



Complete Agenda

Democratic Services
Council Offices
CAERNARFON
Gwynedd
LL55 1SH

Meeting

COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date and Time

10.30 am, THURSDAY, 12TH SEPTEMBER, 2024

This meeting will be webcast

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

NOTE: A briefing session will be held for members at 10:00am

Location

**Hybrid – Siambr Hywel Dda, Council Offices, Caernarfon LL55 1SH
and Virtually via Zoom**

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COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEMBERSHIP (18)

Plaid Cymru (12)

Councillors

Elwyn Edwards
Elin Hywel
Edgar Wyn Owen
Beca Roberts

Delyth Lloyd Griffiths
Kim Jones
Llio Elenid Owen
Rhys Tudur

Annwen Hughes
Linda Morgan
Arwyn Herald Roberts
Jina Gwyrfai

Independent (5)

Councillors

Robert Glyn Daniels
Peter Thomas
Gruffydd Williams

Elfed Powell Roberts
Rob Triggs

Liberal Democrats / Labour (1)

Councillor Stephen Churchman

Ex-officio Members

Vice-chair of the Council

A G E N D A

1. APOLOGIES

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

To receive any declaration of personal interest

3. URGENT ITEMS

To note any items that are a matter of urgency in the view of the Chairman for consideration.

4. MINUTES

4 - 10

The Chairman shall propose that the minutes of the meeting of this Committee, held on 16 May 2024 be signed as a true record.

5. PARKING FEES

11 - 24

To scrutinise developments within the Parking Service.

6. DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FIELD OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT

25 - 38

To provide an update on the developments in the field of public transport.

7. WASTE AND RECYCLING SERVICES

39 - 55

To receive an update on the work programme and the matters requiring attention in the Waste and Recycling services.

8. PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER (DOG CONTROL)

56 - 71

To receive an update on the Public Spaces Protection Order (Dog Control).

9. COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD PROGRAMME

72 - 73

To adopt an amended work programme for 2024/25.

COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE, 16 MAY 2024

Attendance:

COUNCILLORS:

Stephen Churchman, Robert Glyn Daniels, Elwyn Edwards, Delyth Lloyd Griffiths, Elin Hywel, Annwen Hughes, Jina Gwyrfai, Edgar Owen, Llio Elenid Owen, Beca Roberts, Arwyn Herald Roberts, Elfed Powell Roberts, Rob Triggs, Rhys Tudur and Gruffydd Williams.

Officers present:

Bethan Adams (Scrutiny Advisor), Rhodri Jones (Democracy Services Officer) and Geraint Owen (Corporate Director).

Present for item 7:

Councillor Dafydd Meurig (Cabinet Member for the Environment), Gareth Jones (Assistant Head of Environment Department) and Heledd Fflur Jones (Team Leader, Planning Policy Unit, Environment Department).

Present for item 8:

Councillor Berwyn Parry Jones (Cabinet Member for Highways, Engineering and YGC), and Meirion Williams (Assistant Head of Highways, Engineering and YGC).

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

RESOLVED to elect Councillor Annwen Hughes as Chair of the Committee for the year 2024/25.

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

RESOLVED to elect Councillor Llio Elenid Owen as Vice-chair of the Committee for the year 2024/25.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Kim Jones, Linda Morgan and Peter Thomas.

4. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

There were no declarations of personal interest.

5. URGENT ITEMS

None to note.

6. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee which took place on 18 April 2024, as a true record.

7. SUBMISSION OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT REPORT: NOTICE OF ARTICLE 4 DIRECTION ENGAGEMENT PERIOD

The report was presented by the Cabinet Member for the Environment, the Assistant Head of Environment Department and the Planning Policy Unit Team Leader.

Members were reminded that the Council needed to undertake a four-step process in its effort to introduce the Article 4 Direction within the Gwynedd Local Planning Authority Area. It was noted that the first step was to issue a Notice of the Justification Paper on the Introduction of the Article 4 Direction. It was reported that the second step of the process was to hold a public engagement period. It was explained that the consultation had been held in August 2023 for a six-week period and included questionnaires, corresponding with 52,000 houses and a bespoke questionnaire on the Council's website. The service was acknowledged for securing a consultation period that was double the statutory requirement. The Department was praised for attracting so many responses to the consultation, and encouraged to share the good practice of their experience with other Council departments as they undertook public consultations in the future. Attention was drawn to the fact that very few young people had responded to the consultation, and it was acknowledged that engaging young people to respond to consultations was a challenge that the Council faced.

It was reported that the Council had now reached the third stage in the process of introducing the direction as it considered the responses to the consultation period. It was confirmed that the service had received 3902 responses. It was explained that the Council had allocated its responses to representations submitted to the consultation into themes and sub-themes within the report. It was elaborated that no additional information had been found that justified not confirming the Article Direction based on an assessment of the responses to the representations that had been submitted following the public engagement period, consideration of the evidence contained in the Article 4 justification paper and further research undertaken in response to some of the representations submitted to the consultation.

Consideration was given to the Council's ability to implement the direction if it was introduced. It was considered whether one centralised method of implementation and enforcement would be effective in Gwynedd. It was noted that the Council did not currently have much control over matters relating to changing the use class of dwellings and therefore the importance of robust intervention was emphasised to protect the housing stock while also protecting communities and the housing needs seen in various communities across the County. Due to this, it was confirmed that the service had completed detailed research on suitable methods of establishing financial intervention, planning, registrations and licensing processes and it was confirmed that these required various procedures rather than one centralised system in order to deal with situations adequately. It was emphasised that the direction focused on the use of the property and any change of use, not its ownership and therefore individuals would not have to receive planning permission when buying houses.

It was recognised that the Council had not provided an economic impact assessment specifically on the loss of income from the secondary market to the hotel sector, people spending money in the shops and restrictions that provide people with business and employment opportunities. Despite this, it was confirmed that the Council had completed a thorough impact assessment on Equality Characteristics, the Welsh language and Socio-Economic Disadvantage. It was expanded that tourism policies and the Supplementary Planning Guidance provided clarity on several points for consideration such as providing a definition of what 'excess' means and shared considerations about the safeguarding of the Gwynedd community housing stock. In response to a query

regarding the perception among local mortgage providers that the introduction of the direction would complicate or prevent mortgage applications, officers confirmed that they had been in contact with mortgage providers a number of times over the past few months and they had been unable to provide evidence of how the direction would negatively affect the ability to approve mortgages. It was emphasised that this was not anticipated as an impediment to the approval of the direction and further work would be carried out on this matter before submitting the report to Cabinet.

In response to an enquiry as to whether the economic assessments were adequate and detailed enough given that there was no specific economic impact assessment, it was confirmed that the service received ongoing support from the Council's Legal Service to consider and resolve any risks that arose. As a consequence, the Council was regarded as managing emerging risks as effectively as possible. If the Committee wished, the solicitors could be asked for further confirmation of the risk in relation to an economic impact assessment. It was also noted that the current Planning Policy took holiday accommodation into account and protected the County's housing stock. Assurance was given that information about the impact of the Article 4 Direction would be included within the Supplementary Planning Guidance if approved, with the vision of adapting the policies in future to provide clarity on the implementation of Article 4 in detail. Assurance was given that thorough data would have been gathered before changing Council policies as well as a monitoring framework with specific indicators to assess the impact of the direction. It was reported that it was hoped that the direction would come into force on 1 September 2024 which would allow the Council time to gather appropriate data and statistics.

It was assured that the service was investigating the potential side-effects of introducing an article 4 direction within Gwynedd planning authority in order to be aware of additional considerations if the Cabinet approved the direction. It was hoped that this would ensure that the service was aware of any challenges as they arose in order to deal with them effectively.

Consideration was given to the financial challenges that faced the Council in the future including resources and officers to monitor and enforce the direction. It was elaborated on whether an arrangement of fees for breaching planning conditions could be revisited to ensure the service retained its hold on those funds. It was assured that officers did consider such matters and it was noted that they were pressing on the Welsh Government to reconsider the matter. It was acknowledged that the service needed additional support, referring to recruitment plans developed for officers to be in the roles by 1 September subject to Cabinet approval of the direction.

The importance of ensuring that a monitoring framework containing monitoring measures was in place was noted if the direction was introduced.

It was suggested that Councillors be provided with an information sheet containing information regarding the short-term and long-term changes resulting from the implementation of the direction. The importance of communicating to the public what implementing the direction would involve, was noted.

Neighbouring Local Authorities and Eryri National Park Authority were thanked for their close co-operation throughout the process thus far. It was confirmed that there was a desire for this relationship to continue into the future and ensure that good practice was shared to meet community needs effectively.

It was explained that the report would be submitted to the Cabinet with the observations of this Committee for the Cabinet to make a final decision on whether to introduce the

Article 4 direction or not. It was explained that the Council must act to publicise the decision to confirm the Article 4 Direction in accordance with the statutory requirements. It was elaborated that it was hoped to hold information sessions for elected members of the Council to share detailed information about the direction.

The members expressed their thanks for the report.

RESOLVED:

- (i) To accept the report and recommend to the Cabinet to confirm the Article 4 Direction.**
- (ii) To request that the Cabinet Member for the Environment conveys the observations submitted during the discussion to the Cabinet.**

8. ASH DIEBACK DISEASE

The report was presented by the Cabinet Member for Highways, Engineering and YGC, and the Assistant Head of the Department.

Two errors were cited in the Report, correcting that 1550 high-risk trees had been felled or pruned to date compared to the figure of 710 trees as set out in paragraph 3.4 of the Report. It was further noted that second-hand evidence suggested that ash dieback disease posed less risk as time went by, in relation to the information presented at the beginning of paragraph 5.1 of the Report.

It was explained that ash dieback disease had spread to Wales since a number of years, and it had been estimated that 80% of ash trees would be adversely affected by it. It was confirmed that a team had been established in the department to deal with the challenges it caused. It was emphasised that responding to the disease was a priority on the Council's corporate risk register. It was detailed that the Council had funded an initial inspection in 2020 to see the impact of the disease in the area on the Council's tree stock. It was acknowledged that there was a high risk as many trees had already been infected. As a result, a dedicated specialist team had been appointed to investigate the infection on the Council's roads and land.

It was reported that one of the main roles of the team was to carry out checks of the Council's tree stock on the County's roads and land. It was noted that the team carried out this work itself on occasion but also used specialist inspectors to ensure that all areas received inspections in a timely manner, emphasising that no external inspectors took action on infected trees. This was confirmed as the arrangement because the Department was responsible for approximately 3,000km of roads as well as other lands. It was explained in detail that the Department had developed a prioritisation system for carrying out inspections ensuring that the highest priority was given to ash trees that were near schools, roads, cemeteries, parks and similar locations. The team was noted as being responsible for dealing with the trees if inspections identified them as infected. It was confirmed that these would be put on the team's programme of work ensuring that the most serious cases were prioritised.

An update was shared that the Department had commissioned Gwynedd Consultancy to develop the use of drones to carry out inspections, as they could work at a much greater range than workers on foot. It was noted that results were currently very satisfactory and the hope was that this would be a method that would be used consistently to carry out tree inspections. It was elaborated that the team had been in contact with Coleg Glynllifon

and pupils there had been trained at the same time as the team on the new technological methods of inspecting for the infection.

It was emphasised that the department did not fell the trees once they were infected. It was reported that the team tried to save as much as possible by pruning them sufficiently so that they were safe for the public and did not affect species. It was ensured that new trees were planted for every tree the team cut down.

Assurance was given that more than 23,000 trees had now been inspected by the team and of those, 8,000 had been identified as high-risk trees due to the infection. It was elaborated that 1,550 of these had already received treatment and that 30 trees on school grounds had been found to be in extremely poor condition and immediately received intervention.

It was mentioned that the team also assisted other Council officers on tree-related matters. It was discussed that the number of cases increased as time went on and put pressure on the team. They added that the team collaborated with the Environment department and assisted it within its role with the Gwynedd Nature Partnership.

Second-hand evidence from other Local Authorities was considered to suggest that the disease declined in areas after a period of time. It was emphasised, however, that it was second-hand evidence and there was no evidence to support this view. It was noted that the situation in Gwynedd showed that the disease still existed here and that the team had work to do over a number of years to control it.

It was confirmed that landowners were responsible for maintaining trees growing on their land and had a duty of care to ensure they did not pose a threat to people or property. It was explained that the team had identified 700 high-risk trees originating from private land and had powers under the Highways Act 1980 and the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 to approach landowners to make dangerous trees safe. However, it was acknowledged that the team had not yet had the opportunity to approach these landowners due to inadequate resources.

It was acknowledged that the team relied on contractors to dispose of trees that had been felled due to the infection. It was considered that the trees would be better used as assets for the Council and considerations had been shared with partnerships to dry the wood so that it could be used in the future on various projects. However, it was confirmed that the expertise did not currently exist in the Council and any future developments in this area would be reported to the Committee.

It was explained that the Council had had a Tree Management Policy for a number of years but it had now become dated. It was confirmed that a working group had been established, with the Department and the team taking a leading role, to look into the policy and update it as necessary. It was hoped that the revised policy would be operational within the current year but it was stressed that the approval of other Council departments such as the Education and Housing and Property departments was necessary for it to be operational, as it affected their lands. It was elaborated that statutory requirements stipulated the need to inspect high-risk trees every two years and therefore it was recognised that this would be a challenge for the team. It was confirmed that the team would have further conversations with the Department to produce a bid for funding to assist with these requirements while a new policy was developed to identify the best way forward.

Reference was made to some of the other challenges facing the team. It was noted that communication with other local authorities was helpful but the team was not currently

receiving guidance from this as Cyngor Gwynedd was at the forefront in dealing with the disease. Reference was made to the challenges that could arise when inspecting trees such as that inspections can only be carried out between May and September annually as that was when trees were in leaf.

It was noted that the Department had initiated discussions with other Council departments to receive input on setting up a 'one-stop shop' where all tree queries were dealt with by one team. It was explained that this stemmed from the fact that departments' expertise about trees varied from one department to the next and therefore centralising that expertise would facilitate solutions to future enquiries. It was explained that initial discussions had taken place to date, and updates would be submitted to the Committee if the scheme went ahead.

It was emphasised that the disease was a major challenge within the County, as the inspections carried out by the team were those affecting the public or Council land, noting that there was a possibility that the disease could also be found on private land. At the end of the discussion, the Cabinet Member asked the Committee to consider scheduling an update on the issue in 2025-26.

The members expressed their thanks for the report.

RESOLVED

- (i) To accept the report, noting the observations made during the discussion.**
- (ii) That the Committee considers prioritising the matter for scrutiny during 2025/26.**

9. 2024/25 COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD PROGRAMME

The report was presented by the Scrutiny Advisor. Members were reminded that they had considered potential items to be scrutinised for 2024/25 at the Committee's annual workshop held on 29 April 2024. It was elaborated that members had been asked to respond to an on-line question in terms of their five main priorities from the list of possible items provided before the workshop. It was confirmed that the main priorities that emerged from the responses to the question were:

- 1 Waste Collection and Recycling Services
- 2 Developments in the field of Public Transport
- = New Local Development Plan - Strategic Options, Vision and Objectives
- = Climate and Nature Emergency Plan: Annual Report 2023/24
- 3 Introduce public charging points for electric vehicles
- = Planning and Welsh-speaking Communities

It was added that the Committee had a role in scrutinising the work of the Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board with an understanding that the work of the Board was scrutinised twice a year. It was concluded that a copy of the Board's Annual Report for 2023/24 should be shared with members but not formally scrutinised at a Committee meeting. It was confirmed that the item 'Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board Progress Report' had been scheduled for the January meeting.

It was noted that the 'Streetscene Service' item had been identified as an agenda item during 2025/26.

It was reminded that the scrutiny forward programme was a live programme which would be reviewed regularly during the year to ensure that the correct matters were addressed. It was stated that consideration was given to prioritising matters that would arise during the year, such as matters from performance challenge meetings and items on the Cabinet's forward programme.

RESOLVED

The Communities Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme for 2024/25 was adopted.

The meeting commenced at 10.40 a.m. and concluded at 12.50 p.m.

CHAIR

MEETING	Communities Scrutiny Committee
DATE	12/09/2024
TITLE	Parking Fees
REASON TO SCRUTINISE	Pre-scrutiny 1. To implement savings schemes 2. To consider options to address the shortfall between the parking income target and what is realised
AUTHOR	Gerwyn Jones, Assistant Head of Environment Department
CABINET MEMBER	Councillor Dafydd Meurig, Cabinet Member for the Environment

1. Why it needs scrutiny?

- 1.1 To enable the Parking Service to proceed with the realisation of two savings schemes approved by the Council's Cabinet in 2023/24.
- 1.2 To enable the Parking Service to proceed with realising two savings schemes requiring further consideration before reaching a final decision in 2024/25.
- 1.3 To inform a decision as a result of a significant shortfall in the Parking Service budget.

2. What exactly needs scrutiny?

Savings Schemes 2023/24

- 2.1 The following savings schemes have been approved by Cabinet in 2023/24:
 - Increasing Pen y Gwryd parking fees
 - Increasing the price of Annual Parking Permit and Local Parking Permits for car parks by £5 per annum.

Savings Schemes 2024/25

- 2.2 The following savings schemes require further consideration before reaching a final decision:
 - Extension of Parking Enforcement Hours at Council Short Stay Car Parks
 - Adjustment to Band 2 Long Stay Fee Structure

Budget Deficit

- 2.3 By scrutinising the matter, giving consideration to the financial context and the possible options in terms of increasing parking fees in general and the idea of an inflation-based annual increase, the Committee can make recommendations to the Cabinet for consideration before a decision is taken.

3. Summary of the Key Matters

- 3.1 It is inevitable for the Council to realise significant savings and cuts together with increasing the level of Council tax to address the severe financial deficit in the budgets.
- 3.2 Services across the Council submitted savings schemes that were equivalent to 20% of their budgets in a bid to alleviate the extremely challenging fiscal situation facing us.
- 3.3 Some of these schemes were accepted last year, and since then, all remaining schemes have formed the basis of internal discussions and workshops.

Savings Schemes 2023/24

- 3.4 Below are two of the schemes submitted by the Parking Service that have received approval from the Council's Cabinet in 2023/24 along with the first phase of the Council's savings and cuts proposals. However, and considering that the subject is contentious, we feel it appropriate to present the schemes before the Scrutiny Committee.

Title of Scheme	Estimated Total Additional Income
Increasing Pen y Gwryd parking fees	£40,000
Increasing the price of Annual and Local Car Park Permit by £5 per annum	£17,000
Total:	£57,000

Savings Schemes 2024/25

- 3.5 Below are two of the schemes submitted by the Parking Service that require further consideration and approval from Council Cabinet Members to enable the service to proceed with the arrangements and initiate the realisation of potential income increases:

Title of Scheme	Estimated Total Additional income
Adjustment to Band 2 Long Stay Fee Structure	£160,000
Extension of Parking Enforcement Hours at Council Short Stay Car Parks	£78,000
Total:	£238,000

Budget Deficit

- 3.6 Composite inflation is added on the parking fee income target at the start of each financial year. A significant increase in the target means that income generated no longer reaches the set target. As a result, it creates the impression of significant cost overspend in service budgets.
- 3.7 It is envisaged that parking fees would need to be increased by between 30% and 40% to meet an income target that needs to be addressed by parking fees from the Environment Department's pay and display car parks.
- 3.8 It is anticipated that increasing parking fees by 40% would be sufficient to address the expected inflation increase until the 2028-2029 financial year.

4. Background / Context

- 4.1 A Parking Task Group was established in July 2019 to undertake a comprehensive review of the operational parking strategy and consider its suitability and relevance to the needs of the Council and the needs of our communities today.
- 4.2 The Task Group consisted of four local members at the time, Councillor Angela Russell; Councillor Annwen Hughes; Councillor Kevin Morris Jones and Councillor Gethin Glyn Williams who worked constructively with Dafydd Wyn Williams, Head of the Environment Department and other officers from the Department.
- 4.3 The Council's parking policies and procedures had remained virtually the same since 2015 so we took the opportunity to recommend improvements that fitted in with the local economy and maximised the use of software that is now available. Reviewing the arrangements was also inevitable in terms of financial sustainability in terms of the authority's budgets to ensure that our practical management arrangements are effective and efficient.
- 4.4 A comprehensive report was submitted to the Communities Scrutiny Committee in December 2020 proposing appropriate recommendations for solving most of the issues. Subsequently, a final report was presented before the Cabinet Members in February 2021 with the following recommendations being approved:

1. Adopt a New Parking Fee Structure based on the following bands:

Band	Criteria
Band 1	Sub-regional Centre and the Urban Retail Centres (Providing the best range of services, employment opportunities and access to public transport)
Band 2	Retail and Local Service Centres (providing for the essential service needs of their own population and the nearby rural catchment areas, together with some employment and retail opportunities. They have a good degree of accessibility via public transport to the higher ranked Centres)
Band 3	Seasonal Car Parks

2. Review the parking offer over the Christmas period.
3. No changes to the Blue Badge Scheme.
4. No changes to the Resident Parking Scheme.
5. Strengthen the Parking Enforcement Team.

4.5 The recommendations listed above have been implemented.

Savings Schemes

4.6 As mentioned above, at the turn of 2023, services across the Council submitted savings schemes equivalent to 20% of their budgets in a bid to alleviate the extremely challenging fiscal situation that we face.

4.7 This report focuses on the following four schemes:

- **Increase Pen y Gwryd parking fees**
- **Increase the price of an Annual and Local Car Park Permit by £5 per annum**
- **Adjustment to Band 2 Long Stay Fee Structure**
- **Extension of Parking Enforcement Hours at Council Short Stay Car Parks**

Increase Pen y Gwryd parking fees

4.8 The Council has a pay and display parking provision in the Pen y Gwryd area. Unlike Council car parks, this parking provision is parallel to the highway and is therefore governed by an on-street parking order.

4.9 The same fees have existed at the location for years, at £2.00 for half a day and £4.00 for a full day. Looking at the remaining fees across the County, we feel it is reasonable and timely to increase the current fees to £4.00 for 6 hours and £8.00 for 12 hours.

4.10 We anticipate that this change could generate an additional **£40,000**(Gross).

4.11 We will of course look at the practical side of implementing the changes, including the introduction of alternative payment options that are in addition to the traditional cash-based payment method.

Increase the price of an Annual and Local Car Park Permit by £5 per annum

4.12 The Council offers an annual parking permit which enables permit-holders to park in any long-stay car park throughout the County with no time limit.

4.13 The cost of the annual parking permit increased from £125 to £140 a year in 2021 in line with a recommendation from the parking strategy review. Previously, prices had not increased since 2015.

4.14 The Council also offers a local parking permit for residents without a designated parking space to use a long-stay car park that is close to their homes. The cost of the local parking permit increased from £60 to £70 a year in 2021 as recommended by the parking strategy review. Previously, prices had not increased since 2015.

- 4.15 Implementing the price increase as included in corporate savings schemes would see the price of an Annual Parking Permit increase from **£140 to £145** (+3.6%) per annum and Local Parking Permit price of **£70 to £75** (+7%) per year.
- 4.16 We feel these permits would continue to offer value for money after the fee increase – see below for a breakdown based on the proposed new fees:

	Monthly Cost	Daily Cost
Annual Parking Permit	£12.08	£0.40
Local Parking Permit	£6.25	£0.21

Adjustment to Band 2 Long Stay Fee Structure

- 4.17 Council Cabinet Members approved a new parking fee structure in 2021 and presented an amendment to the recommendation by asking the Council to reduce the enforcement time of short-stay car parks. It was changed from 9:00 - 17:00 to 10:00 - 16:30.
- 4.18 The original recommendation to introduce enforcement hours of 9:00 – 17:00 had already been shortened from 8:00 – 18:00.
- 4.19 The final decision by Cabinet Members was to further shorten the hours to 10:00 - 16:30. The changes came into force in May 2021 with the understanding that the Environment Department would monitor income levels very closely.
- 4.20 Although it is very difficult to approximate the true financial impact of the arrangements, the parking trends before 10:00 and after 16:30 recommend that we lean towards the worst-case scenario in terms of projected income loss, namely **£78,000**.
- 4.21 We feel that we are now in a position where it is inevitable to propose extending the enforcement hours in band 1 and 2 short stay car parks to 9:00 – 17:00.

Extension of Parking Enforcement Hours at Council Short Stay Car Parks

- 4.22 Despite receiving approval and consulting in accordance with the procedure, several complaints were received regarding the new fees. The vast majority of the complaints referred to the cost to park in long-stay car parks within band 2 where a decision had been made to reduce the number of options to just two fees – £5 for 12 hours and £10 for 24 hours.
- 4.23 Concerns were raised that the new fees would not be affordable for local people nor would they meet the needs of people who would want to use the car parks for a period of less than 12 hours.

- 4.24 Full consideration was given to the feedback received after the new fees came into force. As a result, it was decided to introduce two new fees in addition to the two existing fees of £1 for 2 hours and £2 for 4 hours.
- 4.25 The new fee structure in its original form was expected to address the Council's budget. Of course, the figures were calculated based on the original enforcement hours and fees without taking into account the changes subsequently introduced.
- 4.26 Given that long-stay car parks are in question here, we now recommend to dispose of the fee of £1.00 for 2 hours and increase the fee for 4 hours from £2.00 to £2.50.
- 4.27 By using the same model as was previously used to estimate the income and by issuing a fee that is a minimum of £2.50, we envisage that this change could generate an additional **£160,000** (Gross).
- 4.28 A copy of the full proposed fees structure can be seen in **Appendix A**.

5. Budget Overspending

- 5.1 The Council's parking strategy, which includes our fee structure for the Council's pay and display car parks is reviewed every five years or so.
- 5.2 The income target that the service needs to meet through parking fees increases annually in line with inflation. Composite inflation is added to the parking fee income target at the start of each financial year.
- 5.3 We confirm that an income target for the current financial year 2024-25 includes inflation as well as the additional income totals stemming from the savings schemes proposed by the service.
- 5.4 Below is a summary of the income targets from 2021-22:

2021/22	£2,381,880
2022/23	£2,506,260
2023/24	£2,690,350
2024/25	£2,937,020

- 5.5 The total income generated by parking fees in the 2023-24 financial year was around £2.1 million which is approximately £590k short of the target.
- 5.6 Should the parking fee structure and the number of people using the car parks remain the same this year, it is predicted that the service would underperform by over £870,000. By approving the above saving schemes, it would be possible to reduce this total to £730,000.

- 5.7 To try to keep up with the annual income target, given that fees do not increase annually, the only way to do this is by increasing use. The surplus is now unrealistic in terms of how much increase in use would be needed to satisfy this, given that some of our busiest car parks will be full or close to full already during peak periods
- 5.8 The fact that the Council's parking fee structure has remained the same since 2021, and the income target that needs to be met continues to increase, means that the service's budgets appeared to be significantly overspending against the target.

6. The Way Forward

- 6.1 We are alert to the fact that we are facing very challenging times and it is inevitable that the Parking Service, like other services, must contribute towards closing the financial deficit in the Council's budgets.

Savings Schemes

- 6.2 In response to the Council's current financial situation, it is intended to proceed with the savings schemes approved by the Cabinet in 2023/24, namely 1) Increasing parking fees at Pen y Gwryd and 2) Increasing the price of the annual parking permit and the local parking permit to £5 a year.
- 6.3 We will present the savings schemes that require further consideration, namely 1) Adjustment to Band 2 Long Stay Fee Structure and 2) Extension of Parking Enforcement Hours at Council Short Stay Car Parks before Cabinet Members and seek approval in October 2024 in the hope of enabling the service to proceed with the arrangements and initiate the realisation of the increase in potential income.

Budget Overspending

- 6.4 Parking fees generate significant income for the Council. However, we must face the fact that the current fee structure is no longer suitable to meet the income target.
- 6.5 Based on the current fee structure and should the use of our car parks remain the same, we project that increasing all fees would generate the following income levels;

	Total Annual Additional Income (estimate)
1. Increase all fees by 30%	£600,000
2. Increase all fees by 40%	£800,000

- 6.6 To meet the income target set for this year, we anticipate we would need to increase all fees by between 30% and 40%.
- 6.7 **Appendix B** shows the existing fee structure with 30% and 40% additions.
- 6.8 **Appendix C** shows the proposed fee structure with 30% and 40% additions.
- 6.9 If expected inflation increases until the 2028-29 financial year is to be met, it is estimated that all fees would need to be increased by **40%**.

- 6.10 The following options provide a way to alleviate such a significant impact on our parking fee structure:
- Reduce the income target expected from parking fees.
 - Freeze the inflation rate between reviews so that the income target does not increase annually.
 - Increase parking fees annually rather than every 5 years (on average).
- 6.11 These options offer advantages in terms of assisting the service to meet a target that is more achievable. However, it is important to be alert to the fact that the knock-on effect of these options would require the Council to address the financial deficit in an alternative way.
- 6.12 The Parking Service regularly monitors how customers pay for parking, be that via pay and display machines or mobile app. This continuous monitoring allows us to understand customer preferences and trends, ensuring we can adapt our services to effectively meet their needs.
- 6.13 During 2023-24, 55% of all parking payments were made through the mobile phone App (Paybyphone) and the remaining 45% were made through the pay and display machines.
- 6.14 By evaluating the use of different payment methods, we can identify opportunities to streamline operations and reduce costs. For example, if there is a significant shift towards digital payments via an app, we could consider reducing the number of payment machines, resulting in savings on maintenance and operating costs. On the other hand, if payment machines continue to be popular, ensuring that they are up-to-date and easy to use would be essential.
- 6.15 Ultimately, our goal is to offer customers the best possible service in a way that is easy to use and cost-effective. By making informed decisions based on the data we collect, we can make the Parking Service more efficient, improve the customer experience, and save the Council money, contributing to the overall efficiency and sustainability of the service.

7. Consultation

- 7.1 We will submit a report before Cabinet Members in October 2024 and should they approve the associated recommendations and increased parking fees, we would hold a consultation period in accordance with the Local Authority Traffic Orders Regulations – Regulation 25 (England and Wales).
- 7.2 As part of the consultation period, it is essential for the Council to advertise the proposed changes in the local newspapers as well as display the information (including the new fees) at prominent sites in the car parks affected.

- 7.3 When the time comes to implement the changes, we can update the parking fees using the MI Office back-office system. There will be no fee associated with this.
- 7.4 We will try to re-use as many of the tariff signs as possible by buying bespoke stickers with the new fees rather than buying new signs. We would anticipate costs of around £1,000 for updating the signage.
- 7.5 We will promote the annual and local parking permits we offer at reasonable prices. Many residents and people who need to use our car parks on a daily basis take the opportunity to purchase a permit that provides value for money.

8. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

- 8.1 The proposal to increase parking fees should align with the Act's seven well-being goals:

A prosperous Wales: By carefully managing parking fees, the council can support economic growth by encouraging people to use local facilities and services, generating revenue that can be reinvested in infrastructure improvements.

A resilient Wales: Higher parking fees can encourage people to use public transport, reduce car use, and consequently reduce carbon emissions. This helps protect the environment and contributes to a more resilient community in the face of climate change.

A healthier Wales: It can encourage alternatives to car travel, such as walking, cycling, or using public transport, promoting exercise and reducing air pollution, contributing positively to public health.

A more equal Wales: The policy must consider the impact on different socio-economic groups. It should be ensured that any fee increases do not disproportionately affect low-income individuals and that affordable transport options are still available.

- 8.2 We will also promote the annual and local parking permits available at reasonable prices. Many residents and people who need to use our car parks on a daily basis take the opportunity to purchase a permit that provides value for money.

A Wales of cohesive communities: Properly managed parking policies can improve the vitality of town centres by reducing congestion and making areas more accessible and desirable to residents and visitors alike.

A globally responsible Wales: By taking steps to reduce reliance on cars, the council can contribute to global efforts to combat climate change, reflecting a commitment to global sustainability.

A Wales with a vibrant culture and a thriving Welsh language: Parking strategies should also consider their impact on access to cultural events and venues, ensuring that the Welsh language and Welsh culture are promoted and retained.

- 8.3 The proposal to increase parking fees should align with the five modes of working set out in the Act:

We **include** residents and service users by receiving feedback. This includes requests, complaints, comments and other input from the public, users and potential users of our car parks on an ongoing basis.

We are **working closely** with the other key stakeholders. This includes Other Local Authorities, North Wales Police, Eryri National Park, Welsh Government and Transport for Wales.

At an operational level we are working with 10 other Local Authorities in Wales as members of WPPP (Welsh Penalty Processing Partnership) to support the enforcement operation by dealing with challenges, charges and processing all penalty payment notices served.

- 8.4 At a strategic level we provide input into the development of the Regional Transport Plan through the Corporate Joint Committee.

We are looking to **prevent** problems from arising or worsening in the future by working closely with the other key stakeholders. The aim is to optimise the use of the car parks to facilitate access and support resilient communities and a successful and thriving local economy.

We are considering the **long-term** through the Regional Transport Plan and the work of the Corporate Joint Committee. This includes considering how parking strategy and parking fee structure can positively influence travel preferences and behaviours. A programme is in place to locate charging points for electric cars in our car parks. It is possible to pay for parking in car parks through an App which is a reflection in technical changes as well as how customers want to pay for parking. This mode of payment is increasingly popular.

- 8.5 The nature of the work involves a need to **integrate** with other public bodies including other Local Authorities, North Wales Police, Eryri National Park and the Welsh Government.

We consider the relationship between on-street and off-street parking provision as one integrated package with a view to meeting the different expectations and aspirations of stakeholders when these sometimes conflict.

- 8.6 The Scrutiny Committee should ensure that the decision to increase parking fees is made with a holistic view, considering not only the immediate financial benefits but also the long-term impacts on the well-being of current and future generations.

9. Impact on Equality Characteristics, the Welsh Language and the Socio-Economic Duty

9.1 The Service has already considered and recognises the need for impact assessments (e.g. Language and Equality), and assessments will be developed and used during the consultation process engaging with our communities on specific points and for updating the Well-being Assessments.

10. Next Steps

10.1 We will submit a report to the Council's Cabinet Members in October 2024.

Appendices

Appendix A: Copy of proposed fee structure (adjusting band 2)

Appendix B: Existing fee structure with 30% and 40% additions

Appendix C: Proposed fee structure with 30% and 40% additions

Appendix A

Proposed fees structure	
Band 2-Summer Long Stay	
Up to 4 Hrs	£2.50
Up to 12 Hrs	£5.00
Up to 24 Hrs	£10.00
Band 2-Winter Long Stay	
Up to 4 Hrs	£2.50
Up to 12 Hrs	£3.00
Up to 24 Hrs	£6.00

Proposed fees structure with 10% added	
Band 2-Summer Long Stay	
Up to 4 Hrs	£2.75
Up to 12 Hrs	£5.50
Up to 24 Hrs	£11.00
Band 2-Winter Long Stay	
Up to 4 Hrs	£2.75
Up to 12 Hrs	£3.30
Up to 24 Hrs	£6.60

Proposed fees structure with 20% added	
Band 2-Summer Long Stay	
Up to 4 Hrs	£3.00
Up to 12 Hrs	£6.00
Up to 24 Hrs	£12.00
Band 2-Winter Long Stay	
Up to 4 Hrs	£3.00
Up to 12 Hrs	£3.60
Up to 24 Hrs	£7.20

Proposed fees structure with 30% added	
Band 2-Summer Long Stay	
Up to 4 Hrs	£3.25
Up to 12 Hrs	£6.50
Up to 24 Hrs	£13.00
Band 2-Winter Long Stay	
Up to 4 Hrs	£3.25
Up to 12 Hrs	£3.90
Up to 24 Hrs	£7.80

Proposed fees structure with 40% added	
Band 2-Summer Long Stay	
Up to 4 Hrs	£3.50
Up to 12 Hrs	£7.00
Up to 24 Hrs	£14.00
Band 2-Winter Long Stay	
Up to 4 Hrs	£3.50
Up to 12 Hrs	£4.20
Up to 24 Hrs	£8.40

Appendix B

Existing fee structure

Fee structure with **30%** added

Fee structure with **40%** added

Band 1 Short Stay	
Up to 1 Hr	£1.00
Up to 2 Hrs	£2.00
Up to 3 Hrs	£3.00
Band 1 Long Stay	
Up to 4 Hrs	£2.00
Up to 8 Hrs	£3.00
Up to 12 Hrs	£4.00
Up to 24 Hrs	£5.00

Band 1 Short Stay	
Up to 1 Hr	£1.30
Up to 2 Hrs	£2.60
Up to 3 Hrs	£3.90
Band 1 Long Stay	
Up to 4 Hrs	£2.60
Up to 8 Hrs	£3.90
Up to 12 Hrs	£5.20
Up to 24 Hrs	£6.50

Band 1 Short Stay	
Up to 1 Hr	£1.40
Up to 2 Hrs	£2.80
Up to 3 Hrs	£4.20
Band 1 Long Stay	
Up to 4 Hrs	£2.80
Up to 8 Hrs	£4.20
Up to 12 Hrs	£5.60
Up to 24 Hrs	£7.00

Band 2-Summer Short Stay	
Up to 1 Hr	£1.00
Up to 2 Hrs	£2.00
Up to 3 Hrs	£3.00
Band 2-Winter Short Stay	
Up to 1 Hr	£1.00
Up to 2 Hrs	£2.00
Up to 3 Hrs	£3.00
Band 2-Summer Long Stay	
Up to 2 Hrs	£1.00
Up to 4 Hrs	£2.00
Up to 12 Hrs	£5.00
Up to 24 Hrs	£10.00
Band 2-Winter Long Stay	
Up to 2 Hrs	£1.00
Up to 4 Hrs	£2.00
Up to 12 Hrs	£3.00
Up to 24 Hrs	£6.00

Band 2-Summer Short Stay	
Up to 1 Hr	£1.30
Up to 2 Hrs	£2.60
Up to 3 Hrs	£3.90
Band 2-Winter Short Stay	
Up to 1 Hr	£1.30
Up to 2 Hrs	£2.60
Up to 3 Hrs	£3.90
Band 2-Summer Long Stay	
Up to 2 Hrs	£1.30
Up to 4 Hrs	£2.60
Up to 12 Hrs	£6.50
Up to 24 Hrs	£13.00
Band 2-Winter Long Stay	
Up to 2 Hrs	£1.30
Up to 4 Hrs	£2.60
Up to 12 Hrs	£3.90
Up to 24 Hrs	£7.80

Band 2-Summer Short Stay	
Up to 1 Hr	£1.40
Up to 2 Hrs	£2.80
Up to 3 Hrs	£4.20
Band 2-Winter Short Stay	
Up to 1 Hr	£1.40
Up to 2 Hrs	£2.80
Up to 3 Hrs	£4.20
Band 2-Summer Long Stay	
Up to 2 Hrs	£1.40
Up to 4 Hrs	£2.80
Up to 12 Hrs	£7.00
Up to 24 Hrs	£14.00
Band 2-Winter Long Stay	
Up to 2 Hrs	£1.40
Up to 4 Hrs	£2.80
Up to 12 Hrs	£4.20
Up to 24 Hrs	£8.40

Band 3 Long Stay	
Up to 6 Hrs	£3.00
Up to 12 Hrs	£4.00
Up to 24 Hrs	£5.00

Band 3 Long Stay	
Up to 6 Hrs	£3.90
Up to 12 Hrs	£5.20
Up to 24 Hrs	£6.50

Band 3 Long Stay	
Up to 6 Hrs	£4.20
Up to 12 Hrs	£5.60
Up to 24 Hrs	£7.00

Appendix C

Proposed fee structure

Band 1	Short stay	
Up to 1 Hr		£1.00
Up to 2 Hrs		£2.00
Up to 3 Hrs		£3.00
Band 1	Long Stay	
Up to 4 Hrs		£2.00
Up to 8 Hrs		£3.00
Up to 12 Hrs		£4.00
Up to 24 Hrs		£5.00

Proposed fee structure with
30% added

Band 1	Short stay	
Up to 1 Hr		£1.30
Up to 2 Hrs		£2.60
Up to 3 Hrs		£3.90
Band 1	Long Stay	
Up to 4 Hrs		£2.60
Up to 8 Hrs		£3.90
Up to 12 Hrs		£5.20
Up to 24 Hrs		£6.50

Proposed fee structure with
40% added

Band 1	Short stay	
Up to 1 Hr		£1.40
Up to 2 Hrs		£2.80
Up to 3 Hrs		£4.20
Band 1	Long Stay	
Up to 4 Hrs		£2.80
Up to 8 Hrs		£4.20
Up to 12 Hrs		£5.60
Up to 24 Hrs		£7.00

Band 2-Summer	Short stay	
Up to 1 Hr		£1.00
Up to 2 Hrs		£2.00
Up to 3 Hrs		£3.00
Band 2-Winter	Short stay	
Up to 1 Hr		£1.00
Up to 2 Hrs		£2.00
Up to 3 Hrs		£3.00
Band 2-Summer	Long Stay	
Up to 4 Hrs		£2.50
Up to 12 Hrs		£5.00
Up to 24 Hrs		£10.00
Band 2-Winter	Long Stay	
Up to 4 Hrs		£2.50
Up to 12 Hrs		£3.00
Up to 24 Hrs		£6.00

Band 2-Summer	Short stay	
Up to 1 Hr		£1.30
Up to 2 Hrs		£2.60
Up to 3 Hrs		£3.90
Band 2-Winter	Short stay	
Up to 1 Hr		£1.30
Up to 2 Hrs		£2.60
Up to 3 Hrs		£3.90
Band 2-Summer	Long Stay	
Up to 4 Hrs		£3.25
Up to 12 Hrs		£6.50
Up to 24 Hrs		£13.00
Band 2-Winter	Long Stay	
Up to 4 Hrs		£3.25
Up to 12 Hrs		£3.90
Up to 24 Hrs		£7.80

Band 2-Summer	Short stay	
Up to 1 Hr		£1.40
Up to 2 Hrs		£2.80
Up to 3 Hrs		£4.20
Band 2-Winter	Short stay	
Up to 1 Hr		£1.40
Up to 2 Hrs		£2.80
Up to 3 Hrs		£4.20
Band 2-Summer	Long Stay	
Up to 4 Hrs		£3.50
Up to 12 Hrs		£7.00
Up to 24 Hrs		£14.00
Band 2-Winter	Long Stay	
Up to 4 Hrs		£3.50
Up to 12 Hrs		£4.20
Up to 24 Hrs		£8.40

Band 3	Long Stay	
Up to 6 Hrs		£3.00
Up to 12 Hrs		£4.00
Up to 24 Hrs		£5.00

Band 3	Long Stay	
Up to 6 Hrs		£3.90
Up to 12 Hrs		£5.20
Up to 24 Hrs		£6.50

Band 3	Long Stay	
Up to 6 Hrs		£4.20
Up to 12 Hrs		£5.60
Up to 24 Hrs		£7.00

MEETING	Communities Scrutiny Committee
DATE	12/09/2024
TITLE	Developments in the field of Public Transport
REASON TO SCRUTINISE	The Council Plan 2023-28 - A Green Gwynedd
AUTHOR	Gerwyn Jones, Assistant Head of Environment Department
CABINET MEMBER	Councillor Dafydd Meurig, Cabinet Member for the Environment

1. Background and Context

1.1 An update on developments in the field of Public Transport was provided at the Committee meeting on 13 July 2023 and before that on 15 September 2022.

- Report submitted to the Communities Scrutiny Committee on 13 July 2023
[Report Update - Developments in public transport.pdf \(llyw.cymru\)](#)

- Report submitted to the Communities Scrutiny Committee on 15 September 2022
[Report- Developments within the public transport sector.pdf \(llyw.cymru\)](#)

1.2 This report:

- Develops on the previous reports providing an update on the cross-county review of the bus network that Cyngor Gwynedd is responsible for which has now been completed. This includes an explanation of the bus network in Gwynedd and the arrangements that underpin and maintain this along with the strategic link with the Council's Plan 2023-28.
- Responds to the issues raised by the Committee including the additional questions.

2. Gwynedd Bus Network

2.1 As with other areas, the arrangements that maintain the public bus network in Gwynedd are complex.

2.2 There is no single body, company, organisation or authority with full control of the network.

2.3 Services are provided:

- a. directly on a commercial basis by companies
- b. by agreement (De minimis or by procurement) to Cyngor Gwynedd
- c. by agreement (De minimis or by procurement) to Transport for Wales
- d. combination of a.-c.

- 2.4 Profile a.-d. can and will change over time. This is very evident at present as there is so much volatility and various factors influencing and affecting the industry across Wales.
- 2.5 The arrangements that carry out specific journeys, which form part of a wider service, can be different.
- 2.6 While there will be shared principles, this is not always the case with the priorities and motives of the key stakeholders.
- 2.7 The level of influence one stakeholder has over another/others ranges from zero to substantial depending on the specific arrangements in place.
- 2.8 Logistics, technical and legislative constraints and resource availability influence the level of provision.
- 2.9 There are 7 different existing models in terms of how bus services are delivered and maintained in Gwynedd.

Model	Type of Service	Arrangements
1	Local Bus Service: Commercial	Provided by companies on the basis that the service is commercially viable.
2	Local Bus Service: Deminimis	The majority of journeys are provided by companies on the basis that the service is commercially viable but receive contract for certain journeys.
3	TrawsCymru	Part of the TrawsCymru network. Under contract to Transport for Wales on behalf of the Welsh Government.
4	TrawsCymru	Part of the TrawsCymru network. Under contract to Cyngor Gwynedd. The Welsh Government has paid for the electric buses and charging infrastructure.
5	Fflecsi	Part of the wider Transport for Wales fflecsi scheme. Transport for Wales provides the bus.
6	Fflecsi	Part of the wider Transport for Wales fflecsi scheme. Under contract to Cyngor Gwynedd. Transport for Wales provides the buses.
7	Local Bus Service: Agreement by Procurement	Under contract to Cyngor Gwynedd. The Council sets the specifications for the level of service etc.

3. Council Plan 2023-28

3.1 As part of A Green Gwynedd priority in the Council Plan 2023-28, the following has been identified as one ambition:

- A public transport network that meets the various needs of the communities of Gwynedd.

3.2 With the following project a means to achieving this:

- We will be reviewing our existing public transport provision with the aim of developing a public transport network that will be convenient, dependable and reasonably priced to enable Gwynedd residents to travel with ease every day of the week.
- As a part of this plan, we will also introduce new electric buses.

3.3 The following provides an update on the project:

3.3.1 Cyngor Gwynedd, through close collaboration with Transport for Wales, has been reviewing the public bus network in Gwynedd. This has been done on an area-by-area basis.

3.3.2 New services have started in the areas of:

- Caernarfon and Dyffryn Nantlle (July 2023)
- Meirionnydd (February 2024)
- Bangor and Dyffryn Ogwen (June 2024)

3.3.3 These contracts are set on a five-year basis with an option for up to two additional years.

3.3.4 We went out to tender in the Dwyfor area in April 2024 - unfortunately, we could not award the tenders due to:

- A lack of interest and competition in providing the level of service introduced to the market.
- The tenders received did not meet the needs of the specifications.
- The tenders submitted were significantly higher than the current prices despite requiring the same level of resource but deployed in alternative ways.
- The prices received through the purchasing process were significantly higher compared to costs seen in other areas and therefore unaffordable.

3.3.5 In light of the above reasons, the current services had to be re-tendered in exactly the same way as the previous ones for a two-year period with an option of + 1 + 1 year.

3.3.6 The T22 service started on 12 February 2024 using 4 electric buses. The new service operates between Blaenau Ffestiniog, Porthmadog and Caernarfon. The initial use of the service is elaborated below (4.12).

4. Matters to be Scrutinised

What is the situation regarding public use of public transport services?

4.1 See below information on the number of journeys in the areas where we have tendered public buses compared to the previous year. These give an indication of usage but do not reflect the network as a whole as we do not receive the data for commercial services.

4.2 Here is the data comparison of 2022/2023 v 2023/2024

Service	2022/23 Journeys	2023/24 Journeys	Comparison
Caernarfon + Dyffryn Nantlle Network	284,671	312,043	+10% , namely an increase of 27,372 journeys
Cambrian Coast G23 Network (November to March)	25,638	27,788	+8% , namely an increase of 2,150 journeys
Sherpa'r Wyddfa	399,086	511,194	+28% , namely an increase of 112,108 journeys
Gwynedd Network as a whole	1,752,434	1,900,867	+8% , namely an increase of 148,433 journeys

4.3 The following shows journey data on TrawsCymru services that are commissioned and managed by Transport for Wales on behalf of the Welsh Government but are a key part of the bus network in Gwynedd.

T2 Bangor – Aberystwyth

T3 Abermaw - Wreccsam

T10 Bangor – Corwen

	Q1			Q2			Q3			Q4			Total	
	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23		
T2	21878	23788	23920	26042	27290	27254	25907	25500	22495	22886	24516	27041	298517	
T3	13355	14782	15719	17062	16051	17612	15826	14708	12584	13337	13789	14603	179428	
T10	1706	1733	2101	2137	2395	1781	3054	2733	2501	2643	3201	3225	29210	
	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24		
T2	25814	29374	29562	28881	28769	30118	29446	29395	24516	24100	25238	27955	333168	12%
T3	14783	17655	17589	17288	16166	17253	14291	13189	12508	11723	13284	14846	180575	1%
T10	3885	4498	4324	4691	5241	4609	4048	2653	2984	3231	3435	4565	48164	65%

Has the review managed to respond to the requirements of communities?

4.4 The intention of the review was to:

- Optimise resources to maximize attractive travel opportunities for the public. This includes potential as well as existing customers in an effort to make the services environmentally and financially viable and sustainable.
- Have a clear and transparent system in terms of how the services are maintained. This is vital and necessary in the current financial climate and we also need to ensure fairness, an element of competition and compliance with procurement processes relating to significant expenditure of public funds.

4.5 In the areas where the output of the review has been implemented, we have:

- Introduced standard timetables that are easy to understand and remember.
- Introduced a higher service frequency on some routes.
- Introduced a standard and attractive ticket price based on distance.
- Seen better coordination of services in hubs which allows for better integration and connectivity between services and therefore facilitates travelling farther as well as local travel.
- Introduced alternative provision to historical/traditional services where usage was low or very low.

4.6 On the whole, this has resulted in positive feedback and an increase in passenger numbers which bodes well for the viability and sustainability of the services in moving forward.

4.7 This is in a climate where bus passenger numbers across Wales have been steady or declining. In other areas, rationalisation and cuts in bus service levels have already been implemented and it is likely that more of this will be seen in the short to medium term.

4.8 Unfortunately, it will never be possible to meet everyone's travel needs and expectations. To be financially and environmentally sustainable, a critical number of customers are required to travel on the buses regularly and continuously. Buses will not be able to meet individual needs or where numbers are small or minimal.

4.9 The passenger figures are encouraging and support the view that the review has been a success. Another measure of success is the fact that funding has been granted to support and maintain the new network based on the collaborative approach that underpinned the review.

How successful is the use of electric buses?

4.10 The T22 service started on 12 February 2024 using 4 electric buses. The service operates between Blaenau Ffestiniog and Porthmadog every hour and between Porthmadog and Caernarfon every 2 hours Monday to Saturday. There is a Sunday service between Blaenau Ffestiniog and Porthmadog only.

Use of the service

Month	Number of passengers
February 2024	7,680 from 12 February 2024
March 2024	13,135
April 2024	13,558
May 2024	14,887
June 2024	15,368

- 4.11 As can be seen, passenger numbers are increasing on a monthly basis, with a number of passengers travelling for the first time since the electric buses started running.
- 4.12 The feedback from the provider of using the electric buses has been positive and encouraging from an operational point of view.
- 4.13 While electric buses are better for the environment it is unlikely that this in itself has a significant influence on usage. This will be more directly influenced by other factors such as the level of service including frequency, route, days and hours of operation and the cost of travel.
- 4.14 During 2024, Transport for Wales has introduced new diesel buses on the T2 and T3 TrawsCymru routes operating in Gwynedd.

Opportunities and challenges in the field.

- 4.15 Changes in the legislation regulating the arrangements for bus services in Wales will provide opportunities to review the provision of bus services here. It is hoped that this will lead to optimising resources by avoiding duplication, improved co-ordination of the network on a holistic basis by putting passengers at the centre of how the system is designed and delivered. This approach was at the core of the recent review into the bus network in Gwynedd.
- 4.16 Undoubtedly, the biggest challenge in the field are the complexities and financial risks associated with operating the bus network. There are a number of funding streams that are confirmed on a year-on-year basis, contributing to the instability, concern and risk and making it difficult to plan ahead with confidence.
- 4.17 Currently, a number of income streams provide a financial foundation for local bus services, which include:
- Ticket Boxes
 - Payment for the transport of eligible learners
 - Subsidy payments for tendered contracts and/or de-minimis arrangements
 - Live Kilometre Payments of the Bus Service Support Grant
 - Reimbursements for the Mandatory Concessionary Travel Scheme

- 4.18 The profile and value of the above will vary, possibly significantly, between operators and routes. Therefore, the complexity in how services are funded is a difficult issue to analyse in an objective, meaningful and useful way, as the profile of income streams can vary significantly.
- 4.19 Officers from the Integrated Transport Unit are in ongoing contact with peers in Transport for Wales, the Welsh Government and other Local Authorities with a view to securing the financial support from different streams needed to maintain the network. This has been instrumental in securing the additional funding that has been needed to maintain the existing network as a result of the cross-county review.
- 4.20 Due to COVID, significant funding was set aside by the Welsh Government to sustain and support the bus industry in Wales through those difficult and challenging times. This was through various grants that were reviewed and modified over the period. This is now included as part of a Bus Network Grant.
- 4.21 There are likely to be further changes to how the Welsh Government funding is to support bus provision in Wales in the coming years. It is hoped that the arrangements will be rationalised and become clearer with legislative and structural changes. With this, maintaining the network and a transformed level of provision will be the priority in the short to medium term in Gwynedd.
- 4.22 There are other challenges and risks that include the viability and resilience of the local provider market. It has been, and continues to be, a challenging and volatile time for the providers and the market in general with several factors contributing to this including:
- lack of qualified and experienced Public Service Vehicle (PSV) bus drivers.
 - capacity problems that limit the training and examination of new drivers.
 - higher and unpredictable operating costs which include those related to fuel.
 - changes to support mechanisms and funding.
 - uncertainty about future travel patterns, ticket box usage and income.
 - changes in relation to governmental roles, interventions and responsibilities.
 - disruption to supply chains affecting fuel, vehicle supply and parts.
 - review business models explaining real operational income and costs.
- 4.23 Several companies have left the industry in recent years across the country. If the local market is unable to meet needs, it may be necessary to look at other models of service delivery including on a last resort operator basis.
- 4.24 There are financial, legal, reputational, economic and social risks associated with the provision of local bus services.

Regional and national developments and the impact of the developments on Gwynedd.

- 4.25 The Regional Joint Corporate Committee is being established and this includes work to establish a Strategic Transport sub-committee.
- 4.26 Work is ongoing to develop a Regional Transport Plan for North Wales. The Plan will support local partners to work at a strategic level to take the objectives set out in Llwybr Newydd - the National Transport Plan for Wales - and achieve them in a way that is tailored to their context. It will ensure that services meet the needs of the people and communities they serve. The Welsh Government's Metro programmes are central to the vision of an accessible, sustainable, and efficient transport system, set out in Llwybr Newydd.
- 4.27 A review of the legislation applying to bus service provision in Wales is underway. In March 2022, the Welsh Government published its White Paper **One network, one timetable, one ticket: planning buses as a public service for Wales** ([One network, one timetable, one ticket: planning buses as a public service for Wales \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES](#)) which sets out its proposals to transform bus services in Wales. The Welsh Government's aspiration is to move towards a franchise model where it will be possible to take a more holistic overview and greater control over the network from the public sector. This is likely to apply to Gwynedd when the current agreements expire.
- 4.28 The final report of the North Wales Transport Commission ([North Wales Transport Commission: final report | GOV.WALES](#)) was published in December 2023. This includes an overview, on a regional basis, of the situation with buses and makes recommendations for improvements.
- 4.29 There will be a need to be aware and respond positively to changes in the funding sources that underpin the bus network in Gwynedd as this is vital to maintaining them. This applies regardless of the basis upon which the services are provided as they all offer travel opportunities for Gwynedd residents.

5. Additional Questions

How can Elected Members support the department as it deals with changes to public transport and propose ideas to ensure a service where there are existing gaps?

- 5.1 As is already happening, ongoing communication with the Integrated Transportation Unit.

What are the Service's arrangements to communicate changes to bus services with local councillors?

- 5.2 Integrated Transport Unit staff look to communicate and update local stakeholders including Councillors as soon as possible. This is clearly in everyone's interest and benefit. This is also in the context that the Unit is not responsible for the network as a whole and with this reacting and sharing information about changes where others have made decisions and/or are leading.

- 5.3 We work closely with Transport for Wales to share information about the services they provide, are responsible for have an interest in.
- 5.4 Information about changes is updated on the Council's webpages: [Bus timetables \(llyw.cymru\)](#) and information is shared on the Council's social media accounts, and information is also posted about any significant changes on the Members' Intranet.

How long is there between awarding a contract and changes to bus services coming into effect? Is it possible to ensure a sufficient period before implementing the change to give users time to familiarise themselves with the change?

- 5.5 This can depend on what has led to the procurement process. If this is programmed, then the period tends to be more extended while this is shorter when the process has commenced in reaction to decisions by others.
- 5.6 Providers, regardless of the basis on which the service is provided, need to register any bus service with the Traffic Commissioner and there are protocols, commitments and expectations associated with this. Generally, providers need to give the Traffic Commissioner 56 days' notice before changing, starting or ending a service.
- 5.7 Procurement processes can be complex and there is a lot of work and considerations going on in the background that can only happen during different stages of the process. This means that it is not always possible to offer the level of notice that anyone would want before changes are introduced.
- 5.8 As far as possible, Integrated Transport Unit staff work hard to put the operational and administrative arrangements in place and then provide the information about any changes with key stakeholders which include the public and Councillors once these have been confirmed.

How is a bus route planned and what considerations are in place to ensure that the route is as suitable as possible for communities?

- 5.9 This is dependent on a number of factors. Firstly, on what basis the service is provided, i.e., commercially, partly commercial or commissioned?
- 5.10 As general principles, the intention will be to optimise resources, both in vehicle and driver terms, to maximise usage providing services that are attractive. This can mean and include rationalising along a main route without serving all communities to preserve reasonable and attractive travel time for the majority. These considerations and principles have informed and guided the approach to the recent review.

How do you collaborate with providers?

- 5.11 Staff at the Integrated Transport Unit are in continuous contact with the providers. The approach is to try to maintain a healthy relationship for the benefit of passengers. This is in the context that our priorities and objectives will not always be aligned. There are a variety of reasons for this, which include the Council takes an overview of the network as a whole when, quite understandably, the providers' focus tends to be on their own operation.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 The arrangements and funding streams that maintain the bus network are complex. There are several different factors that can influence the situation from a cost perspective and the type and level of service that can be offered.
- 6.2 For most stakeholders, and passengers in particular, they will not be aware or much concerned about the basis on which a bus service is provided. What is important to them is that there is a bus that meets the needs, if not always their wishes, desires and expectations.
- 6.3 There are clear risks to the Council in this regard because while other stakeholders may to some extent turn their backs and walk away there will be an expectation that the Council somehow maintains the provision. Often when changes occur, whatever the basis or the cause may be, stakeholders tend to turn towards the local authority for responses and solutions.
- 6.4 It has been an ongoing challenging time for the bus industry across Wales and there have been a number of reasons for this. The situation has reached a point in some areas where it is not necessarily a lack of budgets that has led to rationalisation and a reduction in the number of travel opportunities but rather, that the local market cannot or does not want to offer the provision. The level of provision, even with financial support, reflects what the providers can and want to provide rather than what the local authority would wish to see.
- 6.5 The Council has undertaken proactive work, in conjunction with Transport for Wales, to review and lay the foundation for a revamped network. This is recognised as good practice and the approach the Welsh Government wants to see in moving towards a public bus system that is maintained and delivered on a franchise basis. It is assumed that the next comprehensive review of the bus network following this period will be done on a franchise basis, which will reflect a change in legislation and the role and responsibilities of local authorities, Transport for Wales and the Joint Corporate Committees.

- 6.6 This work has resulted in benefits for passengers by providing more attractive, consistent and appropriate services to reflect the needs in different areas of Gwynedd. The work has also maximised resources within the system through improved coherence of services which includes integration and interface between local provision and TrawsCymru services. Despite this, there has been a significant increase in costs associated with the provision of public buses and the financial situation maintaining networks is complex and unpredictable.
- 6.7 With this, the Council will need to be aware of this and consider options to respond to a variety of scenarios that are often beyond our direct control. These include decisions made by commercial companies, changes in passenger numbers, changes in streams, Welsh Government grant amounts and allocations.
- 6.8 In an increasingly challenging financial climate for the Council, it will be necessary to consider how much funding the Council wants and can contribute to maintaining the network. Should it be necessary to rationalise and reduce services in the short-term to reflect the financial situation, then this would pose risks in terms of potential challenges for the cancellation of contracts, the impact of reducing travel opportunities on Gwynedd residents and that it is contrary to many of the strategic ambitions and objectives on a national (Llwybr Newydd - Transport Strategy for Wales), regional (North Wales Transport Commission, Regional Transport Plan) and local (Gwynedd Plan 2023-28, Climate and Nature Emergency Plan) level.
- 6.9 There are examples across Wales where the level of bus service and travel opportunities have been reduced, rationalised and in some cases lost altogether and this includes traditional bus services and those such as the Bwcabus/Flexi in south-west Wales.
- 6.10 The difficult reality is that to maintain the same, or similar level, of bus travel opportunities, it is going to cost more at a time of financial squeeze, challenge and continuous reduction in budgets in general and specifically within the transport field. It is a very volatile climate with influential factors changing rapidly and continuously.

7. Consultation

- 7.1 Contact, consultation and engagement with key internal and external stakeholders takes place on an ongoing basis. This includes the public, colleagues in other departments, politicians, providers, other local authorities, the Welsh Government and Transport for Wales.
- 7.2 We seek to respond positively to the feedback and input received when there is an opportunity and ability to do this. Examples of this have been achieved as part of the recent review.
- 7.3 It can be difficult to consult intelligently and purposefully on some aspects of bus provision. Inevitably when changes are mentioned, either designed and planned or on a reactive basis, it can be difficult to reach a consensus about what and who gets priority. Therefore, it is often necessary to try to find a compromise.

8. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

- 8.1 We **include** residents and service users by receiving feedback. This includes requests, complaints, comments and other input from the public, users and potential service users on an ongoing basis.
- 8.2 A public transport system that is affordable, viable and environmentally sustainable relies on a critical number using the services on an ongoing basis. With this in mind, we look to respond positively to any contact by providing the most attractive level of services possible with the resource available accepting that it will not be possible to please everyone. This is especially true where demand is low or very low. This is in the context that the Council is not solely responsible or in control of the network as a whole as the providers themselves and increasingly Transport for Wales have a role in this.
- 8.3 We **collaborate** with the other key stakeholders including the providers, the Welsh Government and increasingly Transport for Wales. Officers have developed positive relationships with their peers at Transport for Wales and this approach to collaboration has underpinned the recent review and the resulting benefits.
- 8.4 At a strategic level we provide input into the development of the Regional Transport Plan through the Joint Corporate Committee.
- 8.5 We collaborate with:
- Other Local Authorities and Transport for Wales on specific projects which include Sherpa'r Wyddfa.
 - Other Local Authorities on a regional basis in the administration of some grants.
 - Transport for Wales / Welsh Government on specific services including the TrawsCymru and the fflecsi network.
 - Third Sector on community transport services to see where gaps, which are not met by traditional public transport, can be filled.
- 8.6 We are looking to **prevent** problems from arising or worsening in the future by working closely with the other key stakeholders and are aware of the fact that it is an unpredictable period and one that will witness a transformation in how public buses are delivered in Wales.
- 8.7 We consider the **long-term** through the Regional Transport Plan and the work of the Joint Corporate Committee.

8.8 The nature of the work involves a need to **integrate** with other public bodies including other Local Authorities and the Welsh Government on an ongoing basis and this is likely to increase as the Joint Corporate Committee becomes established.

9. Impact on Equality Characteristics, the Welsh Language and the Socio-Economic Duty

9.1 Providing a level of public transport service supports resilient and thriving communities.

9.2 The information provided by the Council is provided in Welsh and English.

10. Next Steps

10.1 Monitor the revamped services and look to respond positively to feedback when possible and appropriate to do so.

10.2 Respond to any changes in services provided on a commercial and/or de-minimis basis.

10.3 Look to secure the necessary funding to maintain the network.

10.4 Continue to work with the other major stakeholders including the providers, Transport for Wales, Welsh Government and other Local Authorities to maximise the provision and travel opportunities.

10.5 Raise awareness of the underpinning arrangements and maintain the local bus networks with a view to meet expectations where possible and manage and lower expectations where meeting these is not possible.

10.6 Provide input at national, strategic and regional level that will have an influence on provision in the short, medium and long-term with a view to providing the best possible level of bus services for Gwynedd residents.

10.7 Seek to influence and then respond positively to legislative and structural changes that will have an impact on bus networks.

10.8 Re-examine the network and arrangements in Dwyfor and undertake preparatory work to align with the terms of the contracts that have been put in place. This will include engagement with Local Members.

MEETING	Communities Scrutiny Committee
DATE	12/09/2024
TITLE	Waste and Recycling Services
REASON FOR SCRUTINY	The Council Plan 2023-28 – A Green Gwynedd
AUTHOR	Roland Thomas, Assistant Head of Department, Environment Department
CABINET MEMBER	Councillor Dafydd Meurig, Cabinet Member for the Environment

1. Why does it need scrutiny?

- 1.1 The reasons behind the overspend in this service area and an outline of the work programme to review matters that required attention in waste and recycling were scrutinised at the Committee meeting on 19 January 2023.
- 1.2 The item was prioritised for scrutiny during 2023/24 and it was scheduled for the meeting on 18 April 2024. To provide an opportunity for work streams in this field to develop further, it was decided during the Committee meeting on 30 November 2023 that it would be re-scheduled and considered in the annual workshop.
- 1.3 The service was identified for scrutiny because the 'Waste and Recycling' project had been included in the Council Plan 2023-28 and some savings schemes needed further consideration prior to coming to a final decision.

2. What exactly needs scrutiny?

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to present an update on the work programme and the matters requiring attention in Waste and Recycling, and specifically:
 - What progress has been made in terms of the work programme?
 - Progress and challenges in achieving the target of recycling 70% of waste by 2025.
 - What are the barriers/opportunities to deliver?
 - What is the latest position in terms of the overspend?
 - What steps have been taken to realise the savings?
- 2.2 Although we do not refer directly to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 in the report, we feel that the report does consider that we respond to the five ways of working that are required to deliver the seven well-being goals.

3. Background / Context

- 3.1 In 2022, as part of changes to the Council's corporate senior management structure, the Cabinet decided that the responsibility for waste and recycling should be transferred from the Highways and Municipal Department to the Environment Department.
- 3.2 The Waste and Recycling Services were formally transferred to the Environment Department in October 2022, with full responsibility for the budget transferring in 2023. Four key priorities were identified for attention:

- Improving customer care and dealing with enquiries/complaints,
- Getting to grips with high sickness levels,
- Achieving the national recycling target of 70%,
- Control of over-expenditure.

3.3 In January 2023, a report was submitted to the Scrutiny Committee to update them on the work achieved since the service had been transferred, together with an outline of the Department's plans as they continued to transform the service. This report has been set out with that work programme in mind. **The work programme has been set out as an appendix to this report (Appendix 1).**

3.4 Since starting to undertake this work we as senior managers have followed the principle that nothing is sacred and that we need to review every work area as we realise the core aspirations of improving the service for our residents and staff.

Structure

3.5 We have considered our structure in detail and have restructured a little to ensure accountability, and for the staff and public to have a better definition and clarity of management of the service. The structure is divided under three dedicated managers, and the following summarises the duties according to the areas:

- **Waste and Recycling Service (Collection)** – provide a waste and recycling collection service from Gwynedd homes. The service is responsible for the weekly collection of recycling materials and food, and residual waste every 3 weeks. In addition, garden waste is collected from nearly 17,000 homes who have subscribed to the service, together with the clinical collection and nappies, and commercial waste for businesses and holiday homes.
- **Waste and Recycling Service (Assets and Waste Treatment)** – provide a service, facilities, and arrangements to receive, treat and dispose of waste and recycling once the Council has collected it. The service receives the waste in three internal transfer sites and use one private provider. From these sites residual waste is transferred to Parc Adfer and recycling materials are transferred to be treated by a third party (costs to the Council) or directly to the market (income for the Council). The Council has two of its own treatment sites – Caergylchu in Caernarfon where plastics, metals and tins are sorted, and GwyrAD near Clynnog Fawr to process food waste. The service is responsible for running eight recycling centres and for ensuring after-care arrangements for three former landfill sites.
- **Waste and Recycling Manager – (Data and Quality Assurance)** – provide administrative support, manage commercial and garden contracts and income, monitor, and ensure quality assurance for the waste collection and waste disposal services. This includes ensuring that health and safety arrangements are established and followed. The Service is responsible for the distribution of bins and for educating and promotion via local and cross-county campaigns to promote and help residents reduce the waste produced and to encourage more recycling. In addition, the team has a statutory responsibility for reporting on waste and recycling data to the Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales.

Where we are compared to other authorities

- 3.6 The latest figures published by the Welsh Local Government Association for 2022-23 indicate that running a waste collection and recycling service here in Gwynedd costs £258.48 per property. This places Gwynedd as the third most expensive in Wales. Obviously, there are differences between every Authority in Wales in terms of geography, demographics and the type of service offered, however it demonstrates that some work still needs to be done to turn around the service to be one of the most efficient in Wales.
- 3.7 The cost of collecting recycling (dry and food) in Gwynedd is 37% higher than the Wales average at a cost of £91.78 per household. Evidently there are variations in how other Authorities in Wales operate, however, most authorities undertake weekly collections (17 authorities) and follow the Welsh Government's blueprint (14), namely collect sorted recycling from the doorstep.
- 3.8 Our dry recycling processing costs are £9.18 per property, this is £8.30 higher than the Welsh median. It is likely that one reason the Wales average cost is so low is because some authorities can sell their produce on the market for a higher price than us and have better terms with waste treatment companies. This is certainly something that we are aware of, and this will be addressed further in the following paragraphs.
- 3.9 Our food processing costs are higher than the national average, however GwyriAD, our food processing site using Anaerobic Digestion, is a project the Council has committed to until 2028. Our performance in terms of the levels of food waste collected compared with the rest of Wales is low – we only collect 68kg of food waste per property, in comparison with an average of 90kg by the rest of the authorities in Wales. Again, we will come back to this in the report.
- 3.10 The cost of our garden waste collection is reasonable in comparison with other Welsh authorities, at a cost of £6.36 per property, but again our processing costs are high. We collect 90kg of garden waste per household in Gwynedd – this is higher than the Wales average of 73kg per property. Obviously, we have reduced the garden waste collection season this year for the first time in Gwynedd to reflect the growing season, and so far, the numbers who have subscribed have remained consistent. We will not know until March 2025 whether this will have an impact on the tonnage collected.
- 3.11 Residual waste collection every three weeks cost £34.13 per property a year. This is 25% higher than the Wales average. Our processing costs are £50.98 per property, which is 19% higher than the average other authorities in Wales pay. However, we are in a long-term agreement with another four Local Authorities in the north to divert the waste that we cannot recycle for disposal at Parc Adfer.
- 3.12 Therefore, this is the general picture compared to the other Welsh authorities. The next part of the report is structured according to the headings of the work programme already presented to this Scrutiny Committee in January 2023.

Review collection arrangements

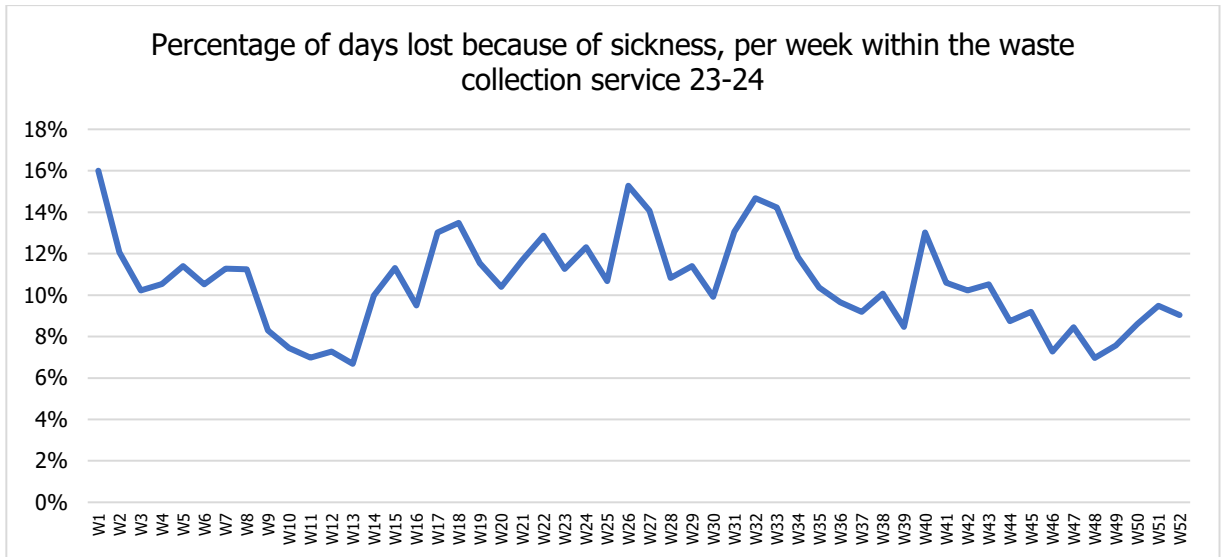
- 3.13 I am reiterating what was conveyed in the original report, namely, there is no doubt that service staff perform a key function and that the workforce's efforts are appreciated by households across the county. They are responsible for the collection of recycling, food waste and residual waste from around 64,000 domestic properties across Gwynedd, and collect garden waste, bulky waste, nappies, and medical material from some homes. They also provide a commercial waste service to around 2,000 businesses.

- 3.14 Early in the observation period it emerged that Cyngor Gwynedd had conscientious and hard-working employees, but arrangements needed to be changed, tightened, and improved to support this work. In the period following the submission of the Scrutiny report (January 2023), a new Waste and Recycling Collection Manager was appointed, and the level of senior and team leaders was restructured. In addition, it was decided to locate a business and administrative resource in the depots to support the work. A clear direction and competence were set for the team leaders' level, especially around sickness arrangements and the requirements to reduce reliance on overtime to complete the work.
- 3.15 It was also decided early on that operating the arrangements in the areas of Arfon, Dwyfor and Meirionnydd created inefficiencies and system based on three waste collection services rather than one service for Gwynedd. The depot at Caernarfon was strengthened to serve the north area, which is the former boundaries of Arfon, and another depot in Harlech to serve the south area, which are the old boundaries of Meirionnydd and Dwyfor. Although the definition of the areas is similar to what they were in the past, this has allowed us to revisit our structure and re-design the collection routes that cross former area boundaries, without having to worry too much where the crews were based. All the collection routes will be designed and modified in this manner in the future.
- 3.16 During this period of change we have seen a high level of complaints about collection failures from our residents. However, as new officers were settling into their roles and the collection workers getting used to the new regime, slowly the level of complaints was reduced. This has contributed to improving customer care and helped give a more positive image to the collection service. The following graph is proof of this.

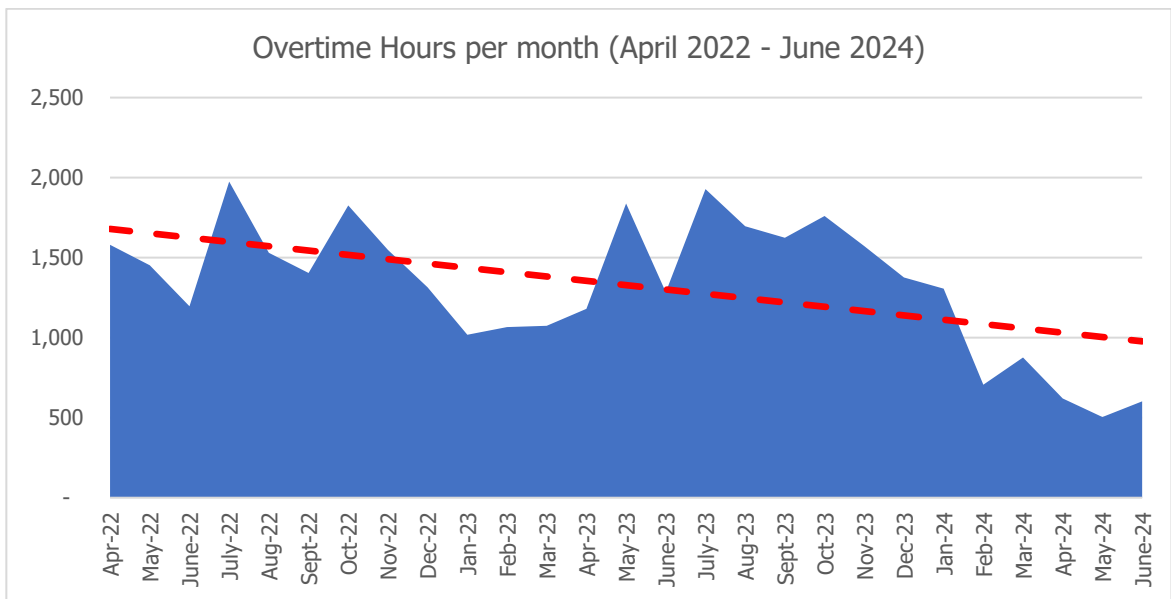


- 3.17 Placing the business and administrative officers in the depots is a new idea but their work has been essential and important in being a clear and direct communication link between the public and the collection crews. We are also working closely with the Council's customer care and information technology services to improve our 'front door', and we will be one of the first services in the Council to use artificial intelligence (AI) technology to help us with this.

- 3.18 We feel that things are going well on the waste collections side at the moment, but clearly there is still work to be done. Strengthening communication and the understanding between management and workforce has led to improved collaboration and it is also observed that there is a greater sense of workforce pride in their work. We are eager to maintain this momentum to deliver further improvements.
- 3.19 We are currently investing in better cameras to be installed in all collection vehicles to improve health and safety arrangements. We have also invested in an 'in cab' technology system (Bartec), which will again strengthen the link between the collection crews and our residents. Bartec's system will also enable our crews to report any misuse of our service, such as homes that present too much waste or homes that do not recycle. Collection crews are also currently using the Bartec system to record whether the bin has been presented for collection or otherwise. This information will be useful as we respond to queries of collection failures and will give us a more accurate picture of how many collections we have actually missed.
- 3.20 Another advantage of the system is that crews will have electronic collection maps. A high number of individual complaints about failure to collect originated from rural areas, when the usual driver was off work, and his substitute was unfamiliar with the collection points, therefore Bartec will help address any such errors. The drivers will also be required to confirm on the system once they have finished collecting from a particular street or property. The system will also allow team leaders to manage the work 'remotely', rather than waiting until the crews have returned to the depots, e.g., if there is a case of collection failure.
- 3.21 Not only will the installation of cameras help improve health and safety, but we have also appointed a dedicated health and safety officer for the waste collection service. We have also prioritised the health, safety, and well-being of staff since inception. Following the Council's sickness arrangements ensures that staff are provided with specialist support (physio, Medra etc.) more quickly, and are monitored regularly until they return to work. In addition, there has been an emphasis on sharing messages about personal health and well-being at the depots. And of course, this Department welcomes the Council's new proposed Alcohol and Drugs Policy, as this will add another layer to our aim to ensure everyone is safe at work.
- 3.22 Another main requirement of the original brief was to bring sickness levels under control. Not only did sickness have an impact on the morale of the rest of the workers, but it cost the service to have cover while an officer was sick – by either employing relief workers or paying overtime to finish the routes. As reported in paragraph 3.20, the absence of the 'usual' driver on a rural route could increase complaints of missed collections due to lack of knowledge of the area. At times sickness levels were so high that it was not possible to get a vehicle out to complete a collection route. The following graph shows the reduction in the sickness levels. The number of working days lost to the service due to sickness in 2022-23 averaged at 79 days per week or 11.3% of the workforce. This had reduced to 71.6 days or 10.6% by 2023-24. We expect further reductions again this year.



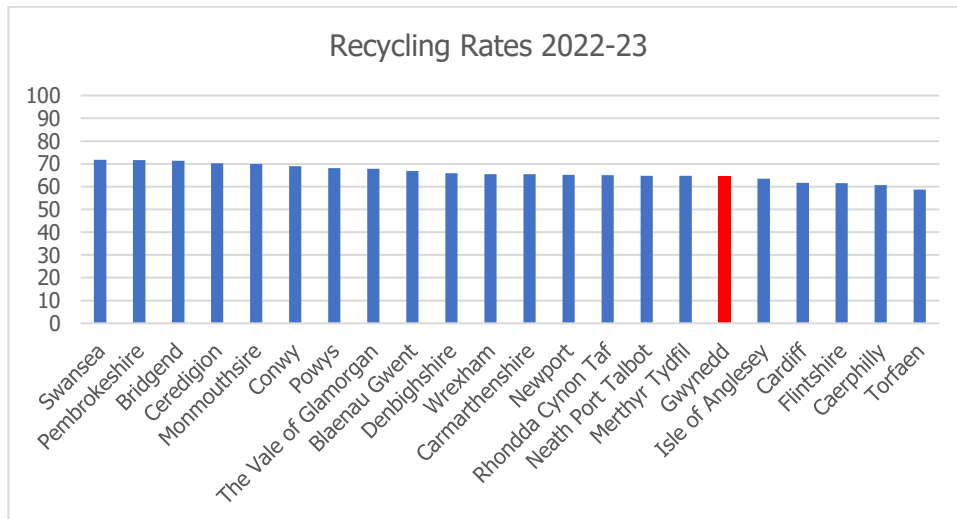
3.23 Another decision made through discussions with the workforce and unions was to continue with task and finish arrangements. But unlike the old system where this was seen as a personal task and finish, the emphasis was clearly changed to a collective task and finish. We feel that this contributed to a better team atmosphere and helped lower overtime levels. The level of overtime has reduced significantly (see graph below), and we have been able to continue to secure the service with the same number of basic hours / employees who were in the service when it was decided to transfer to the Department. We are confident that the introduction of the Bartec system will enable us to continue to push managerial improvements and improve efficiency.



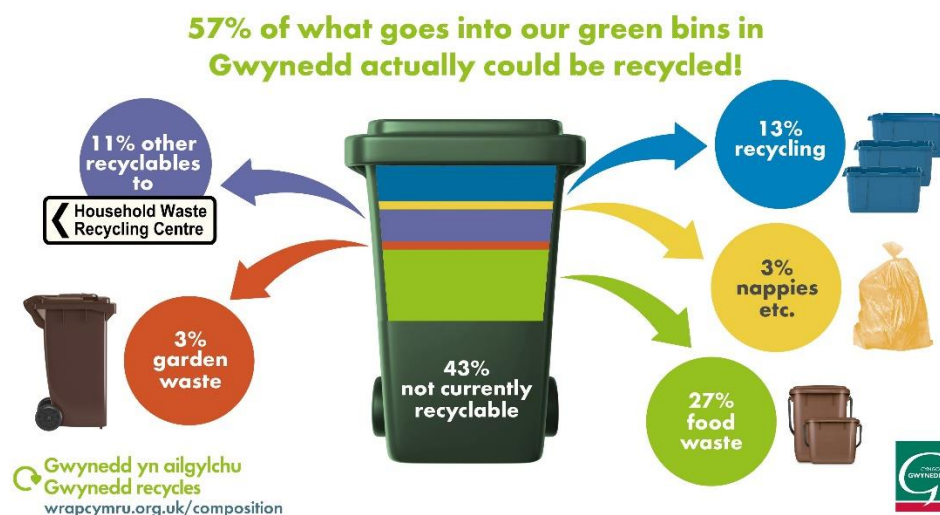
3.24 One challenge the service has is to ensure fair arrangements for employees and their ability to take a break as leave. While the majority of Council staff have been working from home over the course of the Covid pandemic, the waste workforce has been out collecting, disposing, and processing waste. This has resulted in a high number of leave accumulated by staff.

How will the service look in the future

- 3.25 Cyngor Gwynedd has always reached the Welsh Government's recycling target of 64%. However, we have failed to push past the percentage of 64% for a few years now. Cyngor Gwynedd is highly unlikely to meet the statutory 70% recycling target by March 2025, and there is a chance we may face a fine because of this. It is important to note here that not all authorities in Wales have met the statutory target of 64%, and the graph below shows that only five local authorities reached the 70% recycling level (2022-23). We are confident that we have robust plans to reach the 70%, and we are collaborating and communicating closely with Welsh Government officers and their advisors on our plans.



- 3.26 Recent research by Wrap Cymru has given us an analysis of what, on average, is currently in a green bin in Gwynedd. Our challenge is to try and divert as much of these materials into our recycling stream.



- 3.27 There are four promotion and awareness-raising officers within the waste and recycling service. Historically, the officers have been redeployed to deal with other issues within the waste area, and very often solve individual problems locally. While this work is important and appreciated by Gwynedd residents, there will now be a specific direction for them to be prioritising promotion and behaviour change. We also want to re-affirm the recycling message to ensure our residents separate their materials correctly, and emphasis will once again be placed on recycling food waste. Studies show that a 'behavioural nudge' and 'doorstepping' can make a big difference to recycling levels.
- 3.28 Although the communication strategy is yet to be written, we will have to ensure that we hit the core principles and ensure that we make the most of every penny by assessing:
- to what extent will we be successful in ensuring that people will notice the messages (impact)
 - the extent to which the communication technique will influence the recycling behaviour of the people receiving it (influence)
 - the precision with which the technique can be used to reach a very specific audience or group (targeting).
- 3.29 We cannot target our residents with the same message, it will be vital that we identify groups such as children, families, students, older and middle-aged people, and social classification will be important to this too. If we do not see an increase from the campaigns, then we will have to consider adopting some formal enforcement powers for the officers.
- 3.30 Another scheme we want to trial in the coming months is to collect paper and cardboard materials, and cans and plastics in hessian sacks rather than the Cartgylchu trolley-box system. While the results of the pilot will not be known for several months, we as officers hope this will be successful, because primarily, it is going to increase the amount of capacity residents will have to recycle. Other authorities who use a similar system report that the recycling material is of a better quality because it is separated better, and of course the hessian sacks will be cheaper for the Council than buying and replacing the Cartgylchu.
- 3.31 During the autumn we will consult on and publish a new **Waste Strategy**. This is a priority that has been identified in the Council's Plan 2023-28 – Green Gwynedd. Obviously, we will further outline how we want to meet the 70% recycling target, but also, we will consider the frequency of residual waste collection. Consideration of collection frequency has also been identified as one of the service's savings schemes. Yet there is a general suggestion that a collection capacity of 60kg of residual waste a week ensures residents recycle more of their waste. Cyngor Gwynedd currently collects a maximum of 80kg from most of our properties each week, i.e., 240 litre bins every 3 weeks.

Data – weigh bridge

- 3.32 The current system of gathering and processing data about recycling/ waste levels is fragmented and needs to be updated. Recycling percentage data is reported to the Welsh Government on a quarterly basis as part of Natural Resources Wales's statutory arrangements for monitoring levels across Wales. But securing more live data would enable the service to operate in a more timely and proactive manner.
- 3.33 Ensuring data that is of use to us, and available more regularly than the current quarterly regime would enable prioritisation of our efforts to change behaviour in fields / areas in need of improvement. The ability to compare data following intervention would subsequently assist us to measure success.

- 3.34 Therefore, we have invested in new software for our weighbridges, and this will allow us to get timely data, reducing our reliance on getting data from third parties. Wrap Cymru is also currently carrying out an audit on the quality of our data.

Recycling Centres

- 3.35 The costs of maintaining and running eight recycling centres equates to £46.99 per property here in Gwynedd, this is £13.04 higher than the average of other Welsh local authorities. And while there are eight centres in the county, six authorities with fewer facilities receive more materials per property than Gwynedd – we receive 176kg per property. The divert to recycle rate from the recycling centres is 77%.
- 3.36 Cyngor Gwynedd has eight recycling centres located across the county – the highest number in Wales. This ensures that 87% of Gwynedd residents are within a travelling distance of less than 20 minutes to any centre. Wrap Cymru suggests there should be a recycling centre per 50,000 properties – Cyngor Gwynedd has a recycling centre per 8,200 properties. Our provision is currently one of the best in terms of reaching residents – but also the most expensive in terms of cost per property.
- 3.37 We are currently reviewing the accessibility of our recycling centres. One item we want to revisit is the opening of the black bags that arrive at our recycling centres from our residents, because we know that a great deal of recyclables is often in these bags and thrown into the residual waste skip. We will also look for opportunities to improve the sites from a health and safety perspective and the ability to provide provision to be able to recycle a greater number of different materials.
- 3.38 We will also consider charging a fee for the disposal of certain items of waste, particularly materials that cost the Council to dispose of, such as tyres, rubble, and asbestos. We also want to look to tighten who can use our centres, whilst improving accessibility to certain cohorts of society, e.g., creating a 'quiet hour' for residents who find it difficult to book a slot at the centre via the current system.
- 3.39 We also want to look at creating one location or a re-use shop for the materials that come through our recycling centres. While recycling should be applauded, it is important that we try to start the hierarchy by reducing all types of waste, then repair and reuse it before recycling. We see potential here to help people and reduce our disposal costs at the same time. We will likely look for partnership opportunities to make this a reality. Promoting a circular economy has been identified as one of Cyngor Gwynedd's Climate and Nature Emergency Plan priorities, and re-use hits this brief.

Distribution of Bins

- 3.40 Our container distribution service is seen as important by our residents. But recently the levels of complaints about the service have increased significantly as residents have had to wait a long time for their bins. There are several reasons for this, including the unprecedented demand from businesses following the introduction of new collection arrangements in Wales. However, it became clear that we needed to review all our distribution arrangements as a result. We are currently working on creating a more durable and efficient bin delivery service, and also looking to put some of the smaller items in Siopau Gwynedd and Recycling Centres, so that residents can go and pick up an item without delay (e.g., kitchen caddy, food bags). By using technology and making better use of the knowledge of the delivery workers in Llwyn Isaf, we trust we will have a more efficient bin delivery service in the coming months.

Commercial Waste

- 3.41 In April 2024, the Workplace Recycling Regulations were introduced by the Welsh Government. This requirement placed legal implications on businesses to separate the waste in the same way as Welsh households. The implications of the act meant that Cyngor Gwynedd as a collection operator also had to collect waste and recycling materials separately for the first time. Admittedly, the adoption of this system for commercial waste has been very problematic for the Council and highlighted fundamental weaknesses in our business systems and arrangements.
- 3.42 Because of this we decided to review and revisit our commercial waste business, and we are currently going through a comprehensive review of the business with the support of Welsh Government advisors – Local Partnerships and Wrap Cymru. As part of the review, we will be going out to ask for feedback from businesses. We are confident that we will be in a better place in the new year with a more robust structure and systems, and that we can have a service where everyone can be proud of it once more.
- 3.43 Securing a source of income from commercial waste and holiday homes is core to the service and has been identified as one of our main risks on the Department's risk register.

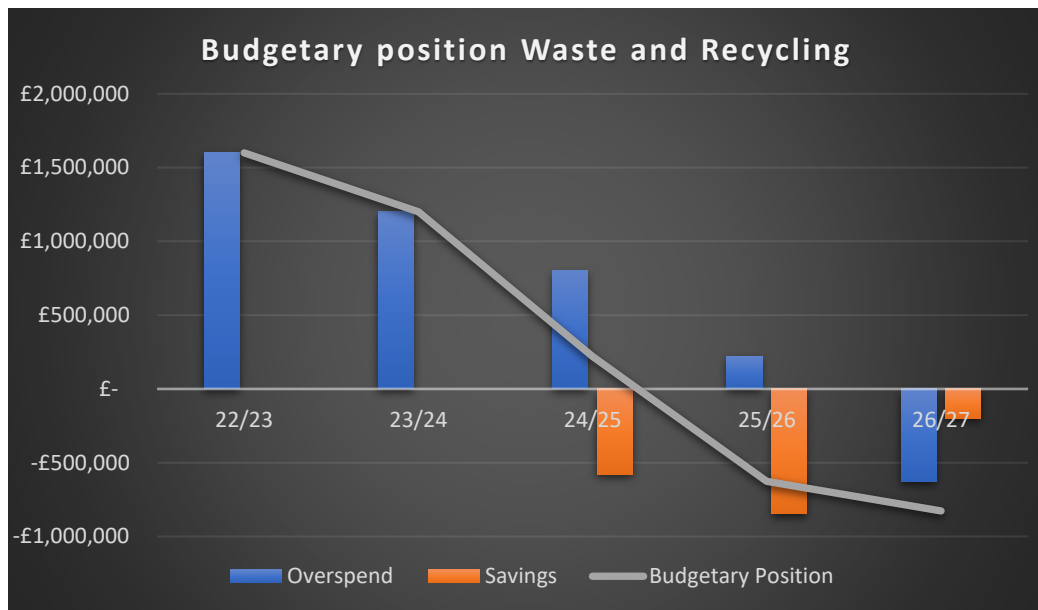
Processing – private / agreements

- 3.44 The nature of the service means that there are several agreements with external providers for the receipt of waste and recycling materials that we collect. One of these are regional arrangements whereby the Council works with other councils from the north on a Parc Adfer agreement for the disposal of residual waste. We have also partnered with Ynys Môn County Council for garden waste disposal and the Biogen company for food waste disposal at our GwyrAD site. We are also reliant on local and national private companies to treat and purchase our waste.
- 3.45 Our location on the periphery of the British market puts restrictions on us in terms of competition to sell our materials and in terms of reaching the market at all. For example, we transport our wood for recycling to the Manchester area and nappies for recycling to Ammanford.
- 3.46 The nature of the market means that prices can vary in terms of the income received for materials that are collected by the Council. Further work needs to be undertaken to ensure there is firm control of contracts with other companies that receive our waste and the income received for it.
- 3.47 We have decided that our main waste processing hubs will be at the Caergyfchu and Ffridd Rasmus sites from now on. Caergyfchu is a processing centre and was started as a project in 2005 between Antur Waunfawr, Môn-Arfon Waste Company and Cyngor Gwynedd. Obviously with Caergyfchu being almost 20 years old, the site has now passed its fitness for purpose.
- 3.48 To enable us to get the best materials to market, and to maximise our selling price per material, we consider that investing in a new site, provision and facility is essential. The size of the site and the development on site, is now also a concern from a health and safety perspective. Many of the machinery at Caergyfchu have also reached the end of their working lives, and the maintenance costs of these machines are also costly and are increasing annually.

- 3.49 We also transfer waste and recyclables across the county from one transfer site to another using three haulage (hook) trucks. Not only does this create unnecessary carbon emissions, but it is costly and can pollute the materials as well.
- 3.50 Therefore, to ensure that our operations are as efficient and effective as possible we are looking to invest in two new treatment and processing centres – one in Caerylchu and having a new processing centre in Harlech.
- 3.51 We are working with Wrap Cymru and the Welsh Government to develop both sites. The initial plans have been accepted and it is hoped that by March 2025 we will have a strong business case to make to the Council. This will enable us to submit our proposal for financial support from the Welsh Government. Thus far the feedback we have received from the Government is positive.
- 3.52 The Harlech site also offers us a place to look at processing other recyclables as well. This will mean that we can reduce costs and reliance on the private sector.

Over-expenditure and Savings

- 3.53 Significant work has taken place since the transfer of Waste and Recycling Services to have better management of the historic over-expenditure. It is not as 'black and white' as stopping spending to come to a balanced fiscal position in one financial year cycle. The core causes of overspending had to be looked at carefully, balancing this with the service being given to Gwynedd residents. At the end of 2022-23, overspending within waste and recycling services stood at £1.6m. The level of overspending was reduced by £420k last year, and a further reduction is anticipated this year, which will mean a year-end overspend of around £800K.
- 3.54 As well as gaining control of the overspend level, £1.7m savings schemes have been identified for Waste and Recycling Services as part of the Council's Savings Strategy. **The list of savings is set out in the appendix (Appendix 2).**
- 3.55 If the savings plans are realised, and an expected further reduction of £400K on the overspend is realised, the Services will have reduced their budgets by more than £2.5m. The savings schemes have had to be prioritised to help the corporate funding gap, before tackling the overspending within the service. If the service had been able to use the schemes to alleviate the overspending, then the Department is confident the Waste and Recycling Service would have reached a balanced position and beyond in its budget by the end of 2025/26.



**The blue blocks show actual over-spending for 22/23 and 23/24 and projected for 24/25. Then from 25/26 the savings are subtracted from the overspend to show a cumulative position but assuming we are unable to move from the likely overspend of £800k for 24/25. The orange shows the corporate savings per year. The grey line shows the budgetary position of the service if we were to only use the savings against the service.

- 3.56 However, with the schemes the Department has to tackle overspending being placed in the savings strategy there is a significant risk that it will not be possible to bring a balanced waste and recycling budget in the near future.
- 3.57 We fully recognise that all services need to play their part in ensuring that the Council can set balanced budgets. This part clearly shows that the Waste and Recycling Service has contributed to the savings programme and continues to do so. However, it is now increasingly clear that a position of semi-neutral spending against the budget cannot be achieved, which was one of the main requirements of the original brief. Delivering corporate savings schemes, while at the same time continuing to deliver improvements to ensure a quality service for the people of Gwynedd will be a challenge.

Vehicles

- 3.58 The service has approximately 100 waste collection and disposal vehicles. At the moment we have not been able to invest much in electric waste collection vehicles. We believe that the significant changes have been enough intervention for the time being, and with the levels of complaints high, introducing more change where it was not possible to guarantee success was too risky. Evidently some other local authorities in Wales have electric recycling collection vehicles, but the findings of the Green Fleet Plan 2023-2029 (Cabinet 24/01/2023) state that *"Electric technology has not reached this market yet [heavy vehicles] at least not to the extent that would be effective in Gwynedd"*. However, we continue to aim to decarbonise our fleet by 2030, but we as a Department will need to work closely with the Fleet Service to look at the technology and business plan in detail, because electric vehicles are currently around double the price of a diesel vehicle.
- 3.59 That said, with financial support from the Welsh Government, we have purchased two electric 'telehandler' vehicles which are used to move materials at the recycling centres. Feedback regarding these machines has been positive and has given us confidence to invest in others if the financial situation allows.

After-care Sites

- 3.60 The Council has three former waste landfill sites in Ffridd Rasus, Cilgwyn and Llwyn Isaf. The Department is responsible for ensuring that aftercare arrangements take place at these sites by sampling the water and gas, maintaining the Flare system which burns the gases, as well as constant maintenance and reporting to Natural Resources Wales.
- 3.61 Two of Gwynedd's former landfill sites have recently been transformed into havens for biodiversity and conservation. Local Places for Nature funding from the Welsh Government has helped restore 74 acres in Ffridd Rasus (Harlech) and 32 acres in Llwyn Isaf (Penygroes) into rich and diverse habitats for plants and wildlife.
- 3.62 These projects will have a positive impact on biodiversity in the areas and have the potential to be able to store carbon. The work has encompassed planting trees and shrubs at all sites, and increasing water storage capacity to attract more amphibians, insects, birds, and natural mammals. The project has been led with the expertise of Natural Resources Wales and the Biodiversity Service and will be further publicised in the autumn.

Future development

- 3.63 The waste service faces internal challenges along with external developments. The latest savings will put additional stress on the service in terms of the budgetary side. The Welsh Government's latest 'beyond recycling' strategy puts more emphasis on getting Wales to be a circular economy country which will probably require us to recycle new materials from the roadside and put more emphasis on repair and reuse.
- 3.64 National developments also bring their challenges. The cost of disposing our residual waste is currently over £4m, and with a new tax on carbon emissions likely to come in 2028, these costs could increase from somewhere between £0.6m to £1.5m for Cyngor Gwynedd alone.
- 3.65 Extended Producer Responsibility (or EPR) has been phased in since 2023, and its purpose is to impose a minimum required statute on businesses producing certain types of products on the market to cover the full costs. This imposes new requirements on us in Gwynedd to sample the waste that passes through our processing centres. We have already installed camera technology on our plastic line to measure how much one-off plastics are recycled by some of the large supermarkets. However, EPR may also be an additional source of income for the Council from 2025, but the extent of this income is currently unknown.
- 3.66 In addition, the Deposit Return Scheme (or DRS) will be expanded. It is a form of extended producer responsibility, meaning drinks producers and importers will have new legal responsibilities for managing and collecting their empty containers for recycling and reuse.
- 3.67 Of course, here in Wales authorities such as Cyngor Gwynedd offer an easy service on the doorstep for recycling glass, tins, and plastics. There is of course a risk that we will see less of the materials coming through our recycling stream, and therefore have an impact on our recycling percentage and income. However, this scheme should reduce waste in the residual bin, increase overall recycling along with reducing litter that is thrown on the street and in street bins.

3.68 Some areas of Gwynedd can be problematic for us because of the different nature of society there. The number of complaints from the city of Bangor is high, mainly from areas where students live and where there is a high number of houses in multiple occupation (HMO). It must be noted here that this is not unique to Gwynedd. We worked closely with the University, the Students' Union, Bangor City Council, and other council departments to try and get solutions to some of these issues, but clearly the resources and funding do not allow us to be able to do everything.

4. Main Conclusions and the proposed work programme

4.1 The Department has acted on a number of issues and has seen progress on a variety of projects over the past two years. The Department has produced a detailed programme of work to enable us to further review some areas and propose solutions to ensure that the Waste and Recycling field offers efficient, high-quality, and safe services, and that we continue to meet the Welsh Government's ambitious recycling targets over the coming years. We are quietly confident that we were going in the right direction and that we can show improvement in the services.

4.2 The next key steps will be to introduce and consult on the Strategy, work together with our partnerships such as the Welsh Government and Wrap Cymru to develop a business case for new processing centres, and design a programme of work to achieve the savings, which could be contentious, such as collection frequency.

APPENDICIES

Appendix 1 – Waste and Recycling Service Work Programme

Appendix 2 – A list of waste and recycling service savings

Main Theme	Examples of the sub-headings	2023			2024									2025															
		Q3			Q4			Q1			Q2			Q3			Q4			Q1			Q2			Q3			
		Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	
G1 Review working arrangements of waste/recycling collectors	Comprehensive review of all the circuits (continuous work)																												
	A review of working hours / arrangements																												
	Solution to employees' accumulated leave																												
	Introduce 'in cab' technology for waste collection vehicles.				Step 1 - Recycling/waste collection vehicles and bin distribution vehicles									Step 2 - Commerical, clinical, nappies and garden waste vehicles															
	Upgrade cameras on all work vehicles																												
	Evaluate all recycling and waste service staff																												
	Establish a North / South structure - in practice and in principle																												
G2 Review arrangements for collecting recycling, including expected future increase in recycling levels	Trial a recycling collection system with hessian sacks in pilot areas																												
	Evaluate and create a business plan to look at the frequency of residual waste collection																												
G3 Review the complaints procedure	Appoint officers who are close to the services to deal with complaints. Collaboration with IT / Customer Care to secure continuous improvement																												
G4 Data that is useful and regularly available	Introduce a new Weighing Bridges system																												
	Ensure that our data is timely and that we analyse this to operate more progressively (continuous work)																												
G5 Change behaviours to reduce the level of residual waste and maximise recycling	Develop a specific programme with a clear focus to raise awareness / change behaviour (continuous work)																												
	A comprehensive review of our Recycling Centres																												
G6 Waste assets plan	Develop a suitable fit-for-purpose processing and treatment centre at Caerqvlchu																												
	Develop a suitable fit-for-purpose processing and treatment centre at Ffridd Rasmus																												
G7 Manage overspend [stemming mainly from workforce sickness and overtime]	Overtime hours worked (continuous monitoring)																												
	Sickness level (continuous monitoring)																												
	Formalising the Waste and Recycling Service structure																												
G8 Ensure there is firm control of contracts with other parties that receive our waste	Review 3rd party Waste Agreements																												
	Parc Adfer (continuous work)																												
	GwyrAD																												
	Comprehensive review of the Commercial Waste Service																												
G9 Communication Plan	Communication Strategy (following the adoption of the Waste Strategy)																												
G10 Health and Safety Procedures	Health and Safety (continuous work)																												

G11 Establish a firm strategy for Waste and Recycling	Formulate, consult and adopt a Waste Strategy																										
G12 Review the service's existing arrangements for distributing bins, boxes and sacks to residents.	Review of the Bin Distribution service																										
G13 Establish a work programme for replacing vehicles for low-carbon vehicles	Prepare a review to de-carbonise the fleet																										

Appendix 2 – a list of waste and recycling service savings

Title	Saving	Status
Rationalising container distribution arrangements	£50K	On track to be delivered in a timely manner
Reduce maintenance costs due to damage to vehicles by 10%	£30K	On track to be delivered in a timely manner
Improve the efficiency of use of waste treatment / waste transfer sites	£70K	Some risks to its delivery
Better management of debts by commercial customers	£30K	On track to be delivered in a timely manner
Waste and Business Service – Rationalise departmental arrangements	£150K	Some risks to its delivery
Marketing Commercial Services – increase income	£40K	On track to be delivered in a timely manner
Increase income from the sale of recycled materials, especially as commercial waste will be collected separately from 2023/24.	£150K	On track to be delivered in a timely manner
Review Waste Contracts	£400K	Risks to its delivery
Allow some types of commercial companies to use the recycling centres	£50K	On track to be delivered in a timely manner
Increase income by collecting Commercial Waste from holiday accommodation	£360K	Some risks to its delivery
Reduce the number of garden waste collections from 25 to 22 a year	£20K	On track to be delivered in a timely manner
Revising existing single-use nappy collection arrangements	£147K	Needs further scrutiny
Frequency of residual waste collection.	£200K	Needs further scrutiny

MEETING	Communities Scrutiny Committee
DATE	12 September, 2024
TITLE	Public Spaces Protection Order (Dog Control)
REASON FOR SCRUTINY	Operational assurance of the Public Spaces Protection Order (Dog Control)
AUTHOR	Peter Simpson, Streetscene Service Manager
AELOD CABINET	Coun. Berwyn Parry Jones

1. Why does it need to be scrutinized?

The Council implements a Public Spaces Protection Order (Dog Control) as a lack of dog control by owners has a negative impact on our communities with the cumulative effect of not clearing or picking up dog waste adversely affecting the image of communities and can pose a risk to human health.

Dog control orders have been in place since 2013 and have now been extended to August 14, 2027.

The powers of the order relate to the matters below:

- not clearing or picking up dog waste
- allowing a dog enter land where dogs are excluded
- not putting and keeping a dog on a lead when a person is asked to do so by an authorised officer.

Non-compliance with the order can result in a fixed penalty notice of £100 (reduced to £75, if paid within 10 working days) or prosecution with a maximum penalty of £1,000.00.

2. What exactly needs to be scrutinised?

- How the orders are implemented together and an update of the process to extend the order
- How many fines have been issued to owners
- What campaigns are being undertaken to highlight the responsibilities of dog owners.

3. Summary and Key Issues

- Seeking the opinion of the Scrutiny Committee whether any future changes to the order will need to be consulted on.

4. Background / Context

4.1. How the orders are operated together and an update of the process to extend the order.

The Public Spaces Protection Order (Dog Control) is operated by the Streetscene Enforcement Team. This includes implementing relevant legislation and guidance, responding to complaints, patrolling, issuing fixed penalties, raising awareness and other prevention activity, such as signage. Powers to issue fixed penalties for Dog Control offences on beaches have also been delegated to officers from the Council's Maritime Service.

In addition to dog control orders, the Streetscene Enforcement Team is also responsible for numerous other enforcement duties, including litter and waste, fly-tipping, graffiti and fly-posters. The Team is led by a Senior Officer who manages 4 Warden/Officers, who operate throughout Gwynedd. They form part of the larger Streetscene Service and work in very close partnership with the Street Cleansing and Tîm Tacluso Ardal Ni (Tidy Teams) Services.

The proposed extension of Gwynedd Council's of Public Spaces Protection Order (Dog Control) 2021 was approved without change for a period of three years to 14 August 2027. A public consultation was required in preparing an extension to the current order and a summary of the results of the public consultation can be found in Appendix 2 (AT2).

4.2. How many warnings/fines have been issued to owners

The number of fixed penalties issued for Dog Control offences is currently on the increase. The majority of these relate to dog fouling offences and breaches of exclusion zones. It should be noted that the majority of dog owners are very careful and receptive to awareness raising initiatives. The issue of a fixed penalty or a prosecution are therefore seen as a last resort, which target the minority who fail to comply.

The table below shows the number of fines that have been issued by the officers for the year 2023/24 and the current year.

Year	Dog Fouling	Exclusions	Dogs on Lead	Total
2023 - 24	21	8	0	29
2024 - (first 5 months)	8	8	0	16

4.3. What campaigns are being undertaken to highlight the responsibilities of dog owners.

A very important element of this work includes educative and awareness campaigns among dog owners. These include:

- Regulatory signs giving direction, e.g. "Clean it up", "No Dogs", "Keep to the Path" and all signage designating seasonal exclusion zones on beaches.
- A range of awareness raising signs, including ones designed by young people, the "Bag it and Bin it" signs, "Leave Only Pawprints" signs, etc.
- The Team has run a number of campaigns locally (e.g. Dyffryn Nantlle, Blaenau Ffestiniog), Countywide availability of free dog waste bags/dispensers, and more recently, implemented a National Campaign under the Caru Cymru banner.

5. Consultation

The responses to the Public Consultation were supportive and justified the aim of a continuation of the dog control powers, which include the control of dog fouling, exclusions and dogs on lead under direction.

The decision is also based on the view that the current arrangement is a fair one, which reflects the aspirations of the public who need to see the public spaces free of dog fouling and also considers the needs of those who need to exercise their dogs.

See Appendix 2 (AT2) for an analysis of the results of the public consultation.

6. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The act imposes a welfare duty on the Council to carry out sustainable development work by acting in conjunction with the 'sustainable development principle'.

This means that the impact on people in the future needs to be considered when making decisions. We do this using the 'five ways of working'.

The input of residents, service users and other stakeholders is of key importance in any consultation relating to dog control and working closely together is a key part of the enforcement and awareness raising process. In the context of dog control, we already collaborate with the following:

- **Internal and Interdepartmental** - Street Cleaning Services, Tîm Tacluso Ardal Ni (Tidy Teams), Pest Control, Maritime and Public Protection.
- **Locally** – Members, Community Councils, Residents, Schools and young people.
- **National** - Welsh Government, Police and Keep Wales Tidy.

Enforcement and awareness raising to prevent or reduce problems is an ongoing issue that requires sustained commitment, including consideration of new ideas, innovation, broader best practice and of course collaboration.

Perceptions and expectations change and increase over time and our recent experience has highlighted an increase in the number of new owners and dogs highlighting the need to plan ahead.

In addition to the need to integrate services internally, there is a need to continue to collaborate and develop new relationships at regional and national level.

7. Equalities Impact Assessment, Welsh Language and Socio-Economic Duty

In 2021, a detailed equalities assessment was prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, and it was concluded that no meritorious reason had been disclosed not to continue with the process of submitting the Proposed Order. Appendix 2 (AT2) has been updated in 2024, although reflecting the results of the new consultation Appendix 1 (AT1). The assessment review has not highlighted an impact that would justify modifying or not extending the order.

8. Next Steps

- In order to monitor the order and how it is operated, the team in accordance with specialist training, legislation and operational guidance. We monitor the number of Fines, Complaints (Ffos), Street Cleanliness Survey - which includes the percentage of streets where dog fouling is present. We also keep relevant records to awareness campaigns, press releases, etc.
- Monitoring the numbers of fines and responses to dog fouling problems that will arise over the winter period – there is a significant increase in winter due to dark nights.
- Implementing recommendations made by the Scrutiny Committee.

Background Information

Cabinet Report - Public Space Protection Order (GDMC): Dog Control

Link - [Programme for Cabinet on Tuesday, 27th July, 2021, 1.00 a.m. \(gov.wales\)](#) – Item 10

Other useful links:

[Fixed penalty notices \(FPNs\) for environmental offences: guidance | GOV. WALES](#)

[Tackling-Dog-Fouling-min.pdf \(keepwalestidy.cymru\)](#)

[Rethinking-enforcement-for-littering-and-dog-fouling.pdf \(keepwalestidy.wales\)](#)

Appendices

- AT1 – GDMC Dog Control Equality Impact Assessment (English)
- AT2 – Dog Order Consultation Results (English)

Equality Impact Assessment

See the leaflet *How to make an Equality Impact Assessment* for help to complete this form. You are also welcome to contact Delyth Williams, Policy and Equality Officer on ext. 32708 or DelythGadlysWilliams@gwynedd.llyw.cymru, for further assistance.

The Council is required (under the Equality Act 2010) to consider the impact any changes in any policy or procedures (or the creation of a new policy or procedure) will have on people with protected equality characteristics. The Council also has additional general duties to ensure fairness and to foster good relationships. Therefore, a timely Equality Impact Assessment should be made before any decision is taken on any relevant change (i.e. that affects people with protected equality characteristics).

I Details

I.1. What is the name of the policy / service in question?

Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) in relation to dog control throughout the County.

I.2 What is the purpose of the policy / service that is being created or amended? What changes are being considered?

The legal basis for the Council's original Dog Control Orders has been superseded by newer legislation which means that it is necessary to replace these with new Public Spaces Protection Order for Dog Control.

The 2013 Dog Control Orders related to the prevention of dog fouling, exclusion of dogs from certain sensitive areas such as playing fields, sports facilities with seasonal restrictions on certain bathing beaches and the requirement for dogs on leads under the direction of an authorised officer.

I.3 Who is responsible for this assessment?

Steffan Jones, Head of Highways and Municipal

I.4 When did you commence the assessment? Which version is this?

1 - 01/04/2021 – first version.
2 - 07/07/2021 – updated version
3 - 22/07/2024 – consultation on extending the Order for 3 years up to 2027

APPENDIX I

2) Action

2.1 Who are the partners it will be necessary to work with to undertake this assessment?

People of Gwynedd
Council Staff
The Police
Keep Wales Tidy (Blue Flag)
North Wales Society for the Blind
Assistance Dogs UK
Dogs Trust
Kennel Club
Access Forum

2.2 What steps have you taken to engage with people with protected characteristics?

The Authority must carry out a public consultation on the Proposed Order, which will need to be in place for 28 days following the Welsh Parliamentary election on 6 May 2021.

A public consultation was held in 2024 to get feedback on the proposal to extend the period of the order.

2.3 What was the result of the engagement?

A total of 1,324 responses were received to the questionnaire. In addition, a total of 7 separate emails or messages were received expressing views on the consultation.

Overall, a clear majority of the responses received through the questionnaire were supportive of the content of the Proposed Order as it stands. There was no consensus in favour of expanding the scope of the GDMC to include additional rules.

A detailed report of the consultation response received is included in Appendix 2.

In 2024 a total of 1,171 responses to the questionnaire were received. In addition, a total of 6 were email messages were received expressing opinions on the consultation.

The clear majority of the responses received through the new questionnaire were very supportive of the intention of extend the period of the order as it is. There was no consensus in favour of expanding the scope of the order to include additional rules.

APPENDIX I

2.4 On the basis of what other evidence do you operate?

- The number of complaints about the impact of dog fouling has been increasing locally and such concerns are being reflected in the national media.
- The impact of the current pandemic has contributed to a worsening of the current situation. More dogs are being walked more often and a significant increase in dog ownership has been widely reported.
- In accordance with the results of Keep Wales Tidy's research some groups, such as children, the visually impaired and wheelchair users may be more susceptible to accidental contact with dog fouling and the pathogens it may contain (e.g. Toxocariasis).

2.5 Are there any gaps in the evidence that needs to be collected?

A detailed report of the consultation response received is included in Appendix 2.

3) Identifying the Impact

3.1 The Council must give due attention to the impact any changes will have on people with the following equality characteristics. What impact will the new policy/service or the changes in the policy or service have on people with equality characteristics? You are welcome to add other characteristics if you wish.

Characteristics	What type of impact? *	In what way? What is the evidence?
Race (including ethnicity)	-	No impact identified from the consultation or otherwise.
The Welsh language	-	No impact identified from the consultation or otherwise.
Disability	Positive	Concerns were raised in respect of disability. The consultation responses to the question on protected characteristics suggest that the order would affect disabled people (37 responses). Specifically, concerns were raised about disabled peoples' access to places without restrictions on beaches or being unable to take the dog for a walk if more places were excluded. Some noted the mental health needs of disabled people to be able to go out with their dogs and the need

APPENDIX I

	<p>to ensure that further restrictions did not affect that. “I have a disability and the dog nudging me to take her for a walk forces me to go out, so yes i feel that it would effect us unfairly”. It was noted that this affects carers. Problems for those who cannot drive for any reason, including disability, were also noted.</p> <p>Pathogens (e.g. toxocarasis) from dog faeces can have a worse effect on some people with certain conditions.</p> <p>Others stated that the PSPO would be positive for disabled people in order to tackle dog faeces and safety problems.</p> <p>The dog exclusion rule includes a special dispensation for any person –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) who is registered as a blind person;(b) who is deaf, in respect of a dog trained by Hearing Dogs for Deaf People and upon which that person relies for assistance; or(c) has a disability which affects that person’s mobility, manual dexterity, physical coordination, or ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects, in respect of a dog trained by a charity specified in the Order and upon which that person relies for assistance. <p>In addition, the rule on requiring clearing up dog faeces includes a special dispensation for any person –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) who is registered as a blind person; or(b) has a disability which affects that person’s mobility, manual dexterity, physical coordination, or ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects, in respect of a dog trained by a charity specified in the Order and upon which that person relies for assistance. <p>In the circumstances, there is adequate provision to ensure that disabled people would not be placed at a disadvantage as a result of the PSPO. The risk to disabled people of being prevented from accessing beaches or a specific location as a result of the PSPO has been minimised. However, the Council would be willing to look into any specific accessibility problems and rectify these where practicable. It should be emphasised that there is</p>
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APPENDIX I

		no intention to extend the area of historic exclusion zones or increase their number.
Gender	Negative	<p>In the question about specific characteristics 2 women have stated that there is a need to ensure that the exclusions do not mean that women have to walk their dogs in isolated areas.</p> <p>The order is not intended to prevent dogs and their owners from access to any public rights of way.</p> <p>4 comments related to lone parent families and the problem of walking the children and dog and accessing play areas. Statistics show that the vast majority of single parent families have a female head of family so that is going to affect women the most.</p> <p>Statistics show that women also tend to have more caring responsibilities than men, both for adults and children, so any comments that appear in the section about young underage families and carers in general will be relevant here.</p> <p>The purpose of the prohibitions in play areas is to protect children and young people from harm. It is not only the unfortunate visual impact of dog fouling as a problem, but also the disease problems associated with it, e.g. toxocariasis which can lead to blindness.</p>
Age	Positive and negative	<p>Two groups are particularly affected here.</p> <p>Young families and children:</p> <p>Most of those who have responded to the specific equality question and have mentioned age have identified problems for families with young children who need to take the children out at the same time as their dog, especially to a park. One person says, "Feels like I am restricted rather than the council taking enforcement action".</p> <p>Again, the purpose of the prohibitions in play areas is to protect children and young people from harm and disease.</p> <p>One respondent has stated that allowing a dog to be within 2 meters of a play area is not unreasonable and it would be advisable to have a designated place, away from the gate, to securely tie a dog. Another proposes that there should be a seat for parents outside the playground to watch the children. One person said, "As a parent I find some exclusion zones exclude me from supporting my</p>

APPENDIX I

		<p>family in their sporting activities".</p> <p>The 2 metre restriction only applies to sports pitches (eg rugby and football pitches) and does not affect the vicinity of children's playing fields.</p> <p>Visits to the beach have also been covered.</p> <p>Comments also stated that the bans would be positive because of dog fouling problems, safety (dogs off leads) and that some children were scared of dogs, with two mentioning a child running into the lane to avoid a dog.</p> <p>The Council intends to conduct a statutory Play Adequacy Survey where there will be an opportunity to consider the needs of children and parents.</p> <p>Older people:</p> <p>Older people are statistically more likely to have mobility difficulties etc. so some of the comments on disability will be relevant.</p> <p>Many of the responses to the question on equality characteristics mention that owning a dog has a positive impact on the mental and physical health of older people and how further restrictions would affect that. Some talk about the need to be able to walk a dog locally: "stopping people exercising their dog on local beaches that could discriminate elderly dog owners living near these beaches who cannot drive or access an alternative.</p> <p>One grandfather has noted that further exclusions would create problems in taking the grandchildren for a walk. Another has said that dog fouling is a problem and it would be easier to take the grandchildren for a walk.</p> <p>The comment that states the need to emphasize that there is no intention to extend the size of the historic zones, or to increase their number, is also applicable here.</p> <p>Some older people had concerns that dogs off a lead could be dangerous and the powers in the order to direct an owner to put an unruly dog on a lead is intended to help alleviate this situation.</p>
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APPENDIX I

		<p>Toxicara</p> <p>Many dogs are infected with parasites that can cause harm to people, especially children and vulnerable people. Toxocariasis is a disease caused by eggs from the Toxicara worm which is transmitted from dogs to humans through dog waste or infected soil. The infection can lead to illness and even blindness.</p>
Sexual orientation	-	No impact identified.
Religion or belief (or non-belief)	-	No impact identified.
Gender reassignment	-	No impact identified.
Pregnancy and maternity	Positive	<p>No additional comments have been made on the basis of pregnancy and maternity except for those who appear under children and young families in the Age category.</p> <p>Toxocariasis is generally more common in young children and the elderly.</p>
Marriage and civil partnership	-	No impact identified.

* Delete as required

3.2 The Council has a duty under the Equalities Act 2010 to contribute positively to a fairer society through advancing equality and good relations in its activities in the fields of age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, race, transgender, disability and pregnancy and maternity. The Council must give due attention to the way any change affects these duties.

General Duties of the Equality Act	Does it have an impact?	In what way? What is the evidence?
Abolishing illegal discrimination, harassment and victimisation	Yes	The issue of access, particularly to beaches, has been considered in 3.1
Promoting equal opportunities	Yes	Equal opportunities for children to have a suitable place to play, and for wheelchair users in a clean and safe environment.

APPENDIX I

Encouraging good relationships	None	No impact identified.
Socio-Economic Duty	Yes	A clean and safe environment benefits the economy.

* Delete as required

4) Analysing the results

4.1 Is the policy therefore likely to have a significant, positive impact on any of the equality characteristics or the General Duty? What is the reason for this?

Positive health effects identified, especially for children, and a clean and safe environment for all.

4.2 Is the policy therefore likely to have a significant, negative impact on any of the equality characteristics or the General Duty? What is the reason for this?

We have not identified any significant negative impact.

4.3 What should be done?

Select one of the following:

Continue with the policy / service as it is robust.	X
Adapt the policy to delete any barriers.	
Suspend and delete the policy as the detrimental impacts are too big.	
Continue with the policy as any detrimental impact can be justified.	
Proceed with the consultation to gather more information.	

4.4 If you continue with the plan, what steps will you take to reduce or mitigate any negative impacts?

We will proceed with the consultation and assess what negative effects are identified.

APPENDIX I

4.5 If you are not taking any further action to delete or reduce the negative impacts, explain why here.

Not applicable.

5) Monitoring

5.1 What steps will you take to monitor the impact and effectiveness of the policy or service (action plan)?

Use of the Council's customer care systems (Ffos) where any complaints and queries regarding the policy are recorded, together with a record of any follow-up action and remedies.

Implementation - An action plan will ensure that the new operational arrangements are in place in a timely manner.

The number of enforcement interventions for non-compliance with the policy will be recorded.

APPENDIX 2

RESULTS OF DOG CONTROL ORDER CONSULTATION 2024

Public Consultation:

As part of the proposed extension of the current order, a public consultation was held. The responses to the public consultation support and justify a continuation of the dog control powers, which include the control of dog fouling, exclusions and dogs on leads.

The consultation was live on the Council's website for a period of two weeks from the 22/07/24 until the 05/08/24. Details were shared on the Council's social media as well as a press release to ensure a wide range of people were aware of the opportunity to share their views.

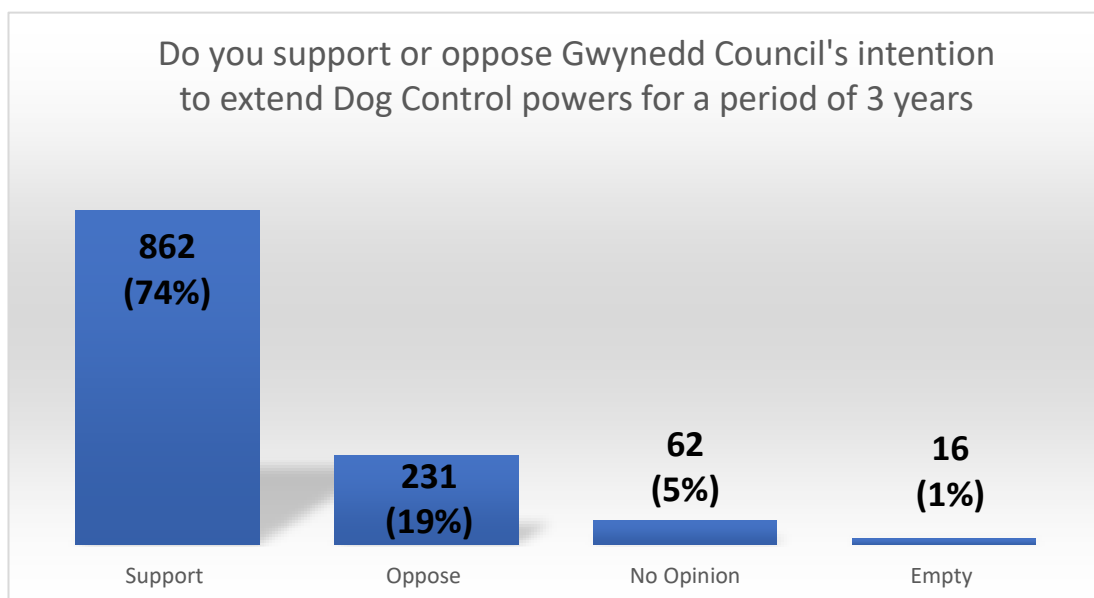
An email was sent directly to Community Council Clerks, members of the Police, other Council departments and various organisations related to Dog Control issues who would be affected by the decision to extend the order.

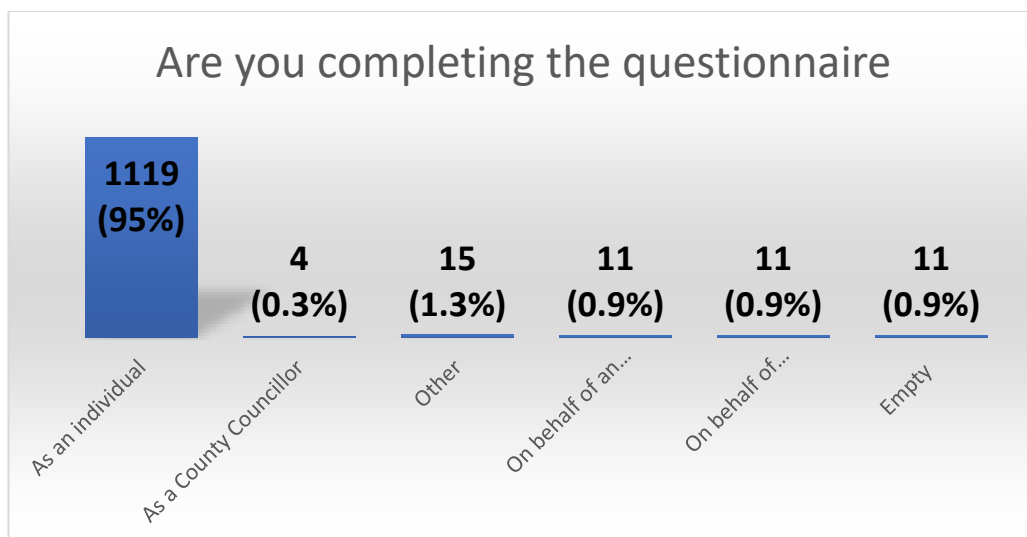
Paper questionnaires were also shared for those unable to respond online.

Main issues highlighted:

See below a summary of the main results of the consultation.

Number of consultation responses – **1171**





Opponents:

Of the 231 who opposed, 51 (of whom shared comments) specifically cited beaches as the main reason for opposing. The percentage of oppositions were very similar to the consultation held in 2021.

Cricieth "Marine" Beach:

The Maritime Service had reported that a number of Cricieth residents and visitors were complaining of a lack of space to take dogs due to an exclusion zone along the two main beaches - Promenade and "Marine". Based on this, the "Marine" Beach exclusion zone was removed in 2021.

In 2024, 13 objected to the extension on the grounds that they wanted to see the Council re-establish an exclusion zone on "Marine" beach.

Kennel Club a Dog's Trust:

Responses from these two groups, which represent dog owners, were supportive to the aim of extending the length of the current order.

Collections:

A clear majority of responses received through the questionnaire were supportive of the content of the order as it stands, i.e. based on the view that the current order is a fair one. This reflected the aspirations of the public at large, to see public spaces free of dog fouling and also considered the needs of those who need to exercise their dogs. There was no consensus for expanding the scope of the order to include additional rules.

It can therefore be concluded that the criteria under Section 59 of the 2014 Act has been achieved and that we can justify proceeding with the order.



MEETING	COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE	12 September 2024
TITLE	Communities Scrutiny Committee Forward Programme
PURPOSE OF THE REPORT	To adopt an amended work programme for 2024/25
AUTHOR	Bethan Adams, Scrutiny Advisor

1. The Committee's Forward Programme for 2024/25 was adopted at the Committee's meeting on 16 May 2024.
2. Following the Committee meeting, a request was received for the Committee to scrutinise 'Parking Fees' before the Cabinet makes a decision. The Chair agreed to the request to ensure that scrutiny has input.
3. As a result, a discussion was held at the Committee's informal meeting on 9 July 2024 regarding which item should be re-programmed for scrutiny from this meeting to another meeting, either 'Introducing public charging points for electric vehicles' or 'Dog Control Orders'. It was concluded that the departments should be asked how timely it would be to scrutinise these items at the meeting in September.
4. Following responses from the departments, a consultation was held with the Chair. The 'Dog Control Orders' item was prioritised to be scrutinised at this meeting, thus re-programming the 'Introducing public charging points for electric vehicles' item. Re-programming this item gives an opportunity for this work-stream to develop further. By scrutinising the item later in the year, there will be a greater opportunity for scrutiny to add value.
5. As there are two items programmed for the Committee meeting on 20 March 2025, it is suggested that this item should be added to that meeting's agenda.
6. See attached as an appendix to the report, the amended work programme for 2024/25.
7. **The Communities Scrutiny Committee is asked to adopt the amended work programme for 2024/25.**

COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2024/25

Date	Items	Reason for scrutiny
16/5/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Article 4 Direction – Public Consultation Ash Dieback Disease 	Pre-decision Scrutiny / Council Plan 2023-28 - A Homely Gwynedd
		A matter on the risk register
12/9/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parking Fees Developments in the Public Transport field Waste Collection and Recycling Services Dog Control Orders 	Pre-decision Scrutiny
		Council Plan 2023-28 - A Green Gwynedd
		Council Plan 2023-28 - A Green Gwynedd
		Assurance in relation to implementation
7/11/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Local Development Plan - Strategic Options, Vision and Objectives Planning and Welsh Communities Climate and Nature Emergency Plan: 2023/24 Annual Report 	Role to scrutinise the Local Development Plan / Council Plan 2023-28 - A Green Gwynedd
		Assurance in relation to implementation
		Council Plan 2023-28 - A Green Gwynedd
23/1/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Update by the Gwynedd and Anglesey Community Safety Partnership Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board Progress Report Public Toilets 	The Committee's role as a Crime and Disorder Committee
		The Committee's role to scrutinise the Public Services Board's work
		Follow-up following scrutiny at the 5 October 2023 meeting
20/3/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Local Development Plan – Preferred Strategy Grass Cutting and Maintenance of County Roads Verges Introducing public charging points for electric vehicles 	Role to scrutinise the Local Development Plan / Council Plan 2023-28 - A Green Gwynedd
		Follow-up following scrutiny at the 22 February 2024 meeting
		Follow-up following scrutiny at the 5 October 2023 meeting

Items to be programmed in 2025/26 - Streetscene Service, Ash Dieback Disease