. We are continuing to receive advice and guidance from others who are more experienced than ourselves in such matters, while being very cautious that we do not do anything that would not be welcomed by the young women and girls.

A4 – Personal Support Plan

As part of our continued support to the victims and survivors, we will have a discussion with them to identify what further support we can offer them from now on. The needs of every child and young person who has suffered a trauma will be different and we need to be flexible and tailor any support to be in line with their needs. We will be open to provide any appropriate support to them to face the next phase of their lives.

A5 – Deal with applications for compensation

Compensation matters are complex and are issues which will be for others to decide upon in line with legislation and guidelines for such cases. Although we cannot discuss such matters in a Plan such as this, we know that these matters can take a long time to be resolved. We are eager to avoid this, as it will not be helpful to the well-being of the victims and survivors. We will, therefore, do everything possible to ensure that proceedings are resolved in a timely manner.

Work Stream B – Ensuring we have the best possible safeguarding arrangements today so that the public has trust and confidence in them.

What has been achieved up to now?

B1 – Corporate Safeguarding Arrangements

The Safeguarding Policy was reviewed during the second half of 2023, the new version adopted by Cabinet in February 2024 and the new version was submitted to the Full Council in March 2024. [Safeguarding Policy.](#)

The Cyngor Gwynedd Corporate Safeguarding procedures focus on ensuring the safety and well-being of children and adults who are at risk of being abused or neglected. All Council employees, elected members and partners have a responsibility to create an environment in which safeguarding is prioritised and where abuse is less likely to happen.

All Council departments are tasked with implementing safeguarding measures as part of their everyday actions, while the Social Services have a specific lead role in addressing cases where individuals are already at risk. At a corporate level, the Council ensures that staff and Members have been trained thoroughly, provide clear routes for reporting on concerns, and use the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to ensure safer recruitment practices.

The corporate safeguarding efforts are co-ordinated via the Strategic Safeguarding Panel and the Operational Safeguarding Group, which oversee and monitor performance, policies and departmental compliance. It is the Panel's responsibility to review and update the Safeguarding Policy regularly to ensure that it continues to be effective and responsive to any legislative or procedural changes, reiterating the Council's commitment to safeguarding those who are vulnerable in the community.

B2 – Schools' Safeguarding Arrangements

Since the offender's arrest, the Schools Safeguarding Policy and training pack for schools have been updated.

Since April 2023, the Education Department's Lead Safeguarding Officer has held Safeguarding Arrangements Monitoring visits at 91 of the 94 schools in Gwynedd, with the remaining ones scheduled.

These visits include:

- Checking Safeguarding policies
- Checking training dates and levels
- Checking practical Safeguarding arrangements
- Asking the Designated Safeguarding Person, staff members and pupils about confidence levels and knowledge in relation to safeguarding
- Checking the content of the school's Safeguarding Arrangements Annual Audit
- Offering general support / guidance.

Every school in Gwynedd has a Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP) who plays a central role in ensuring effective child protection and safeguarding. The designated person is a senior member of staff and he / she has the authority and expertise in safeguarding matters and the responsibility for co-ordinating the school's child protection policies and procedures.

The individual acts as the main point of contact for all safeguarding concerns, providing advice, guidance and support for staff. The task of the designated person is to keep records of safeguarding concerns, ensure timely referrals to appropriate authorities and train school staff ensuring that everyone understands their safeguarding responsibilities. Their role is central to nurturing a safe and supportive environment for all pupils.

The designated person works closely with the Education Department's Safeguarding Lead Officer, who provides specialist advice, support and oversight to ensure the effective implementation of safeguarding and child protection policies across all schools in the county.

All schools receive a model policy from the Education Authority and each school is encouraged to make some modifications (e.g. modify the name of the school, and a designated safeguarding person relevant to the school) and adopt this policy, which has been drawn up in accordance with the requirements of recognised guidelines and standards. It is the responsibility of the governors to ensure that effective safeguarding policies have been adopted and are reviewed at least once a year and continual support is provided for the schools to achieve this. Governors must work with school leaders to create a safe environment, monitor compliance with safeguarding laws, and address any weaknesses or deficiencies in safeguarding practices in a timely manner.

The Education Authority currently holds a Safeguarding inspection in every school every two years, which is already beyond current requirements. Although there are no formal requirements to run such a programme, we believe it is extremely important and our intention to go even further in the future is explained in B5 below.

B3 – Estyn's Inspection of the Council's Education Department

Estyn held an inspection of the Gwynedd Education Department in June 2023 and as part of any inspection of an education authority, the inspectors follow the following process:

"In all inspections, inspectors must report on whether the arrangements of the local authority or other provider of education services for safeguarding satisfy the requirements and are not a cause for concern, or do not satisfy the requirements and cause serious concern.

"Inspectors will consider to what extent there is a culture of safeguarding across the education service which supports the welfare of all learners. Also, inspectors will consider how well the local authority or other provider of education services promote a culture of safeguarding in schools, PRUs and other providers who support the welfare of all learners.

"Inspectors will assess the robustness of procedures for checking the suitability of staff and other people who have contact with children, including maintaining a record of all staff who work with children and the outcomes of appropriate safeguarding recruitment checks. Inspectors will review the procedures for training staff and will check that all staff know how to respond to child protection matters.

"In inspections of local authorities, inspectors will evaluate how well the authority fulfils its statutory responsibilities in relation to safeguarding. Specifically, they will evaluate whether the authority has effective safeguarding arrangements in place, including:

- *strategic planning for, and oversight of, safeguarding in education, including reporting regularly to members*
- *appropriate support and guidance for all education services providers in its area, including the early years, play and youth support services*
- *pursue concerns noted during inspections of providers for whom it is responsible*
- *appropriate safeguarding practice in its direct education services such as education other than at school, PRUs and the youth service*
- *that appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure that all partnership work that is carried out, co-ordinated or funded by the local authority keep to a high safeguarding standard*
- *that there are appropriate policies, procedures and reporting arrangements in relation to physical interventions and being pulled out of lessons*
- *pursue concerns raised by stakeholders, including parents and carers, staff and pupils of providers for whom it is responsible"*

Their findings on the Authority's safeguarding arrangements were received:

"The head of education and his senior management team undertake their statutory role to protect and safeguard children robustly and effectively and relevant leaders at all levels understand their roles and responsibilities. There is a robust procedure for strategic and operational meetings in relation to safeguarding issues. The representation of the education services in these processes and as part of the Corporate Parenting Panel is consistent and influential. Leaders at all levels have developed a mutual understanding with corresponding officers in children's services. As a result, they work together intelligently and productively for the benefit of the authority's children.

"The corporate safeguarding policy is appropriate and the Education Services department provides a beneficial standardised safeguarding policy for schools, together with a large number of other relevant policies and guidelines. Clear guidance and valuable and beneficial support are given to headteachers and designated persons in schools by relevant officers, such as the designated safeguarding officer for education. Training arrangements for school staff at all levels, including governors, are robust. School headteachers welcome recent developments where the designated officer visits to check the quality and challenge the safeguarding arrangements of their schools. This has had a positive effect on strengthening the culture of safeguarding across schools in Gwynedd.

"The quality of implementation of Part 5 of the Wales Safeguarding Procedures, when there are allegations against professional staff, is extremely robust and very thorough. The support and challenge given to schools by other departments in the authority on safeguarding and health and safety issues is valuable and effective. This includes clear guidance from the property and personnel departments on specific issues and risk assessments. However, the authority has not considered risk carefully enough for the inclusion hubs. Safe recruitment arrangements are robust and consistent."

In addition to this, following the offender's arrest, there has been regular contact with the regulatory body and a meeting was held with them in December 2023. Following the meeting, the following comments were received from the inspector:

"We appreciate the detail which you discussed with us, including the steps taken to ensure the welfare and safety of pupils and staff and temporary leadership and governance arrangements. It is obvious that you have responded without delay to this complex matter. We know that your response includes urgent steps in the short term, comprehensive steps over the medium term and more strategic steps with the intention of offering long-term stability."

B4 – Estyn Inspections in specific Schools

In accordance with the National Inspection arrangements by Estyn, every school receives a full inspection on a cycle of approximately 5 years. During COVID-19 this procedure was suspended across the country. Since resuming the procedure, 36 Gwynedd Schools have received a full Inspection which includes a part which looks at the Safeguarding arrangements, following a similar process to that explained above.

Each one of these schools reached the expected standards for safeguarding arrangements.

What else needs to be delivered to meet our objectives?

B5 – Schools' Safeguarding Arrangements

Our current staffing arrangements allow us to hold Safeguarding Arrangements Monitoring Visits by the Lead Safeguarding Officer in every individual school every other year. We are not aware of other Authorities who do this in this way, but we believe that these inspections are valuable, and offer support to individual schools to ensure that their safeguarding arrangements are adequate and to offer them general support in this critical field.

We therefore believe that it would add more value if the frequency of these visits could be increased and that they happen every year in every school. We will therefore invest to increase the staffing resource we have in the Education Department in order to do this and strengthen our support structure for schools.

B6 – Scrutiny Investigation into Safeguarding Arrangements in Schools

Our scrutiny arrangements have a critical role to play as part of the Council's formal governance arrangements and given the seriousness of the situation we face it is quite appropriate for us to be scrutinising this field.

The item 'Safeguarding Arrangements in Schools' was added as an additional item to the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee's annual work programme after the annual workshop at the request of scrutiny members, and the matter was scrutinised at the Committee meeting on 18 July 2024. Following this, the possibility of holding a Task and Finish Group or Scrutiny Investigation into the field was discussed. It was concluded that further discussion should take place on 5 September 2024 where the members expressed their desire to review and confirm that safeguarding arrangements are as tight as possible within our schools.

A brief for the Scrutiny Investigation will be considered by the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee in February 2025 and will appear as Appendix A to this Response Plan once confirmed.

The main question to consider will be - *'Are the safeguarding arrangements in the county's schools appropriate and implemented consistently?'*

B7 – Input by the Children's Commissioner

Following discussions between the Children's Commissioner, officers and Cabinet Members in July 2024 and November 2024, and then a further meeting between the Chief Executive and the Commissioner on 9 December, the Commissioner was invited to provide input to our Response Plan and to be a part of the procedure for monitoring our progress on the various work streams.

That discussion is continuing and is a positive discussion.

We have stated our desire to collaborate openly and positively with the Commissioner and her officers and we appreciate the opportunities to have constructive discussions with them and receive their specialist and experienced input into fields such as these. Following our most recent discussions, the Commissioner intends to discuss the situation further with other relevant agencies in January, including Estyn, the Care Standards Inspectorate for Wales, the Education Workforce Council and Welsh Government. We look forward to further positive discussions with the Commissioner following this.

Work stream C – Establish what has happened, learn and improve

What has been achieved up to now?

C1 – Establish a Child Practice Review (CPR)

As noted in the first part of this Plan, the North Wales Safeguarding Board established a Child Practice Review (CPR) immediately after the court judgement and the Council stated its full support to the Review and committed to do everything possible to support it as well as implement all the recommendations immediately.

The Chair of the CPR, Jan Pickles, is an extremely experienced individual who has been leading high-profile reviews of this nature and has specialised in safeguarding children matters for many years. She is a registered social worker with extensive experience with the Probation Service, the Police and the NSPCC. She is a former Designated Safeguarding Officer at Westminster Council and is a former assistant Police Commissioner in South Wales. She was a member of the National Independent Safeguarding Board Wales for six years, until May 2022.

Amongst her recent work, Jan Pickles has led on and taken part in several high-profile investigations, including chairing the CPR into the sad case of Logan Mwangi in Bridgend. She is the author of the review into historical cases of child abuse in Winchester College and she chaired a review in a prominent school in London and worked as part of the review into historical cases (from the 1970s) of child sex abuse at Chelsea football club. She has also recently completed an independent review of historical cases of child abuse at Caldey Island monastery.

The Chair is supported by two independent investigators who are experienced in work of this nature. Work to gather evidence follows a structured process with the initial step focusing on meeting the victims and survivors and spending time at the school. The Investigators also continue to meet with relevant professionals and members of the public who have information they feel would support the review process. The Review Panel has focused on key matters such as the behaviour of the offender and professional conduct. Governance arrangements and managing disclosures are also under consideration in the review.

The following agencies are a part of the Review

- Cyngor Gwynedd
- Isle of Anglesey County Council
- Conwy County Borough Council
- North Wales Police
- Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board
- North Wales Probation Service
- North Wales Regional Safeguarding Board

All evidence in the ownership of every agency has been collated and presented to the Investigators and they are in the process of creating a detailed timeline of all the relevant events.

In response to the developing situation, we used an external consultant to identify the cases of children and staff linked to Ysgol Friars and created an initial chronology with the intention of identifying any matter that required urgent attention. This information has been presented in its entirety to the CPR.

The Child Practice Review Panel continues to review the Terms of Reference, in order to reflect any new concerns that the review finds. Once the terms of reference have been established and finalised, we understand that it is intended to make it public. We have called on the Regional Safeguarding Board to do this as soon as possible. It is intended for the Terms of Reference to appear as Appendix B to this Response Plan.

The North Wales Safeguarding Board provides regular updates to the Welsh Government Safeguarding and Advocacy Unit regarding the progress of the review, although at present it is not expected for the review report to be completed until the end of Spring 2025.

The Council also meets with the Chair of the Panel regularly to receive updates on the process by her and two-way information sharing happens regularly and effectively.

C2 – Investigation into events in 2019 which have been the subject of press coverage

During the court case there was reference to specific events in 2019. These events have also had considerable press coverage. As already noted, the timetable and terms of reference of the CPR have extended considerably since Jan Pickles attended a meeting with Council Members before the summer. Consequently, and in light of public interest in these specific matters, as a Council we have commissioned an Independent Investigation into these specific matters in order reach conclusions sooner than the CPR timetable.

This work is already underway and is being completed by Genevieve Woods, who is a barrister at Raymond Buildings, London. She specialises in such investigations and has worked with Jan Pickles in the past on such matters. She has extensive expertise and experience of working on safeguarding matters as well as implementing independent investigations.

She has been commissioned to undertake an entirely independent investigation and not to represent the Council.

The purpose of the Independent Investigation is to establish all the facts of the events in question, consider their significance and relevance, decide whether acknowledged procedures were followed, whether appropriate action was taken under the circumstances, whether there are further steps the Council could consider and whether there are lessons to be learned.

This work is expected to be completed by January/February and the findings of this investigation will be provided to the CPR as well as reported back to us as a Council.

C3 – Review of the response to the report by the Independent Complaints Panel in 2019

In 2019 an Independent Complaints Panel was held in accordance with the complaints procedure in schools, to consider complaints against the Governing Body of Ysgol Friars. The Panel made several recommendations, and it is unclear as to whether those recommendations were implemented in full or not.

In response, the Council intends to hold an Independent Investigation into the way the recommendations in the Independent Complaints Panel's Report were responded to. The main purpose of this commission is to assess whether the School, Governing Body and Council responded adequately and appropriately to the findings of the Complaints Panel Report.

This work is expected to be completed by the end of February/March and the findings of this investigation will be provided to the CPR and also reported back to us as a Council and to the Governing Body.

C4 – Investigation into arrangements for dealing with requests under the Freedom of Information Act

Due to the exceptional number of freedom of information requests we have received as a result of this exceptional case (mainly from the press) we did not manage to answer everything within the usual timescales. All these requests needed to be considered in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act. This meant reviewing the information and considering whether exceptions needed to be applied to ensure e.g. that individuals' personal data or child protection matters were not released inappropriately. We answered every request and either released the information, if appropriate to do so, or implemented an appropriate statutory exception.

In order to give assurance that we have acted appropriately we have asked the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) if they would be able to undertake a voluntary audit of the Council's arrangements in relation to responding to requests for information to the Council in the context of the Freedom of Information Act (2000) as soon as possible. That will include compliance with the expectation to respond within the relevant timeframes and the use of exceptions permitted under the Act.

Further information about an audit of this nature can be found on the ICO website – [Audits | ICO](#)

The timeframe of this work is dependent on the ICO and we are currently discussing the timescales with them.

What else needs to be delivered to meet our objectives?

C5 – Respond to the findings of current Investigations

The above-mentioned Investigations and Reviews are all underway, some about to be completed and others only just starting on the work. We have tried to note a likely timeframe for completing every individual piece of work and we will do everything possible to keep to that timeframe. Several pieces of work depend on the workload of the Independent Investigators and on the input required by those who will have information and evidence to contribute, which could influence our ability to complete everything on time.

In due course, we will receive the findings of the above-mentioned investigations and we will need to act on the various findings and recommendations. What will be expected of us will depend on those findings and recommendations and therefore we will need to review this part of the Response Plan after receiving the reports in question.

We know that a CPR Review is extremely thorough and is bound to identify findings and recommendations that we will need to act on. There is a possibility that some of the recommendations will ask us to also establish other investigations ourselves, at which point we will need to amend this part of the Response Plan.

We have stated clearly from the beginning that we will embrace all the recommendations from every investigation and will implement them in full and without delay, and it is appropriate for us to reaffirm this here.

Work Stream Ch – Supporting and stabilising Ysgol Friars

What has been achieved up to now?

Ch1 – School Support Plan

Following the offender’s arrest on 6 September, immediate and responsive support was provided to the school, and a School Support Plan was adopted which included external critical guidance. From October 2023 until March 2024, Sarah Sutton was appointed as a critical friend to the Acting Head, whilst Margaret Davies was appointed to support the Well-being Deputy Head. Margaret Davies continues to work with the school.

In order to support the school and the welfare of staff throughout this challenging time, the Human Resources Advisers Team Leader and Assistant Head of the Education Department with responsibility for supporting the secondary sector provide supervision and operational support.

In addition, a teacher with significant experience in inclusion who until recently worked in another Secondary School within the County offers further support for between three and four days a week.

Since September 2023, the Education Department has been providing continuing support and resources to the School, which includes the contribution and expertise of all staff of the Education Department, ensuring stability and continuous support for the recovery of Ysgol Friars. Support was provided to review their safeguarding policies and new policies have been adopted by the school.

Officers from the Education Department have been meeting Union representatives regularly as well, taking the opportunity to listen to concerns and try to share timely information with them. It must be acknowledged that recent times have been extremely challenging for the school's staff and we must thank them very much for being able to maintain the standard of education and care for pupils despite all of this.

Ch2 – Amending the Governing Body

Following the offender’s sentence in May 2024, the Council reviewed the Authority's membership on the Governing Body including appointing four Members on behalf of the Authority.

In addition, other members have left and by now 14 out of the 19 members of the Governing Body are new to their role, with a new Chair appointed.

Ongoing support is given by Officers of the Education Department in order to provide training and practical support to the new governors of the School.

The Authority now provides clerking support to the Governing Body.

Ch3 – Changes to the Senior Leadership Team

The School's Senior Leadership Team has seen substantial changes since the offender's arrest. As well as the offender's imprisonment, another member of the team retired at the end of the Christmas 2023 term and the Acting Head has also stated his intention to leave the School in Easter 2025.

The responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Officer who was a part of the Senior Leadership Team have also been transferred to a different member of staff.

In the meantime, the School has received supervision from Margaret Davies, who is an experienced head in a school in another county.

Ch4 – Appointment of Interim Head

After significant recruitment challenges, Lynne Hardcastle has been appointed as acting Head to provide leadership in the period between November and the end of December 2024, initially.

Margaret Davies was appointed Head of the school for 4 terms from Easter 2025 until August 2026. The extended period in the role will be an opportunity to stabilise the school and review the operational arrangements thoroughly. It will also give an opportunity to support staff for an extended period and will give faith to the parents that the school is under new, experienced leadership with a strong background in safeguarding.

What else needs to be delivered to meet our objectives?

Ch5 – Appointment of a new Permanent Head

Until now, the Governors have not been able to appoint a new permanent Head for the School which is why the temporary arrangements have been put in place. The appointment of Margaret Davies until the end of the Summer Term 2026 will give the school an opportunity to stabilise and start a new chapter.

Before the end of that period, the school will start a recruitment process to appoint a new permanent Head.

Ch6 – Commission to review operational arrangements at the school

As the new Governing Body establishes itself, and as the interim head has the opportunity to review all the school's arrangements, we as a Council will support them to undertake a piece of work to compare Ysgol Friars' operational arrangements with the operational arrangements in the rest of the county's schools, trying to identify differences in order to consider whether there are any operational changes that need to be made.

This work is intended to be accomplished jointly between the new Governing Body and the Education Department, reporting back during 2025 and before starting the recruitment process of a new head.

Ch7 – Supporting Gwynedd School Governors

This part of the Scheme applies to all schools and not to Ysgol Friars specifically.

The Education system that currently exists places the responsibility on Governing Bodies (as a separate entity from local Government Education Departments) to be responsible for all individual schools. These Bodies are a combination of Governors who represent various stakeholders in schools and are voluntary functions.

In order to support Governors in fulfilling their role arrangements are in place to provide training and support. These arrangements often derive from national guidelines and the training has been provided on a regional basis.

The national system places a significant burden and responsibilities on the Governing Bodies and very often fulfilling the role is extremely challenging, especially on a voluntary basis for a few hours here and there. Their range of duties and responsibilities is wide and challenging including matters of finance, staffing, buildings, standard of education etc. Governors also face, and embrace, the challenge of promoting pupils to be complete and healthy citizens, promoting propriety and fairness towards everyone, including the successful introduction of the new Relationships and Sexuality Education Curriculum.

We believe that a national discussion is needed on the suitability of the current system and the burden that is placed on the shoulders of Governors, and we would ask the Government to consider this.

In the meantime we need to ensure that we offer the best possible training and support to the governors of all our schools and therefore we will review our current arrangements to try and ensure that these volunteers feel confident to carry out their role and receive the appropriate support.

6. Ownership and governance arrangements of the Plan

It is the Council's Cabinet that has commissioned this Response Plan.

It is recommended that a specific Programme Board be established with agreed Terms of Reference, to co-ordinate and ensure appropriate and timely progress, and that the Programme Board should invite input from relevant external bodies such as Estyn, Welsh Government, North Wales Safeguarding Board and the Children's Commissioner. It is recommended that an Independent Chair or Critical Friend from outside the Council should be appointed for the Programme Board, who has the relevant background and experience to facilitate challenging the delivery and implementation.

The Programme Board will report to Cabinet at regular intervals, to be confirmed in the agreed Terms of Reference referred to above.

There will also be a role for the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise the progress and delivery (as well as completing the Scrutiny Investigation noted in part B5).

The content of this Plan will need to be reviewed regularly and as the situation develops, and specifically in order to respond to part C6 of the Plan. This is a live plan, and it is unavoidable that it will change as we move from the investigation and learning phase to the recovery phase.

It is unavoidable that progress will be difficult to measure as many matters will be open to personal opinion. One measure of progress will be completing all the individual steps which have been identified in Work Streams A to Ch. However, it must be acknowledged that delivering all of this will be a long-term process and we will commit to doing so, come what may.

7. Communication plan

Communicating clear, open and timely messages has been very difficult to date. The situation has changed regularly as new information has emerged and as those matters have been discussed publicly or in the press. Often, these matters are involved with the individual cases of children and/or adults and therefore the information is often personal and confidential.

Restrictions on our ability to communicate proactively have been frustrating and without doubt have contributed to creating negative public perceptions. As we move into a new period of investigating and receiving findings, we must ensure that we plan proactively to communicate important messages with different audiences and stakeholders, whilst recognising that those harmed by the offender are a special group to which we will provide feedback in a way of their choosing and this will be reflected in the communication plan.

To this end, a Communication Plan can be seen in Appendix C. This will be updated regularly.

Appendix C

Communications Plan

Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to set out how Cyngor Gwynedd will communicate information clearly, consistently and in a timely manner with all relevant stakeholders, so that Response Plan objectives are met.

The scheme aims to contribute towards restoring public and stakeholder trust and confidence in the Council and Ysgol Friars operates. The Council will meet these goals by:

- Identifying the key stakeholders;
- Coordinate communications with key stakeholders and partners;
- Provide accurate and up-to-date information for all relevant milestones;
- Provide information in response to developments.

Responsibility lies with those in all parts of the the organisation to submit relevant information to the Communications Plan, and the role of the central Communications Service is to advise and provide support regarding the most suitable methods of communication.

Work programme

In addition to providing regular updates, it is anticipated that specific communications plans will need to be drawn up over the coming months for individual phases during the recovery process. It is expected that these steps will include the following:

- Child Practice Review (CPR) – the Council must be ready to respond to any announcements from the Safeguarding Board and, in due course, the publication of the final report;
- Changes at Ysgol Friars – for example the appointment of an interim headteacher who will start work after Easter 2025;
- Publication of results of other investigations.

Communication stages

Stakeholders / Audience	What	Whose responsibility	How	When
Victims and their families	Share information regarding the Response Plan and providing answers to any questions	North Wales Safeguarding Board / Chair of the Child Practice Review Panel / Wales Victim Contact Scheme to liaise between Cyngor Gwynedd and the victims and to provide guidance on the appropriate steps	Cyngor Gwynedd to act in accordance with the guidance received from the North Wales Safeguarding Board / Chair of the Child Practice Review Panel / Wales Victim Contact Scheme, and that they receive information in a way of their choosing.	As needed
Ysgol Friars	Updating pupils / parents	School leadership. Communications Service to support as needed	In accordance to the school's usual practice – pupil meetings, email / text message to parents etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular updates • Timely additional updates as needed
	Updating Governors	School leadership / Education Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-person meetings • Email updates as needed 	
	Updating staff	School leadership / Chair of Governors / Education Department		
Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet	Regular updates	Chief Executive / Corporate Director / Relevant Head of Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-person briefings • Email updates as needed if an urgent issue arises 	Monthly / as needed
Cyngor Gwynedd elected members	Regular updates	Leader and relevant Cabinet Members / Chief Executive / Corporate Director / Relevant Head of Department Communications Service to support and advise as needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email update • Members' Bulletin • Briefing (Teams) 	Monthly / as needed

Audience / stakeholders (who)	What	Whose responsibility	How	When
Cyngor Gwynedd Staff	Updates as needed	Chief Executive Communications Service to support and advise as needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief Executive's Bulletin • Chief Executive's live Q&A sessions • Managers' and team leaders' Network • Managers to cascade information to staff 	
Members of Parliament / Senedd Members representing constituencies within Gwynedd	Regular updates	Leader / Chief Executive Communications Service to support as needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email / Briefings 	Monthly/ As needed
Other schools in the county	Regular updates	Head of Education / Education Cabinet Member	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email / Headteachers' meetings 	As needed
Gwynedd residents in general	Updates as needed	Leader Chief Executive Communications Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press releases • Responding to questions / requests from the press • Publish updates on the Council's website • Link to relevant information on Council social media when appropriate • Via local Members 	As needed
Press – proactive communications	Regular updates	Communications Service Leader Chief Executive Relevant Cabinet Member	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press releases • Make arrangements to share information when it is appropriate and timely to do so 	As needed
Press – reactive communications	As needed	Communication Service Leader Chief Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep a record of press queries and coordinate responses 	As needed

		Relevant Cabinet Member		
Audience / stakeholders (who)	What	Whose responsibility	How	When
Neighbouring councils (pupils from other counties)	Updates as needed	Chief Executive / Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share information with leaders and chief executives from the other authorities 	As needed
Key partners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welsh Government • Children's Commissioner for Wales 	Updates as needed	Chief Executive / Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings • Email updates 	As needed

CYNGOR GWYNEDD - Report to Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet

Title of item:	Terminating the GwE Partnership Agreement
Cabinet Member:	Cllr. Dewi Jones
Relevant Officer:	Geraint Owen, Corporate Director
Date of meeting:	21 January 2025

1. Decision sought:

The Cabinet is asked to approve the recommendation to terminate the current collaboration agreement and thereby confirm that GwE, including the GwE Joint-Committee, will cease on the 31 May 2025.

2. The reason why the Cabinet must make the decision:

Following a review of the responsibilities of Education partners in Wales, a recommendation has been made to move to a wider regional model of working.

To that end, the Transitional Board has been established to oversee the arrangements for transferring GwE services back to the local authorities in North Wales.

In order to formalise the change to the partnership arrangement, all six authorities need to agree to end the current agreement (GwE Services) as well as abolish the GwE Joint-Committee.

3. Introduction and Rationale

3.1 Background / Introduction

GwE was established by agreement between the six Local Authorities in North Wales dated 18 February 2013.

It was agreed to establish a Regional School Effectiveness and Improvement Service which would be accountable to the six Councils and which would fulfil the statutory functions of the Councils in relation to the effectiveness and improvement of schools i.e. monitoring duties, challenge, provide supportive services for continuous professional development through the curriculum and manage schools as well as provide services that can be commissioned by schools and local authorities.

The councils agreed to appoint Gwynedd Council as the Accommodation Authority for implementing and maintaining the Service by forming a Joint Committee, to keep an overview and give guidance as required, in accordance with Section 101(5) and 102(1) Local Government Act 1972 and Section 20 of the Local Government Act 2000.

3.2 The rationale and justification for recommending the decision

On 31 January 2024, the then Minister for Education and the Welsh Language published a written statement referring to a review of the roles and responsibilities of Education partners in Wales as well as current school improvement arrangements. The statement made it clear that there was an intention to move away from the wider regional model for supporting school improvement with a view to establishing partnerships between more than one authority at a more local level. This led to confirmation that GwE would cease to exist as a regional consortium.

As a result of that statement, a Transitional Board has been established to oversee the arrangements for transferring GwE services back to the local authorities in North Wales and structures have been developed to provide support to schools at individual local authority level.

However, the agreement, to work together in partnership in this context, needs to be formally concluded. In order to do that, all six Councils need to agree in writing to terminate the current agreement. The Cabinet is therefore asked to approve the recommendation to terminate this collaboration agreement and thereby confirm that GwE will end on 31 May 2025.

It should be noted that terminating the agreement does not affect cumulative rights or the commitments that have already been agreed upon. Those commitments are detailed in the agreement made between the six Authorities in 2013 (see Appendix 1).

3.3 Next steps

Recommendations:

1. That this Council approves the termination of the agreement to work in partnership with other North Wales local authorities in the context of the regional School Effectiveness and Improvement Service (GwE) on the 31 May 2025 and subsequently dissolve the requirement for the GwE Joint-Committee.
2. That this Council confirms its contractual commitment in relation to ending the arrangement.

4. Views of the statutory officers

4.1 Chief Finance Officer

The decision sought is the next step in the process of responding to the Minister's statement in January 2024, which will lead to fundamental changes in the way support for schools will be provided. It is now clear that there is no reason not to wind up the joint committee. It is

inevitable that there will be costs involved, particularly in terms of the potential redundancy costs. Every effort will be made to keep these costs – which will fall on the six authorities in the north if GwE funds are not sufficient – to a minimum; they will therefore be under ongoing review but in order to move forward and establish the new arrangements there is no choice but to face them.

4.2 Monitoring Officer

Amongst its responsibilities as the host authority, Cyngor Gwynedd is the employer of GwE staff. The agreement contains provisions to indemnify the Council from costs, such as redundancy payments, which it may incur by reason of or arising out of the carrying out its obligations in its role as host authority. As with the decision to establish it, a decision to dissolve the Joint Committee is an executive function and therefore the responsibility of the Cabinet. This provides an appropriate and reasonable route to complete the process of bring the GwE arrangements an end.

18th Feb

2013

- (1) CONWY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
- (2) DENBIGHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
- (3) FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
- (4) GWYNEDD COUNCIL
- (5) ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL
- (6) WREXHAM COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

**INTER-AUTHORITY AGREEMENT
REGIONAL SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS AND
IMPROVEMENT SERVICE**

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THIS AGREEMENT is made on *16 Feb* 2013

BETWEEN

- (1) **CONWY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL** of Bodlondeb, Conwy, North Wales, LL32 8DU ("**Conwy Council**");
- (2) **DENBIGHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL** of Council Offices, Ruthin, Denbighshire, ("**Denbighshire Council**");
- (3) **FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL** of County Hall, Mold, Flintshire, CH7 6NB ("**Flintshire Council**");
- (4) **GWYNEDD COUNCIL** of Council Offices, Shirehall Street, Caernarfon, Gwynedd, LL55 1SH ("**Gwynedd Council**");
- (5) **ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL** of Council Offices, Llangefni, Anglesey, LL77 7TW ("**Isle of Anglesey Council**"); and
- (6) **WREXHAM COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL** of the Guildhall , Wrexham LL11 1AY ("**Wrexham Council**")

(together referred to as the "**Councils**" and individually as a "**Council**")

BACKGROUND

- (A) The Councils have agreed to work together in a partnering relationship to establish a Regional School Effectiveness and Improvement Service to be accountable to, and undertake the statutory functions of the Councils in respect of school improvement and effectiveness (the "**Service**").
- (B) The Council's vision is to establish a Regional School Effectiveness and Improvement service to be accountable to, and undertake the statutory responsibilities of, the six local North Wales Authorities in respect of the duties to monitor; challenge; provide support services for curriculum continued professional development and management of schools, and in addition provide services that can be commissioned by schools and local authorities.

- (C) The Councils have agreed to enter into this Agreement to formalise their respective roles and responsibilities in relation to the Service and the appointment of Gwynedd Council as Host Authority in implementing and maintaining and carrying out the Service in accordance with the terms of the agreed Final Business Case.
- (D) The Councils wish to enter into this Agreement and implement the Service pursuant to the powers conferred on them by Section 9 of the Local Government Wales Measure 2009, Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 Sections 101 and 102 of the Local Government Act 1972 and associated Regulations.
- (E) The Councils acknowledge that this Agreement sets out the basis on which they will establish and manage the Service.

1. Definitions and Interpretation

- 1.1 In this Agreement, unless, the context otherwise requires the following terms shall have the meaning given to them below:-

“Assets”	means the Assets identified in Clause 9
“Business Day”	means any day other than a Saturday or Sunday or a public or bank holiday in Wales
“Chair”	means the chair of the Joint Committee (duly appointed pursuant to Clause 8.13)
“Chief Officer”	means the Chief Officer of the Service
“Commencement Date”	means the date hereof
“Commissioning Model”	The Model by which the Services to be provided to Councils, schools and learning settings will be

	established and agreed – Schedule 1B
“Confidential Information”	means all information whether commercial, financial, technical or otherwise relating to the business of Councils, which is contained in or discernible in any form whatsoever (including without limitation software, data, drawings, films, documents and computer-readable media) whether or not marked or designated as confidential or proprietary or which is disclosed orally or by demonstration and which is described at the time of disclosure as confidential or is clearly so from its content of the context of disclosure
“DPA”	means the Data Protection Act 1998
“Directive”	means Council Directive 2001/23/EC on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the safeguarding of employees’ rights in the event of transfers of undertakings, businesses or parts of undertakings or businesses as applied by the Cabinet Office Statement of Practice: Staff Transfers in the Public Sector
“Employee”	means all those persons employed by the Councils in relation to the Service Functions under a contract of employment (excluding for the avoidance of doubt any person so engaged as an independent contractor or person employed by any sub-contractor employed by a Council in relation to a Service function in the period prior to the Implementation Date)
“Employee	means the information pertaining to the Transferring

Information”	Employees to be supplied by the Councils pursuant to Clause 15 and Schedules 5 and 6
“Final Business Case”	means the Final business case dated February 2012 (as amended from time to time) prepared and approved by the Councils before submission to Welsh Government for funding to support the Service
“Financial Year”	the period between 1 April and 31 March (inclusive)
“Fund”	the Gwynedd Pension Fund within the LGPS;
“Host Council”	means the Council appointed under Clause 6 as the administering authority for the Service whose duties are set out in this Agreement
“Implementation Date”	means the 1st day of April 2013 or such other date as may be agreed by the Councils being the date upon which the Service becomes operational
“Intellectual Property”	means any and all patents, trade marks, trade names, copyright, moral rights, rights in design, rights in databases, know-how and all or other intellectual property rights whether or not registered or capable of registration and whether subsisting in the United Kingdom or any other part of the world together with all or any goodwill relating to them and the right to apply for registration of them
“IP Material”	means the Intellectual Property in the Material
“Joint	shall have the meaning given to it in Clause 8.1

Committee”	
“Joint Committee Meeting”	means a meeting of the Joint Committee duly convened in accordance with Clause 8
“Key Aims”	means the aims listed in Clause 4.2
“Lead Finance Officer”	means the person so appointed from time to time by the Host Council to represent the interests of the Councils in respect of financial matters of the Service
“Lead Legal Officer”	means the person so appointed from time to time by the Host Council to represent the interests of the Councils in respect of legal matters of the Service
“LGPS”	the Local Government Pension Scheme established pursuant to regulations made by the Secretary of State in exercise of powers under section 7 and 12 of the Superannuation Act 1972 as amended from time to time
“LGPS Regulations”	the Local Government Pension Scheme (Administration) Regulations 2008, the Local Government Pension Scheme (Benefits, Membership and Contributions) Regulations 2007 and the Local Government Pension Scheme (Transitional Provisions) Regulations 2008, as amended from time to time
“Liabilities”	all costs, expenses, losses, claims, proceedings, damages, awards and other liabilities including reasonable legal and other professional fees and expenses) whenever arising or brought

"Local Authority"	means a principal council (as defined in Section 270 of the Local Government Act 1972) or any body of government in Wales established as a successor of a principal council
"Loss"	actions, proceedings, losses, damages, awards, orders, liabilities (including any liability to taxation), claims, costs, demands and expenses, including fines, penalties, reasonable legal and other professional fees and expenses and "Losses" shall be construed accordingly
"Material"	means all data, text, graphics, images and other materials or documents created, used or supplied by a Council in connection with this Agreement unless before the first use or supply, the Council notifies the other Councils that the data, text supplied is not to be covered by this definition
"Matters Reserved To The Councils"	means the matters as defined in Clause 7.1.2
North Wales Consortium	The North Wales Consortium of Education Services.
"Outcomes"	The Outcomes set out in the Full Business Case and recited in clause 11.1
"Partnership Contributions"	Means the contribution of each Council towards the Service Budget calculated in accordance with the terms of this agreement
"Model"	means the Centre for Dispute Resolution Model

“Procedure”	Mediation Procedure
“Personal Data”	means personal data as defined in the DPA
“Records”	all books and records relating to the Service, the Assets and the Employees (including personnel files) to the extent the same are owned by and are in the possession and control of a Council and subject to any restrictions on records having transferred under legislation (including data protection) or by virtue of any confidentially restrictions to which a Council is subject and Host Council Officers or their agents shall be granted full access rights to those records which relate to the period prior to the Implementation Date
“Region”	Means the collective administrative areas of the Councils
“Regional Partnership Board”	Means the Partnership Board of the Leaders and Chief Executives of the Councils
“Relevant E L Policy”	means any contract of insurance remaining in force at the Implementation Date giving a Council indemnity against liability as an employer to Employees and, for the avoidance of doubt, a Relevant E L Policy will include compulsory employer’s liability policies, employment protection policies and any other policy which is designed to protect the Council from liability to Employees
“Relevant Employer”	means an employer providing services to a Council whether directly as main contractor or indirectly as

	sub-contractor to whom the contract of employment of any Transferring Employee or any other employee Council be employed in relation to the Service transferred or alleged to be transferred pursuant to the TUPE Regulations and/or the Directive
"Rights"	means the benefits of all rights, entitlements and claims (whether actual, prospective or contingent) to which Councils are entitled in relation to any Assets (including the benefit of any warranty, condition, guarantee, indemnity or policy of insurance) up to the Implementation Date and as of the Implementation Date
"Services"	Mean the Functions and Services set out in Schedule 1A
"Service"	means the North Wales Regional School Effectiveness and Improvement Service established pursuant to this agreement
"Service Budget"	Means the annual baseline budget for the Service as agreed between the Councils
"Service Employees"	Means staff employed from time to time by the Host Authority in that capacity
"SLA"	means an annual Service Level Agreement agreed between the Service and a Council or school or learning setting defining the respective roles and responsibilities of the Service and the Council or school and the Services (including standards and

	performance) which will be provided to that pursuant to this agreement and the relevant Commissioning Plan
“Service Section 151 Officer”	means the person so appointed by the Host Council (as their officer appointed pursuant to section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972) as the officer responsible for the proper administration of the financial affairs under the Service and who shall manage the Lead Finance officer and collate regular reports on Service accounting matters (provided that for the avoidance of doubt each Council’s own officer appointed pursuant to section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 shall be entitled to attend Service Board Meetings and Joint Committee Meetings from time to time
“Transferring Employees”	means any employee of a Council in respect of whom the particulars set out in Schedule 5 of this Agreement are supplied to The Host Council as provided for in Clause 14 and whose contract of employment takes effect on the Implementation Date as if originally made between the Host Council and such employee
“TUPE Regulations”	means the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 or any subsequent re-enactment thereof as applied by the Cabinet Office Statement of Practice: Staff Transfers in the Public Sector
“User Group”	Means the RESIS Schools and Governors User Group established in accordance with Clause 9

“Vice-Chair”	means the vice-chair of the Joint Committee (duly appointed pursuant to Clause 8.13)
“Warranties”	means the warranties set out or referred to in Clause 13 and Schedule 4
“WG”	means the Welsh Government

- 1.2 Except where the context otherwise requires:
- 1.2.1 the singular includes the plural and vice versa;
 - 1.2.2 a reference to any clause, sub-clause, paragraph, schedule, recital or annex is, except where expressly stated to the contrary, a reference to such clause, sub-clause, paragraph, schedule, recital or annex of and to this Agreement;
 - 1.2.3 any reference to this Agreement or to any other document shall include any permitted variation, amendment or supplement to such document;
 - 1.2.4 any reference to legislation shall be construed as a reference to any legislation as amended, replaced, consolidated or re-enacted;
 - 1.2.5 a reference to a public organisation (to include, for the avoidance of doubt, any Council) shall be deemed to include a reference to any successor to such public organisation or any organisation or entity which has taken over the schools and education functions and responsibilities of such public organisation;

- 1.2.6 a reference to a person includes firms, partnerships and corporations and their successors and permitted assignees or transferees;
- 1.2.7 the schedule, clause, sub-clause and (where provided) paragraph headings and captions in the body of this Agreement do not form part of this Agreement and shall not be taken into account in its construction or interpretation;
- 1.2.8 words preceding "include", "includes", "including" and "included" shall be construed without limitation by the words which follow those words; and
- 1.2.9 any reference to the title of an officer or any of the Councils shall include any person holding such office from time to time by the same or any title substituted thereafter or such other officer of the relevant Council as that Council may from time to time appoint to carry out the duties of the officer referred to.

1.3 Schedules

The Schedules to this Agreement form part of this Agreement.

2. Commencement, duration and termination

2.1 This Agreement shall continue in full force and effect from the Commencement Date until the earlier of the following dates:-

- 2.1.1 all the Councils agree in writing to its termination; or
- 2.1.2 there is only one remaining Council who has not withdrawn from this Agreement in accordance with Clause 21(Withdrawal) or 22 (Service Underperformance).

2.2 Without prejudice to any other rights or remedies, this Agreement may be terminated in relation to any Council ("**Defaulter**") by the other Councils ("**Non-Defaulting Councils**") acting unanimously in giving written notice to the Defaulter ("Termination Notice") effective on receipt where the

Defaulter materially breaches any of the provisions of this Agreement and in the case of a breach capable of remedy fails to remedy the same within sixty (60) Business Days (or such other period as agreed by the Councils) of being notified of each breach in writing by the Non-Defaulting Councils and being required to remedy the same. The decision to Terminate shall be a matter reserved to the Councils.

2.3 In determining or responding to any decision or proposal to terminate the Agreement in accordance with this clause all Councils including, for the avoidance of doubt the Defaulting Council, shall have regard to the Partnership Principles and the appropriateness of instigation of the Dispute Resolution Procedure (Clause 32) with a view to identifying a solution which maintains the Partnership.

2.4 The service of a Termination Notice shall be treated as if it were a Withdrawal Notice pursuant to Clause 21 and the provisions of the said clause in relation to the procedure to be followed by the Council's in response and the liabilities of the Defaulting Council shall apply accordingly.

2.5 The following clauses shall continue to apply after the termination or withdrawal from this agreement: clause 13 clause 14 and clause 16 and the associated schedules.

2.6 Termination or withdrawal from this agreement, for any reason, shall not affect the accrued rights, remedies, obligations or liabilities of the parties existing at termination.

3. Principles

3.1 The Councils intend this Agreement to be legally binding.

3.2 The Councils agree to work together to carry out the Service in accordance with the terms of this Agreement.

- 3.3 Without prejudice to the terms of this Agreement, the Councils agree that they will conduct their relationship in accordance with the following principles:-

Openness and Trust

in relation to this Agreement the Councils will be open and trusting in their dealings with each other, make information and analysis available to each other, discuss and develop ideas openly and contribute fully to all aspects of making the joint working successful;

Commitment and Drive

the Councils will be fully committed to working jointly, will seek to fully motivate employees and will address the challenges of the Service with drive, enthusiasm and a determination to succeed;

Skills and Creativity

the Councils recognise that each brings complementary skills and knowledge which they will apply creatively to achieving the Councils' objectives, continuity, resolution of difficulties and the development of the joint working relationship and the personnel working within it;

Effective Relationships

the roles and responsibilities of each Council will be clear with relationships developed at the appropriate levels within each organisation with direct and easy access to each other's representatives;

Developing and Adaptive

the Councils recognise that they are engaged in what could be a long term relationship which needs to develop and adapt and will use reasonable endeavours to develop and maintain an effective joint process to ensure that the relationship develops appropriately and in line with these principles and objectives;

Reputation and Standing

the Councils agree that, in relation to this Agreement and the Service generally, they shall pay the utmost regard to the standing and reputation of one another and shall not do or fail to do anything which may bring the standing or reputation of any other Council into disrepute or attract adverse publicity to any other Council;

Reasonableness of Decision Making

the Councils agree that all decisions made in relation to this Agreement and the Service generally shall be made by them acting reasonably and in good faith;

Necessary Consents

each Council hereby represents to the other Councils that it has obtained all necessary consents sufficient to ensure the delegation of functions and responsibilities provided for by this Agreement; and

Members and Officers' Commitments

each Council shall use its reasonable endeavours to procure that their respective members and officers who are involved in the Service shall at all times act in the best interests of the Service, and respond in a timely manner to all relevant requests from the other Councils.

4. The Service Functions

4.1 Subject to this Agreement and as further particularised in Schedule 1 the Service shall have the function of implementing the Full Business Case by undertaking the following to achieve the Key Aims set out in 4.2 below:-

- 4.1.1 supporting the Councils to undertake their statutory functions in relation to school effectiveness;
- 4.1.2 provide support for both the Councils and Schools (jointly and separately as the case may be) in School Improvement activity;

- 4.1.3 specifically undertaking responsibility for the Implementation of SEF and for CIF accountability*;
 - 4.1.4 making provision for the development, maintenance, and review of regional frameworks on a commissioned basis.
- 4.2 The Key Aims of the Service will be:-
- 4.2.1 Implementing the National School Effectiveness Framework to raise standards and improve wellbeing by reducing variations within and between schools and local authorities whilst taking account of local need;
 - 4.2.2 respond to the Estyn inspection regime;
 - 4.2.3 identify efficiency savings;
 - 4.2.4 provide a foundation that allows for the future regionalisation of education related services.
- 4.3 Nothing in this Agreement shall permit the Service to implement or consult on implementation of any statutory intervention in a specific school, Federation or cluster of schools pursuant to Section 15 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998 or such other equivalent statutory power or provision which permits a Council to directly assume powers of management or re-organisation in respect of such establishments or in relation to the management of staff.
- 4.4 Subject to this agreement the Services will be provided to individual Councils, schools or learning settings under the terms of an SLA prepared in accordance with the Commissioning Model.

* references to SEF and CIF shall be presumed to include any amendments or superseding policies or frameworks in so far as and to the extent that they encompass the Service Functions.

5. Language

- 5.1 The Joint Committee shall within 12 months of the Commencement Date agree and implement a Welsh Language Scheme or Strategy for the Service in accordance with the Full Business Case in order to provide a bilingual service that can fully provide Welsh medium support across the Region.

6. Duties Of The Host Council And Other Councils

- 6.1 The Councils (acting severally) have agreed, with effect from the Commencement Date, that Gwynedd Council will be the Host Council for the Service which shall be carried out for and on behalf of itself and the Councils and Gwynedd Council agrees to act in that capacity subject to and in accordance with and to the extent provided for by the terms of this Agreement For the avoidance of doubt the role of Host Council includes:-

- 6.1.1 subject to the indemnities and warranties act as the employing authority for any staff engaged in the discharge of the Service's functions (appointing, employing or accepting the secondment of staff) in accordance with this Agreement;
- 6.1.2 being the legal point of contact for the purposes of managing the Service;
- 6.1.3 providing such administrative resources and facilities that may be necessary for the purpose of discharging the Service and hold all central funds;
- 6.1.4 providing such Human Resources Services that may be necessary for the purpose of discharging the Service and hold all central funds;
- 6.1.5 provide senior officers who will act as Secretary, Monitoring Officer, and Treasurer (who will also be the section 151 officer) for the Service and who will therefore act as the primary legal and financial advisers to the Service;

- 6.1.6 power to enter into contracts for supplies and services as required for the purposes of the Service.
- 6.2 For the avoidance of doubt the duties and responsibilities of the Host Authority pursuant to this agreement shall only bind the Host Authority to the extent that they have been resourced by the Councils through this Agreement.
- 6.3 Save and except where otherwise required by law all staff employed by the Host Authority pursuant to this agreement shall be employed on the Host Authority's relevant terms and conditions of employment and related staff policies including salary structures.
- 6.4 If the Host Council defaults and the Agreement is terminated in respect of it pursuant to Clause 2 (Termination) or the Host Council withdraws pursuant to Clauses 21 (Withdrawal) or 22 Service Underperformance then a replacement Host Council will be appointed by the Councils and the withdrawing/defaulting Host Council will not have the right to vote in regard to any such appointment.
- 6.5 For the duration of this Agreement, the Host Council shall act diligently and in good faith in all its dealings with the other Councils and
- 6.6 For the duration of this Agreement, the other Councils shall act diligently and in good faith in all their dealings with the Host Council and shall use their reasonable endeavours to assist the Host Council to support the Service.

7. Decision Making

- 7.1 The Councils have identified the following two categories of decisions together with the means by which they will be taken:-
- 7.1.1 **"Joint Committee Matter"** – being a matter which is to be decided upon at a quorate meeting of the Joint Committee by those present and entitled to vote and any such decision will be binding on all the Councils;

7.1.2 **"Matter Reserved To The Councils"** – being a matter which will have to be referred to each Council for decision and, for the avoidance of doubt, any such matter will not be dealt with by the Joint Committee (as the case may be) until the matter has been determined by all of the Councils. If the Councils fail to reach the same decision in respect of such matter then the matter shall be referred under Clause 32 (Dispute Resolution) as a dispute for resolution, and such matters are identified in Schedule 2.

8. Joint Committee

8.1 The Councils have formed the joint committee ("**Joint Committee**") called the **REGIONAL SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS AND IMPROVEMENT SERVICE JOINT COMMITTEE / CYD BWYLLGOR GWASANAETH GWELLA YSGOLION RHANBARTHOL** Pursuant to the Partnership Agreement to carry out the functions set out in Schedule 1.

8.2 The Joint Committee is a joint committee constituted by the Councils under section 101(5) and 102(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 and section 20 of the Local Government Act 2000. Meetings of the Joint Committee are subject to the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 including the provisions on access to information and meetings held in public.

8.3 The Membership of the Joint Committee shall be as follows:-

Voting Members		Officer Members –Non Voting
6x Education Portfolio Members <i>one from each NW LA</i>		6x Statutory Chief Education Officers <i>one from each NW LA</i>
Co-opted Members	Non-voting	Officers in Attendance

1x Diocese Representative <i>nominated from across the Wrexham, St Asaph and Bangor Diocese, on a rotating two year term</i>	1x Legal Representative 1x S151 Representative Other specialists as requested
1x Primary Schools Representative	
1x Secondary Schools Representative	
1x Special Schools Representative	
1x Governor Representative	

(It is expected that all Members of the Joint Committee, including Deputies shall be appropriately authorised to participate in its business.)

- 8.4 Diocesan representatives of the Committee shall be jointly nominated in writing by the dioceses of Wrexham, St Asaph and Bangor on a rotation per diocese commencing on the Commencement Date. Representatives of individual Dioceses shall serve for a maximum term of 2 years per rotation.
- 8.5 The Primary, Secondary and Governor Members of the Joint Committee shall be nominated by the User Group from amongst the relevant sectoral representatives serving on the User Group.
- 8.6 Representatives nominated to the Joint Committee may only serve on the Joint Committee whilst concurrently remaining members of the User Group and subject thereto will be appointed for two years terms (for the avoidance of doubt nothing in this clause will prevent the a member of the User Group being nominated for a further two year period).

- 8.7 In nominating members to serve on the Joint Committee the User Group shall, as far as reasonably practicable have regard to the principle that their nominees as a whole provide a geographical spread of representation from across the North Wales region.
- 8.8 For the avoidance of doubt the Service Section 151 Officer and Service Legal Officer and/or their duly authorised representatives shall be entitled to attend all Joint Committee meetings.
- 8.9 Each Council may, at their discretion, replace their representatives appointed to the Joint Committee, provided that at all times, they have representatives appointed to the Joint Committee in accordance with the roles identified in 8.3 above; and
- 8.10 A body may nominate a Deputy to attend the Joint Committee on behalf of a member in the following circumstances:-
- (i) to take the place of a member of the Joint Committee;
 - (ii) where the member is unable to attend the whole meeting; and
 - (iii) if the member has notified the Chairman in advance of the relevant meeting.

A Deputy shall only have the right to speak and where relevant vote at that meeting- of the Committee or Sub Committee and no other function or appointment including appointments to Working Groups will be applicable to them when acting as a Deputy.

- 8.11 The Chair of the Joint Committee shall be an elected Executive member of a Council appointed by the Joint Committee pursuant to Clause 8.13.
- 8.12 The Vice-Chair of the Joint Committee shall be an elected Executive member of a Council appointed by the Joint Committee pursuant to

Clause 8.13 In the absence of the Chair for any reason, the responsibilities of the Chair can be discharged by the Vice-Chair.

- 8.13 The Chair and the Vice-Chair of the Joint Committee shall be elected at the annual general meeting and appointments shall take effect until the next annual general meeting.
- 8.14 The Joint Committee shall meet as and when required to suit the needs of the Service in accordance with the Service timetable provided that there shall be a minimum of three meetings per year, one of which shall be specified as the annual general meeting. The venue for the meetings shall be agreed by the Joint Committee.
- 8.15 A printed copy of the agenda and reports for each meeting and the minutes of the previous meeting shall be despatched at least five (5) Business Days before such meetings to each representative appointed to the Joint Committee. The Chief Executive of the Host Council shall ensure that the agenda and all relevant papers meet this deadline. All Agendas, reports and minutes in relation to the Joint Committee shall be in both Welsh and English and simultaneous translation of proceedings will be available throughout all meetings of the Joint Committee.
- 8.16 Save as is inconsistent with the terms of this Agreement the Council Procedure Rules and Contract Procedure Rules of the Host Council shall apply.
- 8.17 The quorum necessary for a Joint Committee meeting shall be five (5) voting members of the Joint Committee.
- 8.18 At meetings of the Joint Committee each voting member shall have one (1) vote. Decisions at meetings of the Joint Committee will be taken by a simple majority vote.
- 8.19 The Joint Committee shall not have power to approve any Matter Reserved To the Councils pursuant to Clause 7.1.2 (Decision Making).

- 8.20 The Chair may summon a special meeting of the Joint Committee at any time by written notice to the Host Council specifying the business to be considered at the special meeting.
- 8.21 A special meeting shall be summoned on the requisition in writing of any Joint Committee Member acting on behalf of his/her Council, which requisition shall specify the business to be considered at the special meeting.
- 8.22 Arrangements for holding a special meeting will be in accordance with the timetable set out in Clause 8.15.
- 8.23 In the event that a special meeting is called the Host Council shall notify all Councils in writing as a matter of urgency.
- 8.24 If, at a meeting of the Joint Committee, a matter is not determined by a majority vote pursuant to Clause that matter ("**JC Unresolved Matter**") shall be deferred for consideration at the next Joint Committee Meeting which shall be convened within ten (10) Business Days of that meeting. If at the reconvened Joint Committee meeting the JC Unresolved Matter is not determined the matter shall be determined in accordance with Clause 32–**Dispute Resolution**.
- 8.25 Each Council shall provide all information reasonably required upon request by the Joint Committee and shall comply with any decisions of the Joint Committee to request such information.
- 8.26 Each Council shall consult with the other Councils to ensure the diligent progress of the day to day matters relating to the Service.

9. User Group

- 9.1 The Councils will establish the User Group to provide support and challenge to the Joint Committee.
- 9.2 The User Group shall have the following membership appointed in the manner indicated:-

Membership	Representation
6 Secondary representatives (1 Representative per Council)	The Chair of each respective Council Secondary Schools Headmasters Federation or Group
6 Primary representatives (1 Representative per Council)	Chair of each respective Council Primary Schools Headmasters Federation or Group
1. Special School representatives	One representative drawn from the North Wales Special Schools Federation.
School Governors – 1 Representative per Council	The Chief Education Officer for each respective Council will agree one representative drawn from the Governors elected onto their Overview and Scrutiny Committees pursuant to Parent Governor Representative and Church Representatives (Wales) Regulations 2001.

- 9.3 The User Group shall meet as and when required to suit the needs of the Service in accordance with the Service timetable provided that there shall be a minimum of three meetings per year, The venue for the meetings

shall be agreed by the User Group. All Agendas, reports and minutes in relation to the User Group shall be in both Welsh and English and simultaneous translation of proceedings will be available throughout all meetings of the User Group.

- 9.4 A written Agenda shall be sent to all members of the User Group no later than 5 working days prior to the date of the meeting. The Agenda shall include copies of all reports submitted to the Joint Committee at its previous meetings save and except for matters which were Exempt Items pursuant to Part VA of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 9.5 The User Group shall be entitled to report and make recommendations to the Joint Committee with regard to any matter falling within the scope of the functions of the Service.

10. Commitment of the Councils and Contributions

- 10.1 The Councils agree and undertake to commit to the Service in accordance with the terms of this Agreement and not to commission any service that seeks or would procure the delivery of all or any part of the Services outside the terms of this Agreement save where the Service has been offered the opportunity to provide the service in question and has for reasons of capacity or technical ability agreed that it cannot provide the requested Service in accordance with the stated requirements of the particular Council or school, in which case the Service will assist them in the commissioning of the Services outside this agreement.
- 10.2 The Councils agree to pay the Partnership Contributions which shall be calculated by reference to the formulae in Schedule 3.
- 10.3 The Councils agree to pay the Partnership Contributions to the Host Authority in advance within 28 days of invoice by the Host Authority on to be submitted to the Councils on a six monthly basis by 31 May and 30 November in any given year.
- 10.4 The Host Authority shall prepare annual final accounts in relation to each Financial Year for the Service in accordance with the Host Council's

accounting policies by no later than 31 of May in the following Financial Year.

- 10.5 In the event that the annual expenditure of the Service exceeds the Service Budget the Service Chief Officer will by no later than 31 May in the succeeding Financial Year present a written report to the Joint Committee and serve on the Chief Education Officers and Respective Heads of Finance of the Councils detailing the extent of the over-spend, the cause and the recommended strategy to resolve the matter.
- 10.6 In the event that the Service generates a surplus in any Financial Year equal to or exceeding 5% of the Service budget for that year the Chief Officer will by no later than 31 May in the succeeding Financial Year present a written report to the Joint Committee and serve a copy on the Chief Education Officers and Respective Heads of Finance of the Councils detailing the extent of the surplus, the cause and the recommended strategy with regard to the under spend.
- 10.7 The baseline Service Budget may be jointly reviewed and revised commensurately by all Councils on the third anniversary of the Implementation Date and thereafter by three yearly intervals by reference to the following mechanism:
 1. A Council may upon prior written notice served on the Host Authority and the Chief Officer of the Service no later than 31 October in the year preceding the third anniversary request a review and revision of the Annual Service Budget.
 2. Such notice shall, having regard to the Principles, continuity of the provision of the Services and achievement of the Outcomes set out the proposed revision and the justification for such revision.
 3. On receipt of such a request the Chief Officer of the Service shall within 35 days prepare and serve on each Council a report ratified by

the Joint Committee in response setting out the anticipated effect of the proposed revision on the Service and its ability to deliver the Services and the Outcomes.

4. The response to the report shall be a Matter reserved to Councils and any variation will require agreement of all the Councils any variation will be commensurate for all Councils and require agreement of all Councils.

11. Performance Review

11.1 The Service Chief Officer shall report annually to the Joint Committee and to the Councils individually on the performance of the Service in delivering the Service Functions and Key Aims. The report shall, in particular report on the performance of the Service in delivering the Full Business Case and without prejudice to the generality of the above delivering the Outcomes:

- O1 Improved standards in literacy (Welsh/English) and numeracy (maths) that compare well with the best in other countries,
- O2 A single coherent service for the monitoring, supporting, challenging and intervention within schools across the region,
- O3 Deployment of System Leaders with a consistent approach and recent proven record of school improvement,
- O4 All schools able to access a much broader range of specialist support than that available in individual LA's currently,
- O5 No Local Authorities, schools or learning settings in any Estyn Inspection category of needing significant improvement or special measures.

11.2 The Chief Officers report shall be provided to each Council by no later than 31 October in any given year.

12. Accommodation

12.1 A Council may provide the Host Authority with accommodation and facilities for the Service in the Councils premises on a licence on terms to be agreed in writing between the Council and the Host Authority

12.2 Where premises are provided in a Council's Premises they should be provided with the following facilities

- a) Administration of visitors, trades people, post and deliveries during office hours;
- b) All management of central areas;
- c) Informal message-taking by central reception;
- d) Utilities
- e) Cleaning
- f) Provision of hygiene facilities and consumables;
- g) Maintenance of common parts to include boilers, light fittings; lifts, switchboard, cabling and communication facilities, fire and security systems;
- h) Maintenance of the grounds and window cleaning;
- i) Waste disposal;
- j) Building insurance and also including the common parts;
- k) Management of Health and Safety including fire and asbestos management arrangements
- l) Information Technology Infrastructure/
- m) Adequate car parking for Service staff and visitors

12.3 The fee for provision of accommodation by the Host Authority or the individual Councils shall be on a cost only basis and include a fair allocation of the cost of providing such facilities as are set out in 12,1 above or such other facilities as may be agreed from time to time.

13. Warranties

13.1 The Councils jointly and severally:-

- 13.1.1 warrant to the Host Council in the terms of the Warranties and acknowledges that Host Council is entering into this Agreement in reliance on each of the Warranties and the Warranties will be deemed to be repeated on the Implementation Date with reference to the facts then subsisting PROVIDED that the

Warranties shall be deemed to have been repeated subject to disclosure of information arising at the date of this Agreement if and to the extent that this Agreement provides a mechanism for such disclosure;

- 13.1.2 will indemnify Host Council in full against any Liabilities which the Host Council may suffer or incur, directly or indirectly, as a result of any breach of the Warranties;
- 13.1.3 agree to disclose as soon as reasonably possible to the Host Council anything which comes to their notice which is or may be a breach of any of the Warranties;
- 13.1.4 Unless otherwise specified, where any Warranty refers to the knowledge, information, belief or awareness of a Council other than the Host Council (or similar expression), the Council will be deemed to have such knowledge, information, belief or awareness as Council would have obtained had they made reasonable enquiries into the subject matter of that Warranty;
- 13.1.5 A Council will not be liable in respect of any claim relating to a breach by it of the Warranties if and to the extent that the loss occasioning it has been recovered by the Host Council pursuant to any other claim.

14. Liabilities

- 14.1 Nothing in this Agreement will make the Host Council liable in respect of anything done or omitted to be done by a Council or any Relevant Council Employer up to the Implementation Date or in relation to the carrying on of the Service Functions generally up to the Implementation Date other than as may have been specifically assumed by Host Council under this Agreement.
- 14.2 The Councils will indemnify the Host Council in full against any Losses which the Host Council may suffer or incur, directly or indirectly, as a

result of anything so done or omitted to be done by a Council or any Relevant Council Employer including any act, default or transaction of a Council or any Relevant Council Employer or any circumstance occurring in respect of the carrying on of Service Functions up to the Implementation Date and so that where there are any claims by any third parties in respect of services rendered up to the Implementation Date the claims will be met in full by the relevant Council.

- 14.3 All income received in relation to work undertaken by Councils in respect to Service Functions up to the Implementation Date will be retained by the relevant Council which will remain liable for all costs relating to work undertaken, services received and good received up to the Implementation Date. Any payments in respect of such income paid to the Host Council shall be paid to the Relevant Council as soon as reasonably practicable but in any event within 28 Business Days of receipt.

15. The Tupe Regulations And Tupe Employees

- 15.1 It is acknowledged that for the purposes of the TUPE Regulations and the Directive (whether the same apply as a matter of law or not) the transactions contemplated by this Agreement will be treated as a transfer of the undertakings of the Council's on the Implementation Date and that accordingly with effect from and on the Implementation Date the contracts of employment of each of the Transferring Employees will not be terminated by the transactions provided for in this Agreement but will continue to have effect from and on the Implementation Date as if originally made between each of such Transferring Employees and Host Council except to the extent provided by the Transfer Regulations and/or the Directive but subject to Clause 18 below.
- 15.2 the Councils agree that after the date of this Agreement it will not do any of the following without the consent of Host Council:

- 15.2.1 engage or employ any person who is not currently a Transferring Employee, who would or might as a consequence of such engagement or employment become a Transferring Employee; or
 - 15.2.2 make material changes to the terms and conditions of employment of any Transferring Employee or Employee.
- 15.3 The Councils will discharge all of their obligations in relation to the Transferring Employees, including, without limitation, all costs and expenses, salaries and other emoluments including without limitation accrued holiday pay, up to the Implementation Date. The Councils shall indemnify the Host Councils against all Losses arising from its failure to so discharge and the Host Council shall indemnify the Councils against all Losses arising from Host Council's failure to comply with its obligations under this clause.
- 15.4 At least 14 days prior to the Implementation Date the Councils will provide the Host Council with a Schedule of Transferring Employees in the format set out in Schedule 5 and with the Employee Information referred to in Schedule 6. The Councils will inform the Host Council as soon as is reasonably practicable of them becoming formally aware of any Transferring Employee giving notice to cease to be employed or ceasing to be employed prior to the Implementation Date.
- 15.5 The Councils shall provide Host Council with any other information in relation to the Transferring Employees that they may agree with the Host Council to provide from time to time.

16. Pensions

- 16.1 The Councils are scheduled employers in the LGPS. The Employees employed in the Service will remain eligible to be active members of the LGPS from and including the Implementation Date by virtue of the LGPS Regulations. The Employees' LGPS membership with the Councils or

Cynnal Cyfyngedig a Relevant Employer will be aggregated with their membership with the Fund.

- 16.2 The Host Authority in its capacity as administering authority of the Fund shall treat the Service as a separate entity within the Fund. The Service will be the subject of specific actuarial reporting in accordance with the Host Authority's Policies by the Funds Actuaries and shall be liable for a discrete employers contribution rate (Employer's Contribution).
- 16.3 The Funds Actuary shall make a valuation to establish the relevant assets and liabilities attributable to the employees employed in the Service calculated as at the Implementation Date in accordance with the actuarial basis used in the Fund's ongoing valuation using the financial assumptions and market conditions existing as at the Implementation Date in order to calculate the required Employers Contribution.
- 16.4 The valuation referred to in clause 16.3 shall be reviewed triennially in accordance with the LGPS Regulations and the Employer's Contribution adjusted accordingly.
- 16.5 The Employer's Contribution established and reviewed in accordance with this clause 16 shall be incorporated in the annual Service Budget and form part of the Council's Commitments (clause 10).
- 16.6 In the event of Termination or Withdrawal by any or all Councils the Host Councils actuary shall make a valuation to establish the relevant assets and liabilities attributable to the employees employed in the Service as calculated at the Termination or Withdrawal Date in accordance with the actuarial basis used in the Fund's ongoing valuation in pursuant to clause 16.4 but using the financial assumptions and market conditions existing as at the Termination and Withdrawal Date. Notwithstanding the provisions of Clause 2, 21 or 22 the leaving Council shall pay to the Host Council within 28 days of demand a share of those liabilities (pension deficit) equivalent to its proportion of its share of the Service Budget for

the last full financial year immediately preceding the Termination or Withdrawal Date.

17. Consultation With Unions And Employee Representatives

- 17.1 In good time in advance of the Implementation Date and in any event no later than is required by the TUPE Regulations, the Councils will provide information to and will consult with the Relevant Representatives in accordance with regulation 13 of the TUPE Regulations (“**the Consultations**”).
- 17.2 The Councils will keep the Host Council informed about the progress of the Consultations and will consent, if so requested by Host Council, to permit a representative of Host Council to attend any meeting between the Councils and the Relevant Representatives in respect of the Consultations, which consent shall not be unreasonably withheld or delayed.
- 17.3 The Councils will indemnify the Host Council and keep the Host Council fully indemnified from and against all Losses arising in connection with or as a result of any claim arising (directly or indirectly) from or connected with any failure by a Council to comply with any obligation to inform or consult under the TUPE Regulations or the Directive and whether or not such claim is brought before or after the Implementation Date except to the extent that such claim arises by virtue of the failure of Host Council to comply with its obligations under regulation 13 of the TUPE Regulations.
- 17.4 The Councils warrant that the employee liability information that they provide under regulation 11 of the TUPE Regulations shall be accurate, complete and provided within the time period required under regulation 11 of the TUPE Regulations.

18. Tupe Indemnities

- 18.1 The Councils shall indemnify the Host Council and keep it indemnified against all Losses arising directly or indirectly in connection with:-

- 18.1.1 the employment or termination of employment by a Council of any of the Transferring Employees (whether or not terminated by notice and, if so terminated, whenever that notice expires) up to and including the Implementation Date;
 - 18.1.2 any act, omission or default of a Council up to and including the Implementation Date in respect of the employment by a Council of the Transferring Employees provided that this indemnity will not apply to the extent that Host Council recovers under a Relevant EL Policy;
 - 18.1.3 any claim or allegation by any former or existing employee of a Council (other than a Transferring Employee) in respect of which the Host Council incurs or is alleged by the employee or their representative to incur responsibility or liability as a result of the operation of the TUPE Regulations and/or the Directive;
 - 18.1.4 a Council's failure to provide the employee liability information under regulation 11 of the Regulations.
- 18.2 If, after the Implementation Date, Host Council becomes aware of any employee of a Council or Relevant Council Employer whose particulars do not appear in Schedule 5 but whose contract of employment takes effect after the Implementation Date (as if originally made between Host Council and that employee) or is alleged to do so pursuant to the Transfer Regulations and/or the Directive:-
- 18.2.1 within 14 days of becoming aware of that effect or allegation, the Host Council may terminate such person's contract of employment;
 - 18.2.2 the Council will keep the Host Council indemnified in full against all Losses arising (directly or indirectly) in connection with such termination and against any sums payable to or in relation to such person in respect of such person's employment

with the Council and from the Implementation Date to the date of such termination; and

18.2.3 For the avoidance of doubt, in relation to the indemnities set out in this Agreement in favour of Host Council any Losses incurred by Host Council which arise from claims made by or on behalf of a Transferring Employee shall be recoverable from a Council by Host Council notwithstanding that the Transferring Employee has been transferred to a Relevant Employer and regardless of whether the claim is made by a Transferring Employee against Host Council or the Relevant Employer.

18.3 In the event that a party has the benefit of an indemnity in relation to a claim, it shall not settle that claim or make any admission of liability without first obtaining the prior written consent of the party providing the indemnity (not to be unreasonably withheld or delayed).

18.4 It is agreed that Host Council will have the benefit of any right to indemnity which a Council has under or pursuant to a Relevant E L Policy. Each Council hereby assigns unconditionally and absolutely to the Host Council the benefit of and all its right, title and interest under or pursuant to any Relevant E L Policy insofar as the same gives a right to indemnity in respect of any Employees. The parties will give joint notice to the insurers of such assignment or the Host Council will be entitled to give such notice to insurers (on behalf of the when necessary). The parties will use their respective best endeavours to arrange to have the name of the Host Council endorsed upon any Relevant E L Policy as a named insured (either in addition to or in substitution for the name of the Seller as appropriate) in respect of claims brought by any Employee in respect of facts or circumstances arising on or before the Implementation Date.

19. Intellectual Property

19.1 Each Council will retain all Intellectual Property in its Material.

- 19.2 Each Council will grant all of the other Councils a non exclusive, perpetual, non-transferable and royalty free licence to use, modify, amend and develop its IP Material for the purpose of the Service and any other purpose resulting from the Service whether or not the party granting the licence remains a party to this Agreement or the Service.
- 19.3 Without prejudice to Clause 18.1, if more than one Council owns or has a legal or beneficial right or interest in any aspect of the IP Material for any reason (including without limitation that no one Council can demonstrate that it independently supplied or created the relevant IP Material without the help of one or more of the other Councils), each of the Councils who contributed to the relevant IP Material will grant to all other Councils to this Agreement a non-exclusive, perpetual, non-transferable and royalty free licence to use and exploit such IP Material as if all the other Councils were the sole owner under the Copyright Design and Patents Act 1988 or any other relevant statute or rule of law.
- 19.4 For the avoidance of doubt, any entity or person who is at the date of this Agreement a party to this Agreement and who has licensed any Intellectual Property under this Agreement will have a non-exclusive, perpetual right to continue to use the licensed Intellectual Property.
- 19.5 Each Council warrants that it has or will have the necessary rights to grant the licences set out in Clauses 19.2 and 19.3 in respect of the IP Material to be licensed.
- 19.6 Each Council agrees to execute such further documents and take such actions or do such things as may be reasonably requested by any other Council (and at the expense of the Council(s) making the request) to give full effect to the terms of this Agreement concerning management and control of Intellectual Property¹.

20. Liability Of The Councils

- 20.1 Save where specifically provided for in clauses 13– 18 above:-

20.1.1 The Host Council shall indemnify and keep indemnified each of the other Councils to this Agreement against any losses, claims, expenses, actions, demands, costs and liability suffered by that Council to the extent arising from any breach by the Host Council of its obligations under this Agreement or any negligent act or omission in relation to such obligations and the Host Council shall make payment to the other Councils sums for which it becomes liable under this Clause within twenty (20) Business Days of the date of another Council's written demand;

20.1.2 No claim shall be made against the Host Council to recover any loss or damage which may be incurred by reason of or arising out of the carrying out by the Host Council of its obligations under this Agreement unless and to the extent such loss or damage arises from any breach by the Host Council under Clause 20.1;

20.1.3 Each of the other Councils (acting severally) shall indemnify and keep indemnified the Host Council against all losses, claims, expenses, actions, demands, costs and liabilities which the Host Council may incur by reason of or arising out of the carrying out by the Host Council of its obligations under this Agreement for that Council or arising from any breach by a Council of its obligations under this Agreement or any negligent act or omission in relation to such obligations unless and to the extent that the same result from any breach by the Host Council of any such obligations or any negligent act or omission by the Host Council and each Council shall make payment to the Host Council sums for which it becomes liable under this Clause within twenty (20) Business Days of the date of the Host Council's written demand.

20.2 The Councils agree and acknowledge that the amount to be paid to the Host Council by any of the other Councils under this Clause shall be borne by each of the Councils to the extent of its responsibility, however in

the event that the responsibility is a shared one between the Councils (so that it is not reasonably practicable to ascertain the exact responsibility between the Councils) then the amount to be paid shall be divided equally between the Councils.

- 20.3 In the event of a claim under this Clause in which it is not reasonably practicable to determine the extent of responsibility as between the Councils (including the Host Council), then the amount shall be divided equally between the Councils (including the Host Council).
- 20.4 A Council (including the Host Council) who receives a claim for losses, expenses, actions, demands, costs and liabilities shall notify and provide details of such claim as soon as is reasonably practicable to the other Councils.
- 20.5 No Council shall be indemnified in accordance with this Clause unless it has given notice in accordance with this Clause to the other Council against whom it will be enforcing its right to an indemnity under this Agreement.
- 20.6 Each Council ("Indemnifier") shall not be responsible or be obliged to indemnify the other Councils (including the Host Council) ("Beneficiary") to the extent that any insurances maintained by the Beneficiary at the relevant time provide an indemnity against the loss giving rise to such claim and to the extent that the Beneficiary recovers under such policy of insurance (save that the Indemnifier shall be responsible for the deductible under any such policy of insurance and any amount over the maximum amount insured under such policy of insurance).
- 20.7 In relation to all indemnities set out in this Agreement the party with the benefit shall take all reasonable steps to mitigate any Losses or other loss or liability suffered by it in consequence of any events or circumstances which give rise to a claim.

21. Withdrawal

- 21.1 Subject to Clause 2 if for any reason any Council (including the Host Council) determines to withdraw from this Agreement Clauses this clause shall apply. In determining or responding to any decision or proposal to Withdrawal from the Agreement in accordance with this clause the Councils, shall have regard to the Partnership Principles and the instigation of the Dispute Resolution Procedure (Clause 31) with a view to identifying a solution which maintains the Partnership.
- 21.2 If any Council wishes to withdraw from the Service it shall provide written notice specifying its intention to withdraw from the Service. Such notice shall be served on all Councils and shall provide a minimum of 12 months prior notice to expire on the 31st day of August. ("**Withdrawal Notice**"). The Host Council (or such other Council as nominated by the Joint Committee in the event that the Host Council issues the Withdrawal Notice) shall within twenty eight (28) days of receipt of the Withdrawal Notice provide to all the Councils a Liability Report in the form set out in Schedule setting out the anticipated consequential costs of such withdrawal for the remaining Councils which shall be discussed by the Joint Committee at its next meeting or a specially convened meeting if the next meeting falls more than twenty eight (28) days after the issue of the Liability Report. Those Councils who do not wish to withdraw from the Service shall have a duty, acting reasonably, to mitigate any losses which they suffer due to the financial and resource implications set out in the Liability Report.
- 21.3 Within 28 days of Service of the Liability Report the withdrawing Council shall indicate in writing either:-
- 21.3.1 that it withdraws from the Service and this Agreement; or
 - 21.3.2 that it wishes to continue with the Service and this Agreement.
- 21.4 Where a Council does not indicate its intentions as required by Clause 21.2.2 then it shall at the expiry of the Decision Period be taken to

have indicated that it wishes to continue with the Service and this Agreement.

21.5 Where a Council indicates that it wishes to withdraw from the Service in accordance with Clause 22.1 then the Council who shall have indicated its wish to withdraw shall pay all amounts due to be paid by it in accordance with the Liability Report within twenty (20) Business Days of the date of its notification under Clause 21.2 and comply with its obligation to contribute to the Service up to the date of its withdrawal;

21.6 For the avoidance of doubt, the Council who shall have indicated its wish to withdraw from the Service shall remove its representatives from the Joint Committee with effect from the date of its confirmation under Clause 21.3

22. Service Underperformance

22.1 If, for any reason any Council (including the Host Council) considers that the Service is failing or is materially contributing to a failure to achieve the Outcomes it may serve a notice (**Default Notice**) on the Chief Officer in accordance with 21.2 below. A copy of the Default Notice and supporting information shall be served on each Council at the same time.

22.2 The Default Notice shall specify by reference to this agreement and the Full Business Case;

- the matters by reference to which the Default Notice has been served
- the evidence or information which the Council considers supports the Default Notice, to include supporting documentation data or other material.
- the specific steps which the Council considers are necessary to remedy or otherwise rectify the failure.

22.3 The Chief Officer shall within twenty eight (28) days of receipt of the Default Notice provide to all the Councils a response to the Default Notice which where appropriate shall include proposed actions and timetable (Rectification Timetable) to rectify any default identified which together with the Default Notice shall be discussed by the Joint Committee at its next meeting or a specially convened meeting if the next meeting falls more than twenty eight (28) days after the issue of the Chief Officers response .

22.4 The Joint Committee may resolve:

22.4.1 That the Default Notice requires no further action

22.4.2 That the proposed action plan be adopted in response

22.4.3 That a varied action plan may be adopted in response

22.5 If, at the expiration of the Rectification Period the Joint Committee determines that matters which gave rise to the Default Notice have not been rectified to a material extent the Council serving the Default Notice may serve a Withdrawal Notice in accordance with Clause 21 (Withdrawal) but shall not be subject to the Liability Report process. The Withdrawal Notice must be served on the Host Authority within twenty eight (28) days of the date of the Joint Committees resolution.

22.6 All the Councils and the Service shall, when initiating action or responding under this clause shall have regard at all times to the Partnership Principles and the instigation of the Dispute Resolution Procedure (Clause 31) with a view to identifying a solution which maintains the Partnership.

23. Confidentiality And Announcements

23.1 Each Council shall, both during the currency of this Agreement and at all times following its termination or expiry, keep private and confidential and shall not use or disclose (whether for its own benefit or that of any third party) any Confidential Information about the business of and/or belonging

to any other Council which has come to its attention as a result of or in connection with this Agreement.

23.2 The obligation set out in this Clause shall not relate to information which:-

23.2.1 comes into the public domain or is subsequently disclosed to the public (other than through default on the part of the Covenanter or any other person to whom the Covenanter is permitted to disclose such information under this Agreement); or

23.2.2 is required to be disclosed by law; or

23.2.3 was already in the possession of the Council (without restrictions as to its use) on the date of receipt; or

23.2.4 is required or recommended by the rules of any governmental or regulatory body including any guidance from time to time as to openness and disclosure of information by public bodies; or

23.2.5 is necessary to be disclosed to provide relevant information to any insurer or insurance broker in connection with obtaining any insurance required by this Agreement.

23.3 Where disclosure is permitted under Clauses 23.2, 23.2.4, 23.2.5 the recipient of the information shall be subject to a similar obligation of confidentiality as that contained in this Clause 22.1 and the disclosing Council shall make this known to the recipient of the information.

23.4 No Council shall make any public statement or issue any press release or publish any other public document relating, connected with or arising out of this Agreement without consultation with the Host Authority.

24. Contracts (Third Party Rights)

The Councils as parties to this Agreement do not intend that any of its terms will be enforceable by virtue of the Contracts (Rights of Third Parties) Act 1999 by any person not a party to it.

25. Notices

25.1 Any notice or demand in connection with this Agreement shall be in writing and may be delivered by hand, prepaid first class post, special delivery post, facsimile or email, addressed to the recipient at the address or facsimile number as the case may be set out in Schedule 8 (Addresses of the Councils) or such other recipient address or facsimile number as may be notified in writing from time to time by any of the parties to this Agreement to all the other Councils to this Agreement.

25.2 The notice or demand shall be deemed to have been duly served:-

25.2.1 if delivered by hand, when left at the proper address for service;

25.2.2 if given or made by prepaid first class post or special delivery post, forty-eight (48) hours after being posted (excluding days other than Business Days);

25.2.3 if given or made by facsimile, at the time of transmission;

25.2.4 if given or made by email, at the time of transmission,

provided that, where in the case of delivery by hand or transmission by facsimile or email such delivery or transmission occurs either after 4.00pm on a Business Day or on a day other than a Business Day service shall be deemed to occur at 9.00am on the next following Business Day.

25.3 For the avoidance of doubt, where proceedings to which the Civil Procedure Rules apply have been issued, the provisions of the Civil Procedure Rules must be complied with in respect of the service of documents in connection with those proceedings.

26. Governing Law

This Agreement shall be governed by and construed in all respects in accordance with the laws of England and Wales. Subject to Clause 31 (Dispute Resolution), the English and Welsh Courts shall have exclusive

jurisdiction to settle any disputes which may arise out of or in connection with this Agreement.

27. Assignments

27.1 The rights and obligations of the Councils under this Agreement shall not be assigned, novated or otherwise transferred (whether by virtue of any legislation or any scheme pursuant to any legislation or otherwise) to any person.

28. Waiver

28.1 No failure or delay by any Council to exercise any right, power or remedy will operate as a waiver of it nor will any partial exercise preclude any further exercise of the same or some other right, power or remedy unless a waiver is given in writing by that Council.

28.2 Each Council shall pay their own costs incurred in connection with the preparation, execution, completion and implementation of this Agreement.

29. Entire Agreement

This Agreement contains all the terms which the parties have agreed in relation to the subject of this Agreement and supersedes any prior written or oral agreements, representations or understandings between the Councils relating to such subject matter. No Council has been induced to enter into this Agreement or any of these documents by statement or promise which they do not contain, save that this Clause shall not exclude any liability which one Council would otherwise have to the other in respect of any statements made fraudulently by that Council.

30. Counterparts

This Agreement may be executed in any number of counterparts each of which so executed shall be an original but together shall constitute one and the same instrument.

31. Relationship Of Councils

Each Council is an independent body and nothing contained in this Agreement shall be construed to imply that there is any relationship between the Councils of Partnership or (except as expressly provided in this Agreement) of principal/agent or of employer/employee. No Council shall have the right to act on behalf of another nor to bind the other by contract or otherwise except to the extent expressly permitted by the terms of this Agreement. In particular for the avoidance of doubt, none of the provisions relating to the principles of working in partnership shall be taken to establish any partnership as defined by The Partnership Act 1890.

32. Dispute Resolution

- 32.1 Any dispute arising in relation to any aspect of this Agreement shall be resolved in accordance with this Clause . The Councils undertake and agree to pursue a positive approach towards dispute resolution which seeks (in the context of this Partnership and its aims) to identify a solution with a view to avoiding the need to instigate formal Dispute Resolution or legal proceedings and maintains a strong working relationship between the Councils.
- 32.2 In the event of any dispute or difference between the Councils relating to this Agreement or the Service (whether this may be a matter of contractual interpretation or otherwise) then save in relation to disputes or disagreements relating to a Matter Reserved To The Councils, the matter shall be dealt with as follows by referral in the first instance to the Regional Partnership Board who shall meet within ten (10) Business Days of notification of the occurrence of such dispute and attempt to resolve the disputed matter in good faith.
- 32.3 In relation to a dispute or disagreement relating to a Matter Reserved To The Councils, or if the Regional Partnership Board fails to resolve a dispute or disagreement within five (5) Business Days of meeting pursuant

to Clause 31.2, or fails to meet in accordance with the timescales set out in Clause 31.3, then the Councils in dispute (as the case may be) may refer the matter to:

32.3.1 a mediation facilitated by the Welsh Local Government Association or such other party as the Councils may agree for resolution by them; or

32.3.2 the exclusive jurisdiction of the Courts of England or Wales otherwise.

32.4 Any dispute and/or disagreement to be determined by the Regional Partnership Board (as appropriate), or the Courts of England and Wales or such other body as agreed by the Councils (as the case may be) under this Agreement shall be promptly referred for determination to them.

32.5 The Councils shall on request promptly supply to the Regional Partnership Board (as the case may be) all such assistance, documents and information as may be required for the purpose of determination and the Councils shall use all reasonable endeavours to procure the prompt determination of such reference.

32.6 The costs of the resolution of any dispute and/or disagreement between the Councils under this Agreement shall be borne equally by the Councils to the dispute in question save as may be otherwise directed by the Chief Executive(s) or the Courts of England or Wales (as the case may be).

33. Data Protection And Information Sharing

33.1 In relation to all Personal Data, each Council shall at all times comply with the DPA, (as a data controller if necessary) which includes (but is not limited to) maintaining a valid and up to date registration or notification under the DPA covering the data processing activities to be performed in connection with the Service.

33.2 The Councils agree that they shall provide to the Service such information, data, statistics or records as are reasonably required by the Service to

provide the Services or such other services as are commissioned from time to time by the Councils. The Councils shall adhere to any Information Sharing Protocols that are developed within the SLA's in accordance with the WASPI framework when sharing personal data under this Agreement.

33.3 Notwithstanding the general obligation in clause 32.2, where any *Council including the Host Authority in that capacity on behalf of the Service or the Service* is processing personal data (as defined by the DPA) as a data processor *it* shall ensure that it has in place appropriate technical and contractual measures to ensure the security of the personal data (and to guard against unauthorised or unlawful processing of the personal data and against accidental loss or destruction of, or damage to, the personal data), as required under the Seventh Data Protection Principle in Schedule 1 to the DPA; and

- (a) provide any other Council with such information as that Council may reasonably require to satisfy itself that the Council is complying with its obligations under the DPA;
- (b) promptly notify any Council of any breach of security measures required to be put in place pursuant to clause 23.3; and

33.4 Ensure it does not knowingly or negligently do or omit to do anything which places any Partner in breach of its obligations under the DPA.

33.5 The Councils shall each take reasonable precautions (having regard to the nature of their respective obligations under this Agreement) to preserve the integrity of any Personal Data.

34. Freedom Of Information And Environment Information

34.1 Each Council acknowledges that the other Councils are subject to the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ("**FoIA**") and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 ("**EIR**") and each Council shall where reasonable assist and co-operate with the other Councils (at

their own expense) to enable the other Councils to comply with these information disclosure obligations.

34.2 Where a Council receives a request for information under either the FoIA or the EIR in relation to information which it is holding on behalf of any of the other Councils in relation to the Service, it shall:-

34.2.1 transfer the request for information to the other Councils as soon as practicable after receipt and in any event within two (2) Business Days of receiving a request for information;

34.2.2 provide the other Councils with a copy of all information in its possession or power in the form that the Councils reasonably require within ten (10) Business Days (or such longer period as the Councils may specify) of the Council requesting that information; and

34.2.3 provide all necessary assistance as reasonably requested by the other Councils to enable the Council to respond to a request for information within the time for compliance set out in the FoIA or the EIR.

34.3 Where a Council receives a request for information under the FoIA or the EIR which relates to this Agreement or the Service, it shall inform the other Councils of the request for information as soon as practicable after receipt and in any event at least two (2) Business Days before disclosure and shall use all reasonable endeavours to consult with the other Councils prior to disclosure and shall consider all representations made by the other Councils in relation to the decision whether or not to disclose the information requested.

34.4 The Councils shall be responsible for determining in their absolute discretion whether any information requested under the FoIA or the EIR:-

34.4.1 is exempt from disclosure under the FoIA or the EIR;

34.4.2 is to be disclosed in response to a request for information.

34.5 Each Council acknowledges that the other Councils may be obliged under the FoIA or the EIR to disclose information:-

34.5.1 without consulting with the other Councils where it has not been practicable to achieve such consultation; or

34.5.2 following consultation with the other Councils and having taken their views into account.

35. Mitigation

Each Council shall at all time take all reasonable steps to minimise and mitigate any loss for which the relevant Council is entitled to bring a claim against the other Council(s) pursuant to this Agreement.

36. Statutory Responsibilities

Notwithstanding anything apparently to the contrary in this Agreement, in carrying out their statutory duties, the discretion of any Council shall not be fettered or otherwise affected by the terms of this Agreement.

37 Variations

No amendment to this Agreement shall be binding unless it is in writing and signed by the duly authorised representatives of each of the Councils and expressed to be for the purpose of such amendment.

IN WITNESS whereof the parties hereto have caused their respective Common Seals to be affixed to this agreement as a Deed the day and year first above written:

SCHEDULE 1

SCHEDULE 1A

SERVICES

1. Pursuant to clause 4 the Service shall have the following functions.
 - 1.1 **Supporting LAs to undertake their statutory functions in relation to school effectiveness by:**
 - Monitoring the work and performance of schools on the basis of a range of evidence and reporting on this.
 - Challenging schools on the basis of whole school performance and provision, and in relation to individual learning programmes and pupil support arrangements so as to drive improvement in pupil outcomes.
 - Intervening in the provision made by a school when necessary, and supporting schools in difficulty and those with serious weaknesses.
 - Facilitating the use and interpretation of data to ensure intelligent accountability.
 - 1.2 **Provide Support for both LAs and Schools (jointly and separately as the case may be) in School Improvement activity by:**
 - Supporting schools to address issues of school effectiveness/improvement and pupil outcomes.
 - Providing advice and support for pedagogy (learning, teaching), leadership and management, and in intelligent accountability and professional development. (Self evaluation, assessment and monitoring).
 - Developing and deploying, on an associate basis, system leaders and progressing proactively the system leadership agenda.
 - Facilitating and supporting where required networking and networks of professional practice.

- Addressing issues of concern in schools and LAs and supporting schools needing significant improvement.
- Provide expertise on IT (Curriculum & Pedagogy) and Virtual Learning Environment

1.3 Specifically undertaking responsibility for the Implementation of SEF* and for CIF* accountability by:

- Providing and developing staff expertise and organisational knowledge in pedagogy and learning.
- Supporting school self evaluation.
- Supporting the LAs and schools in exercising their responsibilities in relation to SEF – including improvement in pupil outcomes and their wellbeing.
- Ensuring that all the activities of a regional service are undertaken in the context of SEF.
- Facilitating the development and work of Professional Learning Communities.
- Providing Support for, and addressing the needs of, Schools Causing Concern.
- Contributing to preparations for Estyn inspection of individual schools and other surveys.
- Making arrangements for continuous professional development through courses, brokerage, collecting and disseminating good practice, and developing a regional Portal.

* references to SEF and CIF shall be presumed to include any amendments or superseding policies or frameworks in so far as and to the extent that they encompass the Service Functions.

1.4 Making provision for the development, maintenance, and review of regional frameworks on a commissioned basis, to include:

- Protocols.
- Operational guidance and documentation.
- Documentation and bulletins.

2. The mechanisms for delivery of the Service shall include:

- 2.1 The deployment, management, recruitment and CPD of School Improvement Professionals (now to be called Systems Leaders).
- 2.2 Routine Visits (now to be three per year per School) to Schools to undertake monitoring of a School's Performance.
- 2.3 Undertaking and managing interventions in Schools Causing Concern.
- 2.4 Thematic Interventions, e.g. concerned with specific, normally Under Achieving, groups of learners (e.g. whose first language is not Welsh or English, ALN, Looked After Children, etc.)
- 2.5 Collection, interpretation and dissemination of Schools and Pupil Performance Data to Schools, within the LA, to Elected Members, et al.
- 2.6 Provision of reports concerning School Standards and Performance to Elected Members, ESTYN, the Welsh Government and the general public.
- 2.7 Commentary upon and approval of a School's Post Inspection Action Plan. (These duties are more demanding in the case of a School which has been placed in a formal category by ESTYN).
- 2.8 Attendance at appointments of Headteacher, and routine attendance at appointments other than Headteachers

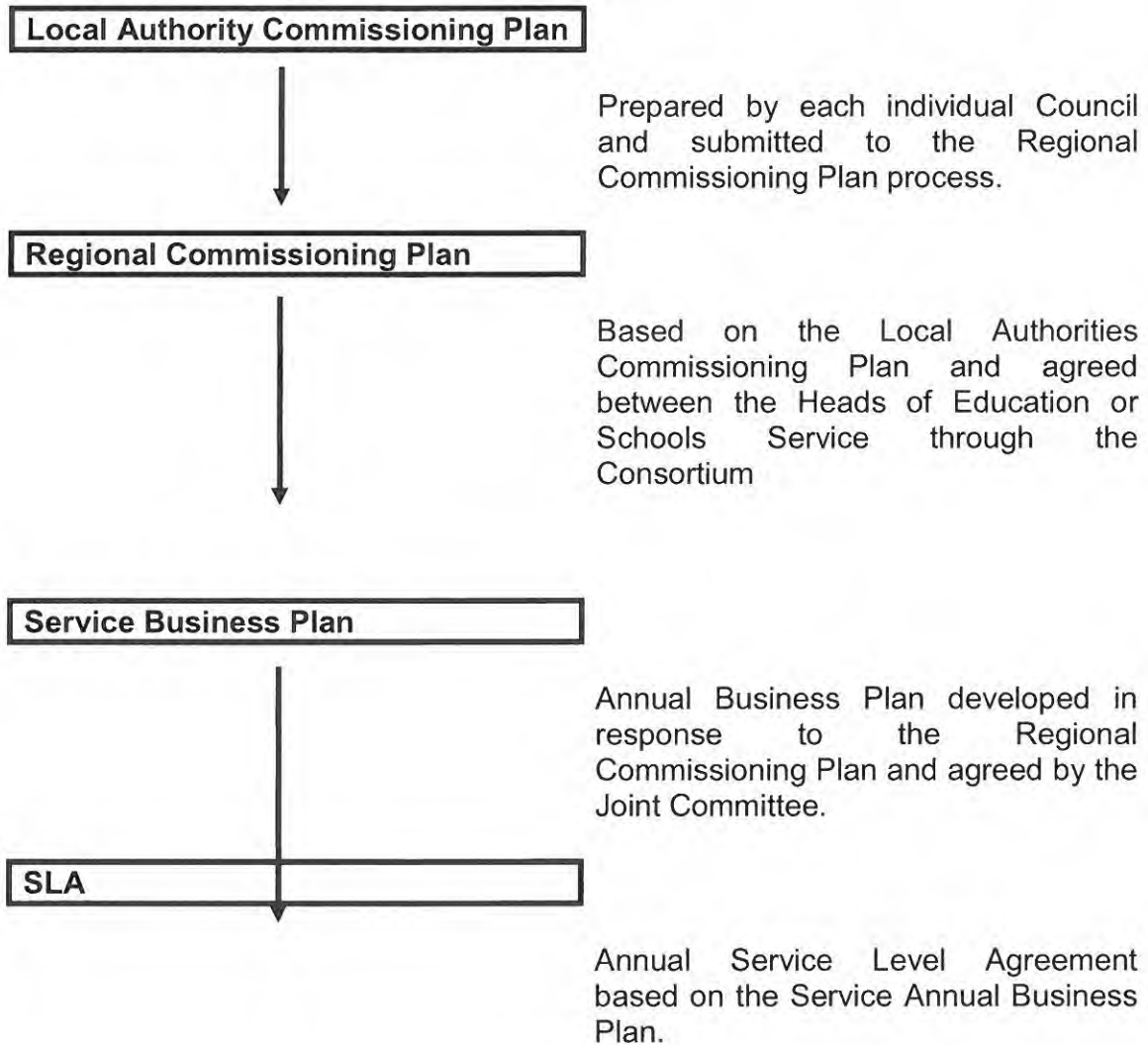
- 2.9 Management of Literacy and Numeracy Strategy and deployment of literacy and numeracy experts and literacy and numeracy CPD programmes.
- 2.10 Challenge to Schools only via Systems Leaders on: Leadership, Teaching, Learning, Under Achieving Groups, Attendance, Behaviour, Financial Management, use of Performance and Assessment data, Looked After Children, PLCs and use of resources to support improvement.
- 2.11 Support and guidance for NQTs.
- 2.12 Leading the development of School to School working.
- 2.13 Curriculum support, including subject advice, phase and aspect-specific advice.
- 2.14 Delivery of local initiatives.
- 2.15 Undertaking the performance management scheme functions and responsibilities.
- 2.16 ICT advice and support.
- 2.17 Convening and managing theme or phase-specific groups.
- 2.18 Professional Development Centres.
- 2.19 Undertaking research.
- 2.20 Notwithstanding the generality of the above the following minimum levels of service shall be provided to each Council.

School Visits	No of visits per annum per School (based	Total Number
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	on 466 inc Nursery, Primary, Secondary and Special)	of Days
Regular Visit	3 days	
Planning and Preparation (including performance management	3 days	
		2769

SCHEDULE 1B

Commissioning Model



SCHEDULE 2

JOINT COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

1.1 The terms of reference of the Joint Committee are:

- 1) to promote joint working in the delivery of the Service through:
 - facilitating constructive partnership working;
 - engaging with key interested bodies and stakeholders when appropriate; and
 - carrying out such other activities calculated to facilitate, or which are conducive to the successful delivery of the Service; and
- 2) to oversee the management of the Service and ensure that the Service is provided and performs in accordance with the expectations of the Councils as reflected in the Full Business Case, Inter Authority Agreement and agreed Annual Business and Commissioning Plans;
- 3) to approve the budget for the Service on an annual basis’;
- 4) to approve the business plan for the Service on an annual basis;
- 5) to monitor and manage the risks associated with the Service;
- 6) to ratify requests from the Service for additional budget funding from individual Councils;
- 7) to approve the staff structure of the Service;
- 8) to appoint the Chief Officer of the Service;
- 9) to decide on disciplinary action against the Chief Officer; and where required, to determine or arrange for the determination of appeals in relation to Human Resources matters.

The following matters are specifically reserved for individual Cabinet decision:

- 1) approval of inter-Council partnership governance arrangements;
- 2) increase of budget over agreed Council contributions;
- 3) procuring the necessary audit and assurance checks; and
- 4) termination of the Partnership

CYNGOR GWYNEDD - Report to Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet

Title of Item:	Education Department Performance Report
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Dewi Jones, Cabinet Member for Education
Relevant officer:	Gwern ap Rhisiart, Head of Education
Date of meeting:	21 January 2025

1. Decision sought:

To accept and note the information in the report.

2. The reason why the Cabinet needs to make the decision:

In order to ensure effective performance management.

3. Introduction and Rationale

3.1 Background / Introduction

The purpose of this report is to update you on what has been achieved in the field that I am responsible for as Cabinet Member for Education.

We are implementing the Council Plan 2023-28, and herein I report on the progress up to the end of December 2024, recognising that it is still early days in the context of some of the pledges that are new in the document since April this year.

3.2 Rationale and justification for recommending the decision

3.2.1 Performance on the Council Plan Pledges

3.2.2 Transforming education for children in their early years

The admissions policy for Gwynedd schools will change from September 2025 as children attending Nursery class in Gwynedd schools will be expected to be fully toilet-trained before they start. We continue to share resources with parents and share information through social media.

The work of extending the childcare provision for two-year-olds to new areas is operational, with 21 childcare locations providing a service for two-year-olds through the medium of Welsh or bilingually. The Team of Advisory Teachers and the Childcare Officers are supporting the new settings through visits, support and start-up grants to invest in bespoke resources to ensure they can raise standards to meet Flying Start requirements.

3.2.3 Modernising buildings and the learning environment

It is nice to be able to announce that the new building and campus for Ysgol Treforthyr in Cricieth has opened its doors to learners at the start of September this year. This follows years of work, and an investment of over £8m to secure the highest quality learning environment and resources for up to 150 learners in the area. In addition, there is childcare provision on the site, as well as an ABC Unit. The Department will arrange an official opening early in 2025.

There is also an intention to build a new school for Our Lady's School on the Ysgol Glanadda site (now closed) in Bangor. The work on the Ysgol Glanadda site began during the summer holidays this year, and I look forward to sharing an update on the progress of this construction work next time.

There is also an intention to make significant improvements to Ysgol Hirael, and in the spring term of this year, the Welsh Government approved a Business Case to release the funding to realise this commitment. We have appointed consultants to lead the work, and improvements to the Byw'n Iach car park which will become a multi-purpose car park for the use of Ysgol Hirael will start in early 2025.

We are also committed to making significant improvements to Ysgol Tryfan in Bangor, and during this term, we have appointed an architect for the projects who is working with the Department and Ysgol Tryfan to try to address the vision for this investment. We are aiming to submit an initial Business Case to the Welsh Government in January 2025 to release the funding to realise our aspirations for securing major improvements and the best possible learning environment for the learners.

Ysgol y Faenol has also received a substantial extension. However, discussions regarding land transfers are continuing and, consequently, we cannot complete the work on the school's car park at present. However, through the cooperation of Pentir Community Council, since September this year, we have managed to secure temporary use of the Penrhosgarnedd Community Centre car park for peak times when children are dropped off and picked up from school every day during the school term, to make it easier for parents and families to escort their children to Ysgol y Faenol daily. I am aware of the local concerns and frustration about the situation, and I wish to confirm that the Department and the Council are doing everything within their ability to try and resolve the situation and complete the project, which includes a new community centre.

I am very pleased of the investment of £4.9m of the remaining budget from the Condition and Suitability project to improve the condition and suitability of up to 11 primary and secondary schools in Gwynedd. This project commenced during the 2024 summer holidays, and the work of ensuring investment and improvements in 3 of the schools has already been completed. The purpose of this project is to improve the condition of our existing school buildings, by making alterations to the buildings in order to ensure that they are fit for purpose and make the best use of the space available.

3.2.4 Promote the well-being of children and young people and reduce the cost of sending children to school

Following responses from a substantial number of parents, learners, staff and school headteachers, the financial challenges of sending children to school is clearly highlighted. Every day, families face the costs of school uniform, school trips and the costs of dinner/break (secondary schools) and the findings of the questionnaires highlight this.

The schools have received a detailed analysis of the findings and a working group is about to meet to establish a Cost Friendly School Charter. This charter will include many recommendations for schools to follow to be recognised as a 'Cost Friendly' School. In addition, Gwynedd Secondary Schools have responded to an EBSA (Emotionally Based School Avoidance) Survey which has highlighted the increasing challenges within this field. This has led to the psychology team hosting a series of workshops for the designated EBSA person within schools on how to support and increase the coping and resilience skills of pupils who experience EBSA.

3.2.5 Extending opportunities for play and socialising for the county's children and young people

I am pleased to report that the Youth Service has now recruited an Engagement Coordinator to lead on developing young people's voice forums across the county to ensure that young people's input is an integral part of the Council's strategic decisions. We have presented the operational plan to the Education Management Team, as well as a group of councillors with the intention of presenting our plan with heads of departments across the council in the new year.

The work of mapping the county's youth provisions has been undertaken and will identify any gaps in provision in the education, employment, health and well-being

and leisure fields. Based on the findings of the engagement and mapping work, a report will be produced to highlight areas of success and areas requiring improvement.

The Youth Service Questionnaire has been shared with the schools, colleges, third sector organisations and partners. The Youth Service wants to better understand young people's experiences, opinion and needs to improve the support that we offer. This questionnaire will provide young people with an opportunity to openly share their ideas and opinion, helping us to draw up services which reflect what is truly important to them.

The Gwynedd Support Services Forum for Young People 11-25 years old was re-established this term to bring third sector organisations together to better identify and respond to young people's complex needs. By establishing a Support Services Forum for Young People 11-25 years old, the young people of Gwynedd are able to receive better integrated and purposeful support, nurturing their potential and enabling them to succeed.

3.2.6 Modernising and extending the immersion provision to teach Welsh to children

On 6 July 2021, the Cabinet approved a new vision for a modern Immersion Education System in Gwynedd. This new vision also includes a capital investment of £1.1 million from the Welsh Government for the purpose of establishing new immersion education sites in Bangor and Tywyn, as well as improving existing facilities at the Eifionydd site in Porthmadog. The work has already been completed on the Eifionydd and Bangor sites, and the new language immersion unit at the Tywyn Secondary School site has now been completed and is opening its doors to newcomers of the area in January 2025.

Following receiving confirmation of the success of the Business Case for the second phase of capital funding to the value of £1.1m, we will invest in the 3 primary immersion education sites located in Caernarfon, Pwllheli and Dolgellau. There is a comprehensive and detailed work programme to ensure the completion of the work on the 3 sites by the end of the financial year in March 2025. The unit in Llangybi is relocated into a purposeful cabin at the Ysgol Cymerau site in Pwllheli. Work will also take place to expand the immersion education provision in Dolgellau, as well as relocating the immersion provision within the Ysgol Maesincla site in Caernarfon.

The Welsh Government's Late Immersion revenue grant has also enabled us to modernise the immersion provision in our centres. The Aberwla immersion scheme

has now been developed and trialled at two of our units. This differential scheme which bridges the primary and the secondary will be operational in every immersion unit from January 2025 onwards. To accompany the scheme, the Aberwla innovative digital project has also been completed. This is a valuable educational resource to normalise the Welsh language on the virtual platform. Initial discussions have taken place between Cwmni Adnodd, Animated Technologies and the Authority's officers to consider the future of Aberwla and the possibility of creating a 'Work Board' version which will provide every child in Wales the access to use it.

3.2.7 Review the Gwynedd Education Language Policy

I am very pleased that we have been able to appoint Meirion Prys Jones as a freelance consultant to work with the Department to revisit the Education Language Policy. The engagement meetings with key stakeholders have taken place during the autumn term of 2024 and I look forward to hearing observations from these discussions, with the aim of presenting the findings to the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee early in the spring term of 2025.

3.2.8 Undertake an evaluation of the Immersion System to ensure that all education policies and services provided to children and young people in Gwynedd set a firm foundation for the Welsh language

The evaluation of the Immersion System is also currently underway - Bangor University Education Department won the tender to work alongside the Education Department on conducting this evaluation. Members of the University's research team have undertaken observations in the Immersion units and followed the learners in the mainstream. In addition, they have hosted focus groups with the Immersion System staff, a representation of teachers and headteachers in mainstream schools across the three regions within the county, as well as the learners. Once more, I am looking forward to receiving a verbal report on the findings of the evaluation before the end of February and then the full written report which will include recommendations for improvement at the end of March 2025. Again, the aim is to present a report on the findings and the recommendations to the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee in the spring term of 2025.

3.2.9 Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion (ALN&I)

Considering the challenges that so many young people face these days, I am extremely pleased that the ALN&I service has managed to reduce the number of days to wait for counselling service from 51 days to 21 days since the beginning of the educational year. There has been an increase in the number of primary learners being referred, and we are trying to respond to this demand by adapting counselling time for the

primary. We have also extended the type of provision offered. We are continuing to look at the capacity of our special schools and centres. Furthermore, during the summer holidays this year, work has been ongoing to adapt some classrooms in Ysgol Pendalar to ensure that sufficient capacity is available in the school for those learners who need access to a special school in Arfon.

The attendance field remains a concern for us and the levels have not returned to what they had been before the pandemic. The average attendance for the last academic year was 89.1% and up from 88% over the same period the previous year (Wales' average for 2023-24 is 89%, up from 88.5% last year). The average attendance for the academic year to date is 91.2% (Wales' average is 91.8%) and for the same time last year, Gwynedd's attendance was 91.3%. We acknowledge that this is not a significant increase and increasing the rates to the levels before the pandemic remains a priority. In recent months, work has been carried out with the data unit so that attendance percentages for specific groups are reported. Over the coming months, there will be a campaign to encourage change in behaviour towards attendance, as well as continuing with targeting work.

Another field which has received attention over the last year is an increase in specific and permanent exclusions as a result of challenging behaviours within our schools. During November/December 2023, a detailed survey was commissioned on the Inclusion Service and recommendations were presented on how to strengthen the provision. One of the main recommendations was the need to jointly develop a clear strategy with schools to support pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, as well as find suitable locations for provision outside the school, giving consideration to adopting a Pupil Referral Unit status which has also been brought to our attention by Estyn. This work is currently ongoing and on track to be operational by September 2025. I look forward to report on the progress in my next report.

3.2.10 The Department's day-to-day work

Over the past year, the Department has been working on designing a 10-year Education Strategy for Gwynedd. An initial draft of the strategy was submitted to the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee on 14 September 2023, and discussions also took place within the Headteachers Strategic Groups, and there have been more recent discussions with headteachers during informal sessions. I look forward to continuing with the engagement and the informal discussions on the content of the Strategy in the spring term, before consulting on it publicly and submitting it to the Cabinet.

The Sustainable Schools Challenge

Following the success of the bid to the Sustainable Schools Challenge, Welsh Government, it is a pleasure to report on the progress of the project which places the input of all stakeholders central to the vision of building an eco-friendly school and community facilities. Ysgol Bontnewydd learners, as well as the staff and members of the community, benefit from valuable experiences with the architects and construction consultants to present their ideas to the design process for this innovative building.

By now, all the cabins have arrived at the Ysgol Bontnewydd site and the work of creating two classrooms in the community centre has been completed. Over the next period, there will be an opportunity for all school learners in their turn to take part in activities with the contractors who will enrich their understanding and their appreciation of sustainable building. I am looking forward to visiting the site when the opportunity arises and to report on further progress of this very exciting project next time.

Catering

Since 1 September 2023, I am very proud that every primary age learner from Reception to Year 6 in Gwynedd is able to receive free school meals, a year ahead of the national timetable. Since September 2024, on average, 4,851 free school meals were provided on any given day, and this reflects progress compared to the figure reported on any given day during 2023-24. I am extremely proud of this achievement, and I am also eager for the Department to further promote the offer amongst children and families to encourage more families to take advantage of the offer.

4. Savings and Financial Position

The Department has two savings schemes in 2024/25 within the field of inclusion that are worth £41,000, and there is a risk that they might not be delivered. The field is currently undergoing a strategic review, and it is therefore premature to cut the resources available at this point, with the possibility of additional resources being needed. The Department is aware of the challenges in this field and, as a result, it would be difficult to implement the savings in the field currently. Consequently, the Education Department will find an alternative plan to address the sum of the cut.

With the exception of these schemes, current savings schemes to the value of £410,560 for 2024/25 have been scheduled, and all of them have been delivered or are on track to be delivered in a timely manner.

A neutral financial position was reported at the end of the 2023/24 financial year, following using £316k worth of departmental funds. By making use of the funds and also one-off underspending on other headings within the Department, we were able to remove the overspending on pupils' transport worth £1.5m, with this heading subject to strategic review to try to manage the progress in the spending. A bid has been accepted for 2024/25 for pupils' transport, with a permanent and temporary element, to enable the Department to identify opportunities to implement savings where possible. Furthermore, the heading is being monitored monthly to try to respond quickly to any anticipated increase in spending, with the situation improving as plans are implemented.

The Department's financial performance is reported upon in a separate item to this meeting of the Cabinet, with projections that the Department will underspend by the end of the 2024/25 financial year. This follows the department's efforts to cut spending where possible, as a result of the financial situation.

5. Views of the Statutory Officers

5.1 Chief Finance Officer

I am satisfied that the report is a fair reflection of the financial situation of the Education Department.

5.2 Monitoring Officer

No observations to add in relation to propriety.

CYNGOR GWYNEDD CABINET



Report for a meeting of Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet

Title of Item:	PERFORMANCE CHALLENGE AND SUPPORT REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE
Cabinet Member:	COUNCILLOR HUW WYN JONES
Contact Officer:	DEWI MORGAN, HEAD OF FINANCE DEPARTMENT
Date of meeting:	21 JANUARY 2025

1. Decision Sought

To accept and note the information in the report.

2. The reason why the Cabinet needs to make the decision:

In order to ensure effective performance management.

3. Introduction and Rationale

3.1 The purpose of this report is to update my fellow members on what has taken place in the areas within my remit as Cabinet Member for Finance. This report will outline the following:-

- What has been achieved as part of the priorities of the Cyngor Gwynedd Plan 2023-28
- Where are the performance measurements
- The latest in terms of savings and cuts schemes

3.2 All matters presented in this report have been the subject of a discussion and have been scrutinised by myself, as well as the Corporate Director, at a Performance Challenge and Support Meeting held on 19 December, where the Department's Management Team and service managers were in attendance.

3.3 I am very glad to note that the performance of the Finance Department has remained generally good over the past months. The Department has also made satisfactory progress on the relevant priority projects.

4. PROJECTS OF THE CYNGOR GWYNEDD PLAN 2023-2028 (Improvement Priorities)

4.1 The Finance Department leads on two priority projects in the 2023-28 Council Plan, namely:

- **Deliver Savings**
- **2023-28 Digital Plan**

4.2 I am very satisfied with the progress being made by the Department against these two projects, and more details on the progress against the milestones can be found in the Appendix.

5. PERFORMANCE

5.1 Below, I outline the main matters that have derived from the department's performance since the last progress report was submitted in October. The information does not refer to all services in the department, only to those we feel that need to be brought to your attention.

5.2 **IT Service - Support.** I am satisfied that the performance of this service has remained consistently good over the past months. As part of a cuts scheme, the service has lost one member of the team at the end of December 2024, and the need to reduce the opening hours of the help desk will need to be considered in order to deliver the cut in full.

Some of the current projects in the pipeline by the team are:

- Preparing for the transfer to Windows 11 (as Windows 10 support is ceasing)
- Migrating the Top Desk system (which manages calls and support) to the cloud
- Improving the Microsoft 365 provision, with a temporary resource located with the Information Service (Corporate Services Department).

In terms of reducing the opening hours of the help desk, there are no times that are busier than others - the morning tends to be a busy time when officers commence their working day; however, the end of the day can also be busy as officers who work off-site connect to the network.

In order to improve efficiency, a new module has been purchased for the Top Desk system, which will highlight any recurring problems/difficulties.

5.3 IT Service - Infrastructure. In terms of network availability, the performance up to the end of November was consistent with the previous period; however, we expect the performance for the next period to be lower, due to the periods of power-cuts following Storm Darragh.

Here are a few of the projects in the pipeline:

- Changes to the back-up system with new servers replacing the existing ones as they age.
- The work of migrating the phone system is in progress; it is anticipated that the connection between the two phone systems will be in place by 8-9 January, and the migration work can be commenced afterwards.
- Regular monitoring work by the cyber team, and Gwynedd is a lead authority in incorporating the CymruSOC (Cybersecurity Operations Centre for the public sector in Wales) standards. This area will receive considerable attention now and in the future.

I am pleased to see that the Service is collaborating with other departments and services in order to contribute towards improving the efficiency of those services. For example, collaborating with the Income Service on their invoicing system has saved 6 hours of staff time every week.

5.4 IT Service – Development. The Service has many projects in the pipeline – these are some examples:

- Residential home register so that a live report of the bed situation at the homes can be obtained.
- Use of Artificial Intelligence to assist the Education Department to identify any positive or critical correspondence about schools and transfer the Council's website to the cloud, thereby introducing a substantial improvement when searching for contents on the website.
- It is early days within the Service in terms of the use of Artificial Intelligence, and a sub-group of the Digital Plan has been given the task of identifying where use can be made of it.

The Council's main systems are now in the cloud (e.g. e-mails and iGwynedd), with any new developments tending to use the cloud. Benefits and problems derive from that; i.e., support is available from provider but things are outside of the Council's control if anything goes wrong.

I am very proud to report that the service has successfully sold a system that was designed in-house to another local authority, and there is potential to sell other systems to them also.

5.5 IT Service – Digital Learning Service. By now, over 16,800 devices have been shared to schools as part of the Government's plan to transform digital within the schools, with the Service providing support to these devices.

5.6 Investment and Treasury Management Service. The team is responsible for Gwynedd Pension Fund investments, as well as Cyngor Gwynedd treasury management.

The fund's investment performance was above the benchmark in the last quarter, with every asset category performing well, and interest rates higher than the Bank of England base rate.

5.7 Internal Audit Service. By the end of November, just under 30% of the audit plan had been completed. One of the main reasons for this was the requirement for the auditors to focus on completing work on behalf of the Shared Prosperity Fund, where the service receives income for this purpose. This income will allow the service to buy-in external expertise in some fields. Of course, monitoring the performance of Internal Audit in terms of the plan for Cyngor Gwynedd is covered in the Terms of Reference of the Governance and Audit Committee.

It was acknowledged that historically, the price for completing an audit of the community councils' accounts had been low, and I can reassure the Cabinet that the prices have increased over the past two years so that Cyngor Gwynedd does not subsidise this work. The price will increase again for 2025/26.

5.7 Insurance and Risk Management Service. The performance has been consistent with previous periods. I am pleased to report that two positive developments have been seen in the past months. An improvement was seen in the information received from the Highways, Engineering and YGC Department, which assists the Insurance and Risk Management Service to be able to deal with claims promptly. Secondly, following a recent meeting with one of the insurers, we are expecting definitive steps and an improvement in the service received, following a period where the support did not meet the expected standard.

5.8 Income Service. The balance of sundry debts over 6 months old at the end of November was £2,117,911, which was a substantial increase of £670,000 compared to the position at the end of September. Approximately £471,000 of this total includes the debts of the Health Board (£350,000) and invoices raised on individuals for their care (£121,000). Work will continue to urgently track the situation.

A recent development is the implementation of the Call Secure system to take payments over the phone. This system strengthens card security when customers pay over the phone; the new system is now fully operational. Currently, it is too early to obtain statistics from Galw Gwynedd to confirm whether the number of payments has reduced or increased; however, we will address this over the coming months.

5.9 Benefits Service. The performance of this service continues to be consistently good in comparison with previous periods; the average time taken to process a new benefits application for November is 16.92 days, which is an improvement on the same period in 2023/24, which was 18.40 days.

On the other hand, the time taken to process a change in circumstances notification during November was 5.87 days, which is two days longer than the same period in 2023/24, which was 3.82 days. I am satisfied that this increase has occurred as the Service has used resources to assist with an outreach project to pension-age residents in order to encourage them to apply for Pension Credit and thus increase their opportunity to obtain a Winter Fuel Payment from the Department of Work and Pensions, and that the number of days taken to process a change in circumstances notification continues to be acceptable.

5.10 Payroll Service. I am pleased to report that the Payroll Service implemented the pay agreement for 2024/25 for APT&C workers and teachers in the November payroll, promptly after the agreement. The adjustments were done smoothly and trouble-free.

The main risk to the Service at present is the future of the payroll system, as a new computer system needs to be purchased within the next 24 months, as the support for the current system is ending. We are currently considering the potential options.

I note that the number of errors has reduced since the beginning of the year, mainly for two reasons. Firstly, the Support Service has raised awareness amongst managers about the importance of providing correct and complete information and the Payroll Service is more strict in terms of the schedule for accepting changes, which means that officers do not rush to make the changes to individuals' salaries.

5.11 Taxation Service. The performance rate of Council Tax collections is lower than the previous periods, with the reduction partly attributed to the increase in council tax and ratepayers' ability to pay a percentage above inflation. A number of second homes were also seen (over 400 properties) returning from Non-domestic Rates. The Service commenced the recovery cycle later this year, but has now reached the usual point.

Currently, the Council's performance in terms of Council Tax collection rates is in the lowest quartile in Wales and work is continuing to identify the reason for this; but there is no doubt that there has been an increase in the number of Gwynedd residents who find it difficult to pay bills.

I have asked the Service to report to me on the time taken to respond to e-mails and telephone calls from now on.

5.12 Finance and Accounting Service. The work of reporting on the end of November review of the financial position is underway, reporting to the various committees in January. Five sets of accounts were completed within the timetable and this success means that the Council will be given priority by Audit Wales to audit the 2024/25 accounts sooner.

6. DEPARTMENTAL SAVINGS

6.1 The department has received a £371k savings target for the 2024/25 financial year, so far this year eight schemes to the value of £194k have already been realised and a further four schemes to the value of £139k are on track to be delivered in a timely manner by the end of the financial year. There is some risk in realising the one remaining scheme worth £38k.

In addition to the above, the department has three savings schemes to the value of £166k relating to 2023/24 which have not been realised. One of the schemes worth £102k has £64k relating to 2023/24 and £38k to 2024/25 (referred to above) and relates to *Increasing Income targets to be commensurate with work*. There has also been a delay on two schemes in the information technology field namely £72k on the *Information Technology Service Re-structuring* scheme and £30k on the *Microsoft's Licence Rationalisation* scheme.

STATUTORY OFFICERS' VIEWS

Monitoring Officer:

No comments to add from the perspective of propriety.

Head of Finance:

I have collaborated with the Cabinet Member to prepare this report, and I confirm the content.

2023-28 Cyngor Gwynedd Plan - Year 2 Actions

Gwynedd Effeithlon (An Efficient Gwynedd): Putting the people of Gwynedd first and treating them fairly and ensuring that the Council performs effectively and efficiently

Department	Project	What we want to achieve during the SECOND year of 2024-25 (milestones):	CONCISE update on the progress made with the milestones to date (note the date)	Has the milestone been completed / is it likely to be completed by the end of the financial year? (Yes / No)
Finance	Manage the impact of national budgetary cuts	1. Monitor that £5.6m worth of savings and cuts for 2024/25, which were approved by the Full Council on 07/03/24, as well as any savings yet to be realised, are being prioritised by the Departments to be realised during the financial year. https://democratiaeth.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/document/s/40348/Eitem%209%20-%20Atodiad%203%20-%20Arbedion.pdf?LLL=1	The situation by the review at the end of November 2024 is that savings worth over £41.7m have been delivered since April 2015, and from this figure, £1.9 million of this applies to the savings of the 2024/25 financial year. Nevertheless, a number of savings schemes across the Council have not been delivered.	Yes – the savings have been monitored but the full target has not been achieved.

		<p>2. Monitor that the Departments are prioritising the delivery of savings that have slipped from previous financial years.</p> <p>3. The Chief Executive, Director and the Head of Finance to meet every quarter to review the status of delivering all the Council's savings and cuts and consider the plans that have slipped in order to carry out an objective assessment of how realistic the expectation is for them to be delivered.</p> <p>4. Report to the Cabinet and to the Governance and Audit Committee on 10 October 2024 and 16 January 2025 on the status of realising all of the Council's savings and cuts plans.</p> <p>5. Collaborate with the Chief Executive and Directors and Heads of Department on the 2025/26 savings and cuts schemes, looking at alternative ways of delivering services. Delivering over £39 million of savings since 2015 [up to 2024/25] has meant that opportunities for efficiency savings have already been delivered.</p>	<p>During this financial year, we have been reporting to the Governance and Audit Committee on 10 October 2024 and to the Cabinet on 15 October 2024 on a savings position as a part of the financial review carried out at the end of August. An update report of the situation will be provided following the end of November review, which will be reported to committee in January 2025.</p> <p>We also reported to the Chief Executive and Directors during the year.</p> <p>This has taken place.</p> <p>After establishing the Medium Term Financial Plan Programme Board, as a part of the Board's work, the Finance Department has provided detailed information to plan ahead to look at the savings for 2025/26 and beyond.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>
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Finance	Digital Plan	<p>Activity planned for 2024/2025: The following plans are either self-financing from the Council's existing resources, or have received full support to implement them during the next two years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritising of projects from the 2023-2028 Cyngor Gwynedd Digital Plan based on the designation of financial support - Q1 2024/25 • Prepare permanent and occasional resources to implement the plan projects Q1 and Q2 • Cyber-security Resources (permanent) - Q2 • Microsoft365 Resources (occasional) - Q1 • Data science degree apprentices (three-year contract) - Q1 • Digital Transformation Trainee (three-year contract) - Q1 • Telephony officer (permanent) - Q2 • Research resource (two-year contract) - Q2 <p>These are the projects that will be implemented in 2024/25:</p>		
		<p>GWEI2 - support the vision of the "Working for the Future" programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Procure standard equipment for hot-desks ▪ Potential changes to the wide area network to address the changes to the office's shell <p>CC3 - redesign the Council's corporate website</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agree on a design ▪ Develop and test the changes ▪ Introduce the new design live 	<p>The development unit has completed a system to assign hot desks and collaborated with the Property Service to incorporate our new office designs into the system and infrastructure support to facilitate the movement of network points and wireless contact points is continuing.</p> <p>The Website Team have demonstrated the proposed changes at a meeting of the Digital Transformation Board on 8 January.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>No</p>

		<p>CC4 - develop and promote apGwynedd</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introduce a new function to map live routes of bus services <p>CC1 - enhance methods of communication, enquiry and submitting service requests</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create a specification of needs ▪ Input a multimedia connection solution on the website and for Siop Gwynedd/Galw Gwynedd <p>CC2 - improvements to the Council's telephone provision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Investigate the available solutions ▪ Create a specification of needs ▪ Procure a solution ▪ Migrate the current provision to the new provision ▪ Training 	<p>Attention to further developments to apGwynedd will be in place from late Q4 onwards and dependent on the results of CC3.</p> <p>There is reliance on the CC2 project for this work, and there will be peripheral activity to CC1 as part of the preparatory work for installation of the telephone system.</p> <p>This project is moving along at pace, but there is still a considerable way to go.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephony officers have received training and have qualified • The new phone system is operational, including the contact centre provision • Successfully integrated to the MS Teams platform • The WebEx app tested on mobile phones • Desk phones successfully connected • Order placed to supply desk phones (mainly for schools) • The types of phones ordered inherently run WebEx, which is the provision that will be introduced in Welsh on the back of this project • An order raised with BT (current provider) for work to merge the current system with the new system. This item is a current risk, due to the lack of cooperation from BT • A job description for a new business resource has been evaluated and will be going to the employment market in the new year 	<p>No</p> <p>No</p> <p>No</p>
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		<p>GSB1 - introduce Artificial Intelligence for transactional and routine activities.</p> <p>GSB2 - digitising and automating invoicing arrangements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create a team under the leadership of Finance ▪ Identify the current procedure ▪ Design a new procedure ▪ Commission development work <p>GSB8 - facilitate collaboration with partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An ongoing agenda without a deadline 	<p>Many projects are in progress, taking the opportunity to trial different solutions. One team is developing everything in-house, whilst another team uses Copilot studio products from Microsoft. Improving experiences and search results on the corporate website is the scope of the in-house provision, whilst the effort with Microsoft products targets correspondence.</p> <p>This project is on hold for a while until the output of the GSB5 project is available. A decision will be made based on decisions sought from the information shared from the report.</p> <p>This is an ongoing activity with the below being developments of a goal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration with GwE to bring the body to an end • Collaboration with Ambition North Wales on the establishment of the Corporate Joint Committee • Sale of an asset system to a neighbouring authority • Collaborating with partners across the north on setting up a care conference at Venue Cymru on 5th March 2025 	<p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>Yes</p>
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	<p>GSB5 - a review of the organisation's management systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prepare a specification of needs ▪ Procuring consultants to prepare a review ▪ Undertake the review ▪ Interpret the results and submit the findings ▪ Prepare the next steps <p>GWYD2 - service continuation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create a job description and employ a new security officer ▪ Establish an incident response plan ▪ Test the incident response plan ▪ Create an annual report on the resilience of our services <p>GSB7 - make the best use of the Microsoft365 platform</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prepare job descriptions and employ resources • Research functions and different tastes of Microsoft365 • Impact of the use of packages from a technical and information governance perspective • Administrate the use of the platform, reducing the burden of the platform's costs ▪ Implement the extended team to use the platform to its full potential ▪ Interpret the impact of the exercise ▪ Prepare a business case for permanent support 	<p>Socitm Advisory were commissioned as advisors to draw up a report on our options for organisation management systems, with the work now completed.</p> <p>Further in-house activity will analyse the options and draw up a business case on the grounds of the two main viable options; Full Organisation Management System (tier 2) or a series of Specific Business Systems (financial, procurement, payroll and human resources). Discussion with the Chief Executive on 15 January.</p> <p>Discussions on the cyber governance situation within the Council are progressing, and it is acknowledged that cyber is not just something for the IT Service alone, and that there should be whole-Council ownership of it. There are four specific fields to address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection from a cyber attack • Responding to a cyber attack • Living through a cyber attack • Recovery after a cyber attack <p>The information governance officer service has been established to look specifically at the implications of establishing some of the functions of the Microsoft365 environment. Technically, everything that has been included within our licences can be released, but we need to be cautious before doing this, and assess the impact of changes or introducing a new provision.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>No</p>
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		<p>GWYD1 - upgrade analogue lines to digital</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prioritise the central resource to carry on with the work already delivered (Phase 1) to identify analogue connections that need to be upgraded ▪ Move the project to Phase 2, identifying what connections need to continue and make arrangements to switch-off the connections that are not needed ▪ Identify alternative technology for the services that need to continue ▪ Collaborate with the departments so that they take ownership of the tasks and cost of migrating to the new provision <p>GWYD3 - upgrade the broadcasting provision in the Council Chambers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improvements to the visual broadcasting provision at Siambr Dafydd Orwig and Hywel Dda <p>GD2 - data charter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Data sub-group to create a data charter <p>GD4 - data reporting platform</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interpreting the needs ▪ Review the available options ▪ Procure a solution as a pilot ▪ Measure the impact of the pilot and prepare a business case to expand the provision 	<p>This task is making progress, with a number of lines removed. As a result, a number of lines continue, and a contact has been identified in every department to facilitate the task of identifying the status and provision of the contact.</p> <p>This has slipped and a new provider has been invited to advise on changes at the start of Q4.</p> <p>The first in a series of workshops led by the Basis company has been held at the end of November to draw up the Cyngor Gwynedd Data Charter.</p> <p>The corporate data team has attended 1:1 sessions with the Microsoft company to share information about the PowerBI reporting platform and Microsoft Fabric data platforms infrastructure for Q3.</p>	<p>No</p> <p>No</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p>
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		<p>GD6 - reporting on performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Data sub-group to collaborate with the Corporate Management Team to create recommendations to improve performance reporting reports <p>GSB6 - the internet of things</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prepare the business case for the Climate Board for additional resources ▪ Investigate cases of how the internet of things can assist Cyngor Gwynedd's efforts to reduce emissions ▪ Introduce a solution on the grounds of reducing our use of electricity and heating our offices <p>GWEI4 - promote Cyngor Gwynedd as a digital employer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prepare a business case for apprentices and trainees ▪ Data science apprentices ▪ Digital Transformation Trainee ▪ Prepare programmes to visit schools and promote Cyngor Gwynedd as a digital employer. 	<p>This project is already in progress and is being led by the Corporate Services Department.</p> <p>Several small projects are underway and we received an award for our pioneering work through the use of LoRaWAN sensors in the area of flooding.</p> <p>It has been announced that a business case for the creation of a regional LoRaWAN network in north Wales has been approved by the Board of Ambition North Wales. This infrastructure is at the core of the flourishing of the development of the internet of things and Council officers are at the forefront of their support for the business case.</p> <p>A business case and resource request will be submitted to the Climate Board in January and will be an enabler to undertake more projects in this area.</p> <p>Two data science degree apprentices were appointed in July and the two new members are settling well as part of the development team.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>Yes</p>
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FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

CYNGOR GWYNEDD CABINET

Date of discussion at the Cabinet	Items to be discussed	Cabinet Member
Quarter 4 2024/25 1 January – 31 March		
21 January 2025	Day Centres	Cllr Dilwyn Morgan
	Revenue Budget 2024/25 - End of November 2024 Review	Cllr Huw Wyn Jones
	2024/25 Capital Programme - End of November 2024 Review	Cllr Huw Wyn Jones
	Savings Overview - Progress Report on Realising Savings Schemes	Cllr Huw Wyn Jones
	Response Plan	Cllr Nia Jeffreys
	Winding-up of GwE	Cllr Nia Jeffreys
	Performance Report of the Cabinet Member for Education	Cllr Dewi Jones
	Performance Report of the Cabinet Member for Finance	Cllr Huw Wyn Jones
	Cabinet Forward Work Programme	Cllr Nia Jeffreys
11 February 2025	Local Energy Scheme	Cllr Nia Jeffreys
	Inclusion Service	Cllr Dewi Jones
	Felinwnda Catchment Area	Cllr Dewi Jones

Date of discussion at the Cabinet	Items to be discussed	Cabinet Member
	Modernising Education Report	Cllr Dewi Jones
	2025/26 Savings	Cllr Huw Wyn Jones
	2025/26 Budget	Cllr Huw Wyn Jones
	Charging for Care Policy	Cllr Dilwyn Morgan
	2023-28 Council Plan Review	Cllr Nia Jeffreys
	Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance: Managing the use of Dwellings as Holiday Accommodation	Cllr Craig ab Iago
	Local Development Plan	Cllr Craig ab Iago
	Housing Action Plan	Cllr Paul Rowlinson
	Performance Report of the Cabinet Member for Housing and Property	Cllr Paul Rowlinson
	Performance Report of the Cabinet Member for Economy	Cllr Medwyn Hughes
	Performance Report of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Support	Cllr Llio Elenid Owen
11 March 2025	Social Services Transport Policy	Cllr Dilwyn Morgan
	One-off Bids	Cllr Huw Wyn Jones
	Panel Assessment	Cllr Nia Jeffreys
	Remodelling Waste Collection Arrangements / Waste Strategy	Cllr Craig ab Iago
	Performance Report of the Cabinet Member for the Environment	Cllr Craig ab Iago

Date of discussion at the Cabinet	Items to be discussed	Cabinet Member
	Performance Report of the Cabinet Member for Children and Supporting Families	Cllr Menna Trenholme
	Performance Report of the Cabinet Member for Highways, Engineering and YGC	Cllr June Jones
Quarter 1 2025/26 1 April – 30 June		
8 April 2025	Llyn AONB	Cllr Craig ab Iago
	Reviewing the Climate and Nature Plan	Cllr Nia Jeffreys
Further dates not determined		