
THE CABINET 16/09/25

Present-

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

Also present:

Dafydd Gibbard (Chief Executive), Nia Grisdale (Legal Services Manager), Dewi Morgan (Head of Finance), Catrin Thomas (Corporate Director), Bethan Richardson (Climate Change Programme Manager), Esyllt Rhys Jones (Regeneration Programme Manager), Llŷr B Jones (Assistant Head of Economy and Community), Delyth Williams (Equality Adviser), Gwen Roberts (Democracy Services Officer) and Courtney Leigh Jones (Democracy Services Officer).

1. APOLOGIES

Everyone was welcomed to the meeting noting that it was Owain Glyndŵr Day. Council staff and Councillors were thanked for their tireless work over the summer period.

Catrin Thomas was welcomed to the meeting in her new role as the Council's Corporate Director.

No apologies were received.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

Declarations of personal interest in relation to Item 6 were received by Cllr Paul Rowlinson as he was on the Ynni Ogwen Board, and from Cllr Menna Trenholme as she was a director at Gwyrfaï Gwyrdd. It was noted that these were voluntary roles, therefore were not prejudicial interests and the Councillors did not leave the meeting.

3. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

There were no matters arising from overview and scrutiny.

5. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8 JULY 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2025 were accepted as a true record.

6. LOCAL AREA ENERGY PLAN

The report was presented by Cllr Craig ab Iago.

DECISION

The report was accepted.

DISCUSSION

The report was praised, but it was noted that it was unlikely that resources and funding would come from the Welsh Government to implement the Scheme at this stage.

Concern was expressed that the climate change plans were not part of Welsh culture at the moment, despite the importance of meeting the targets set. It was noted that there was uncertainty about the outcome of the Senedd Election in 2026 and how this would affect the focus on environmental issues moving forward.

It was confirmed that the depth of this scheme meant that it could be used regardless of the Election outcome.

The importance of working with other organizations in Gwynedd to implement the Scheme was emphasised. Everyone was reminded that this was not just a scheme for Cyngor Gwynedd but a scheme for the whole of Gwynedd.

It was stated that the Scheme formed part of a network of local energy schemes for each county in Wales and would feed into an existing regional scheme. It was added that these schemes would hopefully lead to a Government-led national energy plan.

It was explained that the Scheme sought to look at where and by whom the energy demand was, and how the energy was generated and distributed. It was added that the Technical Report was useful as it included a valuable and trustworthy database, but it was confirmed that this would need to be updated in a few years, as situations changed.

It was recommended that this scheme needed to be reviewed and updated every 3 – 5 years.

Comments arising from the discussion:

- It was mentioned that Ambition North Wales had a number of plans in the pipeline and it was asked whether there were any intentions to discuss with them to try and secure funding to realise plans from the report. It was explained that there was an intention to ensure discussions at a regional level, including with Ambition North Wales, and that applications for further funding were being submitted to the

Welsh Government or relevant organisations to fund the schemes.

- It was stated that over £270 million had been invested in green energy between 2012 and 2025 but that the returns from this were over £400 million. Reiterating the importance of this Scheme, it was added that investment in green energy helped the economy as well as job creation, which in turn ensured that we reached the net zero targets.
- It was noted that these statistics had been highlighted by the Government when talking about a circular economy, despite not investing to deliver such schemes.

7. HOLDING A BANGOR BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS BALLOT

The report was presented by Cllr R Medwyn Hughes.

DECISION

The report was accepted.

DISCUSSION

The report was presented stating that the Business Improvement District (BID) in Bangor had submitted a notice to the Council for the renewal of the BID.

It was noted that the notice did not appear to conflict with any Council policy, so with Cabinet's approval, the next step would be for the Council to instruct the returning officer to hold the vote on the dates set out in the report.

It was added that this issue was technical and practical in terms of arrangements.

8. 2024-25 ANNUAL REPORT, STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN 2024-28

The report was presented by Cllr Llio Elenid Owen

DECISION

The report was accepted.

DISCUSSION

The report was presented stating that this was the first annual report of the Equality Scheme 2024-2028.

It was explained that the report set out the progress that had been made against the 5 equality objectives set out in the report, which would be a priority for the Council throughout the duration of the Plan.

There was pride in the fact that most of the work earmarked for the period had been completed, and any work outstanding would be carried out this year.

Some of the main points of the report were highlighted:

- It was mentioned that the Council had received a level 2 accreditation of the Disability Confident Scheme and was now working towards level 3.
- It was noted that a Staff Equality Forum had been initiated so that staff could contribute and give views on equality issues within their employment.
- It was highlighted that training was being delivered to staff and elected members on neurodiversity. It was added that the numbers of staff completing the mandatory training were now available to the members, and priority areas for training had been identified so work to organise training in the other equality areas was underway.
- It was disclosed that the Housing and Property Department had been gathering information through the Ardal Ni corporate survey, maximising the number of affordable housing and providing support to increase housing efficiency. It was reiterated that procedures had been streamlined so that it was easier for people to access housing support grant and the social housing system.
- It was noted that actions had been put in place for schools through the analysis of the 'The Cost of Attending School' Charter, looking at the financial and emotional cost for children to attend school.
- A Communications and Engagement Co-ordinator had been appointed to establish effective procedures to obtain the input of children and young people, through school councils and forums, ensuring action was taken on the pupil's voice, regardless of their protected characteristics and needs.

It was explained that several different departments across the Council had been involved in producing the Plan, which had contributed to its success.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- Thanks were given for the report, and pride was expressed to see a focus being placed on engaging with communities and listening to the voices of the county's young people.
- A question was raised about the response stemming from the Staff Equality Forum. It was confirmed that there had been one meeting so far, and that the intention was to build on this.
- The Housing and Property Department's contribution to the plan was mentioned and attention was drawn to the fact that the One Stop Shop was now open. It was noted that this would widen public access to housing services which would ultimately promote equality.
- The importance of continuity in the Council's commitment to equality was emphasised. The excellent work carried out by the autism team was also mentioned. Pride was expressed that Gwynedd was an Age Friendly Authority designated by the World Health Organisation, and that this scheme confirmed the Council's commitment to that designation.
- It was reiterated that it was essential for the Cabinet to always consider equality in its decisions.
- It was highlighted that 18 equality-related complaints were identified in the report, 7 of which were genuine complaints; it was asked how this information was being used to improve services. It was noted that 'access' had been identified as a pattern in these complaints, and it was added that

it was already a topic within the Plan and that the problem areas had been identified and were being addressed.

There was talk of placing an additional focus within the Women in Leadership project on women from ethnic minority backgrounds and those with disabilities, for example. It was confirmed that this matter was already being addressed within Objective 1 of the Plan.

9. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

The report was presented by Cllr Huw Wyn Jones.

DECISION

The report was accepted.

DISCUSSION

It was explained that the Medium-Term Financial Plan was essential in supporting the Council's resilience, by providing a strategic forecast of the financial outlook for a period of 3 years, commencing on 1 April 2026.

It was noted that these estimates were based on the latest available forecasts of the change in income that the Council will receive over the period (through the Government Grant and Council Tax), and the additional expenditure requirements over the same period.

It was stressed that the report was a live document, and that it would change as more information became available.

It was clarified that the Council did not expect to find out what the Government Grant would be for 2026/27 until at least November of this year, but with the prospect that the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Welsh Language intended to increase all Government budget expenditure headings by 2% for 2026/27, the Council could expect an annual increase of around 1.5% in its financial settlement.

It was stated that a cumulative funding gap of £40 million was being forecasted over the next three years.

It was mentioned that the Council had received additional funding during this year from the Welsh Government; it was noted that this was welcomed but that receiving this money at the start of the year as part of the settlement would be more beneficial for local authorities.

It was confirmed that the lack of clarity and inconsistent messages from the Welsh Government and Westminster Government made forward planning based on the likely 2026/27 settlement more difficult than usual.

Reference was made to the Welsh Government's threat of a "rollover budget" for 2026/27, which was a continuation of this year's budget including only a small addition towards inflation. It was added that this meant that there would be no remuneration of the other significant costs faced by local authorities. It was warned that this would be a budget cut unless the rate of inflation fell before April

2026.

Grave concern was expressed about the potential funding gap facing the Council, highlighting that the Council had already squeezed the budget and had identified £74 million of cuts and savings over the last 15 years or so.

There were concerns about the direct impact of further cuts on the services delivered to Gwynedd residents and their impact on communities, unless the Council received a fair settlement. These figures were noted to be alarming, underlining the importance of considering the next steps.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- Reference was made to this uncertain situation, noting that there was a considerable difference between the level of inflation and the increase in the settlement. It was noted that having to increase council tax to close this deficit would be a direct consequence of the Welsh Government's failure to increase the settlement in line with inflation.
- It was added that local authorities, through the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA), had been pushing for multi-year settlements, but that the Government's promises of that had not materialised.

10. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The report was presented by Cllr Nia Jeffreys.

DECISION

The forward programme was approved.

The meeting commenced at 1.00 pm and concluded at 2.00 pm

CHAIRMAN