Complete Agenda

CABINET

CYNGOR GWYNEDD

DYDDIAD	Tuesday, 11th November, 2025
AMSER	1.00 pm
LLEOLIAD	Cyfarfod Rhithiol / Virtual Meeting
PWYNT CYSWLLT	Gwen Alaw Roberts Gwenalawroberts@gwynedd.llyw.cymru cabinet@gwynedd.llyw.cymru

AELODAU CABINET CYNGOR GWYNEDD

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

Language

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3	URGENT MATTERS			
4	MATTERS ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY			
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THE CABINET, TUESDAY, 14 OCTOBER 2025

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

Also present -
Catrin Thomas (Corporate Director), Iwan Evans (Monitoring Officer), Ffion Madog Evans (Assistant Head of Finance), Steffan Jones (Head of Highways, Engineering and YGC Department), Amanda Murray (Municipal Asset Manager), Gwern ap Rhisiart (Head of Education Department), Debbie Jones (Assistant Head of Education Services), Dafydd Wyn Williams (Head of Environment Department), Heledd Williams (Planning Policy Team Leader), Bob Thomas (Planning Policy Team Leader), Bethan Richardson (Climate Change Programme Manager), Sioned Eirian Williams (Head of Economy and Community Department), Cllr Dafydd Davies (Local Member, Clynnog Ward), Cllr Peter Thomas (Local Member, Llanllyfni Ward) and Gwen Roberts (Democracy Services Officer).

1. APOLOGIES

Everyone was welcomed to the meeting, and the staff who had been out looking after the streets during the storm a week earlier were thanked.

No apologies were received.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

Councillor Llio Elenid Owen declared a personal interest in relation to Item 12, as she was a Local Member. The member did not consider it to be a prejudicial interest, and did not leave the meeting during the discussion.

3. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

There were no matters arising from overview and scrutiny.

5. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2025 were accepted as a true record.

6. LOCAL TOILETS STRATEGY

The report was presented by Cllr June Jones.

DECISION

To accept the report.

DISCUSSION

The Report was presented, highlighting that the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017 places a duty on all local authorities in Wales to produce and publish a local toilets strategy for their area. She noted that the current Strategy dated back to 2019 so it needed to be upgraded.

She was pleased that there were 60 public toilets across Gwynedd and added that this was due to the support received through the Partnerships Scheme. She noted that the Scheme was going well, thanks to financial support from community and town councils. The member drew attention to the community toilets, where businesses within the county received a grant that enabled them to open their toilets for public use.

The financial challenge of maintaining the public toilets was reiterated, but it was confirmed that grants had been received to improve this provision. She referred to the examples in the report of this work being underway, drawing particular attention to the work that was currently being carried out in Abersoch and Barmouth.

She talked about the *Changing Places* provision that was available in the county, for meeting the needs of those with multiple learning disabilities. She stated that the stock of public toilets in Gwynedd was old and therefore challenging to adapt without significant financial investment. She raised the issue of these buildings needing to be staffed, so it was intended to work with other departments to discuss further steps.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- The department was thanked for considering the Age Friendly aspect in the report, allowing the input of other departments into the plan in order to develop other aspects of this plan.

- It was questioned whether smaller toilets and sinks for children could be created, going forward. It was explained that there had been discussions about this, and that adapting some toilets for children would form part of the future strategy.
- Reference was made to the *Changing Places* provision, noting that it was great to see such a provision in the county. It was reiterated that the premises where these toilets were based needed to be staffed, so it was proposed to work with other departments to be able to create more of these toilets in Gwynedd.
- It was noted that the Welsh Government had carried out a consultation to obtain information on what people wanted to see in *Changing Places* toilets.
- The role of businesses in the strategy was mentioned, explaining that there were currently 41 community toilets in Gwynedd receiving a grant to enable the facilities to be used by the public. The members were assured that the Council carried out assessments of these toilets.

7. MODERNISING EDUCATION – YSGOL NEBO

The report was presented by Cllr Dewi Jones.

DECISION
To accept the report.

DISCUSSION

The importance of this item to the local area and the strong feelings around the item were emphasised.
The members were reminded that the decision before the Cabinet at this meeting was the decision to hold a statutory consultation.
He talked about the challenge facing the whole county due to declining pupil numbers, rising costs, and the need to ensure the best education and social opportunities for all children.
He assured the members that the consultation process would be open, transparent and meaningful, with all concerns being considered before a final decision was made.
He explained that discussions had taken place with the school community about the possible options, and he pointed out that the school's ideas for possible ways forward had been included in the supplementary papers. He reiterated that full consideration had been given to all options.

The participants who had been involved in the discussions held at the school were thanked, and he noted that those discussions had been constructive. It was noted that the department was required to balance things against a specific set of measures.

While constructive options had been proposed as ways forward, it was confirmed that the issue of pupil numbers at the school had led to this proposal.

The Local Member for Clynnog Ward was welcomed to the meeting. He acknowledged that the School Organisation Code laid down a procedural presumption against the closure of rural schools and added that he did not believe that the evidence presented before the Cabinet satisfied the test for closing the school.
He noted that Ysgol Nebo was not failing as the number of pupils had increased by 50% in the last year and that a number of these pupils came from outside the catchment area as well.
He referred to the financial argument for closing Ysgol Nebo, reiterating that the potential savings from closing the School were smaller than they seemed. He added the need to consider the costs of redundancy and the risk of a higher number of children receiving home education, which would put long-term pressure on the Council.
He talked about the Governing Body's proposal to develop Ysgol Nebo into a pilot site for children with additional learning, emotional and social needs, in order to try to keep more children in mainstream education.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- A member asked how the voices of these children who were currently attending Ysgol Nebo will be heard in the consultation. The member was assured that the voices of children and young people would be heard, as had been done previously, and that specific sessions would be conducted with children from Ysgol Nebo as well as children from Ysgol Llanllyfni.
- It was acknowledged that this was a challenging decision, and it was asked if the Local Member's comments would be included in the consultation and whether other options would be considered. It was noted that the options proposed had been interpreted in a way that aligned with the criteria for a mainstream school, which would therefore enable Ysgol Nebo to remain open at the same time as offering a provision to certain groups of children.
- A member asked about the use of the school building should a decision be made to close it. Reference was made to the After-use Policy, which meant that consideration would be given to the use of the building by the Council, and there would be a discussion about community use.
- It was pointed out that the numbers of pupils had been decreasing for decades now. It was noted that Ysgol Nebo had been through difficulties of low pupil numbers before, but the figure was not rising. It was added that there were fewer children within communities to fill many schools.

8. MODERNISING EDUCATION – YSGOL BALADEULYN

The report was presented by Cllr Dewi Jones

DECISION

To accept the report.

DISCUSSION

He presented the item and emphasised how difficult and sensitive discussions of this kind were, and the emotion that was attached to this item as well.
He talked about the Cabinet's duty to consider several factors in reaching a decision – the reduced number of children in our communities and the falling birth rate, the financial challenges facing the Council, and the need to ensure that the education system was sustainable.
He assured the members that everything would be done so that the consultation process was open, accessible and that all voices would be heard and respected.

He revealed that discussions had been held with the School community in order to consider all available options. Reference was made to the content of the papers outlining the comments received at these meetings, and ideas by the School about possible ways forward.
The school community was thanked, and the member noted that the engagement sessions had been helpful. It was reiterated that this had come about because of the reality of declining numbers of children in schools, and that this proposal was not a reflection of the school.

The Local Member for Llanllyfni Ward expressed disappointment at the proposal to close Ysgol Baladeulyn, stating that it would be a blow to the school community if it were to close.
He acknowledged the financial challenge of maintaining a small school but noted the impact on the village if the school closed.
Concerns were raised about the impact of closing the school on the number of people who would want to move to the village, and the potential impact on the Welsh language locally.
It was noted that clarification regarding the use of the building would be required in the event of the school closing.
Queries were made about federation with Ysgol Talysarn and the addition of a specialist unit to Ysgol Baladeulyn for children with additional learning needs. It was proposed that this model would save resources and make better use of the setting.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- There were concerns about the impact that closing the school would have on the area's Welsh-speaking community. It was confirmed that impact

assessments had been carried out and it was noted that there may be an impact on the children's social use of Welsh. It was mentioned that mitigation measures would be needed to ensure that the Welsh language remained strong should the proposal be accepted.

- A member asked about staff redundancies should the proposal be accepted. It was emphasised that no decision had been made at the moment, but there was a team of human resources experts to support the School. It was reiterated that the intention would be to find alternative jobs for those people, but it was added that this was not a straightforward process as it was the responsibility of School Governors to appoint staff.
- It was questioned how the projections for pupil numbers were calculated. It was noted that these projections were submitted annually by the headteachers, and that the number of births in the area was also used to calculate these projections.
- The importance of the School building to the community was reiterated, and reference was made to the Council's after-use policy. In addition, a member talked about holding discussions with the community to see if they had a use in mind for the building.

9. GWYNEDD AND ANGLESEY ALN AND INCLUSION AGREEMENT

The report was presented by Cllr Dewi Jones.

DECISION

To accept the report.

DISCUSSION

It was revealed that Gwynedd and Anglesey had been sharing one ALN service since 2017 and while there were strengths to this, it was noted that the ALN service was not managing to meet the needs of every child.
It was explained that the number of these needs had increased significantly and had changed in nature over the last few years. He added that there had been a 37% increase in the demand for this ALN team between 2022 and 2024.
He indicated that Gwynedd and Anglesey had gone in slightly different directions since 2017, which therefore made this service more difficult to run.
He emphasised that the priority in the wake of this proposal was to ensure that a better service is offered to the people of Gwynedd. It was proposed that a smaller service would be better for children and families, as well as being easier for staff to work within.

He said that this proposal was about a joint ALN and inclusion service. He confirmed that this was not a proposal to separate the ALN Service from Anglesey immediately, but an opportunity for discussions with the Head and staff of the Anglesey Education department in order to propose possible ideas for moving forward.
Observations arising from the discussion:

- A member asked why choose to address this now? It was highlighted that what lay behind this was the need to listen to the voice of schools and the residents of Gwynedd, and the need to improve the service and provision offered.

10. ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT - LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2024-2025

The report was presented by Cllr Craig ab Iago.

DECISION

To accept the report.

DISCUSSION
The report was presented, stating that it was a statutory requirement to submit this report and submit it to the Welsh Government every year.
He explained that the Plan had focused primarily on developments within the local planning area of Gwynedd only since 2023.
He noted that it was primarily based on planning applications that had been determined or implemented over the year.
He set out the purpose of the annual Monitoring Report, stating that it assessed to see whether a review of the Plan was required. He added that a review report had been published and work was underway to prepare a new development plan for the local planning area of Gwynedd.

Reference was made to the table in the report which provided an overview of how the indicators had performed, stating that it confirmed that the planning policies met the main objectives of the plan.
It was highlighted that permission for 173 new residential units had been granted in the 2024/25 period, of which 75 were affordable housing. It was reiterated that 140 of the 212 houses that had been completed during the year, were also affordable homes.

Reference was made to the recommendations of the Planning Policy Working Group, which were included in the report.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- It was stated that the development of the plan was a lengthy process, and that the plan would need to be brought back to the Cabinet and the Full Council in due course.
- A member queried the discrepancy in the figures for the numbers of Welsh speakers that were noted in the report. It was noted that the figures provided by the Welsh Government often differed from the conclusions of the census. It was added that the Government had commissioned work to find out why there was a difference in the figures, but there were no clear answers at the moment.
- Members expressed pride in the high number of affordable homes that had been built.
- Clarification was sought regarding the figure for houses completed on the sites allocated for housing. It was explained that the percentage stated in the report referred to those houses that had been completed on designated sites. As this was the end of the Plan, it was reiterated that several of the designated sites had already obtained planning permission, or that work had previously taken place on that site. It was confirmed that the remainder of the completed houses aligned with the Plan's policies, as they could be on windfall sites. It was noted that small sites were not designated, but that many of the developments were carried out on these sites.
- Referring to the target of houses that need to be built, it was questioned why so many houses need to be built if Gwynedd's population was decreasing. It was noted that the Government's projections along with a number of other factors had been taken into account. It was added that, at the time of producing the Joint Plan, there was talk of major developments such as the new Wylfa, which would likely affect the north of Gwynedd. It was reiterated that much had changed in the meantime and that the new plan would consider what the Government's projections were as well as local need, before proposing a figure in the Plan.

11. CLIMATE AND NATURE EMERGENCY PLAN: ANNUAL REPORT 2024/2025

The report was presented by Cllr Craig ab Iago.

DECISION

To accept the report.

DISCUSSION

The member was proud of the work that had been undertaken over a number of years, noting that the Council was at the forefront in this field.
It was noted that the period of this annual report covered the third year of operation for the Plan.

He drew attention to the fact that the Report set out how the Council responded to Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 in each chapter.
He explained that there had been an increase in the levels of carbon emissions since the previous year. It was stated that it may be misleading to make one-year comparisons in a field where long-term action was required. It was reiterated that the work carried out by the department would take time to come to fruition.

It was confirmed that this Report had already received comments from the Communities Scrutiny committee, which were included in the Report, but there had been no change to the Report as a result.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- It was noted that contractors were not statutorily required to collect data on their carbon emissions, but new guidance was on the way to set out how public bodies can help their contractors to collect the data. It was reiterated that it was hoped that the largest contractors would be able to provide carbon management plans, but it would take more time and support for smaller contractors to do so.
- A member queried what was being done to reduce the emissions arising from energy use in buildings and from travel. It was explained that heating was responsible for the high emissions from the buildings, because gas was currently the main source of heating for many Council buildings. In terms of travel, it was reiterated that the Council's fleet of electric cars had grown. As there were no suitable electric vehicles available for HGVs, there was not much the Council could do in this area at the moment.
- The Cabinet Member for the Environment was asked for his response to the Scrutiny Committee's recommendation. He expressed that he does not believe targets were appropriate here, adding that he would like to find another way to ensure that the work was achieved, without setting unrealistic targets. The need to be ambitious and pioneering was emphasised.
- It was pointed out that the project's funding had almost run out, and it was questioned what plans were there to attract more funding to implement the project. It was noted that internal discussions were taking place and added that the Plan relied on being able to attract a number of grants.
- Reference was made to the lack of suitable charging points in the area, questioning what were the challenges that prevented the Council from being able to increase this number across Gwynedd. It was confirmed that the Council was not responsible for the infrastructure to be able to offer a large number of charging points. It was explained that the Council had been providing charging points, but that different types of charging machines were needed to meet the needs of different cohorts of people. It was reiterated that the grid provision also created challenges.

12. DINAS DINLLE CAR PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN

The report was presented by Cllr R Medwyn Hughes.

DECISION

To accept the report.

DISCUSSION

He drew attention to the previous report on this item that was submitted to the Cabinet in June. He added that the report before this meeting of the Cabinet provided an update following detailed legal work to introduce a permanent off-street parking order at Dinas Dinlle Car Park.
The Monitoring Officer noted that the report followed the standard process for creating a parking order, therefore the proposal requested delegated rights to proceed with the process for creating a parking order.

The meeting commenced at 1:00pm and concluded at 3:15pm.

CYNGOR GWYNEDD - Report to Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet

Title of item:	Corporate Parent Panel Annual Report 2024/25
Cabinet Member:	Cllr. Menna Trenholme, Cabinet Member for Children and Supporting Families
Relevant officer:	Dafydd Gibbard, Chief Executive
Date of meeting:	11 November 2025

1. Decision sought:

The Cabinet is asked to accept and note the information in the report which reports on the work of the Corporate Parent Panel for the 2024/25 year.

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

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on what has been achieved by the Corporate Parent Panel during the period.

It is essential that Cabinet members are aware of the Panel's work and are able to satisfy themselves that the Panel has undertaken the work required both thoroughly and conscientiously.

3. Introduction and Rationale

3.1 Background / Introduction

Cyngor Gwynedd and its partners have a clear responsibility to be a Corporate Parent for every child in care in Gwynedd, and specifically to ensure effective, stable, safe and suitable care for looked after children and young people, including those who are leaving care. This is a report on the work that has been done to ensure that the Council undertakes its responsibility.

3.2 The reasoning and justification for recommending the decision

It is believed that the report is an accurate and fair summary of the Panel's work.

An overall Well-being impact assessment has not been completed for the Annual Report, but Equality Impact Assessments will have been completed for the individual elements contained within.

3.3 Next steps

Nothing to note.

4. Views of the Statutory Officers

4.1 Chief Finance Officer

The report is factual, explaining to Cabinet the work undertaken by the Panel during 2024-25. The implementation of the decision sought will not create a new spending commitment.

4.2 Monitoring Officer

No observations to add in relation to propriety.

List of Appendices:

Corporate Parent Panel Annual Report 2024/25

Annual Report of the Gwynedd Corporate Parent Panel

2024/25



1. Introduction and context: The Role of the Corporate Parent Panel

1.1. Cyngor Gwynedd and its partners have statutory responsibilities to act as corporate parents for looked-after children.

1.2. Children and young people come into the Council's care under very difficult circumstances, but the Council is as ambitious for these children as anyone would be for their own children. The aim is to live life as happy as possible. Any child that is looked after by the Council has the right to expect the same from their corporate parent as any other child would expect from a good parent.

1.3. This means that the Council will:

- Understand their needs, talents and dreams, and will support their interests;
- Be highly ambitious about their future and will expect the best from them and on their behalf;
- Celebrate their successes and support them through challenges;
- Listen to their opinions and incorporate these in services and policies;
- Ensure that they are part of planning their own lives and include them in decisions;
- Acknowledge, support and respect their identity in every way;
- Promote and support their educational attainment to the best of their ability, ensuring access to a high standard of education and extensive learning opportunities;
- Support their health and emotional well-being;
- Provide a safe and stable home where there is a sense of belonging;
- Support their journey from childhood into adulthood and promote their economic potential that contributes to society as a whole.

1.4. To support this role, the Council has established a Corporate Parent Panel. The Panel has a specific and direct responsibility to ensure that appropriate and suitable multi-agency services are available and are of a high quality, accessible and meet their needs. There is collaboration with partners to ensure the best possible outcomes for each looked-after child.

1.5. Membership of the Corporate Parent Panel includes:

- Chief Executive (Chair)
- Cabinet Member for the Children and Supporting Families Department
- Cabinet Member for Education
- Statutory Director of Social Services (the role of the Children and Young People's Lead Director is also included)
- Head of the Children and Supporting Families Department
- Head of Education
- Children's Services Manager, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board

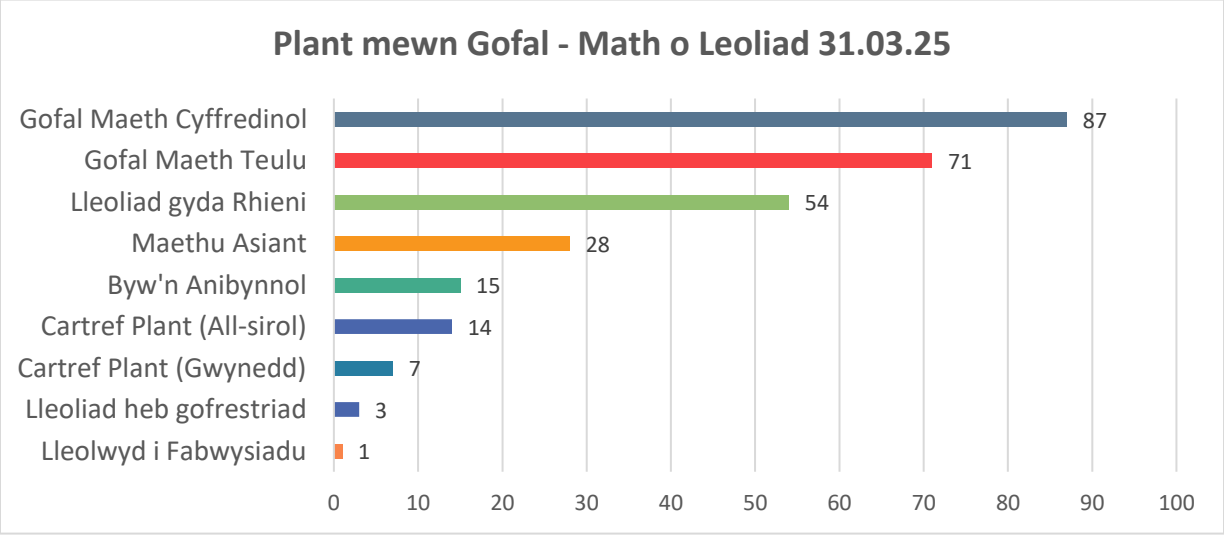
2. Data: Overview of the previous year

2.1. The following information is presented based on the end of quarter four figures (March 2025). It includes the comparative figures from the previous five years:

Looked-after Children on 31 March	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Number of looked-after children at the end of the year	291	281	273	281	281	280
Number of children coming into care during the year	82	46	46	59	65	53
Number of children leaving care during the year	44	56	54	51	65	54
Number of children who are Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers	1	0	3	15	14	4

2.2. On 31 March 2025, there were **280** looked-after children, i.e. one less than the previous year. However, it is important to draw attention to the fact that some children left care during the year while other children came into care, therefore the general number remained fairly consistent despite the changes within the group.

2.3. Type of placement



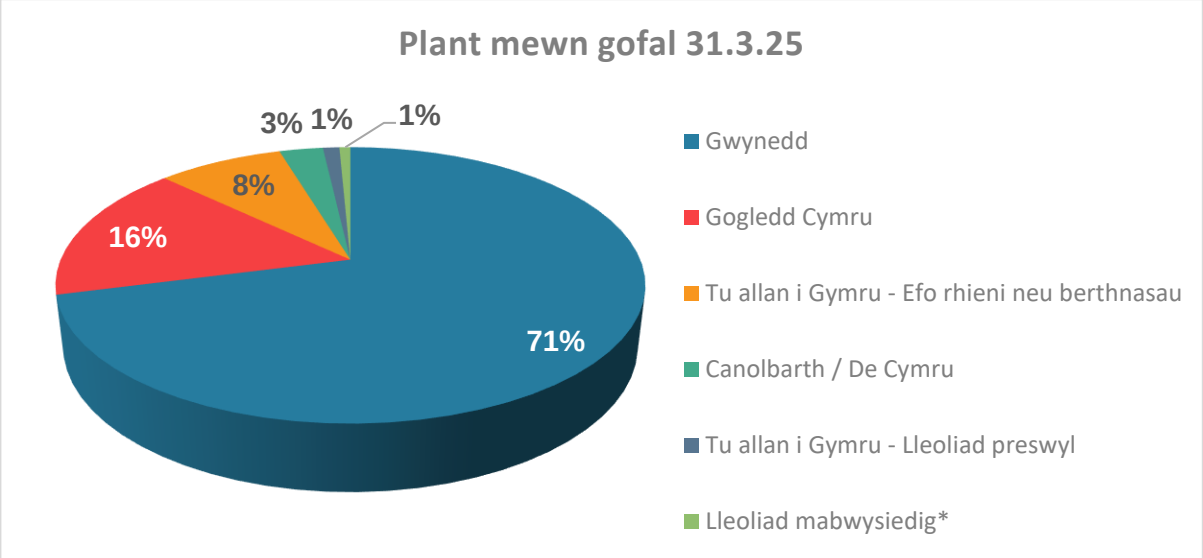
2.3.1. As the above graph shows, of the **280** looked-after children in our care at the end of March 2025, there were **186** (66%) in foster placements, **21** (8%) in residential placements and **54** (19%) placed with their parents. There was **1** child in adopted placements at the end of the quarter with **15** young people living independently with support.

2.3.2. Unfortunately, during 2024/25 unregistered placement arrangements (OWR) had to be used for **3** young people (compared with **5** for last year). Historically, the use of such arrangements has been very rare, and this increase reflects the situation nationally, due to lack of registered placements. This is especially true of teenagers with intensive and complex needs or who have experienced a placement breakdown due to challenging behaviour. The team is working hard to try to ensure registered placements for young people, and it is anticipated that the number will reduce further in 2025/26.

2.4. Geographical location

2.4.1. At the end of the year, **208** (74%) of looked-after children were placed in Gwynedd. This is an increase of **4%** since 2023/24. There were **42** (15%) of children placed in north Wales, with **26** (9%) of these children placed in neighbouring counties (Anglesey and Conwy).

2.4.2. For some children, there is a choice for the Council to place them with general foster carers in the County or with extended family. The extended family may live outside the boundaries of Gwynedd and therefore the child will be placed out-of-county, but the placement will continue within the extended family. A total of **21** (7%) of children were placed outside Wales, with **3** of these in residential placements and the rest are either in placements with parents or relatives.



** These placements are not disclosed as it is sensitive information*

2.5. Number of children entering care during the year

2.5.1. During the whole year, **53 children came into care**, compared with **65** during 2023/24.

2.5.2. The following table shows the ages of the children that came into care during 2024/25. **62%** of the children who entered care during the year were under five years old, with the majority of them having been on the Child Protection Register as part of safeguarding processes before entering care. This was a substantial increase compared to 2023/24, where **37**% of children who entered care were under 5 years old.

Under 1 years old	1 – 5 years old	6 – 10 years old	11 – 15 years old	16+
19	14	7	10	3

2.5.3. The increase in the numbers under 5 years old that enter care is not unique to Gwynedd, and the same pattern can be seen across north Wales and the whole of Wales. Some of the main reasons why children under 5 years old enter care are concerns about the parents' ability to safeguard, intentional abuse, alcohol abuse and substance misuse, domestic abuse and mental health issues, and mothers whose previous children had entered care becoming pregnant and not having made the necessary adjustments in their lives to be able to safely care for the child.

2.6. Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

2.6.1. Please note that the Council has received **30** Asylum Seekers through the Home Office Transfer Scheme since December 2022. The majority come from Afghanistan, although small numbers have arrived from other countries such as Iraq, Turkey, Vietnam and Egypt. **4** of these were looked-after children on 31 March 2025 (with **26** of them now having left care).

2.6.2. Asylum seekers represent **2%** of the children who entered care this year, compared with **18%** in 2023/24. Very little background information is available in these cases, and identifying suitable placements is the main challenge due to their age, linguistic and cultural needs and very often due to the serious trauma they have experienced.

2.6.3. In May 2024, the Panel received a special presentation on Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers by the Post-16 Team. Some challenges the team face were highlighted including various support requirements with the young people having experienced substantial trauma, working with a cohort at a high risk of exploitation, translation arrangements as well as the challenge of finding suitable placements. The Council has already secured an additional resource for the Post-16 Team, and two new temporary posts were created during 2023/24.

"I would like to express my thanks for the incredible support I was given. The commitment to my welfare, education and health has made a significant difference to my life...

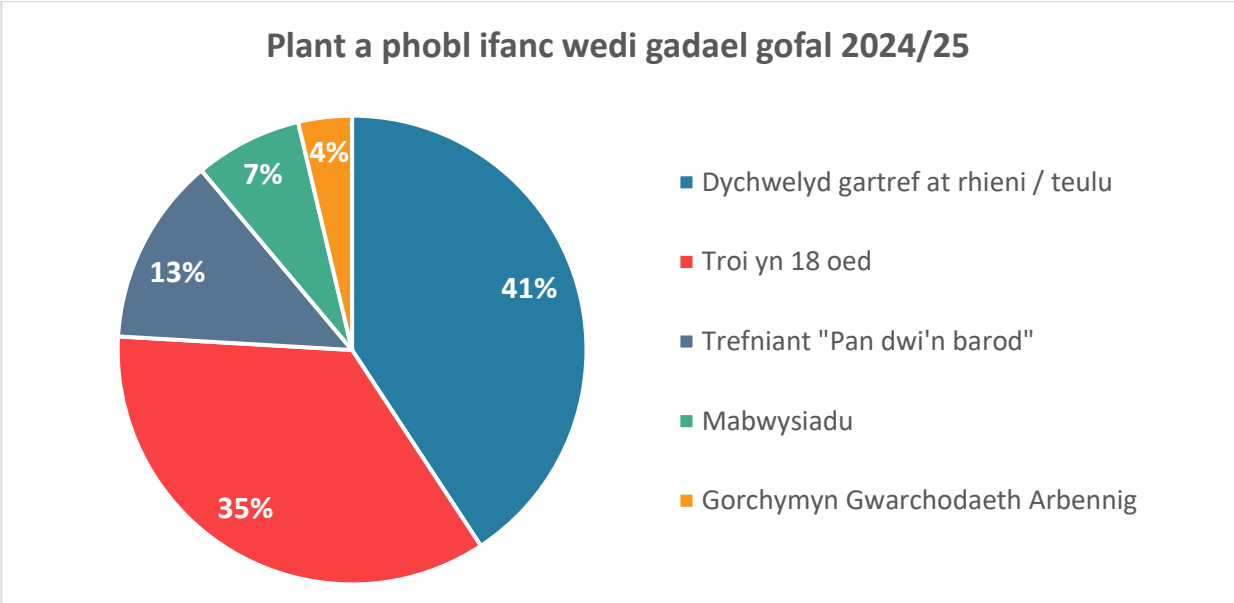
Growing up in Afghanistan, I saw and faced many challenges, but these have given me strength and have fostered hope in me. Moving to another country is never easy, but Wales has given me many opportunities to grow as an individual and an opportunity for a better future.

When I came here, one of the first challenges was to adapt to a new culture and lifestyle. The language barrier was significant, but I was determined to learn and take part. People have been very welcoming and supportive. Their kindness has shown me, despite our different backgrounds, that common values such as compassion always makes us as one."

Feedback from an Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker

2.7. Children who have left care during the year

2.7.1. During the whole year, **54** children left care**. 18** young persons turned 18 years old, with **7** of them remaining with their foster carers under the '*When I'm Ready'* scheme and **0** transferred to the Adults services with complex needs. **22** children returned to their parents' care following short periods being looked after. A care order was completely revoked for **12** children. A Special Guardianship Order or a Supervision Order was made for **2** children (which means that they are no longer looked-after children). Adoption Orders were made for **4** children during the period.



2.8. Support to prevent children from becoming looked-after

2.8.1. The Council offers different tiers of support for families – varying from the Team around the Family, which intervenes early when problems emerge to more intense support from the Trobwynt Service for children who are about to come into care. The teams work closely with families, understanding their challenges and collaborating with parents to improve their situation. This approach helps prevent placing children in care unnecessarily.

2.8.2. Between April 2024 and March 2025, the Trobwynt Services worked with **208** children**.** The team started working with **159** new cases during this period. During the year, the team's intervention ended for **163** children. A **104** of these lived at home with their parents without a care order at the start of the intervention. At the end of the intervention, **101** continued to live at home and **10** have returned home from being looked-after.

3. The Panel's actions over the year

3.1. A stable and safe home: Fostering and Adoption

3.1.1. Stable placements are essential to create a sense of belonging and security in the life of every child. When a looked-after child needs to be placed, the wish is to keep them close to their family and home area. We therefore focus on finding ways of accommodating and providing care to children and young people closer to home, so that they can continue to be part of the community and maintain their support networks.

3.1.2. Practical and professional support is provided to all local foster families. Personal examples can be seen that witness the impact and demonstrating the true value and long-term influence of fostering on the lives of children and young people.

> ***"My foster family meant everything to me, and they still do...There was a sense of belonging and that they really wanted me, I'd never experienced that before. My foster carers chose to welcome me into their home and for me to be part of their family.***
>
> ***For the first time ever, I felt part of the family dynamic, this was something I had wanted all my life. Having parents who treated me like their daughter. Having relationships with siblings for the first time – although it wasn't long before we started fighting as siblings!***
>
> ***But it felt normal and natural. 'I was really happy. Happier than I'd ever been before."***
>
> *A young woman in local foster care*

3.1.3. The Council is proud of its ability to offer foster care of the highest standard and it invests in recruiting, assessing and registering the county's foster carers. At the end of March 2025, there were **72** general foster homes registered with the Maethu Cymru Gwynedd Service. This is compared to **61** in 2024, and therefore a positive increase is seen in the numbers.

3.1.4. Practical and professional support is provided to all foster families. At the end of the year there were **9** (3%) looked-after children in Gwynedd who had experienced 3 or more moves in their placement. This is lower than the percentage for 2023/24, i.e. **7%**.

3.1.5. During 2024/25, the Panel developed a **benefits package** for Gwynedd foster carers. The benefits include:

- A 50% reduction (25% for short break Foster Carers) in the Council Tax bills of foster carers registered with the Council.
- Free annual parking permit.
- Unlimited use of leisure centres.

3.1.6. Also, the offer includes adopting a **Fostering Friendly Policy** for foster carers who are employed by the Council. The policy offers more flexibility in their work arrangements to assist them to meet the needs of the children in their care, including up to an additional 5 days of leave to enable them to undertake their fostering responsibilities.

3.1.7. The purpose of the package is to encourage and attract more to be Foster Carers for Gwynedd as well as to show appreciation of the experienced and committed carers that are already registered with the Council. By making fostering more feasible financially to some residents, and this can even attract those who currently foster with an Independent Fostering Agency to transfer to Gwynedd.

3.1.8. The package is scheduled to be formally submitted to the Cabinet in April 2025, before proceeding to implement the changes and promote the offer during 2025/26.

3.2. <u>A stable and safe home: Small Group Homes Project</u>

3.2.1. Sometimes individual circumstances mean that there is a need to place a child in a residential placement. This comes from a combination of factors that may include complex needs, challenging behaviour, previously unsuccessful foster placements or specialist needs that means that a placement in a family environment would not be suitable.

3.2.2. Developing residential provision for looked-after children is central to the Welsh Government's vision of creating a not-for-profit model for children's services, and is a clear priority for Gwynedd Councillors, who want to see young people supported and housed locally, rather than being located far from the county.

3.2.3. The Small Group Homes is a Project in the Council's Plan for 2023-28 that seeks to address this need. The proposal is to develop registered homes for small groups of up to two children, which will allow them to receive care in Gwynedd, attend local schools, and fully participate in the lives of their communities.

3.2.4. Over the past year, significant progress has been made with the Small Group Homes Scheme. Three new properties were purchased in 2024/25, and the first home was opened in Morfa Bychan, with two children now living there. A manager and a full team of staff have been

appointed to this home, and it is hoped to complete the official registration process with Care Inspectorate Wales early in 2025/26.

3.2.5. In addition, a second home was purchased in Dinorwig and the necessary work is underway to prepare it for registration. A third home was also purchased in Edern, with children expected to move in over the next few months.

3.2.6. During the next year, further steps are underway to explore opportunities in Meirionnydd, including an option to develop on Council-owned land.

3.3. Supporting health and well-being

3.3.1. **Health Assessments**

3.3.1.1. The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 states that all looked-after children must have a health assessment. When a child comes "into care", a community paediatrician should undertake an initial health assessment (IHA) within 28 days.

3.3.1.2. **43** New Health Assessments were due to be carried out during the year 2024-2025 up to 1st April 2025, with **63%** carried out within the required timeframe. Of those that were late the majority were due either to the late sharing of consent and paperwork with the Health Board, or due to placement transfers resulting in requests having to go to areas outside Gwynedd. These figures have significantly improved in comparison to what was reported the previous year (2023/24).

Year	Number of Assessments to be undertaken	Number of Assessments completed	Percentage of Assessments on time	Waiting for data
2024/25	43	41	63%	2
2023/24	55	52	18%	3

3.3.1.3. A looked-after child is also expected to receive Health Review Assessment on a regular basis (every 6 months for a child under 5 years old and every year for a child over 5 years old). There were **294** Health Review Assessments due during the year, with **64%** carried out within the required timeframe. **36%** were late due to problems with carers' illness, appointment cancellations, families on holiday and unavoidable placement changes.

3.3.1.4. The Panel's intention was to look in more detail at the health assessments' data, scrutinising the width and scope of waiting times during 2024/25 and comparing with the

rest of the children population, however, there has been delay as a result of capacity and other priorities. The Panel will revisit this during the coming year.

3.3.1.5. Despite the delay in looking at the data as a Panel, the Health Board has worked on the scope of health assessments. The Quality Improvement measures for health assessments has shown an improvement and an increase in the information included within health assessments. Clearer reporting of indicators such as dental health, vision, height and weight measures and general social/ physical and mental well-being is shared, with timely sign posting to specialist services as required.

3.3.1.6. The Health Board has also incorporated the children and young people's Health Passport information into the last Review Health Assessment before a child becomes an Adult. These reports are well received by the young people and have provided them with a wealth of Information about their own health and how to access and transition to adult services, if required, in the future.

3.3.2. **GP and Dental Registration**

3.3.2.1. Numbers of children in care, registered with a GP, remains high at **99%**. **86%** are registered with a dentist and are receiving regular follow-up and treatment. The remaining **14%** are mostly babies under the age of one, who do not yet require dental registration.

3.3.2.2. The Health Board has worked closely with Community Dental Services to maintain the Dental Care Pathway for Children in Care – maintaining access to specialist dental services until the age of 25, a service not available to the general public.

3.3.3. **Mental Health**

3.3.3.1. Looked-after children are more likely to experience mental health issues due to their circumstances and experience of trauma. Currently of those in care in Gwynedd, **18** are open to the Children and Young People's Mental Health Service (CAMHS) with a further **13** waiting to be seen. Additionally, **107** children have emotional or behavioural issues, and receive services from Action for Children, or Children in Care CAMHS Consultation services.

3.3.3.2. CAMHS practitioners and the Children Looked After Heath Team collaborate closely with carers to identify and provide appropriate support. Previous pilot work identified the need to offer a 'Carers Report' as a baseline when there are emotional issues that do not reach CAMHS specialist threshold for interventions. The intention is to identify problems earlier,

based on reports from carers, and to offer timely intervention when necessary, with more appointments being offered by the CAMHS Children Looked After Consultation service for advice, support and signposting.

3.3.3.3. There is continued close collaboration between the Local Authority 16+ team and the looked after children health team, particularly during the transition to adult health services.

3.3.4. **Neurodevelopmental Services**

3.3.4.1. There are currently **34** Children Looked After accessing Neurodevelopmental Services.

3.3.4.2. During 2023/2024 discussions began with Welsh Government to improve accessibility to Neurodevelopmental Services, with planned developments in North Wales for a whole systems approach aligned with the Nyth / Nest Framework and 'The Right Door' initiative to improve the child and family's journey and access to services, support and advice. This work is led by the Children's Regional Partnership Board, and the Local Authorities and Health Board work together collaboratively to develop and implement a service based on the need.

3.3.4.3. In addition, the Gwynedd Autism Team provides information, advice and assistance (IAA) to help autistic individuals and their families to make informed decisions and have access to appropriate services.

3.3.5. **Training and Feedback**

3.3.5.1. The Health Board aims to have all the Children Looked After Nurses be trauma aware through the Trauma Informed Schools training, to support and maintain the excellent work in supporting families, children and young people (see 3.5.1 for more on the trauma informed approach).

3.3.5.2. Children in Care Nurses continue to provide training to newly qualified school nurses and health visitors. Training has also been provided to acute hospital services to clarify the steps to take when a child in care is admitted to hospital. The Health Board continues to work closely with Cyngor Gwynedd and provide information sessions to social workers and foster carers to raise awareness of its role. The team has attended health information events across the area which were well attended and received very positive feedback from foster carers.

3.3.5.3. The Health Board has also been integral in developing electronic feedback questionnaires to ensure voices of Children Looked After and their carers are heard. They have opportunity to complete the questionnaires following each health assessment with the QR codes being shared widely. To date the results have been very positive, with comments from children, young people and their carers. Further details will be shared as this service user feedback service matures.

3.4. High-quality education

3.4.1. As the National pilot phase has concluded, the role of the Virtual Head of Looked-after Children has been included in the responsibilities of the Education Department's Safeguarding and Well-being Service. The Safeguarding and Well-being Leader, as well as the Looked-after Children Coordinator, ensure the best provision for looked-after children, looking at outcomes from the beginning of their time at school to post-16.

3.4.2. During the year, every Personal Education Plan has been evaluated using a bespoke Audit. Training and guidance are provided to schools who require further support to ensure that the plans' Targets and content are standard and reflect the voice of the pupil.

3.4.3. There are arrangements in place to receive regular information about the progress and attainment of Looked-after Children through an online system. The schools upload reports and plans to the system to ensure that every supporting agency has access to them. The performance results at the end of Key Stage 4 (year 10 and 11 pupils) are analysed against the pupils' individual targets annually, this allows us to evaluate the performance of individuals and identify good practices to share.

3.4.4. The Looked-after Children grant is part of the Annual Learning and Development Grant from the Welsh Government. The grant was successfully apportioned in its entirety this year. Further improvements have been implemented to the process of applying, evaluating and providing grants with every pupil who is a looked-after child being able to make an application of up to £700 to support their well-being and/or educational development.

3.4.5. A full exam series for GCSE qualifications was introduced in summer 2024. The results for Looked-after Children showed that:

- **19** of Gwynedd pupils were looked-after children in their last year of statutory education (year 11) and were pupils who had been in care for over 12 months**.**
- Every pupil has had the opportunity to sit a wide range of external exams such as GCSEs, BTEC, Entry Level and the Welsh Baccalaureate in accordance with their interests and ability.

- The majority have successfully progressed to suitable college courses or on to Year 12 in schools.
- Results vary from pupil to pupil, reflecting the unique abilities of each learner. While one child achieved excellent results with 10 A*, it is important to recognise that success should be evaluated based on individual circumstances and attainment.

3.5. Other matters of the Corporate Parenting Panel

3.5.1. **Trauma-Informed Council**

3.5.1.1. In September 2025, the Panel had a presentation on becoming a "Trauma-Informed Council", looking at what would need to be done to ensure that we are aware of the impact that trauma could have on people. This would include building awareness, ensuring that the workforce understands how to acknowledge and address trauma in a supportive way.

3.5.1.2. Whilst becoming trauma-informed is important for all residents who receive services from the Council, the risk of trauma amongst the cohort of looked-after children is higher, which makes it essential to ensure that our methods and policies reflect this reality and provide the most effective and coherent support to them.

3.5.1.3. "Trauma-Informed" training has already been provided in schools, with over 1000 school staff having attended standard training. In addition, almost half of Gwynedd schools have trained 1 or more staff members to *a level 5 diploma in mental health and trauma-informed communities and schools,* which means a training course of a 6-month period.

3.5.1.4. During the year, members of the Gwynedd and Môn Public Services Board have also undertaken "Trauma Informed" training. In the coming months, the Council will consider expanding the training to include other departments of staff who are in direct contact with the public, including Social Services, teams, Housing teams, the contact centre's customer contact offices, and Siopau Gwynedd.

3.5.1.5. Becoming a trauma-informed Council requires significant commitment in terms of time and resources. More detailed consideration will be required of the financial cost and the time required to complete the accreditation to become a "Trauma-Informed Council".

3.5.2. **The Welsh Government Parenting Charter**

3.5.2.1. The Welsh Government Parenting Charter is a promise to support and promote the role of corporate parenting amongst public sector workers. It is intended to formally present the Charter to the Cabinet in April 2025.

3.5.2.2. To strengthen the commitment to give a central place to the voice of the child and those who have experienced care, consideration will be given to inviting a foster parent or an individual with first-hand experience to join the Corporate Parent Panel. It is strongly believed that lived experiences are essential in policy-making and strategic decisions and the creation of services that are truly responsive and sensitive to the needs of those who have experienced care.

4. Priorities for 2025/26

4.1. During 2025/26 it is intended to:

- Scrutinise the length and scope of the waiting time for health assessments, looking at the main reasons or barriers for any delays;
- Conduct further “Trauma-Informed” training for Council staff and look at the steps that will need to be taken to become a “Trauma-Informed Council”.
- Invite a foster parent or an individual with first-hand experience to join the Corporate Parent Panel.
- Promote the benefits pack for Gwynedd foster carers further to attract more carers.

CYNGOR GWYNEDD - Report to Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet

Title of item:	Annual Performance Report and Self-assessment 2024/25
Cabinet Member:	Cllr. Nia Jeffreys
Relevant officer:	Dewi Wyn Jones, The Council's Business Support Service Manager
Date of meeting:	11th November 2025

1. **Decision Sought:**
   To approve Cyngor Gwynedd's Performance and Self-Assessment Report 2024/25 and to recommend its adoption by the Full Council.

2. **The reason why the Cabinet needs to make the decision:**
   In accordance with the Council's performance management procedure, Cyngor Gwynedd's Annual Performance and Self-Assessment Report for 2024/25 is initially submitted to the Cabinet for approval.

3. **Introduction and Rationale**

3.1 Background / Introduction

This report provides information about the progress made against the content of the Cyngor Gwynedd Plan 2018-23 during 2024/25. The intention is to provide a balanced report, that highlights aspects that were not successfully achieved as well as the successful aspects. It is noted that the self-assessment is a statutory requirement under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

Regular reporting is an essential monitoring requirement within the Council's performance management arrangements. We monitor our performance regularly at Departmental performance challenge and support meetings and in the past have submitted the performance reports of individual Cabinet Members to a cycle of Cabinet meetings during the year, as well as preparing this report to evaluate the progress made. Since June 2025, performance reports have been presented to the relevant Scrutiny Committee in order to increase transparency and provide independent public challenge to performance.

Cyngor Gwynedd's Annual Performance and Self-Assessment Report 2024/25 **(Appendix 2 and 3)** is structured to reflect the format of the Cyngor Gwynedd's Plan 2023-28. In the first part the focus is on the performance of the Council Plan's projects and the day-to-

day work while the second part includes the Self-Assessment. As in 2023/24 the report is much more concise than in the past and the intention was to make it a document that is easier to read while continuing to give the reader reassurance that the Council reports meaningfully on its performance. *(Please note that some further work is needed on the design of the document.)*

This year, we have also prepared a summary (**Appendix 1**) outlining progress on the Council Plan's main projects and day-to-day work. The summary also highlights the key issues that require attention, as identified in the self-assessment. The aim is to present the information by area in a clear and easy-to-read format, and it will be designed before publication.

There is a duty to publish a report setting out the conclusions of the self-assessment annually and to complete the work "as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of the financial year in which it relates."

A duty to consult at least once in a financial year with local people, local businesses, council staff and trade unions is also stated. These consultations should be used to obtain feedback on the extent to which the authority is fulfilling the performance requirements. Over the past year, the Council has conducted surveys with staff and residents of the county and consulted with trade unions regarding its performance. A summary of the responses received through the various consultations held during the year can be found on pages 5, 6, and 7 of the self-assessment (Appendix 1).

The Governance Group has led/taken an overview of the process within the Council to ensure that the work is owned and led at a strategic level.

Statutory guidance requires the involvement of the Governance and Audit Committee in the self-assessment process, giving them the opportunity to provide comments and recommendations, which the Council is responsible for considering. Following a previous request by Committee members to be included earlier in the process, the main issues to be included in the 2024/25 Self-Assessment were presented at the meeting on 22 May. As a result, five points were raised for consideration: the development of care services in Penrhos, consideration of the A499 in the Flood Strategy, continuation of the ARFOR Scheme, the effects of Article 4, and safeguarding arrangements in schools.

A draft of the Self-Assessment document was presented to the Governance and Audit Committee at their meeting on 9 October, where it was agreed to accept the draft report while offering the following comments:

- Consider the impact of a decline in the number of young people and an increase in the county's older population on Council services.
- Refer to work being done to increase staff survey responses.
- Include examples and evidence to give substance to certain statements in the report.

All the above comments have been addressed within the draft version of the Self-Assessment.

In accordance with the requirements of the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023, Appendix 4 outlines how the Council has complied with the Social Partnership duty.

3.2 The reasoning and justification for recommending the decision

Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021
Reviewing, reporting and assessment arrangements on the Council's performance has been the subject of legislative change through the arrangements of part 6 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. This requires the Council to measure its performance against three aspects, namely;
(a) That it is exercising its functions effectively
(b) That it uses resources economically, effectively, efficiently and
(c) That its governing arrangements are efficient in achieving this.

This report responds to these new requirements.

Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023
Since 1 April 2024, the Council has been subject to the Social Partnership Duty, which means it must collaborate with staff representatives or trade unions when setting well-being objectives or making strategic decisions. At the end of each financial year, an annual report must be published showing how the Council has complied with the duty, including evidence of collaboration, the outcomes of the process, and the views of the workforce.

Equality Act 2010
As part of the process of preparing the 2018-23 Cyngor Gwynedd Plan, an Equality Impact Assessment was prepared (presented to the Cabinet on 20 February 2024 and to the Full Council on March 07 2024). The assessment on the Plan in its entirety does not identify any impact that would justify a departure from the recommendation, and there are elements for which a positive impact is anticipated. Project Leaders are responsible for undertaking a full Equality Impact Assessment on individual projects.

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

In order to meet the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act we need to report on what we have done to contribute towards the principles of the Act and specifically the well-being objectives we have adopted. This report has been drawn up based on our well-being objectives (the seven priority areas) outlining what has been achieved in the period in question. For convenience a table will be included at the end of the performance report identifying the objectives to which the projects contribute.

3.3 Next steps and timetable

The Council will discuss and accept the report, or not, at its meeting on 4th December 2025. When the Council approves the final report, it will be published on Cyngor Gwynedd's website. Arrangements will be made to inform the public of the report by communicating the report and the main successes visually via social media as well as by printing copies and sharing them via the Council's usual media and locations e.g., libraries.

4. Views of the Statutory Officers

4.1 Chief Finance Officer

The Annual Performance Report and Self-Assessment is a key document that is now a core part of demonstrating the appropriateness of the Council's governance and performance arrangements. I am satisfied that the contents of the document are a fair and accurate reflection of Gwynedd Council's position.

4.2 Monitoring Officer

As noted undertaking a self-assessment is part of the statutory duties placed on the Council in relation to assessing and reporting on its performance. There are a number of statutory steps which relate to reaching this point and these are specifically referenced in the head report and The Performance Report and Self- Assessment as well as how the Council is to have regard to them. These are specifically around consultation and the views of the Governance and Audit Committee. I am satisfied with the propriety of the recommendation.

List of Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Easy read summary of Gwynedd Council Annual Performance Report 2024/25 (Draft)

Appendix 2 – Gwynedd Council Annual Performance Report 2024/25 (Draft)

Appendix 3 – Gwynedd Council Self-Assessment Report (Draft) 2024/25

Appendix 4 – Annual Social Partnership Report for 2024/25 (Draft)

Executive Summary - Annual Performance Report 2024-25

Gwynedd Yfory (Tomorrow's Gwynedd) - *Giving our children and young people the best possible start in life*

✅ What have we achieved?

🌱 **Support for families and young children -** A new strategy for the early years has led to more support for parents, particularly fathers, and better access to childcare in areas such as Barmouth, Bala, Caernarfon, Porthmadog and Bangor. This helps the children of the County to have the best possible start to their time in education.

🏫 **School Improvement -** Ysgol Treferthyr opened in Cricieth in September 2024. Improvements are underway at other schools including Ysgol Hirael, Our Lady's School and Ysgol Tryfan in Bangor, and Ysgol Bontnewydd. This provides a learning environment that is more modern, safe and suitable for the children of Gwynedd.

💸 **Fewer costs for families -** Work done to understand school costs for families, with plans developed to reduce the financial burden, including free school meals for every primary school child. This reduces the financial pressures on families.

🤝 **More social opportunities -** The views of young people were gathered about the youth services and the Council will use this information to improve the provision and play facilities where possible.

📘 **Forward-looking education -** A 10-year strategy in progress to ensure that Gwynedd education continues to improve and meets the needs of residents.

🧠 **Support for children with additional needs -** We have strengthened the support for pupils with social and emotional difficulties by working with schools, identifying needs early on, and planning a new centre that will offer tailored support from September 2025, ensuring fair opportunities for every child to succeed.

🛡 **School staff trained -** Staff have received training on safeguarding matters and emotional needs, improving the care and support for children.

⚠ Matters requiring attention

📉 **Low pupil attendance -** Many children are absent from school since the pandemic, which can affect their learning and development.

🛡 **Concerns about safeguarding children -** There was a serious case relating to pupil safety. There is a need to ensure that school safeguarding arrangements are robust and are continuously improved.

⚖ **Lack of equity between schools -** There are substantial variances in the costs per pupil across schools, which can lead to inequalities.

🧠 **More support needed for pupils with emotional needs -** Need to strengthen the provision for pupils with social and behavioural problems, ensuring that the support is effective and is available promptly.

Gwynedd Lewyrchus (A Prosperous Gwynedd) - *Strengthening the economy and supporting the residents of Gwynedd to earn a worthy wage*

✅ What have we achieved?

🎭 **Promoting Culture and the Visitor Economy -** A summit was held to discuss sustainable tourism, with over 100 people present. Four new overnight stopovers for motorhomes were opened. 109 cultural support projects were discussed, and investment was made in heritage sites such as the Slate Museum and Parc Padarn.

🏘️ **Community and Town Regeneration -** Local Regeneration Plans were published for 13 areas, with an investment of £1.8 million in local projects. Placemaking Plans were completed for Porthmadog, Pwllheli, Bala and Dolgellau, and Transforming Towns grants were given to key projects such as Parc y Coleg and Galeri Cyf.

💼 **Supporting Businesses and Work -** Over 600 businesses received support through programmes such as ARFOR and the Shared Prosperity Fund, and Gwynedd Business Week was held. Support was given to 221 people to find work, and 251 to improve their skills, with support also given to strategic projects such as Parc Bryn Cegin and Hwb Arloesi Glynllifon.

📍 **Keeping the Benefits Local -** A new procurement strategy was drawn up to keep more money local and we have done work to raise awareness about the new rules among staff and suppliers.

💼 **Supporting Businesses and the Economy -** 176 businesses were supported with grants and practical advice, and 54 of them have committed to pay a real living wage and to use more Welsh.

🏘️ **Supporting Communities -** Over £1.6 million in funding has been allocated to community groups via Cist Gwynedd. £8,5 million was invested to improve town centres, refurbishing 26 buildings and bringing 10 empty properties back into use.

🎭 **Culture, Leisure and Learning -** Substantial investments were made to improve facilities across Gwynedd including Glynllifon, leisure centres, harbours, Dinas Dinlle, and the Lloyd George Museum. Popular events were held across the county, attracting thousands of people and increasing the benefit for the local economy.

⚠ Matters requiring attention

📉 **Less funding available -** Important funding programmes have ended, and less support is now available. This raises questions about how we can continue to support economic development in the future.

📌 **Risk of missing opportunities -** There is a risk that Gwynedd will miss out on an opportunity to fully benefit from regional plans, if the arrangements do not work well.

Gwynedd Glyd (A Homely Gwynedd) - *Ensure suitable, affordable and sustainable homes for the people of Gwynedd*

✅ What have we achieved?

🏠 **Increasing the supply of housing for local people -** Since the start of the Housing Action Plan, 386 social houses have been built, helping around 1,300 people. In 2024/25, 23 houses were bought to let at an affordable rent, 108 empty homes were restored, and 90 affordable houses were built. An additional £8 million was received from the Welsh Government to support further developments, with new sites in the pipeline in Llanberis and Bangor.

💡 **Fuel poverty and the cost-of-living -** Gwynedd residents received support to reduce energy costs, with over 5,600 vouchers distributed and support being available through the Cost-of-living website and community surgeries. Also, 753 received housing support to improve their energy performance, and people were referred to services such as food banks and housing grants to assist them further.

🛏️ **Homelessness -** New accommodation for homeless people was completed in Bangor and Pwllheli, and more are in the pipeline. 65 people have been housed by means of affordable rent schemes, and the Council is preparing to open a 'One Stop Shop' to help people with housing issues.

🏘️ **Second homes and holiday accommodation** - The Council has implemented an Article 4 Direction to control second homes and holiday accommodation. Despite a reduction in the number of these properties, there is insufficient evidence yet to prove the direct impact.

⚠ Matters requiring attention

📉 **Homelessness continues to be a challenge -** Homelessness is still a big challenge in Gwynedd, with a high demand for accommodation. More sites need to be developed across the county to respond to this demand.

📋 **Challenges when implementing new legislation -** Homelessness and Social Housing Allocation (Wales) Bill required more resources in order to implement it in full.

❓ **Access to housing services -** There is concern that people are not freely accessing advice on housing matters, but a 'One Stop Shop' is underway to help with this.

Gwynedd Ofalgar (Caring Gwynedd) - *Supporting the residents of Gwynedd to live full and safe lives in our communities*

✅ **What have we achieved?**

🏥 **Modernising care -** We have improved two care homes - Hafod Mawddach and Cefn Rodyn - and have opened new dementia units in Bryn Blodau. Discussions are ongoing to create extra care accommodation in Caernarfon and in Penyberth, Pwllheli.

📱 **Technology -** Information and advice for further care is available on-line via the Dewis and AskSara search engines, and we have also created a list of telecare devices (such as a personal alarm or sensors). This helps people to live independently and alleviates the pressure on care services.

🤝 **Collaboration with Health -** Communication arrangements and regular meetings have been established to improve the collaboration between the Council and Health Service, reducing duplication and improving the service for individuals.

👩 **Work Opportunities -** Additional staff were appointed to support people with learning disabilities to obtain paid employment with a real living wage. The Council offers support to individuals and employers to ensure that the arrangements are successful.

📊 **Llechen Lân -** An analysis of Gwynedd's population was undertaken, along with the demand for services, and the best practice in order to understand what will be needed over the next 20 years. This will help us better plan resources and services for the future.

🌱 **Supporting People's Well-being -** Well-being Champions were appointed, and cost-of-living events and drop-in sessions were held to support residents. We worked with Citizens Advice to provide numeracy and budgeting support, and practical support was available for people to learn to use technology, including the provision of IT equipment. A fund was established to support community feeding projects, with cookery courses arranged in partnership with the Health Board.

🧩 **Autism Plan** - A preventative worker was appointed to support children on the diagnosis pathway. The team also develops programmes to support parents and carers and has offered training on autism and concerning behaviours. We are continuing to work on the Llwybrau Ni project, which offers social opportunities for young people and respite for parents.

🏡 **Residential provision for children -** A small group home opened its doors in Morfa Bychan with staff appointed and two children welcomed to the home. Two additional properties have been bought, and preparation work is underway to register them.

💡 **Innovation and New Opportunities -** A Care Academy has been launched to help people start a career in care. Almost 1,000 telecare devices have been upgraded to digital ones, helping people to live more independently and safely in their homes.

🏢 **Better Care for the People of Gwynedd -** Despite the increasing demand for services, the Council has managed to reduce the waiting lists for assessments and domiciliary care. Locating staff in hospital has also reduced the delay for patients who are waiting to return home from the hospital.

⚠ Matters requiring attention

🏠 **Lack of Sufficient Care Provision -** A lack of care provision may lead to harm to individuals and additional costs for the Council, increasing the demand for services. The Llechen Lân project helps understand the demand and resources required, to better plan for the future and reduce the risks.

👥 **Staff Recruitment and Retention Challenges -** Staff shortages can affect the quality of the care provided. The Council has taken steps such as establishing the Care Academy and is reviewing salaries to improve the situation.

🤝 **Collaboration with External Partners -** A lack of collaboration with organisations such as the Health Board, the police and third sector may lead to lower-quality services. The Council is already taking steps to strengthen the relationship and simplify the way that organisations work together.

📈 **Increasing pressure on Budgets and Services -** Increasing demand and more needs placing pressure on budgets with the older population growing at a scale that is much higher than the working-age population.

Gwynedd Gymraeg (A Welsh Gwynedd) - *Ensuring that we give every possible opportunity for our residents to use the Welsh language in the community*

✅ What have we achieved?

🏫 **Modernised and extended the immersion provision -** A new unit was opened at Ysgol Uwchradd Tywyn to help children learn Welsh and improvements were made to three other sites - Cymerau, Dolgellau and Maesincla. Also, a virtual village called Aberwla was created to provide on-line help for Welsh learners.

🗣 **Promoting the use of the Welsh Language by the residents of Gwynedd -** Projects were developed to encourage people to use Welsh in their work and in their communities, including digital content for young people. In addition, work was carried out to protect Welsh place names and to address the shortages of staff who speak Welsh in some organisations.

⚠ Matters requiring attention

🔍 Some believe that high-level Welsh language skills are needed to work for the Council, and although this is not the case, this misconception can make recruitment more difficult.

🚶 Young people who speak Welsh are leaving Gwynedd, which can reduce the use of Welsh in the community.

Gwynedd Werdd (A Green Gwynedd) - *Protecting the natural beauty of the county, and responding positively to the climate change crisis*

✅ **What have we achieved?**

🌊 **Flooding -** A new Floods Strategy was adopted for the county, and a project to the value of almost £6 million was completed in Hirael, Bangor, to reduce flood risk and improve recreation. Good progress was also made with the detailed design for the North Promenade in Barmouth.

♻️ **Waste and Recycling -** A new Waste and Recycling Strategy was drawn up for public consultation in 2025, and plans are underway to modernise the waste treatment facilities in Harlech and Caernarfon.

🌎 **Climate and Nature Emergency -** 60 charging points were installed in 13 locations for the Council fleet, with 31% of the fleet now electric vehicles.

🚶**Active Travel –** successful plans were developed for Penrhos Road, Bangor; Ysgol Rhostryfan; Ysgol Treferthyr, Cricieth.

🧹**Clean and Tidy Communities -** the Ardal Ni team has responded to a substantial increase in requests for cleaning work, and they are being praised for their work across the county.

⚠️ **Matters requiring attention**

♻️ **Increase Recycling** – our recycling levels are consistent at 64%, which is now below the new national target of 70%. The Waste Strategy will detail plans to address this.

⛽**Fuel** - there was an increase of 0.98% in the number of litres of fuel used by the Council compared to the previous year.

🧪**Food standards and food hygiene inspections** - the Food Standards Agency (FSA) has stated that the Council is not meeting its statutory duties in terms of the frequency of food standards and food hygiene inspections. The service is in the process of addressing the FSA's recommendations to improve the situation.

Gwynedd Effeithlon (An Efficient Gwynedd)

Putting the people of Gwynedd first and treating them fairly and ensuring that the Council performs effectively and efficiently

✅ **What have we achieved?**

🎓**Staff Learning and Development** - a new Learning and Development Framework was launched with the training programme for the first year focusing on matters such as financial management, well-being and digital skills. In addition, a new Well-being Strategy was introduced with a focus on mental, physical, social and financial well-being.

👩**Women in Leadership Programme -** Further activities were held that underpin the project's work, such as the Developing Potential Programme, encouraging women to apply for senior posts and addressing a balanced representation at committees and groups.

📉**Managing the Impact of Financial Cuts -** total savings of £43 million have been realised since 2015/16 (93% of the target).

💻 **Digital Plan -** a detailed programme has been created to improve our services via our Digital Plan. This includes improvements to the Council's telephone system.

⚠ **Matters requiring attention**

💰**Savings** - need to ensure that departments are realising the financial savings identified.

📄**Tax collection** - a review is underway to improve our rates of collecting Council Tax and Non-domestic Rates.

🗳 **Polling stations** - a review of polling places has been carried out to assess the suitability of the stations and consider whether more suitable locations are available.

Annual Performance Report & Self Assessment
2024-25

Leader's Foreword

I am pleased to present the Annual Performance Report 2024-25 which looks at the Council's work over the past year. This is the second performance report of the 2023-28 Council Plan.

It is miraculous that we have been able to achieve so much as a Council given the huge funding gap we were facing as a result of the inadequate settlement by the Welsh Government, which has been the case for many years. I'm extremely pleased that we committed to protecting the most vulnerable among us when setting the budget for this year. I can't help but think of all the extra things that we would have been able to achieve for the people of Gwynedd if they had received an adequate and fair budget.

Reflecting on what has been achieved in the past year there are so many highlights that I could refer to. A priority programme for me is the cross-departmental Supporting People programme which helps those facing permanent hardship. It's nice to be able to report on the progress of this work over the past year. The programme has progressed considerably since it was established in order to tackle poverty and the cost-of-living crisis and continues to do great work in funding and supporting community hubs, supporting the county's food banks and work to reduce the impact of fuel poverty on the residents of Gwynedd.

Our Housing Action Plan is going from strength to strength with so many county residents having benefited from new homes and practical support. This scheme has brought several empty houses back into use, ensuring that social houses are built, developing Tŷ Gwynedd housing as well as work to mitigate the effects of homelessness.

The past year has seen the opening of the new Ysgol Treferthyr in Cricieth, an eco-friendly school that will provide a first-class learning environment for the children of Cricieth and the surrounding area. Significant investments have also been made to two primary schools in Bangor to ensure a wealth of learning experiences for local children in the area.

We have been able to attract and benefit from several grants here in Gwynedd over the year, one that stands out is the £2 million to Gwynedd's slate communities to fund the innovative LleCHI LleNI project over a five-year period. This funding will raise awareness of the slate heritage of the World Heritage Site areas and celebrate the importance of the Welsh language.

Another source of pride is our investment in young people. I was delighted with the launch of Academi Gofal which tackles staff shortages in the Care sector by attracting and developing individuals to pursue a career in a Welsh environment in this vital field. Increasing the use of the Welsh language is very important to me and the great work of promoting the prosperity of the language continues through significant projects.

Further challenges lie ahead, with the financial situation forcing us to make difficult decisions. Yet I have every faith that we as a Council will continue to do our best for the people of Gwynedd. I, as Leader, will continue to voice my dissatisfaction and lobby the Welsh Government and Westminster about the lack of investment in Local Government, particularly rural areas such as Gwynedd, trying to secure adequate funding for the future.

Councillor Nia Jeffreys

Introduction

The 'Cyngor Gwynedd Plan 2023-28' includes a series of ambitious projects which will enable us to develop and improve our services for the residents of the county over a period of five years. The projects are covered under seven priority fields:

- **Tomorrow's Gwynedd**
  Giving our children and young people the best possible start in life
- **A Prosperous Gwynedd**
  Strengthening the economy and supporting the people of Gwynedd to earn a decent salary
- **A Homely Gwynedd**
  Supporting the people of Gwynedd to live in suitable and affordable homes in their communities
- **A Caring Gwynedd**
  Supporting the residents of Gwynedd to live full and safe lives in our communities
- **A Welsh Gwynedd**
  Ensuring that we give our residents every possible opportunity to use the Welsh language in the community
- **A Green Gwynedd**
  Protecting the county's natural beauty, and responding positively to the climate change crisis
- **An Efficient Gwynedd**
  Putting the residents of Gwynedd first and treating them fairly and ensuring that the Council performs effectively and efficiently

This report looks back at what was achieved during the second year of the Council's Plan. It is customary to undertake an annual review of the Plan to ensure that the projects remain suitable, and to give the Council the opportunity to adapt them in light of local and national developments over the period of the Plan. This annual report covers the plan as agreed by the Council on the 7 March 2024.

Like last year, the report is divided into chapters that reflect the seven priority areas, describing the progress made during the year along with the main achievements in the day-to-day work of our departments, for example child and adult care, the economy, and housing.

The Priority Areas within this document are our Well-being Objectives under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The Objectives will directly contribute to achieving the seven national well-being goals. As we take action, we will also give appropriate consideration to the five ways of working within the Act by considering the long term, prevention, integration, collaborative working and being inclusive of people of all ages. We will do this by adopting a way of working which focuses on putting the people of Gwynedd

at the centre of everything we do. The table at the end of this report outlines the contribution of each priority project towards the five ways of working.

The second part of the performance report is our self-assessment for the year. This is our fourth self-assessment. The Council is expected to submit this annually under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. Also, this year an additional section is appended that outlines how the Council is complying with the Social Partnership Duty which is a new reporting requirement under the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023.

The need to make financial savings is more or less an annual challenge for Local Government by now, and last year was no different. A total of £43 million of savings have been realised since 2015/16, with £5.6 million of this total coming from the 2024/25 financial year. Despite these financial challenges, the Council is constantly innovating and trying to find better and more efficient ways of providing services.

As part of our performance arrangements, a series of departmental performance challenge and support meetings are held on a regular basis to see how the departments are making progress with their day-to-day work as well as Council Plan projects. This Annual Performance Report is based on the findings of these performance challenge and support meetings. The aim of the report is not just to highlight the good things, but to give a fair and honest picture of our performance during the year. In doing so, we can celebrate our successes and see which aspects of our work needs further attention, in order to assist us in providing the best possible service for the residents of the county within the resources we have.

This annual Report is submitted to the Council Cabinet and to the meeting of the Full Council for approval.

Tomorrow's Gwynedd

Our ambition is to ensure that every child educated in Gwynedd gets:

- Treated equally, encouraged to treat others equally and that we give priority to their happiness and well-being.
- Education of the best possible standard including access to a broad range of academic and vocational subjects to fulfil the requirements of the new 'Curriculum for Wales'.
- Access to Welsh-medium education throughout their time in education.
- Educated in buildings that are in a good state of repair, are safe and fit for purpose to the best of our ability.
- The opportunity to develop into rounded citizens, who are content and confident in the world.
- Tailored support from professional services to meet their additional learning needs.
- The opportunity to have a nutritious meal in school, free of charge to as many pupils as possible.
- Access to equipment and technology that promote modern and effective learning.
- An assurance of suitable facilities and playing fields that are available for children and young people in their leisure time.

Projects

- Transforming education for children in their early years
- Modernising buildings and the learning environment
- Promoting the well-being of children and young people and reducing the cost of sending children to school
- Extending opportunities for play and socialising for the county's children and young people
- Formulate and implement a 10-year strategic direction for education in Gwynedd
- Review and improve the range of inclusion provisions in Gwynedd

Project Updates

Transforming education for children in their early years

This is what we achieved during the year:

- A new strategy for the early years is being implemented which includes work to provide support to fathers, provide perinatal mental health support, a toileting scheme, and develop speech and language.
- The two-year-olds childcare provision has been extended to a number of new areas in the county, including Abermaw, Bala, Caernarfon, Porthmadog and Bangor.

Modernising buildings and the learning environment

This is what we achieved during the year:

- The construction work commenced on the site of the Bangor Byw'n Iach car park to upgrade the area and create parking spaces for Ysgol Hirael staff, which will make

the school a car-free site. The building work on the improvements to Ysgol Hirael itself will begin in 2025-26.

- The former Ysgol Glanadda building has been demolished and the construction work for the new Our Lady's School has begun. The frame for the new school is already in place, and work will continue over the next few months.
- An Outline Strategic Case has been produced and submitted to the Welsh Government to improve the condition of the buildings and the learning environment at Ysgol Tryfan, Bangor. Discussions are ongoing to ensure that the project can be delivered within the available budget.
- The construction of Ysgol Treferthyr in Cricieth has been completed, and a new school for 150 learners opened its doors in early September 2024.
- An Outline Business Case for a new school in Bontnewydd was approved in July 2024. Work on the creation of a temporary school, which will allow space for the new school to be built, is progressing with the intention of being operational by September 2025.

Promoting the well-being of children and young people and reducing the cost of sending children to school

This is what we achieved during the year:

- Research findings about the financial cost of attending school were shared with schools.
- A work programme was drawn up to respond to the findings of the questionnaires, and as part of this actions will be drawn up, which are unique to each school, which will lead to a reduction in the cost of sending children to school.

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

This is what we achieved during the year:

- Young people's views on all the available youth provisions were gathered. The gaps will be addressed in the Youth Service's new strategy.
- We will review the facilities available in the high image playing fields and make improvements within the available funding.

Formulate and implement a 10-year strategic direction for education in Gwynedd

This is what we achieved during the year:

- A draft of the new Education Strategy has been prepared, and we aim to introduce it early in 2025-26.

Review and improve the range of inclusion provisions in Gwynedd.

This is what we achieved during the year:

- Following the establishment of a Project Board in March 2024, work was undertaken to map needs and research provisions in other counties in order to identify good practice. As a result of this work, Cabinet agreed in April 2025 to create a (multi-site)

Unit for the provision of support to children with significant behavioural and engagement difficulties. A funding plan was agreed delegating the timetable for implementation and delivery of the plan to the Head of Education in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education. The main location of the provision is in Llanwnda on the former site of the School, with an investment from the ALN Capital Grant to ensure the building is fit for purpose.

Some of our key achievements

- There is a Project Boards arrangement in place to ensure that education capital project management is robust. Significant work has been carried out during the year to meet the expenditure requirements of one-off capital grants during the year such as the Additional Learning Needs grant and community schools and Rolling Programme capital projects are now progressing as expected.
- For admission to Primary and Secondary schools in September 2024, 99.5% of parents' first choices were offered.
- We have been successful in offering training and follow-up workshops to EBSA (Emotionally Based School Avoidance) designated persons and support staff in several secondary schools during 2024/25. Thirteen secondary schools attended the initial presentation, and 10 secondary schools were able to attend the following 3 workshops. We will be offering the training to more secondary schools during 2025/26. We will be offering seasonal supervision sessions to these schools, and we hope to train more staff in the following educational year.
- Free school meals are available to all children from reception to year 6 in all primary schools in Gwynedd.
- We provide professional and efficient education transport for eligible learners in line with the Welsh Government's statutory requirements to facilitate access to all educational sites in the county.
- By reducing the number of pupils in the ABC Centres and also ensuring that all pupils have a shared placement with their Mainstream schools, we have improved the quality of the service. The plan allows us to focus more effectively on individual targets and respond appropriately to the needs at the Centres. In addition, the shared placement arrangement ensures that schools have the opportunity to get to know the pupils, enabling them to plan and prepare an appropriate provision for the Reception year. As a result, there are improvements in developmental progress sooner, and the willingness of the intensive pupils to transition to full-time education.
- 97% of school safeguarding designated persons have completed designated person training in the last two years. While the national guidance states that a period of more than three years should not be left between training, we encourage refresher training every two years as a good practice. The figure is not 100% as three new

members of staff have started in their roles and have not yet completed the training but have registered to do so.

- The Inclusion Service has been focusing on strengthening the support available to pupils experiencing social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD). This has included developing more systematic approaches to identifying needs early, ensuring that interventions are provided in a timely and effective manner. We worked closely with schools and other services to co-design a new strategy, with the aim of ensuring that the support offered is inclusive, sustainable and evidence based. As part of the strategy, we will be establishing a new centre which will be operational from September 2025, offering a range of targeted services to support pupils.

A Prosperous Gwynedd

The foundation for enabling the people of Gwynedd to prosper is ensuring that there are suitable jobs available in the county paying salaries that enable them to support themselves and their families. Our ambition is to ensure:

- High-quality jobs.
- Support for businesses to thrive.
- Sustainable tourism for the benefit of communities.
- Strong and resilient communities.
- Prosperous and vibrant town centres.

Projects

- Promoting our culture and a sustainable visitor economy
- Regenerating communities and town centres
- Creating the best possible circumstances in Gwynedd for businesses and community enterprises to thrive, and support the people of Gwynedd into work
- Keeping the Benefit Local

Project Updates

Promoting our culture and a sustainable visitor economy

This is what we achieved during the year:

- A Sustainable Visitor Economy summit was held with over 100 attendees.
- We reviewed our arrangements to support events in Gwynedd.
- Four 'Aros-fan' (stopping places) have been opened across Gwynedd for visitors travelling in motorhomes. We are monitoring the use made of them and will prepare an evaluation report in due course.
- A structure has been established to implement the Gwynedd and Eryri Visitor Economy Plan 2035, and funding has been earmarked to implement the scheme.
- Communities and businesses in Gwynedd were supported to promote and celebrate culture locally through the 'Diwyllesiant' project. £715,553 was invested to support 109 organisations and businesses to carry out various activities, which attracted an additional investment of £5.8m for the County. A lot of activity took place through Storiel, Byw'n Iach, Archives, Libraries and Parc Glynllifon.
- The communities of Gwynedd were supported to take advantage of the slate industry's world heritage designation by securing Heritage Lottery funding for the LleCHI LleNi projects, and funding from the Shared Prosperity Fund and the Levelling-up Fund. Several major projects are underway including the redevelopment of the Slate Museum and Parc Padarn in Llanberis, and town centre improvements and the installation of public art in six towns. In addition, the Aelwyd yr Urdd was upgraded, and works were completed on a connecting route in Blaenau Ffestiniog.

Regenerating communities and town centres

This is what we achieved during the year:

- The Local Regeneration Plans for each of the 13 regeneration areas in the county were published on the Council's website, and a review of the local co-ordination arrangements was undertaken.
- Grants worth £1.8m were offered through the Community Support Key Fund to a range of local regeneration projects.
- Place Making Schemes have been completed for Porthmadog, Pwllheli, Bala and Dolgellau.
- £1.8m of Shared Prosperity Fund grant funding has been invested to upgrade Gwynedd's town centres.
- A number of town centre improvement projects were awarded a Transforming Towns 2024/5 grant, including College Park, Bangor; the vacant property of Galeri Cyf; Menter y Tŵr Pwllheli; Canolfan Bro Tegid, Y Bala; and Bangor Health and Well-being Centre.

Creating the best possible circumstances in Gwynedd for businesses and community enterprises to thrive, and support the people of Gwynedd into work

This is what we achieved during the year:

- 600 businesses and social enterprises received support from the Council through the ARFOR programme and the Shared Prosperity Fund.
- The Gwynedd Business Week was held in October, with a series of events organised for businesses in Dolgellau, Pwllheli and Bangor. A campaign by the Council to encourage residents and visitors to support local businesses managed to reach 50,000 other accounts.
- We continue to support the North Wales Growth Bid schemes, paying particular attention to the schemes that offer the greatest benefit to Gwynedd, including the approved Bryn Cegin Park Scheme, and arrangements are in place to start operating on the redesigned Glynllifon Innovation Hub Project and site.
- 221 people were supported to return to work in 2024/25 and 251 people were assisted to increase their ability to earn a good salary.

Keeping the Benefit Local

This is what we achieved during the year:

- A new procurement strategy has been drawn up which will soon be presented to the Cabinet.
- Our procurement procedure rules were reviewed to ensure compliance with the new Procurement Act.
- We have updated our website and intranet to raise awareness of the new regulations, procurement techniques and the aim of keeping the benefit local in due course.

Some of our key achievements

Developing the economy and regenerating communities

Cyngor Gwynedd provided a wide range of support to sustain and support businesses to thrive during the past year:

- Support was provided to 176 different businesses through Council-led business support schemes. The support was a combination of financial help in the form of a grant to enable businesses to invest in order to reduce costs or take advantage of new opportunities, practical support to help businesses review their activities and plan for the future, and support for businesses to make better use of technology and digital media.
- Following support from the Gwaith Gwynedd team, 221 residents were successful in getting a job. This was an increase of one third on last year's result.
- As a result of being offered financial support from the Council during 2024/25, 54 businesses have committed to paying their employees a real living wage and using more Welsh.
- Completion and publication of Place Making Schemes to improve six towns within the county - Bangor, Caernarfon, Pwllheli, Porthmadog, Dolgellau and Bala.
- Cist Gwynedd, the community grants portal, has allocated over £1.6million of grants to various groups and organisations in the county.
- The Regeneration Programme Service has secured an investment of £8.5m for town centre projects.
- To improve the towns of the county, financial support was given to bring 10 empty properties in town centres back into use, and to renovate and improve a further 26 buildings.

Culture and Leisure

- A new website was launched for Parc Glynllifon www.parcglynllifon.cymru to promote what is available there.
- A bid worth £300,000 for financial support from the Welsh Government was successful. As a result of this, work will take place in 2025-26 to resurface the car park, install charging points for cars and bicycles, solar panels and interpretation/signage works.
- There have been improvements to the infrastructure of leisure centres including the resurfacing of the indoor tennis courts, the installation of a new Padel court – the first public court in North Wales – at Arfon Tennis Centre, and the conversion of the MUGA into a 2G 7v7 pitch at Glan Wnion, Dolgellau.
- A new 3G pitch was opened in Caernarfon by former Wales and Liverpool footballer, Ian Rush.
- Improvements have been made to Porthmadog harbour which included replacing the harbour mooring chains to ensure the safety of boats, and the improvement of the harbour's outer enclosure to provide a more practical and safer site. The CCTV

system at Barmouth harbour was upgraded to improve security and improvements to the Compound Road were completed.

- Following a £450,000 upgrade to the car park, a new charging system for parking in Dinas Dinlle was trialled.
- £280,000 has been invested to modernise the exhibitions at the Lloyd George Museum in Llanystumdwy after obtaining a grant from the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund.
- The Warm Welcome campaign is active in all of Gwynedd's Libraries with the opportunity to join in activities such as playing chess, making jigsaw puzzles and a dementia choir. Caernarfon Library's Thursday afternoon chess session is growing from strength to strength, with children, young people and older people playing together regularly.
- Our Library system (LMS) was upgraded in December 2024. The LMS Cymru team, led by Cyngor Gwynedd, is working on launching a new app and All Wales book catalogue.
- A varied programme has been developed at Neuadd Dwyfor, with an emphasis on live music evenings by individuals and bands in Welsh, in addition to the usual film and theatre show offerings. As part of this, the 'Gigs Town Hôl' brand was introduced which is going from strength to strength.
- Financial support worth £77,000 was provided to hold 33 different events in the county. 154,000 people attended the events, and it was estimated that this benefited £4,069,561 to the local economy as a result.

A Homely Gwynedd

Our ambition is to ensure that the people of Gwynedd can access a suitable home of a high standard, that is affordable and improves their quality of life. We will try to achieve this by setting an ambition to:

- Ensure that no-one is homeless in Gwynedd.
- Help the residents of Gwynedd to own an affordable home in their community.
- Ensure that houses in Gwynedd are environmentally friendly.
- Ensure that houses in Gwynedd have a positive influence on the health and well-being of the county's residents.

Projects

- Increasing the supply of housing for local people
- Dealing with the energy cost crisis and fuel poverty
- Ensuring that no one is homeless in Gwynedd
- Managing second homes and short-term holiday accommodation

Project Updates

Increasing the supply of housing for local people

This is what we achieved during the year:

- 386 social housing units have now been erected since the start of the Housing Action Plan, and these will help almost 1,300 individuals.
- Construction work has begun on sites in Llanberis and Bangor to create affordable housing under the Tŷ Gwynedd scheme.
- 23 houses were purchased through the Buy to Let Scheme (bringing the total to 46 houses), and these will be let at affordable rent levels.
- 108 vacant properties have been brought back into use through grant aid to renovate empty homes since the start of the Housing Action Plan.
- 62 households have now bought their home through the Homebuy Scheme.

Dealing with the energy cost crisis and fuel poverty

This is what we achieved during the year:

- The county's residents were supported to make the most of schemes to reduce energy costs such as ECO4, with 216 applications having been approved.
- Ensuring that the residents of Gwynedd are aware of all the benefits available to them by working with internal and external partners.
- We have distributed 656 energy vouchers to residents in need who are on a prepayment meter in Gwynedd with expenditure of £24,719. Since the beginning we have distributed 5,671 vouchers worth £236,055 – money that has gone directly to the county's most vulnerable residents.
- We have referred residents to get additional support from organisations such as the Food Banks, Canllaw, Telecare, the Council's Empty Homes Grants and Council Loans,

Gwaith Gwynedd, the Priority Services Register, Welsh Water, Community Hubs and we have also referred to the Smart Energy Meters service.
- Expertise and useful information were shared on Cyngor Gwynedd's Costs of Living website which is available to everyone.
- Community clinics were held to refer people to the services and support available.

Ensuring that no one is homeless in Gwynedd

This is what we achieved during the year:

- Developments to accommodate homeless people have been completed in Bangor and Pwllheli, and construction work is ongoing on another development in Bangor.
- The purchase of the former Government offices, Penrallt, Caernarfon, has been completed and substantial background work has taken place, such as structural assessments, feasibility assessments etc, prior to submitting a planning application for conversion into units for local people in need of a home.
- An additional 12 properties were attracted to the Leasing Wales Scheme which enables more people to rent privately in Gwynedd, making it a more affordable option. We will continue to engage with landlords and the Government to look at options to increase opportunities over the life of the scheme. To date 28 properties have been let, helping 65 individuals.
- Our 'One Stop Shop' is almost ready to launch. The 'One Stop Shop' is a new resource to respond to the needs of residents as they submit applications relating to housing in one central location.

Managing second homes and short-term holiday accommodation

This is what we achieved during the year:

- Following a period of public consultation, it was decided to introduce an Article 4 Direction for the Gwynedd planning authority area, to manage the use of homes as second homes and holiday accommodation. This has been implemented and is now in place across the county.
- Research was carried out into the effect of the Council Tax Premium with respect to any change of use of a property. It was found that there had been a decrease in the number of second homes and self-catering holiday units, but there was not enough data available at the time to prove that this was a direct result of the Premium. Following this, the Council decided to keep the Premium at the same level for 2025-26.

Some of our key achievements

- We have set an ambition to create 83 supported accommodation units for our county's homeless people by the end of the Housing Action Plan, to meet the growing demand for the service. Since 2021, 20 units have been created, with a further 62 on the work programme. To date, at least 30 people have received support in the new units, and we will continue to support individuals and families over the next few years.
- In October 2024, Dôl Sadler – a brand-new building for providing supported accommodation to our county's residents – opened on the site of the former Ysgol Glan Wnion in Dolgellau. The development was shortlisted for the Inside Housing Development Awards in the Best Supported Housing Development category: Rural/Suburban.
- There are two Tŷ Gwynedd sites in the construction process – the Llanberis and Coed Mawr, Bangor sites. Another two will start in 2025/26, with more to follow in the coming years. Other sites are being considered across the county to address local needs.
- Through the Buy-to-Let Scheme, the Council buys homes on the open market to let them to residents in housing need. The Council has already purchased 46 houses (exceeding the ambition set for the end of the 2024/25 financial year, which was 43). The Council has let 16 houses and is completing necessary repairs and upgrades on a further 20 houses.
- To bring more empty homes back into use, there are several interventions available to the people of Gwynedd. Through the Housing Action Plan, the Department can offer an additional year's exemption from council tax on empty homes, so that a family or individual can complete key restoration work to bring the house to an acceptable standard of living. To date, 123 exemptions totalling £165,061 have been granted to empty homeowners.
- Grants are available for owners to carry out necessary upgrade work to a house that used to be empty, and to date 108 of these grants have been allocated. The total number of empty homes that have come back into use because of the Council's support is 284. This means, of course, that 284 empty houses have also come back into use for local residents. This meets and exceeds the ambition set to bring 250 empty homes back into use.
- The Housing and Property department is working closely with its housing partners on social and intermediate housing developments to meet the huge demand for housing in Gwynedd. During 2024/25, 90 affordable homes were built across Gwynedd bringing the total number of new homes since the start of the Housing Action Plan to 386.
- The Department has been successful in attracting additional funding from the Welsh Government to deliver more affordable housing developments. In 2024/25, an additional £8m was attracted which will enable our housing partners to build at least an additional 50 units.
- Work on developing the Penrhos, Pwllheli site is underway, after the Council, in partnership with Clwyd Alyn housing association, secured an additional grant of around £7.7m from the Welsh Government to enable the start of phase 1 of the development which will create 44 new homes.
- The Homebuy Scheme has managed to help 62 households to buy a home on the open market in Gwynedd. Another 25 are currently in the process. The Council, in

partnership with the Dwyfor Pilot, has succeeded in extending the maximum value of eligible properties in certain areas of Dwyfor to respond to the local situation, meaning that more people can benefit from the Scheme.

- Since October 2022, 753 homes have received grant support to improve their energy performance. This has helped many residents of Gwynedd to live in more cosy homes and to avoid or get out of fuel poverty by providing support to insulate houses, receive effective heating equipment and eco-friendly upgrades such as solar panels and air-source heat pumps.
- During April and May 2024, Taith ar Daith was held, which was the first series of drop-in events for helping the public with housing issues. Three locations were visited – Caernarfon, Pwllheli and Dolgellau, and positive feedback was received at each site from the 158 people who called in. The Department has received several invitations to visit other locations, and these will be visited in the coming years.

A Caring Gwynedd

Looking after vulnerable individuals is one of our main responsibilities, and our ambition is to support the residents of Gwynedd to live full and safe lives in our communities by:

- Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- Supporting residents to participate and engage with their communities, and to reduce poverty and its effects.
- Ensuring that children, young people and their families live happy lives and reach their potential in terms of their education, health and well-being.
- Ensuring there is information available for the residents of Gwynedd to assist them in making informed decisions about their health and physical and mental well-being.
- Enabling the residents of Gwynedd to live independently in suitable accommodation with dignity for as long as possible in their community.
- Supporting unpaid carers.
- Providing high-quality care and support in the right place at the right time.
- Supporting our communities to ensure accessibility and to develop into an Age-Friendly Gwynedd.

Projects

- Modernising our care resources to meet future needs
- Using technology more effectively to improve the ability of Gwynedd residents to access support and care
- Working with Health Services to enable people to live their best life in the community
- Developing training and employment opportunities for individuals in need of support
- Llechen Lân
- Supporting People's Well-being
- Autism Plan
- Developing a residential provision for looked-after children in small group homes

Project Updates

Modernising our care resources to meet future needs

This is what we achieved during the year:

- We have finished upgrading Hafod Mawddach and Cefn Rodyn.
- Dementia units in Bryn Blodau have opened.
- Discussions have begun on the development of Extra Care Housing in Caernarfon.
- We are investigating whether there is a need for additional provision of Care Housing at the Penyberth site, Pwllheli.

Using technology more effectively to improve the ability of Gwynedd residents to access support and care

This is what we achieved during the year:

- The Dewis search tool and AskSara occupational therapy system have been integrated into the social services website pages. This means that people can obtain

suitable and timely information and advice to help them remain independent and reduce pressures on traditional services.

- A menu of telecare devices has been created and is being promoted on the website, in the media and through the social work teams to help people remain independent. It will also reduce the pressure on traditional services.

Working with Health Services to enable people to live their best life in the community

This is what we achieved during the year:

- Arrangements for regular communication and meetings were established in order to promote collaboration and enable the adult teams to feel more like one. This reduces duplication and improves communication which in turn provides a better service to the individual.
- New joint-working arrangements were developed for the mental health teams, and a review of the arrangements was carried out to ensure they were robust.

Developing training and employment opportunities for individuals in need of support

This is what we achieved during the year:

- A Job Opportunities Co-ordinator and additional Employment Support Officers were appointed, and work was undertaken to identify the type and number of opportunities needed. This meant that individuals with a learning disability were given paid employment (real living wage) and that both the individual and the employer received support from Council officers.

Llechen Lân

This is what we achieved during the year:

- An analysis of Gwynedd's demographics, the demand for service, and adult social services best practice was completed in order to understand and highlight the demand for service and the associated resources that will be required for the next twenty years.

Supporting People's Well-being

This is what we achieved during the year:

- Well-being Champions were appointed, and cost-of-living events and various drop-in sessions were held.
- Two Supporting People Hubs have been established in two new areas.
- We worked with Citizens Advice to provide numeracy and budgeting support to residents.
- Practical support was provided for people to learn how to go on-line, and IT equipment was distributed as part of the Digital Inclusion Project.
- The pilot of the Gafael Llaw scheme has been set up which is a scheme across social services and Galw Gwynedd, which proactively reaches out to residents to make sure everyone knows where to go for help and what help is available.

- A Capital and Revenue Fund was established to support community feeding projects, and cookery courses were provided at the hubs in collaboration with Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board.
- Food and Fun sessions were run during the summer holidays where activities were provided for children which included educational sessions, physical activity and food and nutrition education. Four schools signed up to participate.
- Kits were provided to support children's toileting which included real reusable nappies, potties and information packs.
- Hundreds of free period products were distributed through libraries during 2024/25.
- 5,575 food packages were distributed by community food schemes throughout the county and 11,601 meals were provided.
- 3,478 people attended Croeso Cynnes sessions across 25 schemes across the county where wellbeing workshops such as weekly games and creative sessions were provided as well as drop-in sessions on various issues e.g. finance or health.

Autism Plan

This is what we achieved during the year:

- A preventative worker has been appointed to the family support team to work with children who are on the diagnosis pathway or who have been diagnosed. The worker works very closely with the autism team and is involved in providing group-based intervention.
- The team is developing parent/carer support programmes to ensure that the support provided at home is effective and appropriate.
- A range of training was provided to professionals and parents/carers including training on awareness and understanding of autism, and training on worrying behaviour.
- The team continues to work on the Llwybrau Ni project, which will provide social opportunities for young people and a break for parents and carers.

Developing a residential provision for looked-after children in small group homes

This is what we achieved during the year:

- A small group home was opened in Morfa Bychan, and two children were welcomed into the home. In addition, two other properties have been purchased and preparatory work is underway for registration.
- A meeting was attended in the area to discuss the plan.
- A 'Statement of Purpose' and policies have been developed for the development as they will be required to register the unit with Care Inspectorate Wales.

Some of our key achievements

- The Care Academy, a unique scheme for people to develop a career in the Care sector, has been launched. Practical experiences and opportunities will be provided for staff to build and develop their skills to ensure a long and successful career within Cyngor Gwynedd's Care services.
- Almost two-thirds (about 1000) of Gwynedd's telecare devices have now been transferred to new digital devices.
- Despite the increase in demand, we managed to reduce the waiting lists for assessment. The '50 Day Challenge' funding has enabled us to fund the work of an Occupational Therapist to address waiting lists, as well as up-skilling Practitioners to carry out assessments for equipment.
- Following changes that involve staff working part of the week in hospitals, we saw that individuals have been receiving a timely assessment and response, which has led to a reduction in the number of individuals waiting to return home safely from hospital.
- The waiting list for domiciliary care has reduced significantly over the year.
- The Council's residential homes occupancy rate has increased and reached its highest level for years which means fewer people are staying unnecessarily in hospitals or are at high risk in the community.
- The 'Learning Disability Job Opportunities Scheme' is going from strength to strength. The specialist chair transport scheme has commenced, which employs individuals with a learning disability, and several individuals have completed training on testing electrical equipment with the aim of providing a testing service for Council departments.
- 1183 nights of short break care for children were offered over the year (April 2024 – March 2025). This allows the child to receive care and support and have opportunities and experiences to encourage their development and wellbeing, while parents are able to enjoy periods of respite from their caring role.
- A new information page has been published on the Council's website to promote the 12.5 hours of free childcare available for children after their 2nd birthday.

A Welsh Gwynedd

As a national leader we will promote the growth of the Welsh language in all parts of the county. Our ambition is to:

- Ensure that every child in Gwynedd can use Welsh confidently in school and in their social life.
- Promote the growth of the Welsh language in all parts of the county and ensuring there are sufficient opportunities for everyone to be able to use the Welsh language naturally in their communities.
- Work jointly with our partners to facilitate the ability for Gwynedd residents to have access to all public services through the medium of Welsh.
- Ensure that promoting the Welsh language is a key part of all the Council's work, and any plans that impact the people of Gwynedd.
- Support efforts to create new Welsh-speakers of all ages.
- Ensure access to facilities and information of a good quality in relation to leisure, culture and the arts.

Projects

- Modernising and extending the immersion provision to teach Welsh to children
- Promoting the use of the Welsh Language by the residents of Gwynedd
- Review Gwynedd's Education Language Policy and conduct an evaluation of the Immersion System to ensure that all the education policies and services provided to children and young people in Gwynedd set a firm foundation for the Welsh language

Project Updates

Modernising and extending the immersion provision to teach Welsh to children

This is what we achieved during the year:

- The construction of a Language Unit on the site of Ysgol Uwchradd Tywyn has been completed and the unit opened to learners in January 2025.
- Work to modernise the three Primary immersion units has been completed with improvements made to the Cymerau, Dolgellau and Maesincla units.
- Following a further grant from the Welsh Government, work on the creation of the virtual Aberwla village for Welsh learners has been completed.

Promoting the use of the Welsh Language by the residents of Gwynedd

This is what we achieved during the year:

- Several different projects were developed as part of the Language Strategy 2023-33 including some to promote clear communication and the Welsh language in business.
- An evaluation of the project to Protect Place Names was conducted, and a work programme was established for 2025-26 to ensure that Welsh names are protected and continue to be used.
- 'Project 15' has been further developed to increase the use of the Welsh language by children and young people. The project creates digital content in Welsh for various

audiences and in different styles and creates new opportunities for people to use Welsh. A company was commissioned to create content and activities for 2025/2026 as well as produce a report on options for the future.
- We contributed to the work of the Services Board's Welsh Language sub-group which tries to respond to the challenges of recruiting a workforce with Welsh language skills.
- We worked with Bangor University to research the attitudes and language use of residents.

Review Gwynedd's Education Language Policy and conduct an evaluation of the Immersion System to ensure that all the education policies and services provided to children and young people in Gwynedd set a firm foundation for the Welsh language

This is what we achieved during the year:

- Following a period of engagement, a draft Language Policy was submitted to the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee on 10 April 2025. It will receive further consideration by the Cabinet later in the year.
- An Impact Study of the Immersion System was commissioned and the report, which will include recommendations from the main findings and potential improvements for the future, will be presented to the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee in the autumn.

Some of our key achievements

- Support has been given to Menter Iaith Gwynedd to establish itself as a sustainable language initiative that will promote the Welsh language in communities across Gwynedd. We managed to keep to the original timetable and completed the work before the end of the financial year, and transfer staff to the independent entity by 1 April 2025.
- The Gwynedd Language Forum was co-ordinated, including an engagement project with young people to understand more about their attitude and use of the Welsh language.
- A pilot was carried out to measure the use of the Welsh language by Gwynedd residents when using some of Cyngor Gwynedd's frontline services including libraries, leisure centres, receptions and the call centre.

A Green Gwynedd

Cyngor Gwynedd has declared a climate emergency, and our aim is to be a net zero carbon Council and ecologically positive by 2030. Our ambition is to ensure:

- Significant reduction in carbon emissions.
- Response to the effects of climate change.
- An increase in biodiversity and nature habitats.
- An excellent network of routes for residents to have the choice of active travel to their place of work, education or leisure.
- A public transport network that meets the needs of Gwynedd's communities.

Projects

- Acting on flood risks
- Waste and Recycling
- Climate and Nature Emergency Plan
- Active Travel
- Public Transport
- New Local Development Plan
- Clean and Tidy Communities

Project Updates

Acting on flood risks

This is what we achieved during the year:

- A new Floods Strategy was adopted for the county.
- A project worth nearly £6 million was completed which will protect the Hirael area of Bangor from the effects of coastal flooding and improve local recreational resources.
- In Barmouth, the detailed design work for the North Promenade is still on the right track and progressing in line with the programme. A physical model of the scheme has been built at Imperial College London and will be used to assess any potential changes to flood risk as a result of our work. The detailed design phase is expected to take about two years to complete.

Waste and Recycling

This is what we achieved during the year:

- A draft Waste and Recycling Strategy has been drawn up which will set a direction for the coming years with the aim of maximising recycling levels and specific actions to transform the waste and recycling services. This will be the subject of public consultation during 2025.
- We have been working with Wrap Cymru to prepare initial plans for modern and purpose-built waste treatment and processing facilities for the Caergylchu (Caernarfon) and Ffridd Rasus (Harlech) sites.
- A scheme to promote the use of certain recycling services was trialled in the Tanygrisiau and Bangor areas, with the intention of extending it to other areas later in the year.

- Additional focus was given to expenditure management, taking into account the savings schemes as well as aiming to avoid overspending.

Climate and Nature Emergency Plan

This is what we achieved during the year:

- 31% of fleet cars and vans are now electric vehicles.
- 60 charging points were installed in 13 locations for the fleet
- The Gwynedd Nature Partnership has attracted £2.3 million to Gwynedd for conservation work in the last two years and has received a further £511,000 for the next two years, contributing significantly to national nature and biodiversity targets.
- We managed to attract the following grants in the field of buildings and energy: £300,000 from Energy Wales for installing batteries at Plas Silyn and Plas Ffrancon Leisure Centres, and £1.7M from the Welsh Government through the Low Carbon Heat Grant for Plas Ogwen Bethesda. This is an exciting scheme with the challenge of bringing such a building up to Passivhaus standard.

Active Travel

This is what we achieved during the year:

- After submitting detailed plans to the Welsh Government for Active Travel schemes and Safe Routes in Communities, successful schemes were developed at Penrhos Road Bangor (second phase), Ysgol Rhostryfan and Ysgol Treferthyr, Cricieth. All the projects will be completed soon in 2025-26.
- Walking and cycling routes were promoted to residents and visitors to the county, drawing particular attention to Gwynedd's active travel network.

Public Transport

This is what we achieved during the year:

- Following a review, a new public buses network was introduced in Meirionnydd and Arfon which will improve provision in the area. A further review will need to be carried out int Dwyfor following the results of a recent tender.

New Local Development Plan

This is what we achieved during the year:

- We have begun implementing the Delivery Agreement to facilitate the arrangements for preparing a new Local Development Plan for Gwynedd. The Delivery Agreement received approval from the Welsh Government.
- The first steps of gathering evidence and calling for development sites have begun. This work will continue during 2025-26.

Clean and Tidy Communities

This is what we achieved during the year:

- The Ardal Ni tidying up team has dealt with a significant increase in requests for work which has included cutting urban weed and overgrowth, street washing and removal of gum, cleaning road signs/street names, and cleaning street furniture. They continue to receive very positive feedback from Members, community and town councils and residents.
- There was a 21% reduction in fly-tipping incidents brought to the Council's attention during the year.
- A campaign was undertaken to raise people's awareness to clean up after their dogs, and there has been a reduction in the number of complaints from the public about the problem.

Some of our key achievements

- Trading Standards successfully met the target of inspecting 100% of high-risk businesses during the year. These include properties licensed to sell explosives and fireworks as well as those related to animal health.
- 82% of local bus journeys managed to arrive on time.
- 38% of the Council's cars or vans are now green (electric or hybrid).
- There was an increase of 0.98% in the number of litres of fuel used by the Council compared to the previous year.
- The vast majority (99%) of food businesses inspected continue to achieve a score of 3+, and a revisit is arranged within 3 months for those with a lower score. However, the Food Standards Agency (FSA) has stated that the Council is not meeting its statutory duties in terms of the frequency of food standards and food hygiene inspections. The service is in the process of addressing the FSA's recommendations to improve the situation.
- Our recycling levels over the last four years have been a consistent 64%. However, because of the increase in the national target to 70%, we are no longer meeting the statutory target. The Waste Strategy will detail plans to address this.
- There was a significant decrease of 44% in the number of complaints about missed waste and recycling collections during the year.

An Efficient Gwynedd

In order to ensure that the residents of Gwynedd receive the best possible services, we have a responsibility to ensure that our internal operational arrangements are always of the highest standard. Our ambition is:

- To promote a culture of open and inclusive working which always puts the needs of the people of Gwynedd at the centre of everything we do.
- To provide adequate and suitable staffing resources for delivering services.
- To be an organisation that looks after our workforce's well-being and embeds the principles of equality naturally in all parts of the organisation.
- To make the best use of all financial resources.

Projects

- Workforce Planning
- Developing the Council's culture
- Ensuring fairness for all
- Women in leadership
- Managing the impact of national budgetary cuts
- Digital Scheme
- Strategic review of Health and Safety management
- Adopting the Property Assets Management Plan to ensure that our estate is fit for purpose for future working.

Project Updates

Workforce Planning

This is what we achieved during the year:

- Establish a work experiences scheme, as another stream to try and attract people to come and work for the Council in the future.
- A dashboard has been produced which provides information on mandatory staff training.
- A dedicated workforce training scheme for general staff has been set up, to compliment and support plans that are already in place for the wider management and leadership of the Council.
- The Council was successful in achieving Level 2 accreditation in the 'Disability Confident' scheme.
- Establishing a staff forum(s) on equality matters.
- More apprentices and professional trainees were appointed. For 2025, a total of 21 new jobs are available, namely 13 apprentice jobs and 8 graduate jobs.

Developing the Council's culture

This is what we achieved during the year:

- "Ffordd Gwynedd" is the name given to the way of working that we have adopted to put the people of Gwynedd at the centre of everything we do. Changing culture,

behaviours and mindsets are at the heart of this, and it happens across all parts of the Council's activity.

- The Practitioners Group was re-established as the Experiment and Improve Group, with the intention of encouraging greater sharing of best practice and lessons learned.
- Reviews of systems and processes were carried out in service units in all departments in the Council.
- Two series of the Managers and Team Leaders Network were held to deal with items such as cross-departmental joint-working, the well-being strategy, celebrating success, understanding and improving performance, managing absences and the practice of conducting reviews of work systems.
- A Forum for Assistant Heads of Services was established for the first time within the Council, as a result of identifying a gap in the opportunities for this cohort of senior managers to share experiences and contribute to the development of the organisation.
- A new Learning and Development Framework has been launched with the programme for the first year focusing on basic training such as financial management, well-being and digital skills.
- A new Well-being Strategy was introduced. The Strategy is based on three pillars, namely leadership and management, sustainable support and a work environment with mental, physical, social and financial well-being at the heart of what we seek to achieve.

Ensuring fairness for all

This is what we achieved during the year:

- We have gathered, analysed and acted on data relating to schools. In particular, cases of bullying and hate crime, the true financial and emotional cost of attending school along with the attendance, punctuality and attainment of various groups of pupils. Work has begun on identifying training needs for school staff and working with welfare officers, the youth service, the police and agencies to be able to act on the data.
- Reviewed the information that is available in the national data dashboard by Data Cymru and decided to create a similar dashboard internally that looks specifically at Gwynedd.
- Continued with the training framework, ensuring that it covers a range of equality characteristics / diverse topics, to give our staff at all levels within the Council the resources and confidence to respect diversity and deal with a range of needs appropriately. The LGBTQ+ training course is up and running and available to all staff since the start of 2025.
- Following the introduction of the new impact assessment system, we have had a chance to improve it through a pilot period. We have also looked at raising staff awareness of the new system and providing support, information and training to ensure the quality of work.
- Establish a staff forum(s) to discuss equality issues, so that our employees can contribute to the area within the Council.

Women in leadership

This is what we achieved during the year:

- Further activities were held that form a foundation for the project's work, such as the Developing Potential Programme and the Sgyrsiau dros Baned.
- Promoted and raised awareness of matters of unconscious bias and self-awareness amongst managers and staff.
- Held events to raise awareness amongst men.
- Continued to consider what Services across the Council are doing to encourage women to apply for senior positions in order to identify and share good practice.
- Continued to pay attention to the constitution of committees and groups to ensure a balance in terms of female and male representation.

Managing the impact of national budgetary cuts

This is what we achieved during the year:

- Total savings of £43 million have been realised since 2015/16, representing 93% of the £46.6m required over the period. £5.6 million of the total savings applies to the savings for the 2024/25 financial year.
- Monitored that the Departments are prioritising the realisation of savings that have slipped from previous financial years.
- Worked with the Chief Executive and Directors and Heads of Department on the 2025/26 savings schemes and cuts, looking at alternative ways of providing services.

Digital Scheme

This is what we achieved during the year:

- We are following a detailed work programme to realise the Digital Plan, and governance arrangements are in place to oversee our progress.
- To support the Council's new "Working for the Future" procedure, a new computer system has been developed to enable staff to book desks.
- Work is underway to redesign the Council's website. It will be tested with the public during 2025-26.
- Improvements are taking place to the Council's telephone provision, with almost 1000 staff now on the new system, including the Contact Centre and some schools, and a comprehensive programme has been prepared for completing the provision.
- Work has been undertaken to reach a conclusion on our options for the organisation's future management systems.

Strategic review of Health and Safety management

This is what we achieved during the year:

- Commenced the work of introducing a new Health and Safety IT system across the Council.
- Drew up an action plan for the Council's Management Team on how to achieve an integrated model of health and safety management.

Adopted a Property Assets Management Plan to ensure that our estate is fit for purpose for working in the future

This is what we achieved during the year:

- Work on reviewing policies has been carried out and discussions have taken place with most of the Departments.
- The work of adapting the departmental spaces within the Main Offices has been completed to enable the relocation of staff from the peripheral offices.
- Initial work has been undertaken to identify our need for office space in Ffordd y Cob and Penarlâg, and options were considered for optimising the use of the sites by combining alternative uses.

Some of our key achievements

- During 2024-25, 89 proactive press releases were issued by the Communications Service which led to 469 news items, which compares favourably with the previous year. Over the same period, the Service also dealt with 510 queries from the press and media.
- There were 2,790,297 visits to the Council's website during the year.
- 261,549 requests for a service were submitted on-line during 2024-25 which is 4,472 more requests than in 2023-24.
- A new account was launched by the Council on the Bluesky social platform.
- On average, the translation team has translated nearly 400,000 words each month, along with providing simultaneous translation in nearly 60 meetings each month.
- A Staff Voice Survey was carried out during the year, and the results are being used to identify the needs of our employees and how the Council can improve further.
- A review was introduced to improve the collection rate of Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates.
- A review of polling places in the county was carried out in order to assess the suitability of our stations and consider whether more suitable locations are available.

DIWEDD

Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021

Cyngor Gwynedd Self-assessment 2024/25

Background and Introduction

This is the fourth self-assessment that Cyngor Gwynedd has undertaken under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

The Act requires all Councils in Wales to continually review the extent to which it meets the 'performance requirements', i.e. the extent to which:-

i. it is exercising its functions effectively;
ii. it is using its resources prudently, efficiently and effectively;
iii. the Council has robust governance arrangements in place to ensure performance requirements i. and ii.

This year, for the first time, we are considering these three questions in the context of the strengths and weaknesses of each of the priorities in the Council's Plan. The purpose of this 5-year Plan is to set out the Council's vision and priorities for the period from April 2023 to the end of March 2028, so considering the above three questions when detailing our main strengths and weaknesses is a suitable and effective approach to shining a light on the Council's performance.

As part of the development of the Plan we considered a wide range of issues to prioritise and engaged and consulted with local people, elected members, Town and Community Councils and partners. One part of the work that was instrumental in the development of the Council's Plan was the work of *Ardal Ni* which outlines what is good about the area, what is not as good as what needs to be done to create a better area by 2035.

The self-assessment process is intended to encourage honesty, objectivity and transparency about the Council's performance and governance. Although this duty is quite new, the Council is already preparing several documents containing the type of information that we are expected to include within the self-assessment. This includes documents such as Performance, Equality, Director of Social Services' annual reports, Annual Statement of Accounts and the Governance Statement. The Governance Group, which includes officers such as the Corporate Director, Head of Finance, Head of Corporate Services and Head of Legal Service amongst others, has led/taken an overview of this work within the Council. In doing so, the intention is for the work to be owned and led on a strategic level.

It is the Council's intention to undertake a Panel Performance Assessment, which will be made up of independent members. This was originally planned to be done in November last year, but due to the political changes in the Council this was changed to March 2026. A Panel Assessment needs to be carried out at least once within an electoral cycle and is linked to the duty to be carrying out annual self-assessments on performance with these documents forming part of the evidence base.

Our performance challenge and support arrangements have been in place for several years now. These performance challenge and support meetings are held at Departmental level every other month, and focus on the progress of Council Plan projects, service performance (namely the 'day to day' work), and the response to key risks within the Corporate Risk Register. The information then feeds into regular performance reports submitted by each Cabinet Member during the year together with the Annual Performance Report at the end of the financial year. A copy of the Council's Annual Performance Reports can be found on the Council's website here: Performance Measuring. To further strengthen this in the future, there will be adjustments to the performance challenge and support arrangements from April 2025 onwards with an arrangement to report directly to the Scrutiny Committees, which will result in more input into the process from members.

The document includes an assessment of our governance arrangements responding to the 3 performance requirements that Councils are expected to respond to as part of the self-assessment. We have also considered the draft methodology published by the Welsh Local Government Association for Panel Assessments in preparing the self-assessment for 2024/25 and responded to the following questions:

- How well are we doing?
- How do we know that?
- What can we do to improve, and how?

The self-assessment for 2021-22 was our first assessment and steps have been put in place to act on the improvements that had been identified. Some of those improvements were seen to continue in the 2022-23 assessment and in 2023-24 as they are long-term issues, but several additional points were also added. This year, we see the pattern continuing, with the long-term matters re-appearing but with new considerations also being added.

This document is therefore a high-level summary of the Council's performance during 2024/25, categorised as a series of Strengths and Risks under each priority area that align with the priorities set out in the Annual Report and the Council's Plan.

The Strengths are based on:

- highlights of the annual performance report
- feedback received from external audit bodies (e.g. Audit Wales, Care Inspectorate Wales, Estyn etc.)
- issues arising from the internal performance challenge and support process

The Risks are based on:

- our main risks as noted in the corporate risk register
- issues identified by external audit bodies
- other matters we have identified and included in the Council Plan.
- issues arising from the internal performance challenge and support process

It is important to note that many of our strengths are included in the other parts of the annual report, particularly where they relate to the Council's Plan projects and our day-to-day work. To avoid repetition, we (mostly) do not list them in the Self-assessment as well. For the reader, considering the two documents (the Annual Report and the Self-

Assessment) together will give a fuller picture of the Council's performance over the period in question.

While many of the priorities involve cross-departmental responsibilities, it should be noted that 'Efficient Gwynedd' is much more corporate in nature as many of the strengths and weaknesses found here are institutional. This priority is a little different from the rest therefore, which is more inclined to reflect departmental strengths and weaknesses.

An Efficient Gwynedd

Strengths

- The Council has been able to effectively cope with periods of austerity/lack of funding, but the situation is becoming increasingly difficult as the funding provided by the Government has dwindled. The Council is very concerned about the pressure this is putting on the residents of the county to meet the increase in Council Tax, as well as the Council's ability to provide adequate services to the population of Gwynedd within our budget.
- Good corporate Governance Arrangements. To ensure that we deliver our functions effectively, we put performance measures in place to challenge performance across all services. Occasionally, we review these measures to ensure that they continue to be relevant, and we are aware of the need to continuously challenge ourselves and set meaningful measures to allow us to improve consistently. We recognise that there is room for improvement in terms of detailed workflow forward planning over the period of the Council's Plan 2023-28, and as a result we have introduced a series of annual milestones for each of the projects to allow us to measure progress as well as plan work for the future. Work to further improve this continues.
- The Council's Constitution is a public document that sets out the governance arrangements and a Guide to the Constitution is provided to reinforce this. The Governance Group maintains an overview of governance issues within the Council. The Group comprises the Corporate Director, Monitoring Officer, Section 151 Officer, Head of Corporate Support, Assistant Head of Corporate Support, the Risk and Insurance Manager and the Council's Business Support Service Manager.
- The Council publishes an annual Governance Statement outlining our governance arrangements and their effectiveness following the principles of the CIPFA/Solace Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework.
- The Council has a process to manage risks by having a Corporate Risk Register in place.
- An annual workshop on assurance and risks will be held with external auditors (Audit Wales, Care Inspectorate Wales and Estyn).
- When recommendations are issued by external audit bodies, an institutional response will be prepared on behalf of the Council and the Governance and Audit Committee is responsible for reviewing and assessing the response along with progress against the recommendations.
- Also, there are appropriate arrangements in place to respond to any reports from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

- Principal governance risks are scored corporately and on a Departmental level, since the risk level varies. There is an in-house Governance Group with an overview and responsibility for quality assurance within Cyngor Gwynedd.
- The Council has commissioned *Local Partnerships* to undertake a review of our governance arrangements, with a view to providing the Council with an independent and objective challenge as well as offering any recommendations for improvement. It will pay particular attention to:
    i. Undertake a rigorous review of our existing arrangements including our governance and financial arrangements.
    ii. Review our governance arrangements in the context of the current Constitution to assess whether it is fit for purpose.
    iii. Assess whether the Annual Governance Statement fulfils its purpose.
    iv. Identify how we meet the full range of statutory requirements in decision-making, e.g. Equality, the Well-being of Future Generations Act, the Welsh language.
    v. Evaluate how we identify and assess risks and review and monitor them.
    vi. Evaluate how we monitor and deliver recommendations for improvement from external and internal regulators and learn lessons across the organisation.
    vii. Identify what we can do to strengthen our governance arrangements for the future.
- We are aware that there is a need to continue reviewing the procedure of identifying and scoring risks, particularly to ensure consistency across the organisation in terms of the assessment and scoring process. As part of this work, we will improve the training offered to managers on risk management. In addition, we are going to review the extent to which specific measures are being introduced to address the risk manage to effectively reduce the risks. We will also consider whether we should add a record of the score that considers any mitigation, as well as the current risk score (which is only a result of the *effect x likelihood*). The work of Audit Wales to undertake a Review of the Council's Risk Management Arrangements during 2025 will feed into this work, along with recommendations from the *Local Partnerships* review.
- The Head of Finance will prepare and promote the authority's risk management policy statement and strategy. The risk management strategy is owned at a corporate level through the Governance Group referred to above and the Governance and Audit Committee which is responsible for challenging the governance risk scores.
- As a part of its service continuity arrangements, the Council has categorised Services from 1 to 4 on the grounds of post-disaster recovery priorities. This enabled the organisation to prioritise during the Covid-19 period and ensured the continuity of 'essential' services. Lessons learned from dealing with the Covid-19 crisis has been valuable in subsequent crises, e.g. the war in Ukraine.
- While the risk management arrangements and strategies for the future are generally improving and strengthening, new arrangements have been put in place to try to standardise and seek to reconcile the scores for very high risks. These are presented to the Corporate Management Team every 3 months. During 2025/26, we will also

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report on these risks to the Governance and Audit Committee and the Leadership Team twice a year (in September and February)

- Based on the work of Internal Audit completed during 2024/25, it was considered that Cyngor Gwynedd's internal control framework during that financial year was operating at a level of reasonable assurance on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the Authority's governance, risk management and internal control framework.
- Gwynedd is a host authority for several different partnerships and provides effective support for them.
- There are robust arrangements in place for supporting Elected Members in Gwynedd, with 97% of Gwynedd Councillors reporting that the service provided by the Democracy Team is good/very good. We will continue to build on these solid foundations in the year ahead.
- The Head of Finance has undertaken a self-assessment of compliance with the CIPFA Financial Management Code and updates it at least once a year and the current assessment shows high compliance across all standards. In 2025, we have commissioned CIPFA to undertake an independent check of the self-assessment, and the results of this work will be considered when designing financial support services for the future.
- The Apprenticeship Scheme has provided an opportunity for **81** apprentices since 2019 (which is one of the highest numbers in Wales compared to the population and size of other Councils). There are numerous examples of the success of the Scheme, with several individuals who have embarked on the Apprenticeship Scheme receiving promotions and permanent positions within the Council. Similarly, the Graduate Scheme (‘Cynllun Yfory’) has provided an opportunity for **37** professional trainees since 2017 with many of them having been offered a job with the Council. For 2025, a total of 21 new jobs are available, namely 13 apprentice jobs and 8 graduate jobs. The job areas range – from new areas such as Energy and working with Councillors, to established ones such as Software Engineering, Finance and Pensions and Mechanics, to name but a few.
- The 2024 Staff Voice Survey was conducted during a challenging period that included fiscal uncertainty, political changes in the Council, and a period of further changes to our 'working for the future' working arrangements following the pandemic. As a result, there has been a slight decrease in the level of staff satisfaction in response to most of the questions, but the level of satisfaction remains high for some of the key indicators e.g. the score for the statement 'the Council is a good place to work' is 80%, and 87% for "I've been motivated to do my best in my job for the benefit of the people of Gwynedd." As in last year's survey, this year's survey consisted of 4 parts – Me and my Well-being, Me and my job, Me and my service and Me and my Employer.

  Some of the themes that emerged last year are repeated, particularly issues around receiving appreciation and recognition, and these remain points for improvement. More staff are also expressing concern about work pressures, which may be a result of the financial squeeze that has faced the council over recent years, and this will also receive further attention.

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1,330 staff completed the Staff Voice questionnaire, which is approximately 21.8% of staff who had the opportunity to answer the survey. **50.6%** noted that they agreed or strongly agreed that **the Council is carrying out its duties effectively.**
40.9% agreed or strongly agreed **that the Council made the best use of the resources at its disposal**, and **48.6%** agreed or strongly agreed **that the Council has arrangements in place to ensure that it performs effectively.**
Going forward, awareness-raising meetings for the Staff Voice Survey will be held with representatives from each department, with the main aim of increasing the number of staff participating. We will also work closely with Heads of Department to encourage engagement through regular communication and weekly updates on the number of staff who have completed the survey.

- Trade Unions were consulted and asked for feedback on the following areas:
    - Comments on the authority's performance and areas for improvement
        - Is the Council carrying out its duties effectively?
        - Is the Council making the best use of the resources at its disposal?
        - Does the Council have arrangements in place to ensure it performs effectively?
    - Tips for improving staff engagement and wellbeing

  Among the responses, it was noted that there was room for improvement in communication with unions regarding staffing issues in some departments, and there was a recognition that we had some way to go in terms of Social Partnership (when groups such as local government, businesses and trade unions work together to make decisions) because this is a learning process.
- The Council gathers the views of the people of the county in many ways to improve services and to meet the legal requirement for councils to engage with residents under various acts such as the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. This year, Gwynedd was part of the National Resident Survey, the first of its kind to be conducted in Wales. While we are aware of the limitations of such a survey, it is an additional means of gathering opinions and we will triangulate the findings with other data and information we collect to ensure that we respond appropriately. One particular advantage of this survey is that it allows us to compare our results with other councils, something that has not been possible with internal surveys alone. There were 3,094 responses to the survey and the results include:

    i. Percentage of respondents who are fairly or very satisfied with how the Council is running things:

    Gwynedd: 31% (3rd out of 9 councils that took part in the survey)

    ii. Percentage of respondents who generally believe that the council provides high quality services (to some extent or to a large extent):

    Gwynedd: 55% (3rd out of 9 councils that took part in the survey)

    iii. Percentage of respondents who generally believe that the council provides services that represent good value for money (to some extent or to a large extent):

    Gwynedd: 43% (3rd out of 9 councils that took part in the survey)

Other results seen in the survey include:

iv. Percentage of respondents who generally believe that the council takes residents' views into account when making a decision (to some extent or to a large extent):

Gwynedd: 27% (2nd out of 9 councils that took part in the survey)

v. Percentage of respondents who generally believe that the council is acting on the concerns of local residents (to some extent or to a large extent):

Gwynedd: 30% (2nd out of 9 councils that took part in the survey)

vi. The percentage of respondents who agree somewhat or strongly that contacting the council is simple:

Gwynedd: 50% (1st in Wales of the 9 councils that took part in the survey)

vii. Percentage of respondents who agree little or strongly that up-to-date information about council services is easy

Gwynedd: 45% (1st in Wales of the 9 councils that took part in the survey)

viii. Percentage of respondents who trust the council to a large or very large extent

Gwynedd: 37% (joint 3rd of the 9 councils that took part in the survey)

- We also prepare an annual report on complaints and continuously adjust our services when observations or complaints suggest improvements.
  The number of Valid Formal Complaints has decreased this year compared to last year, but those that have gone to the Ombudsman have increased. We are still working on reducing the time taken to respond to complaints and aim for the new Customer Contact Charter being developed to have a positive impact on this.
- We are aware of the need to be vigilant to avoid 'consultation fatigue' as we are already seeking the views of our residents on many various topics and schemes, and as a result we have a cross-departmental Engagement Group which meets to gather information on proposed consultations, and to share results and good practice. This helps to ensure that there is sufficient time to plan consultations and avoid duplication.
- The Procurement Team provides advice and support to services, and ensures that the organisation adheres to regulations and best practice in the procurement field. The team's aim is to enable the Council to achieve value for money, strengthen and develop procurement expertise, adopt best practice in the field and support the local market. There are also Category Management arrangements in place, where three Category Teams (Environmental, Corporate and People) are responsible for procurement in specific areas looking at procurement strategically, placing an emphasis on collaboration and carrying out a thorough analysis of the market to try and ensure we get value for money.
- The Council has already adopted the Sustainable Procurement Policy which complies with the principles of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. By adopting the Policy, the intention is to consider the possible social, economic and environmental impact that our procurement decisions can have and what steps can be taken to make the best possible use of the Council's expenditure, for the benefit of the county.

- In 2024/25 the Council was shortlisted for the Welsh procurement award (GO Awards). The nomination is for our efforts to seek to gain social value in the procurement of our food provision across the County.
- The Council has also been preparing for the New National Procurement Regulations, known as the Procurement Act 2023. The Corporate Procurement Team and the Category Team have been busy preparing for the new arrangements and work systems. It is expected that the new Procurement Legislation will encourage public institutions to share what they intend to procure soon while also following simpler and more transparent procurement arrangements.
- Ongoing work is underway to support businesses to respond to requirements in tenders as a result of any developments in the field, such as gaining accreditations or responding to the requirements of the new Legislation. We continue to work with the supply chain to assess the environmental impact and seek to reduce the carbon footprint, helping businesses with the new procurement arrangements will be a priority next year.
- Considerable work has been done during the year to ensure/confirm an understanding among our management that the nine work streams within the Ffordd Gwynedd scheme are in fact our organisation development plan. This is the scheme that works towards ensuring that we have a satisfied and healthy workforce, who are given the necessary support and training to enable us to develop the culture to put the people of Gwynedd at the centre of everything we do.
- We have been working on courses/e-modules that managers can use with their teams to ensure their understanding of the culture being sought, and to support them through the process of conducting Ffordd Gwynedd service reviews. We have already started trialling some of the courses with small groups of staff and have received positive feedback.
- In a nutshell, this is the most obvious increase during the second year of the Ffordd Gwynedd Scheme.

  Learn, Experiment and Act to Improve - The emphasis in the current Plan on carrying out reviews on smaller pieces of work systems, as well as carrying out reviews on whole systems, has borne fruit and all Departments in the Council are able to provide examples of reviews that have led to improvements during the year.

  Leadership - The new Ffordd Gwynedd training programme has been reintroduced for managers during the year while the Manager Development Programme goes from strength to strength with the positive feedback from attendees.

  Support and Develop - A new Learning and Development Framework has been launched with the programme for the first year focusing on basic training such as finance management, well-being and digital skills. The Senior Leadership Programme, the Manager Development Programme and the Women in Leadership Programme continue to demonstrate their value with a large number of officers eager to sign up on each occasion when a new series is announced.

  Workforce Planning and Talent Development - seven work streams have been identified for driving this work forward. They range from conducting a

"Ffordd Gwynedd" exercise on the whole process of attracting staff to work for the Council, to the need to establish specific training plans that address rare skills and expertise, as well as the appropriate behaviours, that are necessary to the future continuity of service.

A Satisfied and Healthy Workforce - A new Well-being Strategy was approved by Cabinet at its meeting on 17 December 2024. The Strategy is based on three pillars, namely leadership and management, sustainable support, and a work environment with mental, physical, social and financial well-being at the heart of what is sought to be achieved.

Customer Contact - A cross-departmental Group has been established to draw up a Customer Contact Charter. That Charter, in its final draft form, will be submitted to Cabinet for adoption on 8 July 2025. There has been comprehensive consultation on the content of the Charter across Council services, and this is a good example of seeking views on developments with staff.

- From the point of view of the Council's internal activities, we have good engagement and communication arrangements in place and a space with important messages centrally shared with staff in a variety of ways including a weekly staff bulletin, a staff Facebook group, the intranet, staff self-service, the Gair o Gyngor magazine, front-line staff visits and Q&A sessions with the Chief Executive. In addition to this, departmental and managerial communication activities take place on a regular basis.
- An extensive training programme for Elected Members was provided during 2024/25 which included core training in seven specific areas:
    i. Safe Leadership and Personal Safety
    ii. Code of Conduct
    iii. The Well-being of Future Generations Act
    iv. Safeguarding Children and Adults
    v. Your Responsibility for Equality
    vi. Your Responsibility as a Corporate Parent
    vii. Information about People: Your Responsibility
- In addition to this, training was offered in several other areas as well as the opportunity for each Councillor to receive a personal development interview to identify specific areas of development. There is an offer for councillors to have specific sessions before they undertake roles on different committees, e.g. Cabinet Members, and several other committees such as Planning, Licensing and Governance and Audit. Furthermore, briefings will also be held for members, which are an opportunity to present an update on important issues e.g. when there are changes in legislation etc.
- We as a Council take advantage of opportunities to innovate and embed digital technology to improve the lives of our residents, to work better with partners, and to strengthen and improve the responsiveness of our services to the needs and expectations of our customers. To assist us with this, in 2023 Cyngor Gwynedd's new Digital Plan for the five years from 2023-28 was approved. The period of this Plan coincides with the period of the Council Plan (in the same way as the period of the

Ffordd Gwynedd Plan). Funding has been secured to drive the Digital Plan's first two-year work programme and several further priorities are in place.

- The cyber team was strengthened by the promotion of an apprentice to a permanent role with the Council, two data science degree apprentices were supported, and extensive advances were made on the integrated telephone system, organisation management system and analogue to digital line upgrades projects during 2024/25. Many of these projects will be completed during 2025/26, with the integrated telephone system in full development and already rolled out in various locations. Another project that will see significant growth this year is the organisation management system, and it is expected that a new system for salary payment and the administration of Human Resources matters will be in place during 2026/27. There is constant and ongoing development with the upgrade of our analogue lines, and this will continue until the end of 2026, and we hope to welcome a new Digital Transformation Trainee to the Council during the summer through the Council's trainee and apprenticeship programme.

Risks

- Setting a balanced budget for 25/26 is a challenge, particularly given the need to ensure that departmental budgets are adequate to provide the necessary level of services for the people of Gwynedd, and to avoid overspending as seen in 2024/25. At that time there was a departmental overspend of £6.6m with significant overspend in the Departments of Adults, Health and Well-being, Children and Families, Highways, Engineering and YGC and Environment.
- A new savings programme was introduced as one of the Council's top priorities in responding to the latest financial situation, and the Council agreed a £650,000 savings programme in setting the 2025/26 budget in addition to savings of £6.4million in setting the 2023/24 budget, and a further savings of £5.2million in setting the 2024/25 budget. Cabinet approved a 'Medium Term Financial Plan' for Cyngor Gwynedd up to the 2027/28 financial year in May 2024. As part of this Plan, a range of measures and work packages have been established to prepare for the significant gap in the Council's budget over the next three years, under the guidance of the Chief Executive. An updated version of the Medium-Term Financial Plan (until the end of the 2028/29 financial year) was presented to the Cabinet on the 16th of September 2025.
- During 2024, Audit Wales undertook a review of the Council's financial sustainability including a focus on the actions, plans and arrangements to bridge funding gaps and address financial pressures over the medium term. It found that there had been a significant increase in the number of departments in the Council that overspent in the last two financial years, and that the Council had developed arrangements to review its budgets.
- An internal review is underway to improve our Council Tax collection arrangements, and actions have been introduced to increase collection rates in the future. This work will continue to receive attention over the coming year. We are also eager to ensure that issues such as this receive early attention in the future, and we will look to review our arrangements to ensure that this happens.

- Over the past year, there have been changes in the Council's political leadership, with several new Cabinet Members taking on responsibilities across a range of areas. In addition, appointments to senior officer positions are expected over the coming months. These changes may pose challenges to consistent leadership and cause delays in strategic decision-making, but we recognise this and intend to address the issue appropriately.
- Difficulties in recruiting for jobs in some key areas such as social care and education can jeopardise the continuity of service. The concern about this has led to the creation of a special project in the Council's Plan - 'Workforce Planning' - which will address the challenge and offer a range of solutions. The Governance and Audit Committee has indicated in the past that workforce planning, succession planning and managerial succession should be considered as possible areas for the Panel Performance Assessment. Having rescheduled the date for the Panel Assessment, it is likely that this will be further considered ahead of their March 2026 visit. In addition, Audit Wales will conduct a study on 'Responding to workforce pressures in local government' during 2025/26.
- The Council is part of several local and regional partnerships such as the Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board and the North Wales Economic Ambition Board. It would be fair to note that the effectiveness of these partnerships varies at the moment, and we will continue to work to try to ensure that we benefit from these arrangements. Similarly, our relationship with the third sector continues to evolve and we, with the support of the Third Sector Liaison Group, will be looking at this again during 2025/26.
- The work of ensuring that equality is deeply rooted within the Council's work to improve our services for all the people of Gwynedd continues. A Strategic Equality Plan for 2024-28 was developed to provide a framework to improve fairness within the Council, and to ensure that we treat people according to their needs, and this work continues.
- As has already been noted, the Cyngor Gwynedd Plan 2023-28 was adopted during 2023. The Plan is ambitious in an extremely challenging financial climate. Although consideration has been given to the resources required to deliver what is within the Plan as it is developed, the financial situation has changed significantly since then, and if the financial squeeze continues, it may mean that the Council will have to adjust or reduce our ambitions and as a result the number of projects that we will be able to fully complete within the period.
- The Finance Department, in close contact with the Chief Executive and Directors, undertakes ongoing reviews of the Council's financial forecasts over the next three years, updating the model regularly when new information is received and reporting regularly to Cabinet members and to the Corporate Management Team (Chief Executive, Directors and Department Heads). The corporate planning cycle coincides with the statutory cycle of budget planning, and we aim to present the annual update of the Council Plan to the same meeting of the Full Council as the budget.
- Every year, the Council prepares a Financial Strategy and sets a balanced Budget to ensure continuity of service. The Council also publishes a Statement of Accounts at the end of every financial year, which shows its annual expenditure. The review of expenditure against budgets and monitoring that savings have been achieved by all Council departments, ensures that the services are operating efficiently. However,

as noted earlier, the increasing pressures on the Council's budget are making it harder for departments to maintain the same level of services within the budget provided, which leads to a risk of overspending.

- The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 has created new duties for Political Group Leaders to take an element of responsibility over promoting good conduct and collaboration with the Standards Committee. Agreement was reached on a protocol and criteria to assess the discharge of the duty at a workshop between members of the Committee and Leaders. These were adopted by the Standards Committee, and they will contribute towards preparing the Committee's annual report. This work has been supported by meetings and regular communication with the Monitoring Officer.

A Caring Gwynedd

Strengths

- Timely and good quality Statutory Reviews are carried out to ensure that care and support plans remain appropriate.
- An improvement in outcomes for people who receive domiciliary care because of the use of technology and alternative methods of service provision. Almost two-thirds of Gwynedd's telecare devices have now been transferred to new digital devices.
- Strategic planning developments - Llechen Lân has been published and i-Lechen is being implemented.
- As part of the Home Care Work Programme there is particular attention to developing suitable and appropriate information and data systems and ensuring ownership and control of the most relevant and operational roles in the domiciliary care field/system.
- Following the Improvement Check Visit undertaken by Care Inspectorate Wales in October 2024, it was noted that: "The entire professional workforce of the service in terms of social workers and occupational therapists has been employed by the local authority. This means it doesn't rely on agency staff and offers people a more consistent service. People also benefit from a professional workforce that can offer a service through the medium of Welsh."
- We employ a dedicated practitioner to support and train people to set up micro businesses, and Care Inspectorate Wales identifies this as good practice, adding: "The local authority should continue its work to promote the care and support options available including the number of micro-carers available, in line with its duty to provide information, advice and support and preventive services."
- Care Inspectorate Wales stated in their Improvement Check Visit (October 2024):
    - The leaders are experienced and provide stable leadership, and the practitioners say they are visible and easy to approach.
    - The leaders appreciate the dedication of the practitioners. The practitioners are committed and exceed expectations when it comes to supporting people. They obviously know the people they support very well.
    - Positively, as noted in the last performance evaluation inspection, practitioners continue to feel that they are well supported. 94% of

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practitioners who completed our survey indicated that they 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that they were well supported by their colleagues and leaders.

- Departmental budgets were reviewed to consider the additional resources needed to complete any action plans, and to deal with historic budget shortfalls in some departments (e.g. social services). This is intended to ensure that the services provided can be provided within the base budget to support the financial sustainability of the Council. Revision of provisions in budgets will continue over the next year in the preparation of the 2026/27 budget.

Risks

- If there is an insufficient and inefficient provision of domiciliary care, residential homes and nursing, it could lead to harm, increasing needs and additional costs. Among the steps we are taking to deal with this is a new project in the Council's Plan – Llechen Lân – which has analysed the demographics of Gwynedd; the demand for service; and adult social services best practices to understand and highlight the demand for service and associated resources that will be needed for the next twenty years.
- To ensure the highest quality services and effectively manage costs, the teams need to collaborate on a multi-disciplinary level with partners such as health, police, the third sector, and care providers. Steps have already been taken to strengthen these partnerships although there is further work to be done, for example to further develop the collaborative relationship with the Health Board.
- If enough staff cannot be recruited, there is a risk that the best services cannot be provided to the people of Gwynedd. We have therefore recently reviewed salaries and introduced the Llechen Lân project, as well as introducing a Care Academy to try and improve the situation and we intend to take additional steps shortly as well.
- If Business and Care Commissioning services are not effective and efficient, there is a risk to the safety of individuals and staff, as well as a risk that we do not provide quality services to the residents of Gwynedd. Several steps have been taken to respond to this, including the introduction of a new social services recording system. However, even though we are introducing a new system, we will have to work with the existing system without support for a period of several months. This is a very high risk, but it is a national issue, and work is underway to mitigate the risk.
- In certain specific circumstances, the Council can make a DoLS (Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards) authorisation in order to protect a person who lacks the mental capacity to accept care or treatment to keep them safe from harm. The Council has a waiting list for DoLS assessments because a qualified officer is needed to complete them, and they need to be reviewed regularly. There is a legal and financial risk associated with failing to carry out the assessments in a timely manner, and the Council is aware of this and is taking steps to improve the situation.
- A weak relationship with institutional stakeholders could lead to a failure to provide quality services to the people of Gwynedd. Steps are being taken to ensure a good relationship between organisations, as well as to try to simplify the working relationship which can be overly complex due to legislative barriers.

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- Failure to have mental health assessments outside of working hours would leave individuals at risk and face mental health distress without proper support.
- An increase in demand for services coupled with an increase in the complexity of needs, leads to budgetary pressures and risk of overspending.
- It is projected that Cyngor Gwynedd's population will increase by 5% between 2024 and 2043 from 125,900 to 132,200, including a projected 3% increase in the number of children, a 1% increase in the number of working age population and a 16% increase in the number of people aged 65 and over.
- The data collected on assessments and support for unpaid carers needs to be improved, as set out by Care Inspectorate Wales in their Improvement Check Visit (October 2024): "This is essential to ensure that it fulfils its statutory duty to assess whether a carer needs care and support (or is likely to need care and support in the future) and if so, what needs they are likely to have."

Tomorrow's Gwynedd

Strengths

- The outcomes of primary and secondary school inspections are generally strong.
- Support to meet the needs of learners/Welsh-language provision - including the Immersion Education system.
- During an inspection in 2023, Estyn found that the authority firmly promotes and supports pupils' well-being. This was further confirmed at Assurance and Risk Assessment meetings in 2024 and 2025.
- We continue to make improvements to schools across the county, and in particular the Bangor, Cricieth and Bontnewydd area and have taken every opportunity to apply for grant aid to enable us to modernise existing buildings and develop new buildings. A new building and campus for Ysgol Treferthyr in Cricieth has opened its doors to learners in early September 2024. This follows years of work, and an investment of over £8m to secure the highest quality learning environment and resources for up to 150 learners in the area. In addition, there is childcare provision on the site, as well as an ABC Unit.

Risks

- Changes in the county's demographics affect the viability of the current school system and increase the lack of equity that exists due to the significant variation in cost per capita per pupil.
- Arrangements for monitoring, evaluating and promoting pupil attendance need to be improved. Attendance levels remain a concern following the pandemic-induced slump. Attendance is also a priority for the Government and Estyn. We will be introducing an Attendance Strategy in 2025, and we have strengthened our processes by improving the systems for targeting attendance. We have also made use of Welsh Government grants to improve capacity and a campaign to improve attendance.

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- We will strengthen provision for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, and ensure arrangements for monitoring and improving the quality of that provision. We have created a new plan for September 2025, which is to create a multi-site Pupil Referral Unit to provide high level support for some pupils and strengthen support for these learners in our schools.
- A fundamental change in school improvement support following the end of GwE. With such a significant change, it is inevitable that it may affect the quality of support in terms of improving schools and standards.
- To provide quality support to schools that are in a follow-up category following Estyn audits.
- During the year, there were serious cases of offences against children, including a high-profile case where the former headteacher of Ysgol Friars, Neil Foden, was arrested and sentenced to 17 years in prison for sexual offences against pupils. This case has highlighted significant failures in the council's safeguarding systems over a number of years.
- In response, the Council has reviewed its safeguarding policies and procedures, commissioned independent reviews, and contributed to a regional Child Practice Review led by an independent chair. The Education Scrutiny Committee has also launched a review of safeguarding arrangements in schools across Gwynedd, with the aim of improving standards and ensuring the safety of children. The formal review is expected to present lessons and recommendations in the autumn of 2025.
- There is a significant risk that failure to ensure safeguarding arrangements in schools meet the highest standards, or failure to implement the lessons from the review, could lead to continued safeguarding failures, harm to children and young people, loss of public trust, legal consequences, and pressure on the Council's resources.

A Prosperous Gwynedd

Strengths

- As part of a new Regeneration Framework, a Local Regeneration Plan has been prepared for each of the 13 regeneration areas in the County. The plans reflect local priorities highlighted during the 'Ardal Ni' consultation with Gwynedd residents. The Local Regeneration Plans incorporate projects that are being developed by a wide range of organisations and groups active in the area and contribute to the economically, environmentally, socially or culturally improvement of areas to create healthy, thriving, dynamic and sustainable communities with a prominent and central place for the Welsh language.
- The 'Gwynedd and Eryri Sustainable Visitor Economy Plan 2035' has been jointly developed by Cyngor Gwynedd and the Eryri National Park Authority. This is a groundbreaking scheme and introduces a new way of operating, supporting and measuring the impact of the entire visitor economy on the area.
- We have been successful in securing significant funding from sources such as the Shared Prosperity Fund and ARFOR to strengthen Gwynedd's economy. Together with our partners we have allocated £24.4 million from the Shared Prosperity Fund to schemes that have contributed towards strengthening Gwynedd's economy,

improving skills and creating pride in our communities. Over 960 businesses, enterprises and organisations have received support creating or safeguarding almost 300 jobs, and over 700 people have gained a new qualification.

- Town Centre Schemes have been created for several towns in Gwynedd. The purpose of these is to identify and agree action plans and set priorities for individual towns. The Town Centre Schemes give particular attention to high street areas, with the intention of making them more attractive places to visit and work, and to encourage people to spend their time and money there.
- A Cross Departmental Vacant Properties Group has been established to co-ordinate the efforts of the various Council Services dealing with vacant properties. The Group has adopted a range of interventions – including the provision of information, technical advice, financial assistance, as well as enforcement arrangements. We intend to develop this work further over the next year.
- Since gaining UNESCO World Heritage Site status for the North West Wales Slate Landscape in 2021, the Council and its partners have been trying to make the most of the designation. This includes the Llewyrch o'r Llechi and LleCHI LleNI project – schemes worth over £30m and supported through Cyngor Gwynedd, UK Government, Welsh Government, Heritage Lottery Fund, Amgueddfa Cymru – Museum Wales and several other partners – which are already underway to improve understanding, pride and economic and social opportunities in our slate valleys and across the area.

Risks

- The ARFOR programme ended at the end of March 2025 and although the SPF programme has been extended for the 2025-26 year, that is on a smaller scale than what has been seen in the past. Significant uncertainty exists regarding the finances and administration of any future economic development programs.
- There is a risk that we may miss an opportunity to secure the best economic benefit for Gwynedd through the Growth Plan (North Wales Ambition).

A Homely Gwynedd

Strengths

- The Housing and Property department is working closely with its housing partners on social and intermediate housing developments to meet the huge demand for housing in Gwynedd.
- Through the Buy-to-Let Scheme, the Council buys homes off the open market to let them to residents in need of housing.
- In order to bring more empty homes back into use, there are a number of interventions available for the people of Gwynedd to take advantage of.
- The Department has been successful in attracting additional funding from the Welsh Government to deliver more affordable housing developments.

- The development of the Penrhos site, Pwllheli, is underway, after the Council, in partnership with Clwyd Alyn housing association, secured an additional grant of around £7.7m from the Welsh Government to enable the start of phase 1 of the development.
- The Council helps many county residents avoid or get out of fuel poverty by providing support to insulate houses, receive effective heating equipment and eco-friendly upgrades such as solar panels and air source heat pumps.

Risks

- Homelessness remains a challenge even though several new interventions have recently been introduced. We will continue to implement many ambitious schemes including the development of several additional sites across the county.
- Although there is much to welcome in the Homelessness and Social Housing Allocation (Wales) Bill, it may require a lot of additional resources to implement.
- There is concern that the public don't have easy and clear access to an enquiry and advice service on housing matters. As part of the Housing Action Plan, we will soon be launching a Housing 'One Stop Shop' to support residents with their queries.
- Support for planning applications to build social housing.

A Green Gwynedd

Strengths

- Consistently managed to meet statutory recycling targets in the past.
- Have set an ambition of being net zero carbon by 2030 and adopted a 'Climate and Nature Emergency Plan' to meet the ambition.
- A Flood Strategy has been adopted which highlights the current and future risks of flooding and coastal erosion in the county and how the risks will be managed.
- The percentage of respondents to the National Residents' Survey who find it fairly or very easy to book the recycling and waste centre in Gwynedd is 89% (1st in Wales of the 9 councils that took part in the survey).
- A scheme which provides grant support to improve the energy use performance of housing in the county is having a positive impact.
- Attracted significant grants from the Government to fund renewable energy schemes, an electric vehicle fleet and public and fleet charging points.
- Willingness to experiment and innovate – Welsh Government grants and capital from the Council will fund a pilot project to convert a care home to the Passivhaus standard, aiming to reduce carbon emissions by 94%.
- Working with external partners – the Council leads the Gwynedd Nature Partnership.
- In line with the Council's Green Fleet Plan, when vehicles need to be replaced, we have been converting to electric vehicles where possible. 48% of the Council's cars and vans are now electric vehicles.

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Risks

- To meet the national recycling target of 70% and avoid a financial penalty, residents' behaviours need to change so that they recycle more and reduce the residual waste that needs to be collected.
- Waste treatment sites need to be modernised as well as improvements made to our recycling centres.
- There is a significant risk of coastal flooding which could have a detrimental impact on many communities such as Fairbourne.
- Failure to meet frequency targets in relation to food hygiene inspections and food standards.
- The Council's 'Climate and Nature Emergency Plan 2022/23 - 2029/30' sets an ambition which notes that "Cyngor Gwynedd will be carbon net zero and ecologically positive by 2030." The Plan includes a broad range of projects to reduce carbon emissions and absorb carbon across many fields: buildings and energy, movement and transportation, waste, procurement, governance, land use, ecology. We acknowledge that reaching net zero is a long-term task, but this plan sets several specific milestones for us to measure our annual progress up to 2030. There are so many policy, legislative and budgetary factors that are beyond the Council's control and are having a huge impact on the Council's ability to deliver many of our projects, such as electricity grid network supplies or investment in energy and heating buildings. Nevertheless, the Council has chosen to spend substantial funding from our coffers to deliver many of our projects in our Climate and Nature Emergency Plan, and £3m was earmarked for the work. Despite the investment however, the uncertainty from the perspective of external factors means that meeting the ambition to be ...'net zero carbon and ecologically positive by 2030' remains a practical and financial risk for the Council.
- Although the Council has invested £3M of its own funding since 2022, which is a continuation of significant investment in carbon saving schemes since 2010, there is a real risk to not having the funding or human resources to deliver the Climate and Nature Emergency Plan as a whole.
- Work is ongoing to ensure that the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and other statutory requirements are fully integrated within our corporate planning frameworks, rather than in a way that is responsive and fragmented in nature. To assist with this, a new template was introduced to plan reports to the Cabinet, which leads officers to refer to the various statutory requirements, including the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, when preparing their reports.

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A Welsh Gwynedd

Strengths

- The Welsh language is a key part of all the Council's work, and any plans that affect the people of Gwynedd. Welsh is the Council's main administrative language, which means that we are one of the largest employers in the country who use Welsh on a day-to-day basis in the workplace.
- We offer opportunities for staff to develop their language skills including training to learn Welsh and to further develop Welsh language skills across all levels.
- The Council has modernised and expanded the immersion provision for learning Welsh to children and intends to further increase the provision of Welsh-medium education in the county.

Risks

- There may be a perception by some that a 'University standard' Welsh is needed to work for the Council, and while that is not accurate, it may affect recruitment to some posts.
- Welsh-speaking young people are migrating.

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Additional improvements identified for 2025-26
• In response to the recommendations of a study by Audit Wales we will be looking to improve our service commissioning arrangements.
• Manage the impact of the significant changes that have recently taken place in the Council's political leadership and among Heads of Department.
• Improve training on risk identification and management.
• To act on the relevant recommendations in the Local Partnerships report.
• Consider how we can build on the resident survey organised by the Welsh Local Government Association/Data Cymru and obtain more information/evidence to enable us to improve services.
• Implement further steps to improve compliance with the Social Partnership Duty.
• Act on the findings of the Staff Voice Survey, including staff appreciation and well-being.

Improvements that have been identified within past Self Assessments and will continue into 2025/26.

Improvement	
We will:	**Our progress to date**
• Review the procedure of identifying and scoring risks, particularly to ensure consistency across the organisation in terms of the assessment and scoring process.	• Over the past few months, the Chief Executive and Corporate Directors have been looking specifically at the very high risks. The intention is to ensure that the right risks are included in the list and to try to ensure consistency in how they are scored.
• Continue the work to strengthen our internal arrangements to ensure that statutory requirements/guidance or legislation is a core element and better integrated with our corporate planning work.	• During 2024/25 it was planned to hold a session with the Leadership Team on the Future Generations Act led by the Office of the Future Generations Commissioner as well as holding further training sessions for the remaining members. The member training sessions were held in the Autumn. • It was originally planned to hold a session with the Leadership Team in November, but due to the political changes that have taken place in the Council it has not been possible to hold the session. • During June/July 2025 Local Partnerships will be looking at governance arrangements within the Council and as part of this work they will be looking at how we are operating in this area and making recommendations

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	for improvement (if necessary).
• Continue work on reviewing the Council's Asset Plan to ensure that priorities remain current in light of the experiences and developments of recent years.	• Drawing up a new Asset Management Plan is a project in the Council Plan for 2023-28. • Policy review work has been carried out and discussions have taken place with a significant number of Departments. A draft Asset Plan is in place but requires modifications and resolution to be adopted. • When the Corporate Property Management Strategy is approved, it will be possible to proceed to prepare a Property Asset Action Plan (the timetable of which will be subject to the Corporate Strategy).
• Looking to develop a way to measure value for money (efficiency) at service level as part of our performance challenge arrangements.	• We will collaborate with peers in other councils and professional bodies such as CIPFA to develop a framework to be able to identify value for money. This work commenced in 2023/24 and has continued during 2024/25. During 2025/26 we will consider the options available to establish cost-effective benchmarking arrangements with other authorities.
• Continue to implement a project to address the existing staff recruitment problems that the Council is experiencing.	• The 'Workforce Planning' Project, which is a part of the Council Plan for 2023-28, is addressing this. • Work to create a matrix of key, risk-assessed posts for the continuity of the Council's key services (particularly in the areas of care and education) has begun but further work remains to be done. • There is an intention to carry out a review of the whole process of attracting staff to work for the Council, with the aim of continuing to improve the process for all involved - particularly job applicants.

Completed improvements from 2024/25

Improvement	
We will:	**Solution**
• Improve our forward planning over the period of the Council Plan 2023-28, by setting a series of annual milestones for the various projects in the Council Plan.	• At the start of 2024/25, milestones were provided by the Project Leaders for every project within the Council Plan. The progress was assessed against these milestones at the performance challenge and support meetings during the year.

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• Participate in a national survey arranged by the WLGA to obtain useful information by the County's residents on our performance.	• The Council participated in the national citizens survey arranged by the WLGA and Data Cymru in February/March 2025, with over 3,000 residents responding.
• Complete the actions to improve scrutiny effectiveness in response to the recommendations of the Audit Wales report.	• All actions have been completed after the arrangements for reporting on performance were presented to the Scrutiny Committees at the start of 2025/26.
• Communicate information about service performance, and the Council generally, more effectively to residents.	• Over the past year we have been working on a new performance reporting regime whereby reports will be submitted to the relevant Scrutiny Committees rather than Cabinet meetings. These arrangements are in place from June 2025 and all Council performance measures will now be published rather than a summary of the main ones as in the past.
• Improve understanding and raise awareness of the Council's areas of work amongst County residents.	• Substantial communication work is being done on raising awareness of the Council's activities, including press statements, items on our website and social media. In addition, detailed responses are provided to enquiries from the media about the work of the Council and/or committee reports. A response to the national resident survey shows that these works need to be continued. This is ongoing work that will continue to receive the Council's attention.
• Conduct a staff voice survey (as has been the case in the past) to engage in constant discussion with the workforce and provide them with the opportunity to say what is working well and the barriers they face.	• A Staff Voice Survey was conducted during November/December 2024, comparing the results with the previous year. • The key findings will be shared with members of the Corporate Management Team, and with each Department's management teams individually. The corporate work plan for action on the main findings will be monitored as part of the work of the Ffordd Gwynedd Officers group.
• Conduct an appraisal of the work of the Governance and Audit Committee to establish whether it is effective.	• The Committee has carried out a self-assessment in April 2024 and actions have been identified and acted upon.
• Continue to act on the actions already put in place in response	• By the end of 2024/25 we will have acted on all the recommendations made by Audit

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to an audit of performance challenge arrangements undertaken by Audit Wales and continue to review the success of those arrangements and review if necessary.	Wales in their audit of performance challenge arrangements. • The final step in this response will be to submit performance reports to the scrutiny committees rather than the cabinet. This will be operational from the June 2025 round of scrutiny committees.

• Implement the Ffordd Gwynedd Plan Work Programme 2023-28 to continue to improve performance and provide the best possible services for the County's residents.	• The Ffordd Gwynedd Plan annual report for 2024/25 shows that the Council is moving in the right direction in terms of culture and working methods. It is also noted that:
	  • some departments are showing good leadership, but progress is inconsistent across the organisation.
	  • technology and artificial intelligence are key to improving services.
	  • need to expand training and strengthen ongoing evaluation.
	  • reducing absences and increasing ownership of performance are priorities.
	  • talent development plans are positive, but workforce planning is still a challenge.
	  • the vision for quality services is clear – the priority now is to speed up work in all departments.
	Work on the 5-year Plan will continue.

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Further evidence for our findings:

Strategic Equality Plan 2024-28

Cyngor Gwynedd Diversity Statement

Cyngor Gwynedd's Annual Performance Report and Self-Assessment 2023-24

Annual Report of the Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board 2023-24

Annual Report of the Director of Social Services 2024-25

Participation Strategy 2023

Fforddd Gwynedd Plan 2023-28

Corporate Risk Register

Annual Workshop with the Regulators and Cabinet Members

Performance Reports of individual Cabinet Members

Statement of the Accounts 2024-25

Cyngor Gwynedd's Assets Plan 2019/20 - 2028/29

Audit Wales Annual Audit Summary 2024

Cyngor Gwynedd's Constitution

Staff surveys

Surveys of residents

Annual Report Cyngor Gwynedd Standards Committee 2024-25

Final Accounts 2024/25 – Revenue Out-turn

Annual Report of the Head of Internal Audit 2024-25

Reports by Audit Wales

Reports by Care Inspectorate Wales

Reports by Estyn

2024/2025 Governance Statement

Cyngor Gwynedd's Annual Equality Performance Report 2024-25

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Cyngor Gwynedd

Social Partnership Duty Annual Report 2024-25

1. Introduction

The aim of the report is to show how Cyngor Gwynedd has complied with the Social Partnership Duty.

The **Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023** (the "SPPP Act"), which came into force on 1 April 2024, requires public bodies, including **Cyngor Gwynedd**, to produce an annual report to show how they have complied with the **Social Partnership Duty** established by the Social Partnership and Public Procurement Act.

The Social Partnership Duty requires local authorities to seek a **consensus or compromise** with their recognised trade unions, when they:

i. determine their **well-being objectives**; and
ii. make **strategic decisions** about the reasonable steps they intend to take to achieve those objectives.

Section 16(2) of the Act sets out a number of specific requirements relating to the Duty, which a public body must comply with when "seeking a consensus or compromise".

To seek a consensus or compromise, a public body must involve its recognised trade unions or other representatives of its staff in the process of setting objectives or making decisions, by (specifically):

a) consulting with them in the **early stage** of the process, and
b) include them throughout the process by:
    i. providing **sufficient information** for them to be able to give due consideration to what is proposed, and
    ii. providing **sufficient time** for them to consider what is proposed and respond appropriately.

According to **Section 18** of the Act:

1. A public body must prepare, for each financial year, a report of what it has done to comply with the duty.
2. The report must be **agreed with recognised trade unions** or include a statement explaining why it was not agreed.
3. The public body must **publish the report**, and submit it to the **Social Partnership Council**, as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of the financial year.

Draft - Not to be circulated

2. Background

In addition to duties under the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act, there are requirements within other Acts such as the Future Generations Act and the Local Government and Elections Act to consult with different cohorts (including staff).

Cyngor Gwynedd has established a Liaison Group between the Council and the trade unions for a number of years, to reinforce the healthy relationship that has largely existed for more than a decade. This forum meets approximately every 6 weeks. The aim of this group is to place emphasis on maintaining good working relationships between the Council and the Trade Unions, proactively discussing and resolving constituent employment issues, as well as handling and discussing the development of local working conditions and other employment initiatives. The meetings are chaired by the Human Resources Service Manager and include representation from the Council (HR Service Manager, Health, Safety and Well-being Service Manager, human resources officers) and representatives from the Trade Unions (GMB, UNISON and Unite).

The trade unions recognised by Cyngor Gwynedd are:

- GMB
- UNISON
- Unite

3. How we met/complied with the Social Partnership Duty

While we normally undertake an annual review of the Council's Plan, only a light review was carried out during 2024/25, with only one new project being added to the Plan. There was no wider consultation by the Council beyond Elected Members (through Cabinet and Full Council meetings) in making this decision.

As part of the process of producing the Council's Self-Assessment for 2024/25, a consultation was carried out with the recognised trade unions, seeking their feedback and comments on the authority's performance and potential areas for improvement. Specifically, it was asked:

- Is the Council carrying out its duties effectively?
- Is the Council making the best use of available resources?
- Does the Council have robust arrangements in place to ensure effective performance?
- What suggestions do they have for improving staff engagement and well-being?

Draft - Not to be circulated

Among the responses, it was noted that there was room to improve communication with the unions on staffing issues in some departments. It was also recognised that our approach to the Social Partnership needs to be further developed as it remains a process of learning and evolving. While the corporate relationship is generally healthy, and there are also positive links within some departments of the Council, it is recognised that the next step is to go further and establish a constructive relationship between the trade unions and each of the Council's departments. This will be a further proactive and positive development.

As mentioned above, the corporate Liaison Group between the Council and the trade unions meets approximately every 6 weeks to discuss employment issues. While some attention has been given to the Social Partnership Duty in the past, we will ensure that it is included as a standard item on the agenda of all future meetings.

During 2024/25, the corporate liaison group met approximately every 6 weeks. Here are some of the issues that received attention during the year:

1. Introduction of a new alcohol and drug testing policy.
2. Develop and introduce a new staff sickness absence management policy and system.
3. The possibility of adopting the TUC's Welsh language charter
4. Dealing with change within services/departments, in a sympathetic manner that provides support to staff.

One example of the partnership working constructively is the development of the new policy on conducting drug and alcohol testing among the workforce, and the introduction of a new sickness absence management policy and system. The success of these two examples has been based on inclusion and collaboration with the unions from the very beginning – from identifying the 'problem' to formulating solutions. Both topics can be contentious and have involved considerable change in policy, but by working together from the outset we have been able to reach a solution that is acceptable to both sides.

From April 2025, the Council will take decisive steps to facilitate the participation of local representatives in their union duties, including identifying and allocating a specific budget to support this process and releasing representatives from their permanent roles.

Historically, we have not specifically sought to achieve a consensus with the trade unions in making strategic decisions or in setting our well-being objectives. This shortcoming has been recognised as a weakness in the process, and looking to the future, we will take decisive steps to ensure that sufficient time is earmarked in the planning process, to enable meaningful and productive collaboration with the unions.

Draft - Not to be circulated

Our goal is to embed the principle of social partnership in everything we do. As part of this commitment over the next year we will put steps in place to strengthen our contribution, including:

- Raising awareness of the requirements arising from the Welsh Local Government Act and the Social Partnerships Act and to provide a suggestion as to how to meet the requirement.
- Submit a draft of Cyngor Gwynedd's Annual Performance Report and Self-Assessment 2024/25 so that unions have an opportunity to submit any recommendations or comments before the document is considered by the Governance and Audit Committee, Cabinet and Full Council. (July 2025)
- Arrange a face-to-face meeting with the unions to discuss the current well-being objectives and priority projects within the Cyngor Gwynedd Plan 2023–28. This will provide a proactive opportunity for unions to share their views directly, ensuring their input is considered as part of the review process. (November 2025)
- Actively involve the unions in the drafting process of the review of the Cyngor Gwynedd Plan 2023–28 by sharing a draft and allowing them to submit recommendations and comments for consideration by the Cabinet/Full Council prior to adoption. (January 2026)
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Draft - Not to be circulated

CYNGOR GWYNEDD – Report to Cyngor Gwynedd's Cabinet

Item Title:	Quarterly Report – Chair of the Response Plan Programme Board (November 2025)
Cabinet Member:	Cllr. Nia Jeffreys, Leader of the Council
Relevant Officer:	Dafydd Gibbard, Chief Executive
Date of meeting:	11 November 2025

1. The Decision Sought:

The Cabinet is asked to accept the report which is the second quarterly report from the Chair of the Response Plan Programme Board.

2. The reason for the need for a decision:

A Response Plan was adopted by Gwynedd Council's Cabinet in January 2025 to collate all support, reviews, audits and other workstreams relating to the response to crime by the Head Teacher, Neil Foden.

There was a commitment to report quarterly to Cabinet Members on the progress of the Response Board's work programme and operation.

The report is shared by the Chair of the Response Plan Programme Board, with the intention of raising awareness of the developments and what has and needs to be achieved by the Response Plan Programme Board.

3. Introduction and rationale

3.1 Background/ Introduction

The Chief Executive was commissioned to put arrangements in place for the implementation of the content of the Response Plan including establishing a dedicated Programme Board and regular reporting on progress to Cabinet.

Professor Sally Holland was appointed to the role of Independent Chair of the Board in February 2025. Sally is Professor of Social Work at the Children's Social Care Research and Development Centre (CASCADE) at Cardiff University and a former Children's Commissioner for Wales (2015-2022).

As promised, Sally will report quarterly to Cabinet Members on the progress of the Response Board's work programme and operation. This is the second of these reports (the first being in July 2025).

The publication of the Child Practice Review was expected on 24 September, 2025, and therefore the hope for this report was to be able to share an update on progress against the

recommendations of that report as well as the current work programme of the Response Plan. However, the publication of the report was postponed, and therefore at the time of writing this report there was a limit to what could be shared as an update.

3.2 Next Steps

The Board's work continues with the intention of reporting back to Cabinet on progress in 3 months' time.

4. Comments of Statutory Officers.

4.1 Chief Finance Officer

The decision sought will not create a new spending commitment and I have no further comments to add.

4.2 Monitoring Officer

The Programme Board has been established by the Cabinet to co-ordinate and ensure progress on the Response Plan which it adopted. It is key to this governance arrangement that the Cabinet receives regular updates on progress in this all-important work. A report by the Independent Chair, Professor Sally Holland is a transparent and robust method of providing that assurance. I welcome the report.

QUARTERLY REPORT TO CABINET: RESPONSE PLAN PROGRAMME BOARD

PROFESSOR SALLY HOLLAND: CHAIR OF THE RESPONSE BOARD

DATE: 4th November 2025

Introduction

Since my previous report to Cabinet in July 2025, the Response Plan Programme Board ("The Board") has continued to meet regularly and monitor progress across all workstreams of the Response Plan. There have been three further meetings since my last report including one face to face meeting with the CPR review team. There has been notably high engagement with the Board, with 100% attendance at meetings by Cyngor Gwynedd representatives and external agencies, demonstrating that members and observers regard it as a priority.

The publication of the Child Practice Review (CPR) is imminent as I finalise this report and will have been published by the time I meet with the Cabinet on 11th November.

The Board acknowledges the difficult circumstances of the previous unexpected postponement of the CPR report publication, and I would emphasise that the primary consideration has been for any impact on the victims and survivors. The Board members additionally expressed concern in this period about the impact on the school and other services featured in the report and sought reassurance from senior officials in Cyngor Gwynedd that support was in place during the last three months.

Due to the very recent publication of the report, I must make clear that this report provides information about the Board's activities prior to the publication. We have not had a Board meeting since publication.

Current Position

During this quarter the Board has continued to receive updates on the improvement work that is ongoing in Gwynedd. Since my last report we have seen further developments, specifically;

- *Internal audit into the Cyngor Gwynedd workforce's awareness of safeguarding arrangements*
- *Funding agreed and post created to appointment a new Safeguarding Champion role which will help raise awareness and improve training uptake*
- *Part Ch of the workplan (Supporting and Stabilising Ysgol Friars) has been revised with the input of the Chair of Governors and interim Headteacher to reflect the key priorities for the school.*

- *Children's Services have been further reviewing procedures e.g. Strategy Discussions/Part 5 Meetings to reflect learning to date*

Challenges to progress have included:

- Ensuring all staff have completed mandatory online safeguarding training. There are specific challenges to ensuring that some frontline staff have access to computing facilities to complete this (primarily staff who are not office based such as those in the Waste and recycling Service and Cleaning service), and the Board has asked for regular updates while solutions to this are implemented.
- Regarding Article 12 of the UNCRC (children and young people's rights to be listened to and involved in decisions that affect them), it has been reported that the Gwynedd youth forum has been in the process of being re-established this year. The Board is looking forward to hearing more about young people's confidence in, and experience of, safeguarding in Gwynedd through the youth forum and other mechanisms. As Chair I have encouraged the local authority to consider reviewing and doing further work to embed all children's rights across the county, and senior officials have expressed a desire to do this. A half-day workshop has been arranged for early 2026.
- While additional resources have been made available, the improvement work is taking place in addition to high workloads of key staff. The Board continues to consider the anticipated resources required post CPR publication (i.e. staffing and training) to ensure that Cyngor Gwynedd is able to deliver on the Work Programme in a timely manner.

In anticipation of the publication of the CPR report, the Board has been actively advising on the response plan and impact measures might be reshaped and redeveloped in response to the findings and recommendations of the report. This has been with an aim of ensuring that the Board will be ready to respond promptly and comprehensively to the CPR findings, once they are available to us.

In the next meeting of the Response Board in the first week of December, members and observers will be asked to consider a further-developed workplan and set of measures.

In the meantime, there is work being done nationally and regionally which is likely to have a direct impact on the work of the Board and it will be important that the response plan is also aligned to these national developments:

- Welsh Government - **Review of Governance and Accountability Mechanisms**
- Welsh Government **-** **Review of School Governing Bodies.**
- Children's Commissioner - Recommendation about school governance: **Children's Commissioner Annual Report**

The Board will continue to ensure any regional or national developments and new recommendations from these will feed into the workplan. The Board continues to be

updated and briefed on these developments by the external bodies who also sit on the Board as observers. The Board has advised that Cyngor Gwynedd should aim to make improvements that anticipate national developments, where that does not breach current guidance, rather than wait for them to be published. Cyngor Gwynedd are in full agreement with this approach.

Scrutiny and Assurance

As Chair, I keep a close eye on the various **mechanisms** available to the Board to scrutinise, support and advise on progress. In summary, these are as follows:

1. The Board receives a written update on each action in the response plan in advance of meetings. Lead officials report verbally on these in Board meetings and there is an opportunity for all Board members and observers to ask questions about these.

2. As the months progress, we are starting to receive some findings from impact measures. These mainly relate at this stage to *outputs*, e.g. how many staff have completed training, and how many schools have been visited and found to be compliant with expected policies and procedures. Measures of *outcome*s, such as the confidence of children, parents and staff in safeguarding arrangements in their settings are planned and will be reported to the Board as they become available.

3. I conduct meetings external to the Board to gauge experiences of the improvement work. For example, during this quarter I have met with Ysgol Friars Head Teacher and Chair of Governors, and RASAC (the charity providing some of the support and counselling to victims and the wider school community). I also meet the members for external national bodies who act as observers to the panel quarterly to check their views on progress. Issues raised in these meetings are noted by me and taken up with relevant senior officials.

4. The Terms of Reference for the Board are constantly reviewed. A change made since my last update has been to clarify the role of Cabinet Members on the Response Board. The four Cabinet Members who are part of the Response Board are present in order to provide accountability to the public, ensure a democratic element to the board and to ensure that resources are in place to support the work. As Chair, I meet with these members on a quarterly basis to discuss the progress of the Board.

5. There are regular inspections of schools and social care provision by the relevant inspectorates and these inspections always include examination of safeguarding. Additionally, there is a county-level joint inspection by Estyn and Care Inspectorate Wales this month of safeguarding. These external inspection reports are available to the Board, and both agencies have observer status at meetings.

Using the above methods, there is some triangulation of the evidence sources by which the Response Board can scrutinise and support progress.

Next Steps

The Board anticipates reviewing the findings of the CPR report at the earliest opportunity. The Board will also review and advise on Cyngor Gwynedd's revised version of the Response Plan. This is expected to incorporate new or amended objectives and tasks. The Board is also committed to refining its impact and outcome measures to fit the redeveloped plan to ensure that progress is not only tracked but meaningfully assessed against our overarching objectives which are to *Acknowledge, Apologise, Support, Establish, Learn, Improve* and be *Accountable.*

Closing Remarks

In summary, this has been a challenging quarter due to the unanticipated delay in publication of the CPR report. This has led to a delay in being able to redevelop the response plan and impact measures to meet the findings and recommendations of the CPR. Given the very recent publication of the CPR report, this report to Cabinet is necessarily limited in detail regarding the Board's views on Cyngor Gwynedd's response to those findings. I will be in a position to provide a fuller and more substantive report in the next quarterly update.

There has also been a necessary delay in assessing the time period for the response plan and the Board to continue, before the work becomes embedded into Cyngor Gwynedd's usual practices. This will be assessed after the publication of the CPR report.

The Board remains committed to scrutinizing and advising Cyngor Gwynedd to ensure that all necessary improvements are embedded effectively and that the interests of victims, survivors, and the wider community remain central to every action taken.

I would like to thank all members of the Board and partners for their continued engagement and readiness to adapt to what will be an important and sensitive period ahead.

Professor Sally Holland

Chair of the Response Plan Programme Board

CYNGOR GWYNEDD – Report to meeting of Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet

Item Title:	**Statutory Consultation on the Proposed Glyndŵr National Park**
Cabinet Member:	**Cllr. Craig ab Iago, Aelod Cabinet Amgylchedd**
Contact Officer:	**Gareth Jones, Asst Head of Environment Dept**
Date of Meeting:	**11 November 2025**

1. THE DECISION SOUGHT

1.1 To approve the response in Appendix 4 as Gwynedd Council's response to the statutory consultation on the proposed draft designation order and boundary for the proposed Glyndŵr National Park.

1.2 Delegate the right to the Head of the Department for the Environment to make any insignificant changes that may be required to the response before it is submitted to Natural Resources Wales.

2. REASON WHY THE CABINET NEED TO MAKE THE DECISION

2.1 As a statutory consultee, Gwynedd Council is required to provide a formal response to the statutory consultation on the proposed draft designation order and boundary of the proposed national park. The statutory consultation commenced on 15 September 2025 and closes on 8 December 2025.

3. INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

3.1 Background

3.1.1 In its Programme for Government (2021-2026), Welsh Government set out its intention to designate a new National Park based on the existing Clwydian Range & Dee Valley National Landscape (formerly known as an 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty' or AONB). The Welsh Government commissioned Natural Resources Wales (NRW) to evaluate the case for a new National Park. The assessment will take place within the current term of the Senedd (2021-2016).

3.1.2 If NRW considers a national park designation to be appropriate and desirable, a 'designation order' will be served to the Welsh Government, which will then decide whether to confirm, refuse or vary the designation order. If confirmed, a fourth national park will be created in Wales. The first new park since 1957, and the first ever park to be created in and by Wales.

3.1.3 Only a small area of Gwynedd is included within the proposed park boundary (just over 11km^2 and less than 2% of the total area). Llandderfel is the only settlement within the boundary. According to information from the Council's Land and Property Gazetteer there are 220 addresses with 185 being residential and 15 commercial/business units. According to the 2021 Census the average household size in this area is 2.4 therefore it can be estimated that the population living in this area is 528. A map showing the boundary of the new park and which part of Gwynedd falls into the proposed boundary of the new national park can be found in Appendix 1.

3.2 Previous Consultations

3.2.1 Between October and November 2023, NRW conducted a public engagement period on an initial map of the new national park, referred to as a 'Search Area Map'.

3.2.2 NRW undertook a non-statutory public consultation on a proposed draft boundary between October and December 2024, referred to as the 'Candidate Area Map'.

3.3 Gwynedd Council's response to the non-statutory Consultation between October and July 2024

3.3.1 Although the consultations related to the proposed boundary of the new park and although it only affects a small area of Gwynedd the Council raised a number of concerns/questions namely:

- The impact on house prices
- The rural economy
- The visitor and tourist economy
- The Welsh language
- Planning (Policy and Development Management)
- Governance and funding
- The candidate area and the need for a new national park

3.3.2 The table in appendix 2 summarises the concerns/questions raised by Gwynedd Council during the previous consultations, NRW's response to the issues raised and our comments on its responses.

3.3.3 The table shows that we are not satisfied with the response to five concerns raised which are:

- The Welsh language
- Planning
- Funding
- Governance
- The candidate area

3.4 Gwynedd Council's Response to the Current Consultation

3.4.1 NRW has created an online response form for the consultation which is available here: Proposed Glyndŵr National Park (Designation) Order - Statutory Consultation 2025

3.4.2 The Council's draft response to the consultation can be found in appendix 4 which elaborates on the concerns raised in 3.3.3.

3.5 Internal consultations and discussions

3.5.1 On 9 October, we met with NRW and Councillor Elwyn Edwards to discuss any concerns he may have as the local member who raised the following concerns:

- The impact on the Welsh language
- Funding / Waste of money
- Governance
- Over-tourism

3.6 Next steps

3.6.1 The Council will need to submit its comments by 8 December 2025.

3.6.2 Following a review of the responses to the statutory consultation, and if NRW's board agrees, then a designation order will be submitted to the Welsh Government in February 2026. The Welsh Government has the authority to designate a national park or not.

3.6.3 A briefing note sent by NRW on the 31 October which states:

"Any objection made by a local authority (and not withdrawn) will trigger a local inquiry to be held. Should a local public inquiry be held, an assessment

will be made of the financial and resource implications, the nature of the objections and how objecting local authorities may choose to participate."

A copy of this briefing note can be seen in Appendix 5.

The views of the statutory officers

Monitoring Officer

This is a significant consultation that justifies Cabinet attention. Although the area of Gwynedd falls within the boundaries of the proposed National Park is comparatively small in geographical terms, this may have material implications for Cyngor Gwynedd. It is appropriate that the draft response highlights this.

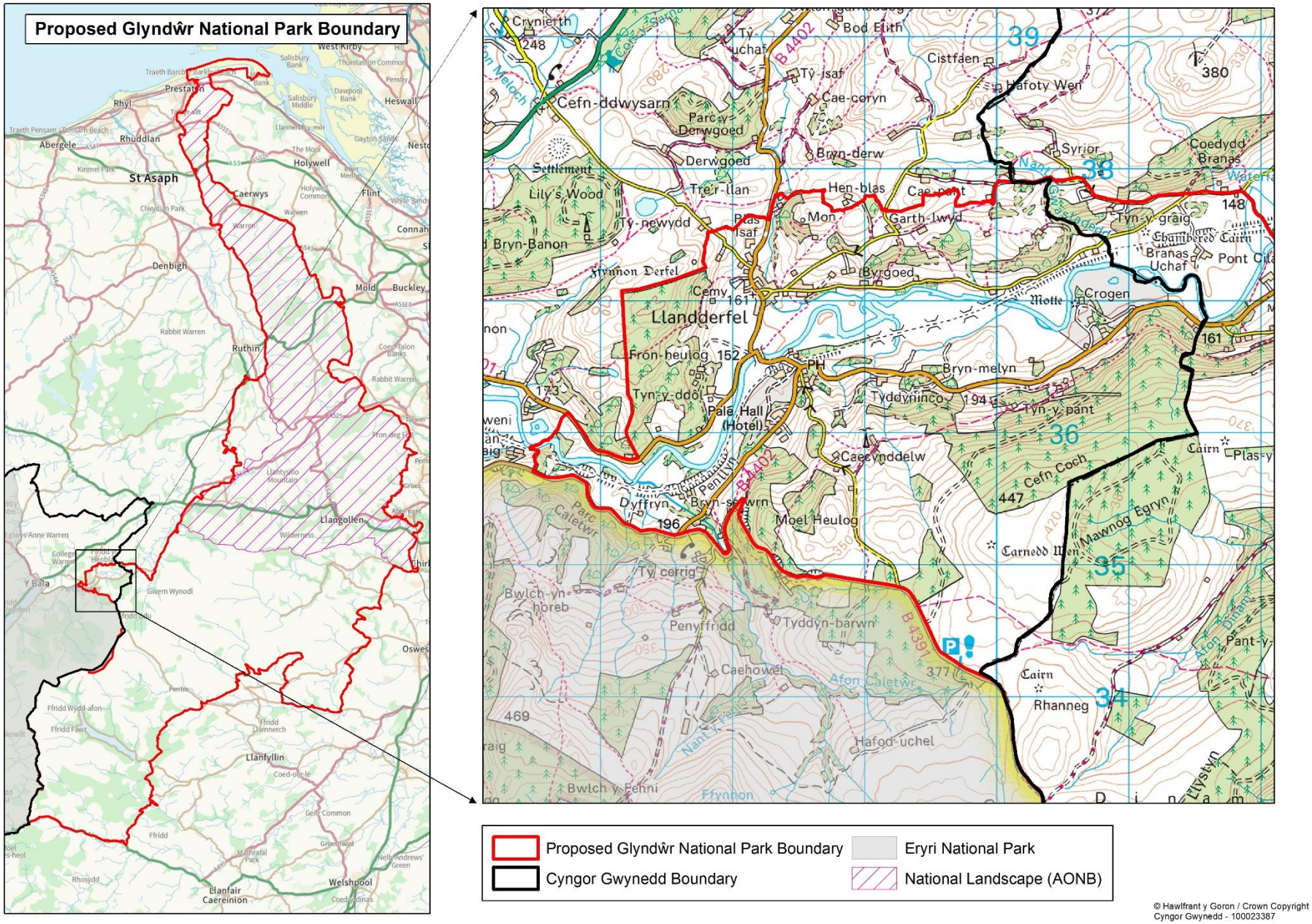
Head of Finance

I have no objections to the decision sought.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Map of the Proposed Glyndŵr National Park
Appendix 2: NRW's response to Gwynedd Council's comments on the previous consultation
Appendix 3: Letter from the Deputy First Minister
Appendix 4: Gwynedd Council's response to the Statutory Consultation
Appendix 5: NRW Briefing Note 31 October

Appendix 1 – Proposed Glyndŵr National Park Map



Appendix 2 – Summary of NRW's Response to Cyngor Gwynedd's Comments on Previous Consultations

Summary of Issue Raised	NRW Response	Cyngor Gwynedd Comments
The impact on house prices Research undertaken by Nationwide shows that house prices can rise by up to 25% within a National Park and a number of people from Gwynedd are already being prised out of the housing market because of the high price of houses compared to the county's average wage.	NRW has commissioned ARUP to undertake an Economic impact report that addresses these issues. The report agrees that average house prices within National Parks are generally higher than neighbouring areas and recognises that it can lead towards a potential increase in demand for housing and limited supply. But the report notes that NPAs can implement policies to limit house prices and highlights the Snowdonia National Park LDP's policy of prioritising housing for local communities, with new developments usually limited to small-scale housing or affordable housing for local residents.	Note the comment.
The rural economy The area around Llandderfel is very rural where agriculture is one of the main industries. Diversification is important for the agricultural sector and can help the viability of businesses in the countryside. The concern is that	NRW has commissioned ARUP to undertake an Economic impact report that addresses these issues. The report acknowledges that there is potential for increasing restriction on	Note the comment.

a new National Park designation will introduce more stringent policies regarding developments that are acceptable within the area.	commercial development in national parks. The report also notes that National Park status can raise area recognition at an international level, offering promotional benefits for local products such as beef, lamb and venison, helping producers secure premium prices. The 'Ffermio Bro' scheme, for example, is now available to farms within a National Park or National Landscape.	
<u>The visitor and tourism economy</u> Over-tourism is an issue of concern in parts of Gwynedd particularly in Eryri National Park. This leads to parking problems, congestion on the local roads, litter and pollution leading to conflict with the local community. There is concern that the designation of a National Park in this area will lead to an increase in the number of people visiting the already popular area and therefore lead to an exacerbation of these problems. In addition, the designation of a National Park could lead to an increase in the number of second homes and short-term holiday lets.	NRW has commissioned ARUP to undertake an Economic impact report that addresses these issues. The report acknowledges that in addition to increased spending, additional visitors also bring a risk of overtouris. This could create pressures in certain locations and on transport and services. However, a new NPA could also help mitigate these impacts by providing targeted control of the area, along with wider policies such as the proposed visitor tax in Wales.	Note the comment.

<u>The Welsh language</u> The issues identified above e.g. the lack of availability of housing which is affordable for local people can have a negative impact on the Welsh language. The research that Gwynedd Council has undertaken to justify the introduction of Article 4 guidance clearly shows that there is a correlation between high numbers of second homes and short-term holiday accommodation and the Welsh language.	NRW has carried out an impact assessment on the Welsh language which states that the designation of a new National Park is unlikely to have a negative impact on the Welsh language, affect the use of Welsh, or treat Welsh less favourably than English.	The proposed area to be included in the new National Park in North West Wales includes parts of Gwynedd that are recognised as one of the strongholds of the Welsh language, where it is used on a daily basis. Incorporating these communities into a new Local Planning Authority comprising several unitary authorities – many of them with lower levels of Welsh language use – could risk weakening the focus on Welsh considerations in planning and policy. This could have a negative impact on the status of the language and everyday use in an area where it is currently thriving. Although an assessment of the impact of the Welsh language has been carried out, the Council does not consider that the negative impact on the Welsh language can be mitigated in the proposed area which falls within the Gwynedd LPA.
<u>Planning</u> <u>Planning Policy</u> - The final decision on the designation of the new national	Under legislation, a National Park Authority ('NPA') would be the Local	The only fact we have is that the new

park will be made around the same time that Cyngor Gwynedd holds its public consultation on the Deposit Plan (Local Development Plan). We need guidance from the Welsh Government / NRW on how Gwynedd's new Local Development Plan should deal with the proposed national park in the area within Gwynedd <u>Development Management</u> - Guidance is needed on how planning applications are dealt with in the area of the new National Park in Gwynedd. Will Gwynedd Council's Development Management Service maintain this service until the new Local Planning Area (LPA) is established and new staff are appointed? Or will this service be externalised to Gwynedd Council for a fee once the LPA is established?	Planning Authority ('LPA') for the National Park boundary and would be responsible for Forward Planning (Local Development Plan ('LDP')) and Development Management. The Planning Services Review report prepared by Arup includes alternative models for delivering the planning service. No decision has been taken on this yet, as a new APC would need to be considered, if one is created, in partnership with the local authorities within its boundaries and Welsh Government. The report produced by Arup will help inform any future discussions. LPAs have raised concerns in relation to wasted resources if LDPs need to be rewritten on the confirmation of a new National Park. NRW has considered the future timeline for the establishment of a NPA and the transfer of planning functions and considers that the risk to LPAs of abandoning existing or developing LDPs is low, particularly where the area being proposed is already an AONB and therefore unlikely to feature heavily in any LDP.	National Park will be a Local Planning Authority. No decision has been made as to what type of planning service the new national park will have, so we cannot be certain that there will be no negative impact on existing planning services. With regard to the LDP, it is incorrect for NRW to state: "...*considers that the risk to LPAs of abandoning existing or developing LDPs is low, particularly where the area being proposed is already an AONB and therefore unlikely to feature heavily in any LDP*" The guidance we have received from the Welsh Government's Planning Division is that no LDP should include parts of a different Local Planning Authority. The pending decision to designate the new national park or not may have an impact on the Gwynedd LDP's timetable.

	This issue can be monitored and discussed between the LPA and Welsh Government, given it is ultimately Welsh Government who has control over the timing of confirming a Designation Order. In respect of individual planning applications, it is unlikely that the proposed existence of a National Park will impact most decisions as, in many cases, development will fall within permitted development rights that exist currently. However, for Developments of National Significance, it is recommended that LPAs advise developers that a new National Park is developing and that they should be aware that, should they choose to proceed with their application, they would be proceeding at risk. The materiality of a new National Park will increase further into the process, and it is suggested that LPAs seek their own legal advice in respect of those more complex matters.	
<u>Funding</u>		

More information is needed on how the new National Park will be funded. It is noted that 25% of National Park funding comes from the constituent Local Authorities. In the current financial climate faced by all public bodies, there are significant concerns about the additional burden this will place on the Council during very challenging times financially.	We are pleased to note that, following representations in relation to this issue and your calls for clarity, the Deputy First minister for Wales has responded and written to Local Authorities. (a copy of the letter can be found in appendix 3). The Deputy First Ministers letter includes the comments: *"it is absolutely vital that a new National Park is properly funded without reducing the core funding for our existing National Park Authorities, or by reducing the funding available to Welsh Local Authorities. We are committed to this principle"…* *"I have considered the likely core revenue costs arising from the Environment Act 1995 (EA 1995) that require funding from Welsh Government and a NPA's constituent Local Authorities. The Welsh Government is committed to providing additional funding to fully cover both of these requirements should a new National Park be designated. That is to say, there would be no financial burden placed on your Council to provide funding to a new National Park,"*	Glad to receive a letter from the Deputy Minister but it does not provide reassurance. NRW's response states that the Welsh Government has given assurances that Local Authorities will not be financially disadvantaged but as the Welsh Government is not receiving additional funding for the new national park, there is no information as to where this funding is coming from.

<u>Governance</u> There are currently no details on how the new National Park will be Governed. Clearer details on this will be required before the statutory consultation, to give Cyngor Gwynedd a reasonable opportunity to give an opinion on this. Will the Council would want to be one of the authorities represented or contribute to the Authority? This would be similar to the situation in the south of Snowdonia National Park which is within the boundaries of Powys Council but they are not part of Snowdonia National Park Authority	We recognise that the proposed boundary includes a small area of Gwynedd (just over 11 km2 and less than 2% of the total area). Also only the settlement of Llandderfel is included. This raises questions about the symmetry of governance implications. We have raised this with the Welsh Government and set a relevant precedent in relation to other comparative examples in Wales. However, we currently expect that Gwynedd County Council would be represented on the National Park Authority (NPA). The new APC administrative area will encompass a number of unitary authorities. These unitary authorities will retain responsibility for local government services, other than planning, for which responsibility will fall on the new APC. Proper governance would be carefully considered as part of a transition and establishment period, should a National Park be ratified. This goes beyond the role of NRW, which is solely tasked with carrying out the assessment. NRW	There are no details on how the new National Park will be governed. Details are needed regarding if the Council will be represented or contribute to the Authority or not. As no sound guidance has been provided on this issue, although we raised the issue in our previous consultation response, Gwynedd Council is unable to comment on this.

	would expect Gwynedd County Council, as a member of the potential new APC, to be able to contribute to initial discussions on governance.	
<u>Candidate Area and the need for a new National Park.</u> The area of Gwynedd considered to be part of the National Park borders the Snowdonia National Park. Was this area considered when determining the boundaries of Eryri? If so, why wasn't it included within the boundary of Eryri National Park? What has changed in terms of the landscape of the candidate area since the designation of Eryri National Park and the Vale of Clwyd and Dee Valley AONB? There are five National Landscapes in Wales - is there a particular reason for choosing this area over any other?	The current proposals have a historical basis in terms of consideration previously given to the area. The Report of the National Parks Committee (England and Wales) chaired by Sir Arthur Hobhouse identified the land of a National Park and potential Areas of Conservation (later known as AONB and National Landscapes) which included the Clwydian Range and the Berwyn. The area of Gwynedd which is included within the existing proposed boundaries of Glyndŵr National Park was originally identified by Hobhouse as AONB land possible to be included in Y Berwyn.	Gwynedd Council is not satisfied with the reason given in NRW's response for including part of Gwynedd in the new National Park. It was noted that the area of Gwynedd which is included within the current proposed boundaries of Glyndŵr National Park was originally identified by Hobhouse as possible AONB land to be included in Y Berwyn and not to be included in Snowdonia National Park. It is not clear what has changed in the landscape to be included in the new national park.

Huw Irranca-Davies AS/MS
Y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog ac Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Newid Hinsawdd a Materion Gwledig
Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref HIDCC/00586/25
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21 August 2025

Dear Nia and Dafydd

Earlier this year I wrote to Flintshire CC following a letter from their Chief Executive. In that letter I pledged to provide further information about how a future new National Park Authority in Northeast Wales would be funded, if a new National Park is designated. I am now writing to provide further information about the Welsh Government's commitment to provide future funding for the proposed new National Park and the financial implications to Cyngor Gwynedd of any decision made by Welsh Ministers in relation to the designation.

As outlined in my previous reply, it is absolutely vital that a new National Park is properly funded without reducing the core funding for our existing National Park Authorities, or by reducing the funding available to Welsh Local Authorities. We are committed to this principle and will continue work to assess the costs related to the establishment of a new National Park and the funding required by the Welsh Government.

At this stage, ahead of any recommendation that Natural Resources Wales (NRW) might make about any new designation, it is not yet possible to accurately quantify the cost of a potential new National Park. However, I can confirm that I have now been able to consider in more detail the most significant costs that would arise out of creating a new National Park Authority and confirm that these will form part of the Welsh Government's future financial plans.

In particular, using approximate costs based on our existing National Parks, I have considered the likely core revenue costs arising from the Environment Act 1995 (EA 1995) that require funding from Welsh Government and a NPA's constituent Local Authorities. The Welsh Government is committed to providing additional funding to fully cover both of these requirements should a new National Park be designated. That is to say, there would be no financial burden placed on your Council to provide funding to a new National Park, as additional funding would be provided to your Authority to meet the costs outlined under EA 1995.

In addition, I would note that our existing NPAs have benefited in recent years from accessing additional Welsh Government capital funding through programmes such as Sustainable Landscapes, Sustainable Places (SLSP), Ffermio Bro and Local Places for Nature (LPfN) to take forward important work in areas including nature recovery, climate change, access and sustainable tourism. I fully expect that any new NPA would be able to access and benefit from these schemes or their future equivalents.

There would be a period of transition required between any new designation being confirmed and a new National Park Authority being brought into being. While further work is required on the nature of such a transition arrangement, the Welsh Government also
intends to provide funding towards this.

Finally, while the above has focussed on costs and funding, I would also highlight that National Parks have the potential to bring economic benefits to the areas they serve such as through boosting tourism and the visitor economy, as well as wider benefits. As part of its assessments, NRW has carried out an Economic Impact Review for the proposed National Park, which will be made available to Local Authorities alongside other new evidence by NRW during a statutory consultation in the autumn (subject to approval by NRW's board).

I hope that this information is useful.

Yours sincerely,



Huw Irranca-Davies AS/MS
Y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog ac Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Newid Hinsawdd a Materion Gwledig
Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs

Atodiad 4 – Ymateb Cyngor Gwynedd i'r Ymgynghoriad Statudol

4. I/we would like to make representation on the following. Please select the option(s) that are most appropriate:

- ☐ I/We support the current proposal for a new National Park
- ☐ I/We support the principle of a National Park but suggest a boundary change (please provide details below)
- ☐ I/We support the principle of a National Park subject to certain points being appropriately addressed or clarified (please provide details below)
- ☐ I/We object to the proposal for a new National Park
- ☑ I/We remain undecided / don't know

Please provide further details as appropriate:

There is not enough clarity on the issues below for Gwynedd Council to be able to give a specific opinion on the New National Park:

The Welsh Language

The proposed area to be included in the new National Park in North West Wales includes parts of Gwynedd that are recognised as one of the strongholds of the Welsh language, where it is used on a daily basis. Incorporating these communities into a new Local Planning Authority comprising several unitary authorities – many of them with lower levels of Welsh language use – could risk weakening the focus on Welsh considerations in planning and policy. This could have a negative impact on the status of the language and everyday use in an area where it is currently thriving.

Although an assessment of the impact of the Welsh language has been carried out, the Council does not consider that the negative impact on the Welsh language can be mitigated in the proposed area which falls within the Gwynedd LPA.

Planning

The only fact we have is that the new National Park will be a Local Planning Authority.

No decision has been made as to what type of planning service the new national park will have, so we cannot be certain that there will be no negative impact on existing planning services.

With regard to the LDP, it is incorrect for NRW to state:

"...considers that the risk to LPAs of abandoning existing or developing LDPs is low, particularly where the area
being proposed is already an AONB and therefore unlikely to feature heavily in any LDP"

The guidance we have received from the Welsh Government's Planning Division is that no LDP should include parts of a different Local Planning Authority.

The pending decision to designate the new national park or not may have an impact on the Gwynedd LDP's timetable.

Funding

Cyngor Gwynedd is glad to receive a letter from the Deputy Minister but it does not provide reassurance.

NRW's response states that the Welsh Government has given assurances that Local Authorities will not be financially disadvantaged but as the Welsh Government is not receiving additional funding for the new national park, there is no information as to where this funding is coming from.

Governance

There are no details on how the new National Park will be governed. Details are needed regarding if the Council will be represented or contribute to the Authority or not.

As no sound guidance has been provided on this issue, although we raised the issue in our previous consultation response, Gwynedd Council is unable to comment on this.

The Candidate Area

Gwynedd Council is not satisfied with the reason given in NRW's response for including part of Gwynedd in the new National Park.

It was noted that the area of Gwynedd which is included within the current proposed boundaries of Glyndŵr National Park was originally identified by Hobhouse as possible AONB land to be included in Y Berwyn and not to be included in Snowdonia National Park. It is not clear what has changed in the landscape to be included in the new national park.

Briefing note – October 2025

Statutory Consultation on a Proposed Glyndŵr National Park

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) is issuing this briefing note to provide further clarification on several points, following dialogue with statutory consultees and the Welsh Government. This briefing note is intended to support local authorities in preparing their formal responses to the statutory consultation on the proposed designation of a new Glyndŵr National Park in Wales.

Points of clarification.

1. **Planning Arrangements:**

The Welsh Government has issued a statement to clarify its position on planning arrangements under any future National Park Authority. These matters will be further addressed following the making of the Designation Order, but prior to confirmation of the Order by the Welsh Ministers.

'Welsh Ministers recognise and understand the importance of planning arrangements under any new Planning authority.

While ultimately, as set out under legislation, this would be a decision for any new Authority, it is one in which Welsh Government would work actively with the new body during the transition period to ensure the issue is given careful consideration to maximise the effectiveness of the new arrangements. This would include actively seeking the input of all Local Authorities within the boundaries of a new Park to help inform the development of the form, function, and resourcing of planning arrangements, including the sharing or delegation of functions.

This partnership approach has already been adopted in the work that Natural Resources Wales (NRW) has done in developing the evidence base for the new National Park proposals. This included commissioning the Arup consultancy to produce the report "Planning Services Review in the context of a proposed National Park in Wales" that sets out the baseline of existing planning service in the area across the 5 local authorities affected and considered alternative models for delivery.

We would also expect the development of any new planning service to take into consideration wider Welsh Government planning strategy that is encouraging and supporting the sharing of services and the development of joint plans. The extension of the current successful shared service approach to minerals, waste and infrastructure across North Wales would be explored with the objective to extend the approach to other specialist and technical planning functions.'

Note: Welsh Government has requested participation by all affected local authorities in an advisory group. It is intended that this group would steer developments post the potential making of a Designation Order by NRW.

2. **Funding statement:**

The Deputy First Minister has provided the following assurance regarding funding:

'Further to my letter of 16 April, I am writing to provide further information about the Welsh Government's commitment to provide future funding for the proposed new National Park and the financial implications to Flintshire County Council of any decision made by Welsh Ministers in relation to the designation. Because this potentially impacts several Local Authorities, I am also copying this letter to the CEOs of Denbighshire, Wrexham, Powys, and Gwynedd Local Authorities.

As outlined in my previous reply, it is absolutely vital that a new National Park is properly funded without reducing the core funding for our existing National Park Authorities, or by reducing the funding available to Welsh Local Authorities. We are committed to this principle and will continue work to assess the costs related to the establishment of a new National Park and the funding required by the Welsh Government.

At this stage, ahead of any recommendation that Natural Resources Wales (NRW) might make about any new designation, it is not yet possible to accurately quantify the cost of a potential new National Park. However, I can confirm that I have now been able to consider in more detail the most significant costs that would arise out of creating a new National Park Authority and confirm that these will form part of the Welsh Government's future financial plans.

In particular, using approximate costs based on our existing National Parks, I have considered the likely core revenue costs arising from the Environment Act 1995 (EA 1995) that require funding from Welsh Government and a NPA's constituent Local Authorities. The Welsh Government is committed to providing additional funding to fully cover both of these requirements should a new National Park be designated. That is to say, there would be no financial burden placed on your Council to provide funding to a new National Park, as additional funding would be provided to your Authority to meet the costs outlined under EA 1995.

In addition, I would note that our existing NPAs have benefited in recent years from accessing additional Welsh Government capital funding through programmes such as Sustainable Landscapes, Sustainable Places (SLSP), Ffermio Bro and Local Places for Nature (LPfN) to take forward important work in areas including nature recovery, climate change, access and sustainable tourism. I fully expect that any new NPA would be able to access and benefit from these schemes or their future equivalents.

There would be a period of transition required between any new designation being confirmed and a new National Park Authority being brought into being. While further work is required on the nature of such a transition arrangement, the Welsh Government also intends to provide funding towards this.

Finally, while the above has focussed on costs and funding, I would also highlight that National Parks have the potential to bring economic benefits to the areas they serve such as through boosting tourism and the visitor economy, as well as wider benefits. As part of its assessments, NRW has carried out an Economic Impact Review for the proposed National Park, which will be

made available to Local Authorities alongside other new evidence by NRW during a statutory consultation in the autumn (subject to approval by NRW's board).'

Note: The local authority levy element of funding is reflected in individual local authority settlements. This is standard practice for existing National Parks in Wales. It is not a temporary or unique arrangement for this designation. The above statement reiterates this and reinforces that it would apply to the proposed Glyndŵr National Park.

3. **Local Development Plans:**

A National Park strictly becomes a material consideration in respect of planning once a Designation Order is confirmed by Welsh Ministers. However, local planning authorities and developers alike will consider the materiality of the National Park over time, and the level of likelihood and risk will increase through the various stages of the designation process. Transitional arrangements will be put in place while the new National Park Authority is being established, and this will help avoid unintended impacts on Local Development Plans. Welsh Government is aware of the risks involved and intends to avoid duplication or unnecessary costs. A constructive dialogue between local planning authorities and the Welsh Government will be essential and the above-mentioned advisory group will help to steer discussion in this respect.

4. **Timeline and Next Steps**:

Consultation Deadline: Formal responses to the consultation on the draft Designation Order and proposed boundary are requested by 8 December 2025.

NRW Board Decision: On 12 January 2026, the NRW Board will consider the proposal alongside consultation responses and decide whether to make the Designation Order and submit it to the Welsh Ministers for confirmation.

Notice Period: If the Order is made, but before it is submitted to the Welsh Ministers for confirmation, NRW must publicise a Notice confirming that the Order has been made and is going to be submitted for confirmation. This triggers a 28-day period during which representations or objections can be given. During this time, NRW will contact all local authorities. Where an authority objected during the consultation period, or provided conditional support, and that authority remains dissatisfied, it must confirm its objection during this Notice period. Note that it is the responsibility of the local authority to ensure that any representations or objections are submitted to NRW in time and in accordance with the Notice.

5. **Potential Inquiry**:

Any objection made by a local authority (and not withdrawn) will trigger a local inquiry to be held. Should a local Public inquiry be held, an assessment will be made of the financial and resource implications, the nature of the objections and how objecting local authorities may choose to participate.

Local authorities that do not object are not required to participate, though they may choose to comment on particular matters.

Further support and information.

NRW remains available to advise local authorities throughout this process. Please contact us via your nominated officers or using the details below should you require further clarification or assistance.

We remind you that the following documents are currently available via the project webpage:

https://ymgynghori.cyfoethnaturiol.cymru/north-east-gogledd-ddwyrain/proposed-national-park-statutory-consultation-2025

Previously Available	New analysis in 2025
Area or Search Report (and map)	**Benefits for Nature Report**
Engagement period (2023) Report	**Health Impact Assessment**
Special Qualities Report	**Welsh Language Impact Assessment**
Forces For Change Report	**Economic impact Report**
Management Options Report	**Equality Impact Assessment**
Evaluation areas Report	**A Review of Planning Services Report**
Candidate Area Report (and map)	**The processes for identifying a name**
Public Consultation (2024) Report	**A Review of the boundary**

Yours Faithfully

Ash Pearce

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Arweinydd Tim Rhaglen Tirweddau Dynodedig / Designated Landscapes Programme Team Leader



CYNGOR GWYNEDD CABINET

Report for a meeting of Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet

Date of meeting:	**11th of November 2025**
Cabinet Member:	**Councillor R.Medwyn Hughes** **Cabinet Member for Economy and Community**
Contact Officer:	**Llŷr B Jones** **Assistant Head of Economy and Community Department** **Esyllt Rhys Jones** **Regeneration Programmes Manager**
Contact Telephone Number:	**LlyrBJones@gwynedd.llyw.cymru** **01286 679219 (ext.32219)** **EsylltRhysJones@gwynedd.llyw.cymru** **01286 679513 (ext 32513)**
Title of Item:	**Holding a Caernarfon Business Improvement Districts Ballot**

1 THE DECISION SOUGHT

1. To note that the Business Improvement District (BID) Proposal and supplementary documents from the HWB Caernarfon Company have been received by the Council and that they comply with the Regulations;
2. That the Cabinet instructs the Returning Officer to hold the Caernarfon BID ballot;
3. To approve the arrangements and financial implications noted in Part 3 of the report;
4. To delegate the right to the Cabinet Member for Economy to vote on behalf of the Authority in the BID ballot.
5. If the ballot is successful in Caernarfon, and in accordance with the Business Improvement District (Wales) Regulations 2005, to delegate the right to the Head of Economy and Community, in consultation with the heads of the following departments to approve the final version of the Operational Agreement and the Baseline Agreement and complete the Agreements in accordance with the Council's arrangements:
    - Environment;
    - Highways, Engineering and YGC;
    - Legal;
    - Finance.

2 THE REASON FOR THE NEED FOR A DECISION

2.1 It is noted in the Business Improvement District (Wales) Regulations 2005 that there is a need for local authorities to authorise the process of holding the Business Improvement District ballot. In accordance with the Council's constitution, the Cabinet is responsible for authorising this.

2.2 Local authorities have the veto right if it considers that BID proposals would likely conflict significantly with existing policy, would place a financial burden on taxpayers or that the levy was too high. However, the intention to hold a ballot is supported because:

- The HWB Caernarfon proposal responds to challenges which have been identified by the business community.
- In holding a ballot, the business community receives the opportunity to support the establishment of the HWB Caernarfon in order to give them the ability to realise the objectives which have been noted within the business plans.
- The proposed HWB Caernarfon could attract additional investment and maximise the profile of Caernarfon
- HWB Caernarfon would be a medium to collaborate with the Council and provide additional services.

There is no reason to implement the statutory veto.

3. INTRODUCTION

3.1. Following a successful ballot back in 2015 , the Caernarfon Business Improvement District was established in April 2016 and the HWB Caernarfon company was established to implement the BID. In accordance with The Business Improvement Districts (Wales) Regulations 2005 a BID only operates for a period of 5 years. It was required to follow a ballot process back in 2021 for the second term of the HWB Caernarfon. The second term will end in March 2026, so it is again necessary to follow the same procedure for another term.

3.2 In order to hold a ballot for a further period, the HWB Caernarfon company is required, in accordance with the Business Improvement District (Wales) Regulations 2005 to issue a notice on the Billing Authority so that the ballot can be held. In accordance with the Regulations, the Council is the Billing Authority.

3.3 HWB Caernarfon has served a notice to the Council for the renewal of the BID. HWB Caernarfon Company has issued the notice to the Council and the proposals received have been reviewed. It does not appear that the notice conflicts with any Council policy. With the Cabinet's approval, the next step will be for the Council to instruct the Returning Officer to hold the ballot.

3.4 As part of the process, the HWB Caernarfon Company has been consulting with the directors as well as the businesses paying the levy for their proposals for 2026-2031. The HWB Caernarfon Proposal and appendices have been included in the supporting documents.

3.5 It is anticipated that the details and arrangements of the proposed BID will offer a levy of 1.5% against non-domestic rateable list, exclude properties with a taxable value of less than £2,000. It is anticipated that the BID would raise up to £102,000 per annum (namely £510,000 over 5 years) in Caernarfon.

3.6 Timetable

The legal requirements associated with holding the vote are included in the timetable below:

Action	Requirement within the Regulations	Date*
Cabinet Decision		11.11.25
Returning Officer to call the ballot	42 days before the ballot	6.1.26
Publish ballot papers	Last day: 28 days before the day of the ballot	20.1.26
Last day to vote		19.2.26
Counting the vote	As soon as practicably possible after the day of the ballot	20.2.26
Result announced		20.2.26
Starting date of the BID		01.04.26

* this is an outline idea of the timetable.

3.7 If the ballot is successful, HWB Caernarfon Company and the BID will remain operational until 31 March 2031. If the ballot is unsuccessful, the HWB Caernarfon Company and the BID will wind up on 31 March 2026.

Formal Agreements

3.8 In accordance with the Regulations, a series of agreements have been made between the Council and the HWB Caernarfon Company. These agreements must be in place following a vote in favour. The draft agreements have been included in the supporting documents.

Baseline Agreement: this agreement defines the level of service being implemented by the Council within the BID area. In line with the agreement, the Council will be required to inform the BID Company of any change to this service during its term. The purpose of this agreement is to ease the minds of the businesses within the area, that do not pay the levy for the services that already exist. This agreement is currently being reviewed to ensure that the current version reflects the Council's current services within the boundaries of the BID. A draft of the agreement will be negotiated with the HWB Caernarfon Company. Subject to a 'Yes' result, the agreement will be agreed and formalised.

Operational Agreement: this is a document that is an agreement between the HWB Caernarfon Company and the Council which outlines and sets out the administrative arrangements, collecting the levy and the enforcement details in the context of the BID levy. The Council has the legal right to establish financial arrangements and to invoice and collect the levy in Gwynedd. It is required under the Regulations that the BID Revenue Account has been established. This arrangement will be wound up unless a successful vote is achieved and then the Caernarfon HWB Company and the Council will be expected to agree on a new Operational Agreement from 1 April 2026 onwards. If the vote goes against the BID, the Council and the HWB Caernarfon Company will need to negotiate the final terms. In such a situation, there is a financial risk associated with unpaid levies, which is the responsibility of the BID and not the Council.

The Implications of Caernarfon BID to Cyngor Gwynedd

3.9. It is anticipated that the following implications will arise for the Council as the relevant local authority:

Financial Implications – The work to date has identified that 20 hereditaments within the boundary of Caernarfon BID are owned by Cyngor Gwynedd. This number is subject to change over the course of the BID term. As a business that pays business rates, a cost is associated with a successful ballot. Based on 2023 Non-Domestic Rateable List, the table below outlines what the annual cost would be to Cyngor Gwynedd over the next term of the Caernarfon BID if the vote was in favour. This levy would be a fixed amount over the BID term.

Hereditament	Rateable Value	Annual Cost of Levy
Baclava Car Park Public Toilets	£3,000	£25.56
Library	£5,5000	£468.60
5 Castle Street (Cwmni Gyrfaoedd)	£19,000	£161.88
5 Castle Street	£36,500	£310.98
County Offices	£300,000	£2,556.00
Car Park Glan y Mor Uchaf (A047)	£16,250	£138.45
Car Park (A048)	£4,450	£37.91
Crown Buildings	£169,000	£1,439.88
Part 2nd Flr, Swyddfa Arfon	£16,250	£138.45
Cwmni Cynnal, Part2nd Flr	£38,750	£330.15
Wisdom, First Floor Swyddfa Arfon	£9,700	£82.64
Gwe 1st Floor Swyddfa Arfon	£14,500	£123.54

Swyddfa Arfon Penrallt	£155,000	£1,320.60
Car Park Eglwys Crist (A045)	£57,000	£485.64
Car Park Penllyn	£35,500	£302.46
Cyngor Gwynedd Stryd y Jel	£94,000	£800.88
Old School	£9,500	£80.94
Car Park Multi Storey	£33,250	£283.29
Dock	£21,500	£183.18
County Archives	£40,250	£342.93
Total	**£1,128,400**	**£9,613.97**

Process of Holding the Ballot – Subject to Cabinet approval, Cyngor Gwynedd in accordance with the regulations, will instruct the Returning Officer (appointed under Section 35 of the People's Representation Act) to hold a ballot amongst the business community within the designated area to test support for a BID in Caernarfon.

Council Vote - subject to the approval of the Cabinet, in accordance with the arrangements in 2015 and 2021, the Cabinet Member for the Economy will decide how the Council will vote and how many votes will be cast.

Legal contracts - the proposed agreements described above will be completed and they will be a basis to the collaboration arrangements between both organisations.

Long-term Support - If the ballot is successful, Cyngor Gwynedd will support HWB Caernarfon during the third term, supporting and involving itself to the work of further renewing and developing the economy of Caernarfon.

Impact on the Policy Framework and Procurement

There are no implications to the policy framework or procurement rules.

Equality Matters

The content of this report does not have any direct equality implications.

Issues relating to the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) (2015)

The Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 identifies seven well-being goals. It sets an ambition, permission and legal obligation to improve our social, cultural, environmental and economic well-being. This report and the work associated with the BID responds to these Well-being Goals:

- A Prosperous Wales - In Gwynedd, the retail and business sector in our

town centres make a substantial contribution towards the county's economy and offers a cross-section of employment opportunities. Caernarfon Town Centre makes a substantial contribution towards the Gwynedd economy;

- A Healthier Wales - visiting our town centres, with a range of services, attractions and open spaces contributes towards the health and welfare of individuals;
- A more equal Wales - town centres are places that offer a variety of opportunities and provisions for a broad cross-section of the population, regardless of the background or circumstances of the individuals;
- A Wales of cohesive communities - vibrant and prosperous town centres would offer a range of services, entertainment, shops and services in a pleasant and safe environment. This is crucial for the future of communities;
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language - town centres contribute towards protecting our culture through its people, attractions and services, along with the work of promoting the Welsh language.
- A globally responsible Wales - supporting the town centres, the businesses and local producers support the carbon reduction agenda. The use of public transport within town centres is key.
- A Resilient Wales - town centres are key when establishing structures and opportunities that can face and respond to future economic and community challenges.

4. THE RATIONALE AND JUSTIFICATION FOR RECOMMENDING THE DECISION

4.1 In accordance with the Business Improvement Districts (Wales) Regulations 2005 the Caernarfon Business Improvement District has submitted an application to Cyngor Gwynedd, as the Billing Authority, to hold a ballot.

4.2 The Economy and Community Department recognises that the principle of having a Business Improvement District within a town or city offers a way to attract investment to regenerate. The model is a vehicle for regeneration where there is no assurance of any alternative source of funding. The ballot offers businesses the opportunity to vote for the continuation of the BID in Caernarfon, or not.

5 NEXT STEPS AND TIMETABLE

5.1 Subject to Cabinet approval, the ballot is scheduled to be announced by 6th of January. Once the notice has been submitted, this will allow the ballot papers to be issued along with details of the proposed proposals (with explanatory notes) during January 2026.

5.2 In accordance with the above timetable, the closing date of a postal vote would be 19th of February 2026, with the results announced on 20th of

February 2026.

5.3 Should there be a vote in favour of a BID the decision will come into effect from 1 April 2026.

6 ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO RECOMMENDING THE DECISION

Observations of the Head of Finance:

The Taxation Service has worked with HWB Caernarfon over the first two periods of the scheme in collecting the levy on behalf of the company, ensuring that it is transferred appropriately to the company and taking appropriate steps to recover outstanding amounts. If the result of the ballot, therefore, is that the Business Improvement District should continue, the administrative arrangements are already in place and familiar to us. The levy is billed separately from the Non-Domestic Rates, and it should be noted that the Council does not transfer any money to the company until it has been collected by the Taxation Service and properly invoiced by the company.

I have worked with the author of the report, and I am satisfied with the accuracy of the levy figures which appear in the "Implications of the Caernarfon BID for Cyngor Gwynedd " section of the report."

Observations of the Monitoring Officer

This report has received input from Legal Services. I am satisfied with the propriety of the report and can provide further guidance at the meeting if necessary.

Supporting Documents

- Bangor BID Proposal
- Draft Baseline Agreement
- Draft Operational Agreement

Business Proposals- 3rd term
1 April 2026 – 31 March 2031

Submission to Cyngor Gwynedd on Tuesday 16 September 2025

Contents

1 BID Proposer
2 BID Business Plan
3 Financial and governance arrangements
4 Levy payer consultation
5 Voters database
6 Notice in writing
7 Cost of ballot
8 Baseline Services and Operating Agreement
9 BID boundary

Appendix 1: HWB Caernarfon's BID Business Plan (word version)
Appendix 2: Levy Payers Survey
Appendix 3: Summary of Consultation Responses
Appendix 4: Notice to Welsh Government
Appendix 5: Formal Letter to Cyngor Gwynedd asking electoral services to run ballot
Appendix 6: HWB Caernarfon BID's Boundary Map
Appendix 7: Letters of Support for the BID
Appendix 8: Proposed Baseline Agreement (revised version received 18/8/25)
Appendix 9: Proposed Operational Agreement (not revised by Cyngor Gwynedd as yet)

1 BID Proposer

The BID proposer is HWB Caernarfon, a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee set up in 2013 (registered in England and Wales company number 09959600) to oversee HWB Caernarfon BID. The articles of association are available on request.

HWB Caernarfon will deliver the third term business plan should the BID be voted in at the forthcoming ballot.

2 BID Business Plan
A copy of the BID Business Plan (appendix 1) will be issued to all BID levy payers by 5 December 2025.

Established in 2016, HWB Caernarfon is a Business Improvement District, funded and led by businesses to deliver initiatives for the benefit of Caernarfon. Our mission is to promote the town and provide business support to our members, support events and festivals, welcome visitors, help to maintain an attractive town centre, and working in collaboration with local businesses and key organisations to drive improvements.

To achieve our mission, HWB Caernarfon will focus on four key themes as prioritised by our members (80% of the businesses consulted voted all four themes as essential or important) with funds allocated as appropriate and in line with the budget in the business plan:

1. **Proudly Promoted:** raising Caernarfon's profile, increasing footfall and visitor spend, benefitting our businesses and community.
2. **Clean, Green and Eco-friendly:** creating a vibrant, attractive, appealing, accessible town, and a unique experience to our visitors.
3. **A Safe Place:** promoting wellbeing, providing safe spaces, and a welcoming environment for our visitors and residents alike.
4. **Together Stronger:** providing quality support to our members, working collaboratively with stakeholders, ensuring inclusivity.

3 Financial and Governance Arrangements
To view the outline five-year budget for HWB Caernarfon, governance arrangements and rules for who is liable for the levy, see the business plan at appendix 1.

4 Levy Payer Consultation
HWB Caernarfon continually consults with businesses on the issues affecting them and the town centre more generally, with ample opportunities for our members to provide us with their feedback, proposals and ideas.

- A minimum of quarterly e-newsletters are sent out to the 120 registrants that have signed up to receive our digital bulletins.
- 12 newsletters have been issued in the last twelve months.
- Useful Information was enclosed along with the members' 2025/26 levy bill, including a financial information document and a flier highlighting achievements and plans for the year.
- We use social media to communicate with levy payers and the wider community.
    - 4,735 followers on HWB Caernarfon's Facebook.
- HWB Caernarfon's manager is regularly around town, visiting and liaising with the businesses.

- 4 pop-in sessions were held in June and July 2025, where there was an open invitation for businesses to come and speak with our manager and a Board Director member.
- All members are invited to HWB Caernarfon's Annual General Meeting. The latest took place at Caernarfon Sailing Club on 9 July 2025.

Additionally, HWB Caernarfon undertook two surveys as part of its third term consultation process:

i) Snapshot survey in February 2025 conducted by the HWB Caernarfon team to assess early appetite for the BID and an indication of likely BID 3 projects to explore further.

ii) Extensive survey in June and July 2025 (see appendices 2 and 3) conducted by *Lafan Consulting*, indicating the likely content of the third term business plan.

The consultation also included details of the BID's main second term activities and achievements.

Results from the surveys provides confidence and confirmation to the Board that there is an excellent mandate to forge ahead with writing the business plan and taking the BID through to ballot for a third term.

The report from *Lafan Consulting* based on the survey feedback is included in appendix 3.

5 Voters Database

HWB Caernarfon has received updated data from Cyngor Gwynedd on 12 June 2025 detailing the names and addresses of all the hereditaments liable to pay the BID levy.

A further database will be requested in December 2025 to finalise the voter list prior to the notices of ballot being issued. Information has only been used for the purpose of renewing the BID in line with good data protection practices.

A full voter's database will be sent to Siôn Huws in the elections team by 16 December 2025 to allow enough time to issue the notice of ballot on Tuesday 6 January 2026 with ballot papers to be despatched on Tuesday 20 January 2026. Detailed discussions have taken place between Cyngor Gwynedd and the elections team to ensure that the democratic process can run smoothly.

6 Notice in Writing

HWB Caernarfon BID has complied with BID legislation in respect of the various notices required. A letter has been issued to the Welsh Government on 17 April 2025 giving notification of HWB Caernarfon BID's intention to go to a BID Ballot (appendix 4).

On 13 May 2025 a letter was sent to Dafydd Gibbard, Chief Executive of Cyngor Gwynedd asking Cyngor Gwynedd to hold the ballot on HWB Caernarfon's BID's behalf with a note confirming that the final proposals are due to be submitted to Cyngor Gwynedd by October 2025. A further letter is attached, dated 16 September 2025, formally requesting Cyngor Gwynedd to run the ballot (appendix 5).

The next notice to be issued will be the notice of ballot on Tuesday 6 January 2026 followed by the issuing of ballot papers on Tuesday 20 January 2026.

7 Cost of Ballot
In line with BID legislation, Regulation 20 under the *Business Improvement Districts (Wales) Regulations 2005*, the cost of the ballot will be met by Cyngor Gwynedd (the Ballot Holder).

HWB Caernarfon BID has put aside a contingency fund of £3,000, available should Cyngor Gwynedd request it to meet the ballot costs due to circumstances arising in regulation 10 of the *Business Improvement Districts (Wales) Regulations 2005*, namely:

- The result of the ballot is a 'no' vote, **and**
- The turnout of eligible voters in the ballot is less than 20%

8 Baseline Services & Operating Agreement
The Baseline Services Agreement sets out the baseline standard services currently provided by Cyngor Gwynedd. A revised agreement has been prepared by Cyngor Gwynedd and received by HWB Caernarfon BID on 18 August 2025. Both parties will sign the agreement when the BID starts its new term. A copy of the baseline agreement will be available on request. (see appendix 8)

The Operating Agreement confirms the arrangements by which the BID Levy shall be collected together with general arrangements as to the relationship to be established between Cyngor Gwynedd and HWB Caernarfon BID for the duration of the BID term. A revised agreement has been prepared by Cyngor Gwynedd and received by HWB Caernarfon BID. Both parties will sign the agreement when the BID starts its new term. A copy of the Operating Agreement will be available on request. (see appendix 9)

9 BID Boundary
The following streets (either in whole or in part) are included within the BID boundary. A map shows the area covered:

Allt Pafiliwn	Mill Lane / Lôn y Felin
Bank Quay / Cei Banc	New Street / Stryd Newydd
Balaclava Road / Balaclafa	Newborough Street (Eagles Hotel)
Bangor Road / Stryd Bangor	North Road / Fford Y Gogledd (Number 14 Alexandra, Morrisons filling station, Moduron Menai Garage)
Bridge Street / Bont Bridd	Northgate Street / Styd Pedwar a Chwech
Castle Ditch / Pendeitsh	North Penrallt / Penrallt Uchaf
Castle Hill / Allt y Castell	Palace Street / Stryd y Plas
Castle Square / Y Maes	Pepper Lane
Castle Street / Stryd y Castell	Pool Hill / Penllyn
Chapel Street / Tre'r Gôf	Pool Lane / Pen y Graig
Church Lane / Lôn yr Eglwys	Pool Side / Penllyn
Church Street / Stryd yr Eglwys	Pool Street / Stryd Y Llyn
Doc Fictoria	Pretoria Terrace / Rhes Pretoria
Garnon Street / Stryd Garnon	Segontium Terrace / Rhes Segontiwm

Glan Môr / Crown Street	Shirehall Street / Stryd y Jêl
Greengate Street / Tan y Bont	Skinner Street / Lôn Crwyn
High Street / Stryd Fawr	Slate Quay / Cei Llechi
Hole in the Wall Street / Stryd Twll yn y Wal	Snowdon Street / Stryd Capel Joppa
Lôn Twthill	South Road / Lon Parc
Market Street / Stryd y Farchnad	St Helens Road / Ffordd Santes Helen
South Penrallt / Penrallt Isaf	Stryd y Porth Mawr



HWB Caernarfon Business Improvement District: THIRD TERM BUSINESS PLAN 2026 – 2031

A decade of progress!

VOTE YES! from 23 January to 19 February 2026



HWB Caernarfon

CANOL TREF
CAERNARFON
TOWN CENTRE
ALLWEDD - KEY
PEN DEITSH - CASTLE DITCH
STRYD FAWR - HIGH ST
Y MAES - CASTLE SQUARE
ALLT Y CASTELL - CASTLE HILL
RHOSTYLLEN - POOL ST
RHOSTYLLEN - POOL HILL
PENRALLT ISAF - SOUTH PENRALLT
PENRALLT UCHAF - NORTH PENRALLT
PEN LLYN - POOL SIDE
RHOSTYLLEN - POOL ST
TWR'R GOF - CHAPEL ST
RHOS SEGONTIWM - SEGONTIUM TERRACE
FFORDD SANTES HELEN - ST HELEN'S RD

A Welcome from our Chair

Dear HWB Caernarfon members,

As a proud business owner here in Caernarfon, I share your passion for our unique town, its culture, heritage, history, community spirit and diverse offering. In my role as Chair of HWB Caernarfon over the last three years, I've seen the progress and positive changes that have allowed the town and its businesses to prosper. The Business Improvement District (BID) works hard on behalf of its members, building stronger local partnerships and delivering on strategies and projects, helping to ensure Caernarfon is well promoted and reaches its full potential.

It's been a challenge getting the town back on its feet post COVID 19, and we acknowledge that we didn't get everything right at HWB Caernarfon during this second term. However, we are committed to continue improving, to deliver on our promises and keep building on our ten years of progress. Caernarfon is perceived by many as a great town that is thriving. With the support of our levy paying businesses, a third five-year BID term from April 2026 will allow us to continue driving your priorities, realise a range of key projects, and ensure Caernarfon remains a strong and resilient destination to invest, work, visit and live.

Between 23 January and 19 February 2026 there will be a BID ballot where you will get your opportunity to vote for a new BID term. The strength of our business community means that together we have a stronger voice and can look forward to more shared success. **A "Yes" vote will mean our good work can continue and our town will benefit economically and socially from over £500,000 of investment from BID levy income over the next five years, securing Caernarfon's long-term prosperity.**

A "No" vote will mean that all projects and services that HWB Caernarfon delivers will cease on 31 March 2026. No other organisation will have the capacity or resources to step forward and continue with the projects that you have prioritised. You may not always notice some of the good work we do on your behalf ... but you will certainly notice if it stops!

This business plan has been shaped on feedback from many months of consultation with the town's businesses. The Board and I believe that its contents should resonate with you – the levy payers - and we hope that our proposals will be supported by the businesses.

We can't do it without you! Vote YES from 23 January to 19 February 2026.

Sincerely,

John Stanley Evans, owner Black Boy Inn

Chair – HWB Caernarfon



What is a BID?

A Business Improvement District (BID) is a business led initiative supported by government legislation which gives businesses the power to raise and spend funds locally, improving a defined commercial area. They are funded through a mandatory levy on eligible businesses within the BID area after a successful ballot.

There are 347 Business Improvement Districts currently operating in the UK. They are independent from local authorities and other statutory agencies and deliver projects over and above the baseline services provided by them.

HWB Caernarfon is managed by a board of local business representatives and was established in April 2016. It is now approaching the end of its second term, and is one of 12 BIDs currently operating in Wales. During the past ten years we have worked with you and our partners to deliver a wide range of positive achievements for our town. These are set out in this business plan.

Second Term Highlights – a snapshot of achievements!

Marketing & Promotions

- Funded and operated the Tourist Information Centre at Oriel Pendeitsh. Supported over 3,500 visitors in 2024 alone
- Provided Free Town Centre WI-FI, identifying Caernarfon as a 'digitally smart' town. 5,000 unique users over past 12 months
- Collaborated with the BBC on its 'Thriving Towns' story in June 2025, promoting our town and its perception with a good-news story

Business Support & Communication

- Regular newsletters on HWB activities, grant opportunities, and useful information. 12 editions sent over past 12 months
- Launched various grant schemes, including the recent business improvement grant and business event grant
- Provided free training opportunities, including Health & Safety, Patrwm WI-FI data, Makaton

Enhancing the Town's Visual Appeal

- Annually sourced and erected colourful flags on the town centre streets
- Annually sourced and covered 50% of costs of the small Christmas trees placed above town centre shops
- Organised and funded the cleaning of guttering of hundreds of buildings in the town centre in summer of 2023

Events

- Funded and managed many exciting and free events, including Caernarfon's first ever Superheroes Day in 2023 and Dinosaurs Day in 2024 and the annual Christmas community event – free fun for all the family
- Main sponsor of Gŵyl Fwyd Caernarfon, which put us on the map, attracting over 40,000 visitors on the day
- Sponsored other key events, including Gŵyl Arall, Caernarfon Pride, Castle Garrison activities, and many more

✨ 🌟 **VOTE YES!** 🌟 ✨

To keep HWB Caernarfon and all that we do

Second Term – Key Numbers

- **£300,000** investment into our key themes - Proudly Promote, Clean, Green and Eco-friendly, A Safe Place, Stronger Together
- **£16,000** additional funding secured for projects through SPF grants
- **42,300** visitors came to Caernarfon for Gŵyl Fwyd 2024
- **5,000** additional visitors to Pool Street during Superheroes Day in October 2023
- **4,000** additional visitors to Caernarfon Town Centre duing Dinosaurs Day 2024
- **3,537** tourists from 27 countries visited the Tourist Information Centre during 2024
- **4,735** HWB Caernarfon Facebook followers, increased significantly over past 18 months
- **300** families take part in our annual Easter Egg Hunt
- **250** entrants into our annual Santes Dwynwen competition in January

This page, along with the whole plan, will be designed professionally before sending out to the members in early January 2026

Third Term Consultation

Following positive results from a 'soft' survey conducted with some member businesses by our team in February 2025 to gauge the appetite for a third BID term, HWB Caernarfon Board of Directors felt it was important to instruct an independent consultant to survey a cross-section of our members, eliminating any bias and ensuring objectivity. *Lafan Consulting* surveyed many of you during June and July 2025. We thank all that gave their time to express their ideas, views and opinions, which was extremely valuable and has helped us to shape this proposal document.

Results from February 2025 survey showed that **71%** of the businesses surveyed would vote **"YES"** to another BID term.
During a three-week period in June and July, *Lafan Consulting* surveyed a variety of businesses offering a wide range of products and services. Again, the results were positive – **77% in favour** of granting HWB Caernarfon another five-year BID term and an average rating score of 3.66* out of 5* for our support to businesses over the past year. Clearly, we have room for improvement, but it was great to see that the most popular vote was 4*.

In addition to direct surveying of businesses, we also provided four pop-in sessions at Oriel Pendeitsh in June and July 2025, and there was an opportunity to express your views at our AGM that took place at Caernarfon Sailing Club on 9 July. Your engagement and feedback is so important, so that we continue to align with our members' priorities and address your concerns.

What else you said

- Many comments expressed support for HWB Caernarfon's efforts, recognising the value added to the town through events, business grants, local sponsorship, physical beautification, and the presence of a dedicated co-ordinator despite limited resources.
- You commented that there has been a noticeable improvement in HWB Caernarfon's activities and engagement during the second half of the current term. Some of you feel that we need to communicate and collaborate more with our members.
- Most of you agree with the importance of our four themes and would like to maintain the themes into a third term. You scored 'A Safe Place' as the highest priority, emphasising the importance of security and creating safe spaces.
- You'd like to see more being done to help keep Caernarfon tidier, particularly in specific problematic areas of the town centre.
- A few of you said we need to do more business-focused activities and less community events.

- Some of you mentioned expanding the capacity of HWB Caernarfon to provide additional business support and increase its operational reach, whilst you also appreciated the budget constraints and the challenges of having just one full-time staff member.
- You said it would be useful if HWB Caernarfon could provide support to business with making grant applications.
- Many of you commented that we do a good job on promoting the town and building its identity with our events and sponsorship, although some said they'd not seen our efforts in their part of the town centre.

We highly value your feedback and have incorporated as much as possible into this business plan. The projects and services that HWB Caernarfon plans to deliver in its third BID term are based on your priorities! Thank you all for your input.

Testimonials

"As a business that works closely with HWB Caernarfon, we fully support the important work they do to promote the town and its commercial community. The organisation has been a strong voice for local businesses, especially through their small but effective grants – like our £500 grant for a new sign, which makes a real difference to our presence. HWB plays a vital role in pushing Caernarfon forward as a place to live, visit, and do business. In these challenging times, continuous support is needed to ensure that the town thrives. We look forward to collaborating with them to create a better future for the town and its businesses."
Aled and Heledd Davies-Jones, Castle Gift Shop

"Having run businesses in Caernarfon for the past 40 years, and as a former member of the Chamber of Trade, I would like to voice my support for the HWB initiative. HWB provides a vital link of support between the business community and Gwynedd Council as well as helping to coordinate a spirit of cohesion and cooperation between the businesses themselves. The funding it provides for events, and resources it produces (eg. town map, wifi) I believe are vital in presenting the town as a progressive and successful centre for both the local community and visitors alike."
Sue Kirk, Historic Tours Wales

“I have been a business owner in the town of Caernarfon since 1989. The arrival of HWB has been a great help to the small businesses in the town that have started to feel the strain of running a business in an economic downturn before and after Covid. This town relies heavily on tourism as well as support from local people day to day. Like many other businesses, we have received support from HWB to improve the outside of our building. HWB has supported the annual Food Festival which brings necessary funding to the town every May, as well as organizing other events throughout the year. Unlike other nearby towns, HWB has ensured that we have a Tourist Information Centre which is an essential resource for visitors and local people too.
By collaborating with the Council and the town's businesses, HWB ensures a future for the town. Thank you for your support and service.”
Carys Owen, Siop Y Ddraig

“HWB Caernarfon has been one of those that provides the largest grant to Gŵyl Fwyd Caernarfon annually. The festival is one of the main events held in Caernarfon and therefore is an event with significant financial costs. Receiving financial support from HWB annually helps us ensure that we can continue to hold the festival but also enables us to make sure we cover our costs. This grant comes from the income that HWB collects from the town's businesses and therefore is a way for businesses to contribute and support an event that attracts over 40,000 visitors to the town, many of whom stay to enjoy what the town has to offer beyond the festival's hours itself. Gŵyl Fwyd Caernarfon received the first prize through North Wales as ‘event of the year’ before going on to the final round through Wales in the 'Go Tourism Awards'.This is a source of pride for us as we are able to offer an event of such quality in our own town - there is no doubt that we could not have done that ourselves and the annual grant support from HWB, along with the support of the HWB Manager, is one of the key factors for the success of the Festival.”
Mirain Roberts (Secretary) & Nici Beech (Chair), Gŵyl Fwyd Caernarfon

Key Elements of Third Term BID Plan 2026 - 2031

You told us that you support our current four themes and would like these to continue, so they will!

1. **Proudly Promoted:** raising Caernarfon's profile, increasing footfall and visitor spend, benefitting our businesses and community.
    - ✓ Continue to operate the Tourist Information Centre, promoting businesses and providing a valuable service to our visitors
    - ✓ Sponsor and organise key Town Centre events, encouraging footfall and improving the image of our town
    - ✓ Collaborate with stakeholders and implementing strategies to increase Caernarfon's appeal and visitor numbers
2. **Clean, Green and Eco-friendly:** creating a vibrant, attractive, accessible town, and a unique experience to our visitors.
    - ✓ Provide small grant schemes for business, enhancing the properties' appearance and promoting a welcoming town centre
    - ✓ Erect flags above many town centre businesses each Spring and small Christmas Trees each December
    - ✓ Collaborate with community groups, schools and others to inspire and promote green projects and clean-up initiatives
3. **A Safe Place:** promoting wellbeing, providing safe spaces, and a welcoming environment for our visitors and residents alike.
    - ✓ Create and sponsor wellbeing programmes and provide free workshops, focus groups and social events
    - ✓ Host and sponsor family-friendly events and implement projects that provide a secure and enjoyable experience for all
    - ✓ Collaborate with North Wales Police and stakeholders, implementing safe spaces and tackling anti-social behaviour
4. **Together Stronger:** providing quality support to our members, working collaboratively with stakeholders, ensuring inclusivity.
    - ✓ Support our members with meaningful communication, networking opportunities, tailoring our services for collective benefit
    - ✓ Celebrate cultural events and the town's diversity whilst respecting cultural and social differences, promoting inclusivity
    - ✓ Build partnerships and joint initiatives with our members, local charities, schools and public services to deliver on priorities

Taking your specific feedback on board, we will ensure to include these focus areas:

Supporting all businesses

We want all local businesses to have a say and benefit from being part of our BID, irrespective of sector or location. This means reassessing where and how we deliver our projects and services, ensuring the businesses at the edge of the BID district are included. We will increase networking opportunities and encourage more engagement through informal meetings. Working as a collective of businesses, we can use the power of our BID to lobby change and to secure opportunities for our town.

You told us you'd like to see grant opportunities for business start-ups, encouraging entrepreneurship and reducing shop vacancy rates. We will launch a grant scheme for this in the new term if successful.
You also expressed support for our idea of a Caernarfon Gift Card scheme, encouraging people to shop and spend locally. We intend to launch the scheme during 2026 if granted a new BID term.

Strengthening partnerships

You told us it is essential that HWB Caernarfon collaborates with our statutory partners to ensure the town is attractive, clean and welcoming, so this will be a key part of our agenda. We already work closely with Cyngor Gwynedd and Caernarfon Town Council, ensuring resources are maximised to benefit our town and businesses. More effort needs to go into keeping the town centre clean and tidy, and we will increase our work and co-operation with Cyngor Gwynedd's Tîm Tacluso (Tidying Team). As part of this work, your BID levy will be utilised to fund additional activities and not used to fund services that the authorities have already pledged to do, which are funded through your business rates.

Tackling anti-social behaviour in the town centre

You expressed concerns about anti-social activities in certain parts of our town centre. In collaboration with North Wales Police and others, we will implement initiatives in an attempt to reduce the negative impact it has on our town and businesses. In addition to our grants and sponsorships offered to organisers of youth events in the current BID term, we will look at funding additional evening security patrols in problematic areas, including bus stops and car parks, where the budget allows.

Celebrate our town's identity, heritage and unique culture, whilst promoting its contemporariness

HWB Caernarfon operates bilingually and on a 'Cymraeg yn gyntaf' (Welsh first) policy, prioritising our language and culture whilst ensuring inclusivity. We will keep building partnerships with local groups, incorporating Welsh history, the arts, music and food, and help to seek funding for cultural projects. Many of you agree that HWB Caernarfon does a good job in promoting the town. We will push to do even better in marketing the town, highlighting that Caernarfon has a long history, is welcoming, vibrant and modern.

Maximising HWB Caernarfon's income

We fully appreciate the challenging economic climate and how tough town centre trading is. For this reason, the Board has decided not to increase the levy rate for the third term, despite the ever-increasing BID operating costs.
We want to ensure that we make the best use of your money. Our careful project budgeting and negotiation will help provide value for money. We will also be working with partners and funders to draw in additional contributions, and keep bidding for grant opportunities as they become available.

For HWB Caernarfon to succeed and deliver on this business plan, it is crucial that our members contribute by paying the annual levy fee on time. We will aid this through closer co-operation with Cyngor Gwynedd, who is responsible for the levy collection process, in an effort to avoid the dissatisfaction expressed by some of our members regarding the levy collection process during 2025.

Members' participation

This is your BID - we need and want you to be involved.

We welcome your ideas and expertise and want more businesses working with us.

You can help in various ways – from having informal discussions to being on our Board.

Your feedback has already helped shape this business plan, so let's keep the momentum going!

The Cost to your Business

HWB Caernarfon is funded through an annual BID levy and is projected to raise circa £102,000 per annum in its third BID term. This is based on 1.5% of the rateable value of all premises with a rateable value of £2,000 or more, approximately 400 ratepayers.

There will be no inflation applied to annual levy charges

The chart below shows some typical contributions based on a 1.5% levy:

RV of property	Annual BID Levy	Weekly Cost
£2,000	£30.00	£0.58
£3,000	£45.00	£0.87
£5,000	£75.00	£1.44
£7,500	£112.50	£2.16
£10,000	£150.00	£2.88
£15,000	£225.00	£4.33
£25,000	£375.00	£7.21
£75,000	£1,125.00	£21.63
£100,000	£1,500.00	£28.85
£200,000	£3,000.00	£57.69
£300,000	£4,500.00	£86.54
£500,000	£7,500.00	£144.23

Indicative Budget 2026 – 2031

BID delivery and running costs

HWB Caernarfon BID management salary costs will be split between the four project themes according to the estimated time resourced into each theme, acknowledging that none of the projects and services can be delivered without staffing resource. A proportion of the BID management time is also appointed to the delivery and good governance of HWB Caernarfon, including communication, performance monitoring and financial management. Any reserve funds at the end of March 2031 will be carried forward into the next term.

Alterations policy

HWB Caernarfon's projects, costs, timescales and budgets can be altered subject to the Board's approval, providing the changes fall within the income of the BID and meets its objectives. This enables the BID to operate flexibly, responding to changing demands of levy payers, the economic climate and potential opportunities.

Any change to the BID boundary subsequent to the boundary shown in this business plan, or to the levy rate, would require an alteration ballot. HWB Caernarfon will adhere to the 2023 ratings list throughout the five-year term to the end of March 2031.

Additional contributions

Indicative additional contributions of £6,000 per annum have been included in the budget, and is based on additional funds generated during the current term in the form of government grants. These additional contributions are not guaranteed and may be less or more than the outline budget. Further opportunities to generate additional funds including grants and sponsorship will be proactively explored.

	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	Term Total
Total Rateable Value	£7,150,100	£7,150,100	£7,150,100	£7,150,100	£7,150,100	£35,750,500
BID levy at 1.5% RV / 95% collection rate / 0% inflation	£101,889	£101,889	£101,889	£101,889	£101,889	£509,445
Additional contributions (grants and sponsorship)	£6,000	£6,000	£6,000	£6,000	£6,000	£30,000
Total Income	**£107,890**	**£107,890**	**£107,890**	**£107,890**	**£107,890**	**£539,450**
Expenditure						
Theme 1: Proudly Promoted	£30,150	£30,150	£30,150	£30,150	£30,150	£150,750
Theme 2: Clean, Green and Eco-friendly	£16,500	£16,500	£16,500	£16,500	£16,500	£82,500
Theme 3: A Safe Place	£20,100	£20,100	£20,100	£20,100	£20,100	£100,500
Theme 4: Together Stronger	£13,640	£13,640	£13,640	£13,640	£13,640	£68,200
Sub Total	**£80,390**	**£80,390**	**£80,390**	**£80,390**	**£80,390**	**£401,950**
Delivery and Running Costs						
BID Manager Core Costs (not project related)	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000	£50,000
Levy collection, insurance, professional fees, office, IT	£13,500	£13,500	£13,500	£13,500	£13,500	£67,500
Contingency / Renewal Reserves	£4,000	£4,000	£4,000	£4,000	£4,000	£20,000
Sub Total	**£27,500**	**£27,500**	**£27,500**	**£27,500**	**£27,500**	**£137,500**

Governance and Management

The BID Proposer

HWB Caernarfon is an independent, not-for-profit company, limited by guarantee set up in 2010 (registered in England and Wales, company number 09959600) to oversee the BID. HWB Caernarfon will deliver on this business plan should the BID be voted in for a third term.

Cyngor Gwynedd has received the business proposals in line with BID legislation and has confirmed its support to hold a third term BID ballo ton 19th of February 2026. Welsh Government was formally notified on 17 April 2025 of HWB Caernarfon's intention to hold a third term BID ballot on 19 February 2026.

HWB Caernarfon BID is business-led for business' benefit, governed by a Board comprising of BID levy payers or equivalent voluntary financial contributors, together with other key stakeholders. All members will be invited to the AGM where past and prospective BID activities will be presented.

Under its Articles of Association, HWB Caernarfon has positions on its Board for a minimum of five and up to a maximum of 15 Directors who voluntarily support the BID. Board positions are unpaid, voluntary, and voted on through an election process. There are currently six Directors on the Board, representatives of the local community and users of services offered by the company, with a broad range of skills and experience. All BID Levy Payers will be invited to become a member of the Company. Company members may subsequently nominate themselves for Board positions and vote on company business.

The proposed HWB Caernarfon Board for the third BID term will have the following structure:

- 2 large businesses
- 4 small businesses
- 1 landowner
- 1 voluntary member

Additionally, 2 observers (not entitled to vote):

- Representative of Cyngor Gwynedd

- Representative of Caernarfon Town Council

The BID levy collection process is the responsibility of Cyngor Gwynedd. HWB Caernarfon accounts are independently prepared each year and copies are available on request.

The BID levy is your investment. In return, you and the town benefit from projects and services that would not otherwise happen.

Should the BID ballot be successful on 19 February 2026, the third term will begin on 1 April 2026.

HWB Caernarfon currently employs a BID Manager that reports to the Board and is responsible for delivering the projects in this business plan, and a part-time staff member that operates the Tourist Information Centre. It is anticipated the team will remain the same.

Communications

Hwb Caernarfon is your voice at the table. Our BID Manager can be contacted by phone or email, and is happy to arrange a face-to-face meeting with you. The Board are also always open to hearing your feedback and ideas.

We are also the eyes and ears of our BID members, keeping on top of events as they unfold, keeping you briefed and alerted when necessary of potential problems that affect the smooth running of our town.

It is important to keep all members connected and informed about projects and services. We will do this through physical visits, regular newsletters and updates, email and social media channels.

Annually, with your BID levy bill, you will receive information on how your levy has been spent and the projected spend for the year ahead. Members will b
e invited to attend our AGM and entitled to be nominated to become a Board Director subject to available places.

What you need to know

How do we measure the impact of HWB Caernarfon

Our BID's purpose is to promote the town and to focus on actions that directly benefit our local business community. The money we spend in your priority areas needs to make a real difference, demonstrating the value of your investment This means measuring the impact of everything we do, including keeping abreast of our performance and being flexible to ensure our town remains competitive.

Our website, www.hwbcaernarfon.cymru, is a good source of information about our activities, and you'll also find notes of previous Board meetings and minutes of AGMs, as well as the annual accounts.

Most importantly, we will be asking you how we are doing. An annual survey of BID levy-payers will take place to invite your feedback and to ensure that businesses feel they are getting value for money. We will also conduct a mid-term review of how we are delivering the projects set out in our business plan.

The BID Ballot

- The person, organisation or registered company that is listed on the non-domestic ratings list as being responsible for payment of the rates of a property (also referred to in BID regulations as a hereditament) within the BID boundary on the day of the notice of the ballot (6th January 2026) will receive a ballot paper and ballot letter and will be entitled to vote in a secret ballot.

For the BID to be approved, two tests need to be met:

1. More than 50% of those voting must vote in favour.

2. Of the 'yes' votes, they must represent more than 50% of the total rateable value of all votes cast.

Under the legislation, if both of these conditions are fulfilled, it becomes mandatory for all eligible businesses (those with a rateable value of £2,000 or more) to pay an annual levy of 1.5% of rateable value each year for five years until 31 March 2031, regardless of how they voted.

- To ensure a fair process, the ballot will be conducted independently by Civica on behalf of Cyngor Gwynedd and will be a 28-day confidential postal vote. Voters will have until 5pm on the close of the ballot (Thursday 19 February 2026) to return their ballot paper. A proxy vote is available and details will be sent out with the ballot papers.

- If a business has more than one rateable property it will receive a ballot paper for each property. Each returned paper counts as a singular vote.

- If the BID is approved through both tests being met, it will operate for five years from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2031, delivering the projects outlined in this business plan.

- The number of hereditaments liable for the levy is 415 (at time of writing in August 2025).

- The results of the ballot will be announced on or before Monday 23 February 2026.

The BID Levy

- Every eligible business in the BID area (businesses with a rateable value of £2,000 or more per annum) will pay the annual BID levy, calculated on 1.5% of its rateable value using the 2023 non-domestic ratings list, throughout the BID's third term. The first BID levy payment of HWB Caernarfon's third term will be due on 1 April 2026 with subsequent levies due each year until 31 March 2031. There will be no inflation charged on the levy. If you would like to know the rateable value of your premises, please refer to your rates bill or visit www.voa.gov.uk
- Collection of the BID levy caries the same enforcement weight as collection of non-domestic rates.

- Under the BID regulations, Cyngor Gwynedd will be responsible for collection of the levy on behalf of HWB Caernarfon. These arrangements will be formalised in an operating agreement that both parties sign. The levy income will be collected in a single instalment.
- Cyngor Gwynedd will transfer levy collection funds to HWB Caernarfon regularly.
- This income is then ring-fenced and used to fund the projects outlined in this business plan.

The BID Boundary



HWB Caernarfon operates within the definitive boundary shown on the map, which includes the following streets, either in whole or in part:

(Please note that the street list is not exhaustive and should be considered alongside the boundary map showing the parameters of the BID boundary. There is no change to the boundary for the third BID term - it remains the same as it was for the second term).

Allt Pafiliwn	Current area
Bank Quay	Current area
Balaclava Road	Current area
Bangor Road	Current area
Bridge Street	Current area
Castle Ditch	Current area
Castle Hill	Current area
Castle Squar	Current area
Castle Street	Current area
Chapel Street / Tre'r Gôf	Current area
Church Lane / Lôn yr Eglwys	Current area
Church Street / Stryd yr Eglwys	Current area
Doc Fictoria	Current area
Garnon Street / Stryd Garnon	Current area
Glan Môr / Crown Street	Current area
Greengate Street / Tan y Bont	Current area
High Street / Stryd Fawr	Current area
Hole in the Wall Street / Stryd Twll yn y Wal	Current area
Lôn Twthill	Current area
Market Street / Stryd y Farchnad	Current area
Mill Lane / Lôn y Felin	Current area
New Street / Strydd Newydd	Current area
Newborough Street (Eagles Hotel)	Current area

North Road / Fford Y Gogledd (Number 14 Alexandra, Morrisons filling station, Moduron Menai Garage)	Current area
Northgate Street / Styd Pedwar a Chwech	Current area
North Penrallt / Penrallt Uchaf	Current area
Palace Street / Stryd y Plas	Current area
Pepper Lane	Current area
Pool Hill / Penllyn	Current area
Pool Lane / Pen y Graig	Current area
Pool Side / Penllyn	Current area
Pool Street / Stryd Y Llyn	Current area
Pretoria Terrace / Rhes Pretoria	Current area
Segontium Terrace / Rhes Segontiwm	Current area
Shirehall Street / Stryd y Jêl	Current area
Skinner Street / Lôn Crwyn	Current area
Slate Quay / Cei Llechi	Current area
Snowdon Street / Stryd Capel Joppa	Current area
South Penrallt / Penrallt Isaf	Current area
South Road / Lon Parc	Current area
St Helens Road / Ffordd Santes Helen	Current area
Stryd y Porth Mawr	Current area

What happens next?

January 2026

Voting list is prepared to ensure the ballot papers reach the correct recipient.
Final business plan published and circulated to all levy-paying businesses.
BID ballot papers will be issued and received before 23 January, and voting starts (28-day postal ballot).

February 2026

Postal ballot will close on Thursday 19 February at 5pm. Result will be announced on or by Monday 23 February.

April 2026

If the vote is successful, the third term of HWB Caernarfon BID will commence on Wednesday 1 April.

✨ 🌟 **VOTE YES!** 🌟 ✨

To keep HWB Caernarfon and all that we do

Get in touch

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Email: nigelstrain@hwbcaernarfon.cymru
Website: www.hwbcaernarfon.cymru

Remember – on or before 23 January 2026 your ballot papers will arrive.

Vote 'YES' to keep HWB Caernarfon, ensuring its good work and support continues, leading Caernarfon into the next decade!

CAERNARFON BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT OPERATIONAL AGREEMENT

Cyngor Gwynedd
(the Council)

AGB Caernarfon BID
(the BID Company)

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Operating Agreement

Dated 27th October 2025

(1) Cyngor Gwynedd (the Council), Shirehall Street, Caernarfon, Gwynedd.

(2) HWB Caernarfon (the BID Company, registered in England and Wales company number 09959600), a company limited by guarantee with registered office address of Y Ganolfan Groeso, Oriel Pendeitsh, Caernarfon, Gwynedd LL55 1SE.

Recitals

A The Council is the billing authority for the purposes of the Local Government Act 2003 and is responsible for collecting the BID Levy and administering the BID Revenue Account which shall be used towards the operation of the BID within the area of the Council and the funding of the BID Arrangements.

B The BID Company is responsible for the operation of the BID and for using the BID Levy for the purposes of achieving the objectives and aspirations set out in the BID Arrangements.

C Both parties wish to confirm the arrangements by which the BID Levy shall be collected together with general arrangements as to the relationship to be established between the Council and the BID Company for the duration of the BID.

D The purpose of this Agreement is to:

- establish the procedure for setting the BID Levy.
- confirm the basis upon which the Council will be responsible for collecting the BID Levy.
- set out the enforcement mechanisms available for collection of the BID Levy.
- set out the procedures for accounting and transference of the BID Levy.
- provide for the monitoring and review of the collection of the BID levy.

- Confirm the manner in which the Council's expenses incurred in collecting the BID Levy shall be paid.

IT IS AGREED:

1 Definitions

the **Administrative Expenses** means all costs incurred by the Council in the administration, collection and recovery of the BID Levy including but not limited to any staffing costs and any expenditure incurred by the Council in relation to software or other systems used in relation to the BID levy and any costs associated with this Agreement or any proposed termination thereof.

the **Annual Report** means a report to be prepared by the Council which details the following:-

(i) the total amount of the BID Levy collected during the relevant Financial Year.
(ii) details of the success rate for the collection of the BID Levy.
(iii) the Council's proposals (if any) to help improve its efficiency in the collection and enforcement of the BID levy.
(iv) details of those BID Levy Payers who have paid the BID Levy and those who have not paid the BID levy; and
(v) the Council's proposals for bad or doubtful debts

the **Appeal Notice** means a notice to be served by the BID Company in accordance with clause 9.2.

Bad or Doubtful Debts shall have the same meaning as described in Part 2 of Schedule 3 of the Regulations.

The **BID** means the Business Improvement District which is managed and operated by the BID Company and which operates within and is covered by those streets set out below and shown on the map attached hereto.

The following streets are included in the BID area in whole or in part:-

Allt Pafiliwn	Mill Lane / Lôn y Felin
Bank Quay / Cei Banc	New Street / Strydd Newydd
Balaclava Road / Balaclafa	Newborough Street (Eagles Hotel)
Bangor Road / Stryd Bangor	North Road / Fford Y Gogledd (Number 14 Alexandra, Morrisons filling station, Moduron Menai Garage)
Bridge Street / Bont Bridd	Northgate Street / Stryd Pedwar a Chwech
Castle Ditch / Pendeitsh	North Penrallt / Penrallt Uchaf
Castle Hill / Allt y Castell	Palace Street / Stryd y Plas
Castle Square / Y Maes	Pepper Lane
Castle Street / Stryd y Castell	Pool Hill / Penllyn
Chapel Street / Tre'r Gôf	Pool Lane / Pen y Graig
Church Lane / Lôn yr Eglwys	Pool Side / Penllyn
Church Street / Stryd yr Eglwys	Pool Street / Stryd Y Llyn
Doc Fictoria	Pretoria Terrace / Rhes Pretoria
Garnon Street / Stryd Garnon	Segontium Terrace / Rhes Segontiwm
Glan Môr / Crown Street	Shirehall Street / Stryd y Jêl
Greengate Street / Tan y Bont	Skinner Street / Lôn Crwyn
High Street / Stryd Fawr	Slate Quay / Cei Llechi
Hole in the Wall Street / Stryd Twll yn y Wal	Snowdon Street / Stryd Capel Joppa
Stryd y Porth Mawr	South Penrallt / Penrallt Isaf
Lôn Twthill	South Road / Lon Parc
Market Street / Stryd y Farchnad	St Helens Road / Ffordd Santes Helen

the **BID Arrangements** means those arrangements to be put in place pursuant to the Regulations by the BID Company for the purpose of enabling the projects specified to be carried out for the benefit of the BID or those who live, work or carry on any activity in the district.

the **BID Company's Report** means a report for each Financial Year to be prepared by the BID.

Company which details the following:-

(a) the total income and expenditure of the BID Levy.

(b) other income and expenditure of the BID Company not being the BID Levy.

(c) a statement of actual and pending deficits; and

(d) the various initiatives and schemes upon which the BID levy has been expended by the BID Company

the **BID Levy** means the charge to be levied and collected within the BID area pursuant to the Regulations and this Agreement. Details regarding the BID levy included within Schedule 1.

the **BID Company's Termination Notice** means a notice to be served by the BID Company on the Council pursuant to clause 11.8 and Regulation 18 of the Regulations.

the **BID Levy Payer(s)** means the non-domestic rate payers who are liable for paying the BID levy as described in the Schedule.

the **BID Levy Rules** means the rules set out in the Schedule which sets out how the BID Levy will be calculated, details of Exempt Properties and other requirements related to the BID Levy (as may be amended by a successful alteration ballot).

the **BID Revenue Account** means the account to be set up in accordance with Regulation 14 and operated in accordance with Schedule 3 of the Regulations.

the **BID Term** means the period from 1st of April 2026 to 31st of March 2031.

the **Council's Termination Notice** means the notice to be served by the Council on the BID Company pursuant to clause 11.1 and Regulation 18 of the Regulations.

the **Contributors** means the BID Levy Payers or other Contributors making voluntary contributions to the BID Company.

Demand Notice shall have the same meaning ascribed to it as set out in paragraphs 2 and 3 of Schedule 4 of the Regulations.

Hereditament shall have the same meaning as defined in the Regulations.

Electronic Communications means a communication transmitted (whether from one person to another, from one device to another or from a person to a device or vice versa):

(a) by means of a telecommunication system (within the meaning of the Telecommunications Act 1984); or
(b) by other means but while in electronic form

Enforcement Notice means a notice to be served on the Council as specified in clause 9.

Enforcement Regulations means the Non-Domestic Rating (Collection and Enforcement) (Local Lists) Regulations 1989.

the Exceptions means the circumstances in which the Council shall not be required to seek to enforce payment of the BID levy where a BID Levy payer has failed to make payment pursuant to a Demand Notice. The exceptions shall be as agreed by the parties from time to time.

the **Exempt Properties** means those class or classes of properties as identified in the BID Levy Rules which shall be exempt from any requirements to pay the BID levy.

the **Financial Year** means the financial year for the BID Company which runs from 1st April to 31st March in the following year.

the **First Priority Expenses** means the administrative expenses incurred by the Council in respect of all reasonable costs arising out of compliance with its obligations under this Agreement and the Regulations during each year of the duration of this Agreement.

Liability Order means an order obtained from the Magistrates Court pursuant to Regulation 12 of the Enforcement Regulations

the **Monitoring Group** means the group to be set up to monitor the collection and enforcement of the BID levy (as referred to in clause 10) such group to consist of one officer from Gwynedd Council and one representative from the BID Company.

the **Operational Date** means the date upon which the BID Arrangements come into force.

the **Public Meeting** means the meeting to be held of all BID Levy Payers pursuant to the Public Meeting Notice and Regulation 18 of the Regulations.

the **Public Meeting Notice** means a notice to be served pursuant to clause 11.1 or 11.8 by either the Council of the BID Company which provides the following:-

(a) confirmation that either party is considering terminating the BID.
(b) details of the venue where the public meeting will be held.
(c) confirmation that all BID Levy Payers who attend will be permitted to make representation

the **Regulations** means the Business Improvement Districts (Wales) Regulations 2005 and such amendments made by the National Assembly for Wales pursuant to Section 48 and Section 58 of the Local Government Act 2003 (from time to time).

the **Reminder Notice** means the notice to be served pursuant to clause 8.1.

the **Summons Notice** means the notice to be served following a Reminder Notice and pursuant to clause 8.2.

a **Working Day** means any day of the week other than a Saturday, a Sunday or a bank holiday.

2 Statutory Authorities

2.1 This Agreement is made pursuant to Part IV of the Local Government Act 2003, Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 the Regulations and all other enabling powers.

3 Commencement

3.1 This Agreement shall be effective from 1st April 2026

3.2 if, at the end of the BID Term a renewal ballot is held and is successful then the terms of this Agreement shall be reviewed prior to the start of the new BID Term.

4 Setting the BID Levy

4.1 As soon as is practicable and before commencement of the BID term, the Council shall calculate the BID levy due from each BID Levy Payer in accordance with the BID Levy Rules.

4.2 As soon as practicable after the ballot result, Cyngor Gwynedd confirm in writing to the BID Company the BID levy payable annually by each BID Levy payer.

5 The BID Revenue Account

5.1 Interest payments on money in the BID Revenue Account will be subject to the Council's banking arrangements at the time of operating the account. Such interest, if any, will be paid to the BID Company as part of the BID Levy.

6 Debits from the BID Revenue Account

6.1 The Council may debit directly from the BID Revenue Account:-

(i) the First Priority Expenses at the mid-point of each Financial Year provided that they have been detailed in a valid VAT invoice delivered to the BID Company giving a detailed breakdown of the costs incurred.

6.2 Notwithstanding the above provision the BID Company shall be responsible for ensuring that all VAT invoices delivered to the BID Company shall, if not debited from the BID Revenue Account, be paid within 28 days of delivery.

7 Collecting the BID Levy

7.1 The Council shall at the beginning of each Financial Year confirm in writing to the BID Company:-

(i) the means by which the BID Levy Payer shall be billed for the BID Levy; and
(ii) the date when the BID Levy shall first be collected.

7.2 Pursuant to clause 7.1(ii) the Council shall serve the Demand Notices on each BID Levy Payer and thereafter shall continue to calculate the BID Levy and serve the Demand Notices throughout the BID Term.

7.3 The Council shall maintain a list which identifies payment and/or non-payment of the BID Levy and shall make available to the BID Company as needed or at intervals of once per two months.

7.4 The Council shall liaise with the BID Company in carrying out reviews at regular intervals of each Hereditament within the BID Area in the event of any change in the occupier of each Hereditament or the merger or division of a Hereditament (or provision of an additional Hereditament) shall:

(a) serve and updated list of BID Levy Payers upon the BID Company.
(b) serve a Demand Notice (or alter any existing Demand Notice if appropriate) on the relevant BID Levy Payer.

7.5 The Council shall use all reasonable endeavours to collect the BID Levy on the date specified (pursuant to clause 7.1(ii) above) and thereafter on an annual basis and in accordance with the procedure set out in Schedule 4 of the Regulations.

7.6 The Council shall use all reasonable endeavours to take all reasonable steps for collecting the BID Levy which are consistent with its usual procedures for the collection of non-domestic rates.

7.7 The Council shall notify the BID Company of the amounts credited to the BID Revenue Account and of the amount of the authorised debits in accordance with clause 6. Notifications will be made on the last working day of April and quarterly (every three months) thereafter. Upon receipt of an appropriate invoice from the BID Company, the Council shall, within four weeks, transfer to the BID Company's own bank account the amount due and provide written confirmation of the sum transferred.

7.8 In the event of an overpayment by the Council to the BID in excess of £5,000 for a period of more than three consecutive months, the BID will return the overpayment to Cyngor Gwynedd within 14 days upon receipt of a valid invoice.

8 Procedures available to the Council for enforcing payment of the BID Levy

8.1 In the event that the BID Levy is not paid in whole within twenty-eight days from the payment due date then (subject to the Exceptions or as may otherwise be agreed between the parties) the Council shall serve a Reminder Notice on such defaulting BID Levy Payer which shall:-

(i) identify the sum payable.

(ii) provide a further 14 (fourteen) days for payment to be made.

(iii) confirm that if payment is not received in accordance with (ii) above the Council will make an application to the Magistrates Court for a Liability Order to recover the unpaid sum (together with costs). For the avoidance of any doubt, it is agreed that the costs awarded and obtained by the Council arising from the making of any Liability Order shall be due to and retained by the Council and shall not be payable to the BID Company.

The value of the costs will be commensurate with the Non Domestic Rates liability costs as set out in The Council Tax and Non Domestic Rating (Amendment) (Wales) Regulations 2011/528 or any other subsequent statutory amendment.

8.2 In the event that the BID levy is not paid in whole within 14 (fourteen) days of the service of the Reminder Notice in accordance with clause 8.1 then the Council shall immediately inform the BID Company of such further failure to pay (subject to the Exceptions). The Council will consider any comments made by the BID Company before deciding whether to make an application to the Magistrates Court for a Liability Order. The Council will normally then make an application to the Magistrates Court for a Liability Order to recover the outstanding sum of the BID Levy as is permitted by the Regulations and the Enforcement Regulations (as amended).

8.3 In the event that the Council's application to the Magistrates Court for a Liability Order is awarded it shall immediately inform the BID Company. The Council will consider any comments made by the BID Company prior to entering into an enforcement payment arrangement or issuing recovery instructions to the Enforcement Agent. The Council will endeavour to use external Enforcement Agents which it has arrangements with at the relevant time.

9 Enforcement Mechanisms for non-collection of the BID Levy by the Council

9.1 In the event that the Council is not taking appropriate steps to enforce payment of the BID Levy pursuant to clause 8 above the BID Company shall serve the Enforcement Notice on the Council requesting that:-

(i) it serves a Reminder Notice; or
(ii) a Further Reminder Notice; or
(iii) it applies to Court to obtain a Liability Order pursuant to clause 8.3 above; or
(iv) enter into an enforcement payment arrangement or issuing the account to the Enforcement Agent.

and the Council shall thereafter provide written confirmation of the action taken to recover the unpaid BID Levy.

9.2 If after being served an Enforcement Notice the Council fails to take the requested action within 28 days then the BID Company shall serve an Appeal Notice to the Chief Executive of the Council. Such notice shall:-

(i) detail the sum which remains unpaid.
(ii) confirm that the Council has failed to use the Enforcement Mechanisms available to it as referred to in this Agreement to recover the sum; and
(iii) request a meeting take place between the Chief Executive, relevant officers of the Council and the BID Company to achieve a solution and/or agree a strategy to recover the outstanding sum, such meeting

to take place in any event no later than 28 (twenty eight) days from service pf the Appeal Notice.

10 Accounting Procedures and Monitoring

10.1 Within 1 (one) month from the Operational Date the Council and BID Company shall form the Monitoring Group.

10.2 In addition to the information outlined in 7.4, quarterly (every three months) during the BID Term the Council shall provide the BID Company with a breakdown of:-

(i) the amount of BID Levy for each individual BID Levy Payer.

(ii) the BID Levy collected in relation to each BID Levy Payer.

(iii) details (together with the outstanding unpaid sum) of those BID Levy Payers who have not paid the BID Levy.

(iv) details of the Reminder Notices issued throughout that period; and

(v) details of any Liability Orders obtained or applied for by the Council.

10.3 The Monitoring Group shall meet no less than once in any one Financial Year and on all other occasions further meetings of the Monitoring Group shall be arranged by the service of written notice by either party on the other, such notice to be provided no less that 28 (twenty eight) days prior to the date of the proposed meeting (or lesser if otherwise agreed or in cases of emergency) and provided further that such meetings can be dispensed with altogether upon the written agreement of both the Council and the BID Company.

10.4 At each meeting the Monitoring Group shall:-

(i) review the effectiveness of the collection and enforcement of the BID Levy; and

(ii) if required, review and assess the information provided by the Council pursuant to clauses 10.2 above and make any recommendations for implementation as may be agreed (and which are permitted by the Regulations and the terms of this Agreement).

10.5 Within 1 (one) month after the date of the end of the Financial Year the Council shall provide the Annual Report to the BID Company.

10.6 The BID company shall provide the BID Company Report to the Council two weeks prior to their Annual General Meeting.

11 Termination

11.1 The Council shall not be permitted to terminate the BID Arrangements because:-

(i) In its opinion there are insufficient finances available to the BID Company to meet its liabilities for the chargeable period for the purposes of the BID Arrangements; or

(ii) the Council is unable, due to any cause beyond its control to provide the works or services which are secured as part of the BID Arrangements

unless and until it first serves the Public Meeting Notice on the BID Levy Payers and the Council's Termination Notice on the BID Company and within 14 (fourteen) days from the date of service of such notice both parties shall arrange to meet where the purpose of such meeting shall be to discuss and/or agree all or any of the following set out in clause 11.2 or 11.3 (whichever is applicable).

11.2 Where the BID Termination Notice relates to clause 11.1(i) both parties shall agree and/or discuss or review the following:-

(a) the Council is concerned that the BID Company has insufficient finances to meet its liabilities for that period and details of such concerns should be made available to the BID Company.

(b) insufficient funds.

(c) alternative means by which the insufficiency of the funds can be remedied; and

(d) an appropriate time frame to resolve this issue.

11.3 Where the BID Termination Notice relates to clause 11.1(ii) both parties shall agree and/or discuss or review the following:-

(a) the services or works which it is no longer able to provide together with confirmation and details as to why such works or services cannot be provided.
(b) a review by both parties as to whether such works or services are of material importance to the BID so that termination of the BID Arrangements is the only option.
(c) alternative means of procuring the said services or works by third parties or increased financial funding from the BID Company.
(d) alternative replacement services or works which will be acceptable to the BID Company.
(e) an appropriate time frame to resolve this issue.

11.4 In the event that the parties cannot reach agreement in relation to the above the Council shall cause a Public Meeting to be held and subject to consideration of representations made by any BID Levy Payer at the Public Meeting the Council shall be permitted to terminate the BID Arrangements provided that notice by the Council to terminate the BID shall be provided to the BID Company no less than 28 days prior to termination taking place.

11.5 Upon termination of the BID Arrangements the Council shall review whether there is a credit in the BID Revenue Account and in the event that there are sufficient funds in the BID Revenue Account amounting to a refund of at least £5 for each BID Levy Payer (having already deducted a reasonable sum for the administration of such refund) to:-

(a) calculate the amount to be refunded to each BID Levy Payer.
(b) ensure that the amount to be refunded is calculated by reference to the amount payable by each BID Levy Payer for the last chargeable period; and

(c) make arrangements for the amount calculated to be credited against any outstanding liabilities of each BID Levy Payer or, where there are no such liabilities refunded to the BID Levy Payer.

11.6 Upon termination of the BID the Council shall notify the BID Levy Payers of such termination in accordance with Regulation 18(6) of the Regulations together with confirmation as to whether any part of the BID Levy is to be repaid to BID Levy Payers in accordance with clause 11.8.

11.7 The BID Company shall not be permitted to terminate the BID Arrangements where:-

(a) the works or services under the BID Arrangements are no longer required; or
(b) the BID Company is unable, due to any cause beyond its control to provide works and services which are necessary for the BID to continue

Unless and until it has served the BID Company's Termination Notice on the Council and thereafter carried out a proper consultation with all relevant representatives of the BID Area as considered appropriate by the Council.

11.8 Upon termination of the BID Arrangements the BID Company shall notify the Council of such termination in accordance with Regulation 18(5) and the Council shall notify the BID Levy Payers pursuant to Regulation 18(6) together with confirmation as to whether any part of the BID Levy is to be repaid to BID Levy Payers in accordance with clause 11.5.

12 Confidentiality

12.1 Both the Council and the BID Company agree to keep confidential and not to divulge to any person without the prior written consent of the other party all information (written or oral) concerning the business affairs of the other nor any information which has been exchanged about the BID Levy Payers or Contributors or about other third parties which it shall have obtained or received as a result of operating the BID. This obligation shall survive the

termination or lapse of the BID Arrangements. For the avoidance of doubt nothing in this clause shall prevent the Council from using or divulging such information as is necessary for the purpose of complying with its obligation under this Agreement.

13 Notices

13.1 Any notices or other written communication to be served or given to or upon any party to this Agreement to the other shall be in writing and shall be sent to the address provided for above or such substitute address in England and Wales as may from time to time have been notified by that Party.

13.2 A Notice may be served by:-

13.2.1 delivery to the Assistant Head of Finance, Cyngor Gwynedd;

13.2.2 delivery to the Company Secretary at the BID Company's address specified above;

13.2.3 registered or recorded delivery post;

13.2.4 Electronic Communication (provided that it is in legible form and is capable of being used for subsequent reference);

13.3 Any notice served shall be deemed to have been validly served or given at the time when in the ordinary course of business it would have been received.

14 Miscellaneous

14.1 For the avoidance of doubt where any part of this Agreement is incompatible with the Local Government Act 2003 or Regulations or any other regulations which the Welsh Ministers or National Assembly for Wales may issue pursuant to Part IV of the Local Government Act 2003 in so far as they relate to Wales then such part shall be struck out and the balance of this Agreement shall remain.

14.2 The headings appearing in this Agreement are for ease of reference only and shall not affect the construction of this Agreement.

14.3 For the avoidance of doubt the provisions of this Agreement) other than those contained in this clause) shall not have any effect until this document has been executed and dated.

14.4 Where reference is made to a Clause, Part or Recital such reference (unless the context requires otherwise) is a reference to a clause, part, plan or recital attached to this Agreement.

14.5 References to the Council include any successors to its functions as relevant billing authority.

14.6 References to statutes, bye laws, regulations, orders, delegated legislation shall include any such instrument re-enacting or made pursuant to the same power.

15 Exercise of the Council's Powers

Nothing contained in this Agreement or implied in it shall prejudice or affect the rights discretions powers duties and obligations of the Council under all statute's bye-laws statutory instruments orders and regulations in the exercise of its functions as a local authority.

16 Contracts (Rights of Third Parties)

The provisions of the Contracts (Rights of Third Parties) Act 1999 shall not apply to this Agreement.

17 Arbitration

The following provisions shall apply in the event of a dispute:

17.1 Any dispute or difference of any kind whatsoever arising between the parties hereto out of or in connection with this Deed shall be referred to arbitration before a single arbitrator.

17.2 The parties shall jointly appoint the arbitrator not later than 28 (twenty-eight) days after service of a request in writing by either party to do so and each party shall bear its own costs.

17.3 If the parties are unable to agree within 28 (twenty-eight) days as t the appointment of such arbitrator then such arbitrator (hereinafter referred to as "the Tribunal") shall be appointed on the application of either party to the President for the time being of the Law Society.

17.4 In the event of a reference to arbitration the parties agree to:

- Prosecute any such reference expeditiously; and
- Do all things or take all steps reasonably necessary in order to enable the Tribunal to deliver any award (interim, final or otherwise) as soon as reasonably practicable.

17.5 The award shall be in writing signed by the Tribunal and shall be finalised within 21 (twenty-one) days from the date of such award.

17.6 The award shall be final and binding both on the parties and on any persons claiming through or under them.

18 Freedom of Information

18.1 The BID Company accepts that the Council is obliged to comply with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Code of Practice on the Act and will assist the Council to comply with these obligations. This includes helping the Council comply with its obligation to respond to a request for information within 20 days of receipt; and providing information to the Council where the Council requests.

18.2 The Council is entitled to disclose information unless it believes that the information is exempt under the Act. Exemption may apply where, for example, information is provided in confidence, where the information is a

trade secret; or where release is likely to prejudice commercial interests. The Council will decide, acting reasonably, whether information requested under the Act is to be disclosed or not. The Council will where reasonably practicable consult the BID Company and will consider any representations made by it.

The Council shall not be liable for any loss or other detriment caused by the disclosure of any information in response to a request for information under the Act.

Signed by the parties or their duly authorised representatives

Signed by)
duly authorised for an)
on behalf of)
Cyngor Gwynedd)_____

Signed by)
duly authorised for an)
on behalf of)
AGB Caernarfon BID)_____

Schedule 1 – The BID Levy Rules / Arrangements

This Schedule sets out in further detail the technical and budgetary information relating to how Caernarfon (BID) will operate, in so far as the arrangements between the BID Company and the Council are concerned in the event of any conflict between the body of this Agreement and this Schedule arising then the Agreement shall prevail over this Schedule.

1 Definitions

Definitions of words or terms referred to in these arrangements are those set out or referred to in The Business Improvement Districts (Wales) Regulations 2005, the Local Government Act 2003 and Local Government Finance Act 1988 unless expressly defined in this Agreement.

2 The BID Proposer

The BID Proposer is HWB Caernarfon Ltd, acting through its Board of Directors. In the event of a positive ballot result in February 2026, the existing company, HWB Caernarfon Ltd (a company limited by guarantee), will continue to deliver the BID for its third term.

3 Governance

The BID will be run by the Caernarfon BID Company.

The proposed Board will reflect that of the businesses in the BID area to ensure a representative body to lead the development of the Caernarfon BID. This may include representatives from:

Large Business	Night-time Economy
Medium Business	Business Forum / Chamber of Trade (voluntary levy contributor)
Small Business	Statutory Body (e.g. the local authority)
Professional Services	Local City / Town Council.
Local Community group	Additional businesses who represent different geographical areas within the BID

It is expected that the Board of Directors, through their BID Manager, will implement the proposed Business Plan themes: **Proudly Promote; Clean, Green and Eco-friendly; A Safe Place; Stronger Together**. These are themes led by the Board and/or any established sub-groups. Sub-groups are formed from BID Members, who are responsible for developing detailed budgets for their group, which are then passed to the Board for approval. All businesses are given the opportunity to be represented on these sub-groups and the Board. Sub-groups will be set up as and when required.

Annually, the Board of Directors, through their BID Manager, will produce a billing leaflet detailing financial information about how the BID has spent the previous year's levy and how the BID intends to spend the levy income in the year to which the bill applies. This billing leaflet will be provided to the levy payers annually, along with their annual demand notice.

4 Membership of the Company

All BID Levy Payers will be invited to become a Member of the Company. Company Members may subsequently nominate themselves for directorships or to sit on one of the BID Sub-Groups.

The Board will manage the Executive Team, which will deliver the projects and services as set out in the BID Proposal.

5 Duration of the BID

The BID Term will be five years in duration from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2031. Before the end of this period, the BID Board may choose to seek renewal of the BID for a further term, through a renewal ballot.

6. The BID area

The area covered by the proposal comprises parts of Caernarfon town centre as shown in the map below.


Caernarfon

The BID area covers the following streets, either in whole or part:

Allt Pafiliwn	Mill Lane / Lôn y Felin
Bank Quay / Cei Banc	New Street / Strydd Newydd
Balaclava Road / Balaclafa	Newborough Street (Eagles Hotel)
Bangor Road / Stryd Bangor	North Road / Fford Y Gogledd (Number 14 Alexandra, Morrisons filling station, Moduron Menai Garage)
Bridge Street / Bont Bridd	Northgate Street / Styd Pedwar a Chwech
Castle Ditch / Pendeitsh	North Penrallt / Penrallt Uchaf
Castle Hill / Allt y Castell	Palace Street / Stryd y Plas
Castle Square / Y Maes	Pepper Lane
Castle Street / Stryd y Castell	Pool Hill / Penllyn
Chapel Street / Tre'r Gôf	Pool Lane / Pen y Graig
Church Lane / Lôn yr Eglwys	Pool Side / Penllyn
Church Street / Stryd yr Eglwys	Pool Street / Stryd Y Llyn
Doc Fictoria	Pretoria Terrace / Rhes Pretoria
Garnon Street / Stryd Garnon	Segontium Terrace / Rhes Segontiwm
Glan Môr / Crown Street	Shirehall Street / Stryd y Jêl
Greengate Street / Tan y Bont	Skinner Street / Lôn Crwyn
High Street / Stryd Fawr	Slate Quay / Cei Llechi
Hole in the Wall Street / Stryd Twll yn y Wal	Snowdon Street / Stryd Capel Joppa
Stryd y Porth Mawr	South Penrallt / Penrallt Isaf
Lôn Twthill	South Road / Lon Parc
Market Street / Stryd y Farchnad	St Helens Road / Ffordd Santes Helen

7 Ensuring BID services are supplementary

There is no link between the amount of business rate collected by the Council and the amount it receives back from Central Government to deliver services in the area.

A BID, in comparison, generates revenue that is ring-fenced for the area in which it is collected, to be spent on projects for the benefit of businesses that pay the BID Levy. All services provided by the BID will be additional to those provided by the Council. Additionally, is ensured through the production of a 'Baseline Agreement' which sets out the standard level of statutory service that is already provided for the BID area. This ensures that the BID levy only funds services and projects over and above this level.

8 the BID Ballot

The ballot will be managed by the Legal Services within Cyngor Gwynedd and will run between 22nd January and 19th February 2026. The ballot will be a secret postal ballot for the eligible Hereditaments on the National Non-Domestic Ratings List at the time of the notice of ballot being issued. Where the occupiers of individual Hereditaments have nominated in writing the name of the person who should vote on their behalf, the notice of ballot and ballot papers will be sent to them.

9 Eligible businesses

The following will not be eligible for the BID Levy, or for the vote:

- Business units with a rateable value of less than £2,000.
- Advertising rights and kiosks.

All other types of business are eligible to vote in the BID ballot and to pay the BID Levy. Hereditaments (rated 'units' of business space) with a rateable value of less than £2,000 will be exempt from paying the Levy and therefore will not be eligible to vote in the ballot. This currently means that approximately 415 rateable properties (hereditaments) within Caernarfon will be eligible to vote in the BID ballot and will be liable to pay the BID levy.

Businesses with a rateable value of less than £2,000 will be welcome to take up some of the BID's services by contributing on a voluntary basis at a rate to be agreed.

Where Hereditaments are unoccupied at the time of the notice of ballot, the owner will be entitled to vote in the BID ballot. The BID Levy Payer in cases of unoccupied Hereditaments will be the owner of the whole of the Hereditament. No three-month 'void' period will be given and those Hereditaments which are exempt from empty property rates and will not be exempt from the BID Levy. The BID levy is payable irrespective of part or all of the property being empty. The term 'owner' is defined in section 65(1) of the Local Government Finance Act 1998.

Businesses who receive mandatory and / or discretionary relief from business rates will not have their BID Levy discounted at the same rate. The BID Levy will not be reduced by any discretionary relief.

10 The BID Levy

The BID Levy is charged according to chargeable day procedures. Occupiers and owner-occupiers will pay the Levy at a fixed rate of 1.5% of rateable value, based upon the 2023 Non-Domestic Rating List. The BID Levy will therefore be calculated using the rateable value for each hereditament in the BID area as recorded in the 2023 Rating List on the date when notice of ballot is given. In the first instance this is likely to generate around £102,000 per annum for the Caernarfon area.

New assessments brought into the Rating List will be liable to the BID levy as from the effective date provided in the Rating List. If a hereditament is removed from the Rating List, liability for the BID levy will apply up to the day of deletion of the assessment from the Rating List"

The table below sets out the indicative Levy at 1.5% payable for businesses depending on their rateable value:

Indicative rateable value (£)	Indicative BID Levy (£)

5,000	75
10,000	150
50,000	750
100,000	1,500
500,000	7,500

What if I already pay rates and services charges as part of my rent?

Where the occupants of Hereditaments pay an inclusive rent or other charge for occupying space that includes the rates charge, the owner is liable to pay the BID Levy and, consequently, is eligible to vote in the ballot.

I'm thinking of taking on more premises in the BID area. Will I have to pay a levy on those when I move in?

Businesses which begin to occupy existing Hereditaments during the BID period will be liable to pay the Levy for their period of occupation, providing the Hereditament remains eligible for the BID Levy. The BID Levy will be extended to occupiers of Hereditaments built or first occupied in the BID area during the life of the BID, assuming that they are otherwise eligible. In these cases, the Levy will be calculated on the rateable value entered in the most recent version of the Ratings List.

Occupiers of Hereditaments in new developments located within the BID boundary will also be liable for the BID levy, assuming that they are otherwise eligible.

11 Levy Collection

The Council will be responsible for collecting the BID Levy on behalf of the Caernarfon BID. The BID Levy will be payable in one instalment per year. Bills will be raised in March, and payment will become due on 1st April each year. Bills raised throughout the year will be periodically billed with payment due within 28 days. Enforcement measures for the collection of the BID Levy are detailed under clause 8 above titled 'Procedures available to the Council for enforcing payment of the BID Levy'

The BID Levy is a mandatory charge and collection is enforceable in the same way as the business (non-domestic) rates. After 28 days' non-payment of the BID Levy,

a reminder will be sent giving a further 14 days to pay. If after a further 14 days from the payment date stated in the Reminder Notice the outstanding sum of the BID Levy has not been paid the Council shall make an application to the Magistrates Court for a Liability Order to recover the outstanding sum of the BID Levy. The BID Company will strongly pursue collection of the BID Levy, using all available enforcement mechanisms. Non-payment of the BID Levy will incur additional costs to the business in question.

The Council will apply to the Magistrates Court to recover its reasonable costs incurred in obtaining any order (currently estimated as £70.00 costs per liability order).

12 The cost of the BID ballot

The costs of the BID ballot will be met by Cyngor Gwynedd.

13 Alterations to the BID arrangements

Only minor amendments can be made to the BID arrangements without seeking formal approval from the BID Members. BID arrangements may be altered without an alteration ballot, as long as there is no proposal at alter:

- The geographical area of the BID.
- The BID Levy in such a way that would:
  - (i) cause any person to be liable to pay the BID Levy, who was not previously liable to pay; or
  - (ii) increase the BID Levy for any person other than for inflation purposes as set out above.

Where the BID arrangements may be altered without an alteration ballot, the alteration will be made by a decision of Caernarfon BID Board, following consultation with Cyngor Gwynedd.

BASELINE AGREEMENT FOR THE PROVISION OF STANDARD SERVICES

Dated

Cyngor Gwynedd (the "Council")

and

HWB Caernarfon (the "BID Company")

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Baseline Agreement for the Provision of Standard Services

Dated:

Between:

1) **CYNGOR GWYNEDD** (the Council), Shirehall Street, Caernarfon, Gwynedd.
2) **HWB Caernarfon** (the BID Company), registered in England and Wales company number 09959600, a company limited by guarantee with registered office address of Y Ganolfan Groeso, Oriel Pendeitsh, Caernarfon, Gwynedd LL55 1SE.

Recitals

A The Council is the local authority for the purposes of the Local Government Act 2003 and is responsible for providing the Standard Services within the BID Area.

B The BID Company is responsible for the management and operation of the BID and for achieving the objectives and aspirations set out in the BID Business Plan.

C The purpose of this Deed of Agreement is to set out for the avoidance of doubt

(i) the Standard Services provided by the Council within the BID area;

(ii) the benchmark levels against which the provision of the Standard Services will be measured so as to ensure that whenever the BID Company wishes to provide any additional/complimentary services these services are not services which the Council should be providing pursuant to their existing statutory duties; and

(iii) the mechanism for the continued monitoring and review of the Standard Services.

It is agreed:

1. Definitions

Ballot Result Date means the date upon which a successful ballot result has been declared in favour of putting in place the BID Arrangements.

Baseline Agreement sets out for the avoidance of doubt

(i) the Standard Services provided by the Council within the BID area;

(ii) the benchmark levels against which the provision of the Standard Services will be measured so as to ensure that whenever the BID Company wishes to provide any additional/complimentary services these services are not services which the Council should be providing pursuant to their existing statutory duties; and

(iii) the mechanism for the continued monitoring and review of the standard Services.

BID means the Business Improvement District which is managed and operated by the BID Company and has the meaning given in the Regulations.

BID Area means that area within which the BID operates as shown in Schedule 1.

BID Arrangements has the meaning given by section 41 of the Local Government Act 2003

BID Business Plan means the plan voted for by the BID Levy Payers which sets out the objectives of the BID and for Financial Year 2025/26 is known as the BID Proposal.

BID Levy means the charge levied and collected within the BID pursuant to the Regulations.

BID Levy Payers means the non-domestic rate payers liable for paying the BID Levy.

BID Proposal means the plan voted for by the BID Levy Payers in a ballot which sets out the objectives of the BID and identifies the various projects which will be undertaken using funds raised by the BID Levy and/or Voluntary Contributions to achieve those objectives.

BID term means a five-year term - 1st of April 2026 to 31st of March 2031.

Complementary Service(s) means those services secured or procured by the BID Company from the Council or other third-party provider in addition to the Standard Services.

Complementary Services Agreement(s) means an agreement entered into between the Council and the BID Company or such further agreements as may be entered into by the BID Company for the provision of the Complementary Services.

Complementary Service Provider means the provider of a Complementary Service.

Designated Officer means the officer appointed by the relevant Council Department to liaise directly with the BID on issues relating to the performance of the Standard Services and any Complementary Services provided by the Council.

Financial Year means the financial year for the BID Company which runs from 1st April to 31st March

Operating Agreement means the agreement to be entered into between the Council and the BID Company which sets out various procedures for the collection, monitoring and enforcement of the BID Levy.

Performance Notice means a notice served by the BID Company which:

(a) identifies the Standard Service to which the notice relates;

(b) states how the Standard Service is not being provided in accordance with this Agreement; and

(c) requests that the Council liaise directly with the department, service provider or contractor responsible for carrying out the Standard Service as soon as practicable for the purposes of securing compliance with this Agreement.

Protocols means the informal procedures to be agreed by the Council and the BID Company the purpose of which is to assist in the provision of the Standard Services.

Regulations means the Business Improvement Districts (Wales) Regulations 2005 and such amendments to those regulations which may be made by the National Assembly for Wales pursuant to Section 48 of the Local Government Act 2003 (from time to time).

Services Review Panel means the panel comprising nominated officer representatives from the BID Company and the Council Departments responsible for delivery of Standard Services.

Standard Services means the services provided by the Council within the BID Area as set out in Schedule 2.

Voluntary Contribution(s) means any contributions or funds paid or made available to the BID Company which do not form part of the BID Levy.

2. Statutory Authorities

2.1 This Agreement is made pursuant in accordance with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009, which give the Council powers to promote the economic, social, and environmental well-being of its area, Part IV of the Local Government Act 2003, the Business Improvement Districts (Wales) Regulations 2005, Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 and all other enabling powers.

3. Commencement

3.1 This Agreement shall commence on 1st April 2026 and continue until 31st of March 2031 subject to earlier termination or extension by mutual consent as hereinafter provided.

3.2 This Agreement shall determine and cease to be of any further effect in the event that:

(a) the BID Company fails to secure approval of the Proposals, Renewal Proposals or Alteration Proposals in a ballot, renewal ballot, alteration ballot or re-ballot;

(b) the Welsh Ministers declare void a BID ballot, renewal ballot, alteration ballot or re-ballot;

(c) the Council exercises its veto pursuant to Section 51(2) of the Local Government Act 2003 and paragraph 12 of the Business Improvement District (Wales) Regulations 2005 and there is no successful appeal against the veto;

(d) the BID Term expires save where the BID Company secures approval of Renewal Proposals in a renewal ballot or Alteration Proposals in an alteration ballot or Proposals in a re-ballot in which event this Agreement shall continue until the expiry of the BID Term set out in the Renewal Proposals, Alteration Proposals or the Proposals set out in the re-ballot provided, in relation to Renewal Proposals and Alteration

Proposals, the Council and the BID Company both consent to such continuation;

(e) the Council exercises its discretion to terminate the BID Arrangements in exercise of its powers under Regulation 18 of the Regulations; and

(f) the Council terminates this Agreement pursuant to clause 10 of this Agreement.

4. The BID Company's Obligations

4.1 The BID Company agrees that it will provide the Council with any information the Council will reasonably require in relation to the carrying out of the Complementary Services.

4.2 In the event that the BID Company intends to change the Complementary Services the BID Company shall serve notice on the Council for the purposes of arranging a meeting of the Services Review Panel and at such a meeting the BID Company shall consult with the Council in respect of the intended change to the Complimentary Services.

5. The Council's Obligations

5.1 The Council agrees to the following:

(a) to provide the Standard Services within the BID Area at its own cost for the duration of the BID term; and

(b) will not use the BID Levy at any time to either fund or procure the Standard Services.

5.2 In the event that the Council is unable to continue to provide all or any part of the Standard Services within the BID Area on account of it being statutorily barred from doing so in respect of any of those Standard Services set out in Schedule 2 or it does not have sufficient funds to secure the provision of any of those Standard Services set out in Schedule 2 it shall confirm the following to the BID Company:

(a) identify which part or parts of the Standard Services it is unable to provide;

(b) provide a detailed explanation of why such identified Standard Service is to be withdrawn; and

(c) confirm the date upon which the Council will cease to operate the identified Standard Service.

5.3 The Council may provide different Standard Services, delayed Standard Services or no Standard Services in the event that it is not reasonably practicable to provide the Standard Services by reason of the following:

(a) adverse weather conditions in the BID Area;

(b) an excessive number of pedestrians in the BID Area which would impede or inhibit the carrying out of the Standard Services;

(c) restrictions by the Police as to the persons and/or number of persons permitted access in the BID Area;

(d) a traffic accident or major spillage in the BID Area;

(e) marches, parades, film and theatre premieres, festivals and visits by VIPs in or affecting the BID Area where such activities directly impede or inhibit the Standard Services from being provided;

(f) any other reason in the BID Area or affecting the BID Area beyond the control of the Council;

(g) neither party shall have any liability under or be deemed to be in breach of this Agreement for any delays or failures in performance of this Agreement which result from circumstances beyond the reasonable control of that Party. The Party affected by such circumstances shall promptly notify the other Party in writing when such circumstances cause delay or failure in performance and when they cease to do so. If such circumstances continue for a continuous period of more than six months, either Party may terminate this Agreement immediately by written notice to the other Party.

Provided always that the Council shall first and, if possible, provide the BID Company with reasonable notice in the event that the Council intends to provide different Standard Services, delayed Standard Services or no Standard Services as a result of any of the reasons mentioned in this clause and the Council shall, if possible, endeavour to recommence the Standard Service as soon as reasonably practicable to the same standard as it was immediately before the change.

5.4 To use reasonable endeavours to liaise with the proposed BID to provide Complimentary Services or, and (where practicable) put in place such partnering arrangements (of formal or informal nature) with a Complimentary Service Provider where the Complementary Services are complementary to or are of a similar nature to the Standard Services and to liaise with the Complementary Service Provider (where appropriate).

5.5 To implement such reasonable recommendations in the carrying out or provision of the Standard Services as may be made by the Services Review Panel, insofar as is reasonably practicable and affordable.

5.6 2 months prior to conducting a review/reletting of a contract relating to the Standard Services to notify the BID Company informing it of the timescales for

carrying out the review/reletting and update Schedule 2 with new details within 4 weeks of these being agreed.

5.7 Pursuant to clause 5.6 above to review the provision of the Standard Services as part of the Services Review Panel process and where appropriate and agreed with the BID Company to update Schedule 2 in accordance with the conclusions reached by the Services Review Panel insofar as is reasonably practicable and affordable.

5.8 In the event that the Council intends to change the Standard Services significantly and permanently the Council shall give the BID Company no less than 2 months prior to that change, if possible, and such notice shall include:

(a) a description of the part or parts of the Standard Services the Council intends to change;

(b) a detailed explanation of why the Council intends to change such Standard Services;

(c) the date on which the Council intends to change the Standard Services.

6. Performance Notice

6.1 The Council shall not remove or change any contractor(s) responsible for providing the Standard Services without first serving no less than 28 days written notice on the BID Company confirming:

(a) the removal or alteration of such contractor;

(b) the Standard Services which such contractor is responsible for providing; and

(c) the details of the new contractor appointed to provide the Standard Services

PROVIDED THAT this requirement to give prior notice to the BID Company shall not apply in the event of a contract for the provision of any of the Standard Services terminating immediately on the grounds of fundamental breach of contract or insolvency on the part of the contractor.

6.2 Upon receipt of a Performance Notice from the BID Company the Designated Officer shall inform the contractor or provider of the Standard Services of the lapse, carry out a review of the performance and the carrying out of the Standard Services by the contractor or provider of the Standard Services and to use their reasonable endeavours to secure the improvement of the Standard Services. The Designated Officer in each case shall consult with the BID Company on the action plan arising from such review to secure such improvements, if possible, and keep the BID Company informed of the Council's actions and progress in carrying out the action plan.

7. Licence

7.1 The BID Company, its agents or Complementary Service Provider shall not enter onto into or upon any land within the Council's ownership or the highway for the purposes of the BID Company its agents or Complimentary Service Provider carrying out any function or service required or secured (or any ancillary function) for the operation of the BID proposal without first obtaining the Council's licence and consent under Clause 7.2 and complying with all relevant statutory requirements.

7.2 The BID Company shall give the Council reasonable notice in writing of its intention to carry out any function or service under Clause 7.1, stating when each such access will be required and the location and nature of the proposed works or services. The Council reserves the right to refuse or reschedule such entry in the event that it considers (acting reasonably) it necessary to do

so provided that such refusal shall be given promptly with an explanation and in writing to the BID Company. Any such licence or consent may be given subject to such conditions as the Council may consider reasonably necessary.

8. Monitoring and Review

8.1 The Council and the BID Company shall set up the Services Review Panel within 28 (twenty-eight) days from the date of this Agreement the purpose of which shall be to:

(a) review and monitor the carrying out of the Standard Services;

(b) make any recommendations required pursuant to clause 5 to the Council and the BID Company;

(c) where appropriate, review and monitor the provision of the Complementary Services and make such recommendations to the BID Company as are appropriate;

(d) review any Performance Notices served by the BID Company and steps which should be taken to secure the proper carrying out of the Standard Services and to make recommendations to the Council including recommendations for an improvement in performance in the carrying out of the Standard Services and recommendations for the carrying out of the Standard Services in a manner that facilitates the carrying out of Complementary Services.

8.2 Within 28 (twenty-eight) days from the date of this Agreement the parties shall agree the dates when there will be meetings of the Services Review Panel and there shall be at least two such meetings in each Financial Year (throughout the duration of the BID Term) and on all other occasions further

meetings of the Service Review Panel shall be arranged by the service of written notice by either party on the other, such notice to be provided no less than 28 (twenty-eight) days prior to the date of the proposed meeting (or less if otherwise agreed or in cases of emergency) and provided further that such meetings can be dispensed with altogether upon the written agreement of the parties.

8.3 The Services Review Panel will identify the need for any improvement or alteration to the Standard Services. The Council will in any case formally respond to recommendations from the Service Review Panel within the standard response times, giving reasons for any decision not to implement recommendations in part or in full.

9. Joint Obligations

9.1 Both the Council and the BID Company agree:

(a) for the purposes only of monitoring the Standard Services and the Complimentary Services to review and take account of any representations or recommendations made to them by the Services Review Panel and take such action as may be appropriate;

(b) to agree appropriate Protocols as may be required in order to assist the carrying out or provision of the Standard Services (and thereafter to review them annually);

(c) to operate the complimentary services in accordance with such agreed Protocols.

10. Termination

10.1 The Council may terminate this Agreement:

(a) in the same circumstances in which it may terminate the BID Arrangements under Regulation 18 of the Regulations;

(b) in the event that the BID Company commits a serious and irremediable breach of this Agreement; or

(c) in the event that the Council terminates the Operating Agreement

11. Confidentiality

11.1 Both the Council and the BID Company agree to keep confidential and not to divulge to any person without the prior written consent of the other party all information (written or oral) concerning the business affairs of the other nor any information which has been exchanged about the BID Levy Payers or about other third parties which it shall have obtained or received as a result of operating the BID. This obligation shall survive the termination or lapse of the provision of the BID.

12. Notices

12.1 Any notice or other written communication to be served or given to or upon any party to this Deed to the other shall be in writing and shall be sent to the address provided for above or such substitute address in the UK as may from time to time have been notified by that party upon 7 (seven) days' notice in writing.

12.2 A Notice may be served by registered or recorded delivery post and:

(a) delivered to the Head of Law & Standards of the Council at the above address;

(b) delivered to the BID Director of Operations at the BID Company's office address;

(c) or by electronic communication (provided that it is in legible form and is capable of being used for subsequent reference) to such addresses.

12.3 Any notice served shall be deemed to have been validly served or given at the time when in the ordinary course of business it would have been received.

13. Miscellaneous

13.1 For the avoidance of doubt where any part of this Agreement is incompatible with the Regulations or any other regulations issued pursuant to Part IV of the Local Government Act 2003 then such part shall be struck out and the balance of this Agreement shall remain.

13.2 The headings appearing in this Deed are for ease of reference only and shall not affect the construction of this Deed.

13.3 For the avoidance of doubt the provisions of this Deed (other than those contained in this Clause) shall not have any effect until this document has been dated.

13.4 Where reference is made to a Clause, Part, or Recital such reference (unless the context requires otherwise) is a reference to a clause, part, plan, or recital attached to this Deed.

13.5 References to the Council include any successors to its functions as local authority.

13.6 References to statutes, bye laws, regulations, orders, delegated legislation shall include any such instrument re-enacting or made pursuant to the same power.

14. Exercise of the Council's Powers

14.1 Nothing contained in this Agreement or implied in it shall prejudice or affect the rights discretions powers duties and obligations of the Council under all statute byelaws statutory instruments orders and regulations in the exercise of its functions as a local authority.

15. Contracts (Rights of Third Parties)

15.1 The parties do not intend that the provisions of this Agreement may be enforced or varied by any other party pursuant to the Contracts (Rights of Third Parties) Act 1999.

16. Relationship between the Parties

16.1 Nothing in this Agreement shall constitute, or be deemed to constitute, any partnership agency or joint venture arrangements as between the Council and the BID Company.

16.2 The BID Company is not and will not at any time hold itself out as the agent of the Council for any purposes and under no circumstances will the BID Company have the authority to bind the Council or hold itself out as having such authority.

16.3 All contracts and agreements entered into or made by the BID Company pursuant to this Agreement will be contracts or agreements as between the BID Company as principal and the respective third parties and the Council will have no obligation or liability under them.

16.4 Both parties shall indemnify and keep indemnified the other party against all costs claims demands proceedings and liabilities which may be incurred as a result of any act, neglect or default by the indemnifying party, its employees contractors or agents in carrying out their obligations under this Agreement.

17. Dispute Resolution

17.1 If any dispute or difference arises between the Council and the BID Company relating to or arising out of the terms of this Agreement then dispute shall be referred to the Managing Directors or Chief Executive Officers of the Council and the BID Company or their designated representatives, who will meet in good faith to try and resolve the dispute or difference.

17.2 If after 28 days (or such longer period as the parties may agree) the dispute or difference has not been resolved then either of the Parties may give notice that it wishes to attempt to settle the dispute by mediation in accordance with the Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution ("CEDR") Model Mediation Procedure 2001 ("The Model Procedure") or such later edition as may be in force from time to time.

17.3 If the Parties do not agree on the identity of the Mediator then either party may request that CEDR appoint one.

17.4 The Model Procedure shall be amended to take account of any relevant provisions of this Agreement or any other agreement that the parties may enter into in relation to the conduct of the mediation.

17.5 Both Parties use their best endeavours to ensure that the Mediation starts within twenty working days of the service of the notice of mediation and to pay the mediator's fees in equal shares.

17.6 Any agreement reached by the parties as a result of mediation shall be binding on the parties, as set out in the Model Procedure, but if the dispute has not been settled by mediation within 10 working days of the mediation starting then either party may commence litigation proceedings (but not before then).

17.7 Neither party shall be precluded by this Clause 17 from taking such steps in relation to court proceedings as they may deem necessary or desirable to

protect its position, including but not limited to, issuing or otherwise pursuing proceedings to prevent limitation periods from expiring and applying for interim relief.

IN WITNESS whereof the Council has caused its Seal to be affixed and the BID Company has executed this Agreement as a Deed the day and year first before written

The Common Seal of Cyngor Gwynedd was)
hereunto affixed in the presence of:)

Authorised Signatory

The Common Seal of Hwb Caernarfon was)
hereunto affixed in the presence of:)

Authorised Signatory

Authorised Signatory

Schedule 1 – BID Map Area



Schedule 2 – Cyngor Gwynedd Standard Baseline Services - Caernarfon

Details of Cyngor Gwynedd (GC) service provision within proposed Business Improvement District (BID) Area. Information to be included in this schedule of the baseline agreement and reflects standard services CG provides.

The services and level of activities noted on Schedule 2 are subject to the outcomes of the comprehensive spending review currently underway with Cyngor Gwynedd. Any proposed changes to these services will be undertaken in consultation with the BID as set out in para 5.8 of this agreement

The proposed BID area maps are included in Appendix A at the end of this document. Streets included in full or in part within the proposed BID area where services are provided are:

Allt Pafiliwn	Mill Lane / Lôn y Felin
Bank Quay / Cei Banc	New Street / Stryd Newydd
Balaclava Road / Balaclafa	Newborough Street (Eagles Hotel)
Bangor Road / Stryd Bangor	North Road / Fford Y Gogledd (Number 14 Alexandra, Morrisons filling station, Moduron Menai Garage)
Bridge Street / Bont Bridd	Northgate Street / Stryd Pedwar a Chwech
Castle Ditch / Pendeitsh	North Penrallt / Penrallt Uchaf
Castle Hill / Allt y Castell	Palace Street / Stryd y Plas
Castle Square / Y Maes	Pepper Lane
Castle Street / Stryd y Castell	Pool Hill / Penllyn
Chapel Street / Tre'r Gôf	Pool Lane / Pen y Graig
Church Lane / Lôn yr Eglwys	Pool Side / Penllyn
Church Street / Stryd yr Eglwys	Pool Street / Stryd Y Llyn
Doc Fictoria	Pretoria Terrace / Rhes Pretoria
Garnon Street / Stryd Garnon	Segontium Terrace / Rhes Segontiwm
Glan Môr / Crown Street	Shirehall Street / Stryd y Jêl
Greengate Street / Tan y Bont	Skinner Street / Lôn Crwyn
High Street / Stryd Fawr	Slate Quay / Cei Llechi

Hole in the Wall Street / Stryd Twll yn y Wal	Snowdon Street / Stryd Capel Joppa
Lôn Twthill	South Penrallt / Penrallt Isaf
Market Street / Stryd Y Farchnad	South Road / Lon Parc
Stryd y Porth Mawr	St Helens Road / Ffordd Santes Helen

Regulatory Services

Designated Officer – Senior Manager Environment and Transportation Department

1. Road Improvement Scheme Management

1.1. Oversee and manage proposed road improvement schemes within the BID areas.

2. Traffic Management, Planning and Enforcement

2.1. Creation of Temporary and permanent Traffic Regulation orders .i.e Parking, Speed, Height & Weight restrictions and one-way systems and road closures.

2.2. Managing the coordination of works within the Highway.

2.3. Ensuring the safe and free flowing usage of the highway, through licencing and enforcement.

3. Parking Management

3.1. Management of Car Parks under the ownership or responsibility of Cyngor Gwynedd according to established Cyngor Gwynedd policies and national legislation and regulations. These include :-

- Ffordd Glan y Mor Uchaf	- Tan y Bont
- Doc Fictoria, Y Galeri	- Penllyn Multstorey Car Park
- Doc Fictoria Multistorey Car Park	- Ffordd y Felin
- Balaclafa Road	
- Shell Site	

3.2. Statutory and civil parking enforcement activities within BID area which includes enforcement within car parks and on street parking. Parking enforcement officers are deployed on a daily basis within the BID area to enforce regulations for all road users.

3.3. Management of traffic management bollards where installed within the BID area.

3.4. Management of residential parking Scheme where already established within the BID area.

4. Licensing

4.1. Within identified BID area GC provide licencing activities relating to all works on the public highway, including;

- Use of traffic lights, skips and scaffolding;
- Use of A-Boards, tables and chairs in the public realm
- Providing licenses for events and any other activities which require a license as required within the BID area.

5. Public Transport

5.1. Management of transportation hubs (Caernarfon Bus Station – Penllyn) located on the A487 in the town which is within the BID area including care, maintenance and responding to vandalism.

5.2. Maintaining and ensuring all other bus shelters within the BID area is the responsibility of Caernarfon Town Council.

5.3. Updating Departure Boards in all bus stops in the BID area.

5.4. Monitoring existing public transport provision from transportation hubs adhere to contract terms and conditions.

5.5. Commission subsidised public transport provision from transportation hubs.

Highways, Engineering and YGC

Designated Officer – Senior Executive Officer- Highways, Engineering and YGC

6. Street Cleansing and Associated Services

6.1. In the areas included within the BID areas Cyngor Gwynedd operates routine street cleaning and servicing of litter bins is undertaken on a daily basis. Cleaning schedules are set to meet the duty to keep the relevant land clear of litter and refuse and highways are clean. Areas within the BID area are included within the current cleansing schedules which identify the frequency of cleansing in compliance to grades A – D as set out in the Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse and Associated Guidance 2007 code of practice for rubbish and waste.

6.2. Land managed by the duty body (Cyngor Gwynedd) has been split into four main zones. High intensity of use, Medium intensity of use. Low intensity and areas with special circumstances. Land has been allocated into one of the four zones and managed accordingly. Appendix 1 (below) indicates the types of land within each category. The zones are identified on maps and Appendix 1 provides the information for the area within the BID.

6.3. Hours Operating - 06:00 – 18:00

6.4. Street cleansing teams are deployed on a daily basis to implement cleansing schedule to maintain or restore identified areas to grade A by 8am in high and medium intensity areas.

6.5. Reactive Cleansing shall be determined by the Street Scene Service within the department to achieve the appropriate standard of cleanliness.

6.6. Response times to maintain assigned grades have been set for each category by which a land must be returned to an acceptable standard:-

High Intensity: - the maximum response time to restore to a grade A = 1/2 day, this means by 6pm if reported before 1pm or by 1pm the next day if reported between 1pm and 6pm.

Medium intensity: - the maximum response time to restore to a grade A = 1 day, this means by 6pm the following evening.

Standard of Cleansing

6.7. All works or services performed shall be carried out to the entire satisfaction of the Code of Practice. The Street Cleansing Works Unit shall be responsible for all supervision to identify the cleansing required to achieve the specified standards within the time limits as set out in this Specification and the Response Time Summary. A Supervising Officer may from time to time during the works monitor the cleansing standard and will instruct the Works Unit in accordance with the Conditions if any defects are found. The Supervising Officers' decision regarding the grade and extent of defect shall be final.

6.8. The Street Cleansing Works Unit shall ensure that all personnel will have a thorough appreciation of the requirements of the Code of Practice and shall familiarise themselves with the cleansing standards, definitions, photographic examples, category zones and their response times.

6.9. Standards are based on the Environmental Protection Act: Code of Practice and are categorised as zones 1-7 as indicated in paragraph 17. The Various photographs of these cleanliness standards are the trigger points for the response times for that Category.

6.10. Amendments and additions to the Code of Practice shall be as follows:-

- A full reactive cleansing service shall be provided at all times within a core working day of 06.00hours until 20.00hours except for Christmas day and New Years' day when the service required will be as specified for Category 1 and 2 zones only
- A litter bin with its contents exceeding 90% of its capacity shall result in that bin being deemed to be Cleanliness Standard Grade D.
- Response time for syringes, hypodermic needles and the like shall be immediately collected if found by the Works Unit during monitoring of cleansing or within 3 working hour if instructed by the Supervising Officer and records of work carried out provided in accordance with the operating procedure Part F- Appendix G (as amended February 2007).
- Response time for leaf fall on soft landscapes areas within Zone 4 shall be as for normal waste when cleansing is required but otherwise within 3 weeks of the completion of leaf fall in that particular area.

Response Times

6.11. For the purpose of the Baseline, Table A below indicates the main response time limits for the restoration to the acceptable grade of cleanliness i.e. Grade A for hard areas and Grade B for landscaped areas.

RESPONSE TIME SUMMARY

CATEGORY ZONE	DESCRIPTION	CLEANLINESS STANDARD	
		A	B,C or D
High Intensity of use	Area which through intense pedestrian and /or vehicular movements are prone to fluctuations in litter and refuse and require both high levels of monitoring and cleansing	<--------- <--------- <---------	-- ½ a day. This means by 6pm if reported before 1pm or by 1pm the next duty day if reported between 1pm and 6pm

Methodology of Work

6.12. Cleansing shall be performed by mechanical or manual means or a combination thereof at the discretion of the Works Unit. Our aim will be to undertake cleansing work of any area contained in category zones 1, 2, 3 or 4 shall be applied to the full extent of that area as defined by its natural or physical boundaries. On completion of cleansing any surface, edges and joints shall be visible and completely free from all traces of waste of whatever nature.

6.13. The Works Unit shall endeavour to give special attention to ensure that all unwanted growth, such as weeds and errant grass growth in moist or built up detritus, are removed and discouraged during each cycle of frequency cleansing from all sealed surfaced / hard landscaped areas including recesses interfaces and crannies as found on features such as eg kerblines, channels, footways and modular pavements etc.

6.14. The standard of cleanliness shall be obtained by the Works Unit irrespective of the type of surface including paving blocks, cobbles and the like.

Litter Bins

6.15. Litter bins form an integral part of the Category Zone that they are located in. The operation of litter bin emptying shall consist of complete removal of all waste. The Street Cleansing Works Unit may use recyclable or recycled plastic bin liners at discretion to facilitate the task of litter removal and maintaining the cleanliness of the bin. Any fly posting on the bin or graffiti will be removed at the earliest opportunity.

FREQUENCY CLEANSING SUMMARY

Category Zone	Activity	Frequency

Defined Urban Areas Zone 1	Thorough cleansing to achieve Grade A standard of cleanliness	Daily
Litter Bins	Thorough cleansing to achieve Grade A standard of cleanliness	Daily
Litter bins (addition)	Patrol late in the afternoon	Seasonal

Deep Clean Service / Power washing

6.16. A deep clean of primary public realm areas within the BID area on an annual basis. Additional power washing of public areas and pavements are delivered based on identified needs. This work will be implemented by the 'Ardal Ni' Team.

Graffiti

6.17. Property controlled or owned by Cyngor Gwynedd - Cyngor Gwynedd will remove graffiti including offensive or racist subject matter from buildings it owns or controls.

6.18. Private Property – Cyngor Gwynedd will advise and assist property owners on the removal of graffiti from private property. Where applicable, a removal service can be provided subject to agreed conditions and recover of reasonably incurred costs.

7. Public Conveniences

7.1. 3 Primary public conveniences in Caernarfon located at :-

Location

Yr Empire, Ffordd Glan y Mor *

Allt y Castell

Penllyn *

*these toilets currently charge 20p for entry

7.2. Public conveniences fall within the remit of the municipal service who have a responsibility for the maintenance and cleansing of the assets.

8. Grass Cutting and Gardening

8.1. Within the BID area grass is maintained as follows :-

High Standard = 5+ cuts (may include cut and collect)

Medium Standard = 3-5 cuts

Urban verge maintenance = 3 cuts

9. Highway conditions and inspections

9.1. Highway Inspections - Safety inspections are designed to identify all defects likely to create danger or serious inconvenience to users of the network or the wider community. Defects

identified via inspection or by third party notification are prioritised for repairs based on the risk they posed to users as noted within the table below:

Defect Categories:	**Description:**	**Response Time:**
Critical Defect.	A situation where the inspecting officer considers the risk to safety high enough to require immediate action, e.g., collapsed cellar, missing utility cover, fallen tree, unprotected opening	**2 Hours.**
Safety defect	Service requests or defects requiring a response as soon as possible to remove a potential risk of injury to users	**By the end of the next working day.**
Maintenance defect	Other defects that warrant treatment in order to prevent them deteriorating into a safety defect prior to the next scheduled inspection	**1 month (Class 1, Class 2 and some Class 3).** **3 months (Most Class 3 and Unclassified)**

10. **Street Lighting Maintenance and Inspection**

Activity Type	**Activity**	**Department Standard**	**Code of Practice Standard**
Reactive	Response time for repairing Category 1 faults, damage to units from wind or impact damage and exposed wiring.	Make safe and repair at Category 1 Defect – attention when emergency within 2 hours when possible.	1 working day for emergency. 5 working days for non-emergency.

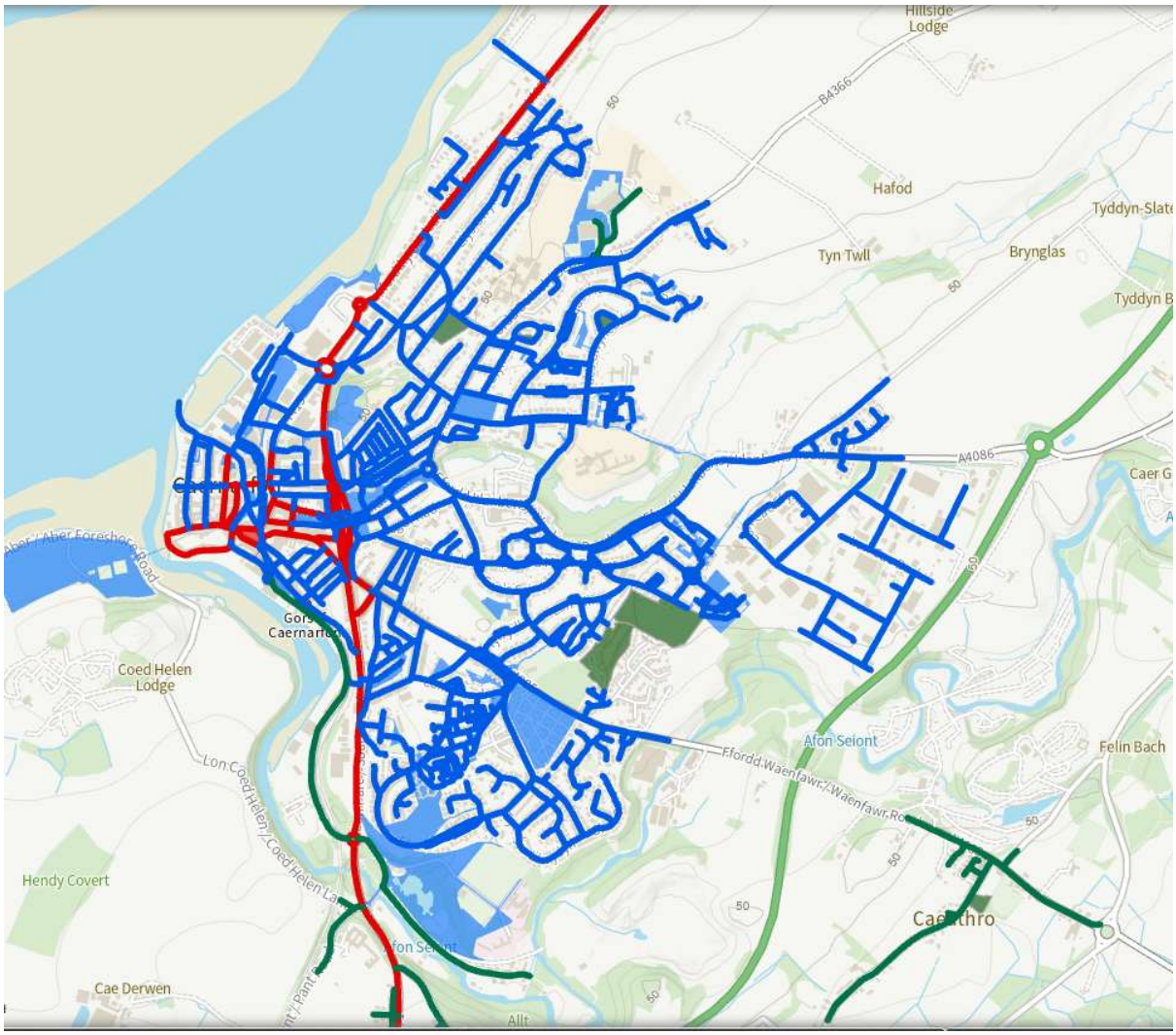
11. Public realm asset management

11.1. Public realm assets receive regular, formal, condition inspections primarily for risk management purposes and to identify essential reactive maintenance works. Public realm assets may include – benches, bollards, statues, sculptures, fountains, litter bins, trees, etc. Frequencies of inspections are determined by risk evaluations and asset management requirements and can be monthly, quarterly, 6 or 12-month basis. Condition inspections can also occur in response to reports of damage or incidents. Frequencies may be reviewed to reflect changes in circumstances.

Caernarfon



Appendix 1 – Zones



STRYD/STREET	PARTH/ZONE	DWYSEDD/INTENSITY
		UCHEL/HIGH
		CANOLIG/MEDIUM
		ISEL/LOW

CYNGOR GWYNEDD – Report to Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet

Item title:	Ensuring consistency of fees for adult care in Gwynedd
Cabinet Member:	Dilwyn Morgan
Relevant Officer:	Alun Gwilym Williams / Mari Wynne Jones
Meeting date:	11/11/2025

1. THE DECISION SOUGHT:

1.1 To adopt a revised Charging Policy for care in accordance with the recommendations in this report.

2. THE REASON FOR THE NEED FOR A DECISION:

2.1 On the 15/10/24, the Llechen Lân report was presented to Cabinet, highlighting the financial and demographic challenges facing social services in Gwynedd over the coming years. To ensure sustainability for the future, it's essential to look at how much care is being provided and in what way. In addition, in order to ensure sustainability the Council needs to charge a fee for services where it has the right to do so.

3. INTRODUCTION

3.1 Background

3.1.1 In accordance with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (the Act), the Council already charges a fee for most care and/or support services by following the current charging policy. To ensure consistency and fairness across services and to maintain sustainable services into the future, the report recommends updating the policy. The proposed changes will mean that some individuals who have historically been receiving services for free will pay a fee in future, but the following principles will continue to protect Gwynedd's most vulnerable residents:

- Everyone in receipt of care and/or support services is entitled to a financial assessment to determine whether or not they have the means to contribute to their care/support.
- The Council has a duty to ensure that a person paying for care has a minimum income to enable them to pay rent, bills, food and other living costs before starting to pay for care. This minimum income varies depending on the individual's situation, benefits etc.
- No one will pay more than £100 a week for a non-residential care service (any care or support provided outside a registered residential or nursing home).
- The Council's Income and Welfare Team supports people through the process of receiving a financial assessment, and also offers support to ensure that individuals receive the benefits to which they are entitled if they have to pay for care and/or support.

3.1.2 The current Charging Policy has been in place in Gwynedd since 2017, see Appendix 3. The policy was created following the passing of the Act to:

- confirm Cyngor Gwynedd’s intention to charge for residential/nursing care and certain non-residential services
- confirm that Cyngor Gwynedd incorporates the requirements of the Act's regulations and code of practice into the policy

3.2 The Act's Code of Practice

3.2.1 Councils have the right to charge for care and support services, but must act in accordance with Parts 4 and 5 of the code of practice (Charging and Financial Assessments):

"Save for the requirements of the Act, the Regulations and this code, where a local authority decides to use its discretion to charge for care and support it provides or arranges the design and content of its policy for that charging is a matter for that authority. In line with the requirements of the Act, the Regulations and this code, authorities need to decide which care and support, if any, they will make a charge for, the nature and level of any charges to be made and how these charges will be applied to particular care and support recipients."

3.2.2 The recommended modifications to the policy do not affect fees for residential services provided in residential/nursing homes, only non-residential services.

3.2.3 There are some situations (below), where the Act clearly states that the local authority can not charge for care and support services, and Gwynedd's policy will continue to comply with these regulations:

- care and support provided to those with Creutzfeldt-Jacob Disease;
- aftercare services/support provided under section 117 of the Mental Health Act 1983
- needs assessments, care planning, care plan making etc.
- transport to a day service where transport is provided as part of of meeting a person's needs;
- independent professional advocacy where a local authority has arranged to provide this in accordance with the code of practice on advocacy under Part 10 of the Act.
- care and support provided as reablement arranged under Part 2 (General Functions) or Part 4 (Meeting Needs) of the Act, or reablement arranged as direct payments under sections 50 or 52 (direct payments) of the Act, to a person for up to 6 weeks to enable them to maintain or regain their ability to live independently at home.

3.2.4 In addition, there are some services for which Gwynedd Council has the discretion to charge but have historically been provided free of charge:

- Day care provided in specific centres/locations outside the home (although individuals contribute to their food provision).
- Mental Health Support Services in the community (excluding services under part 117 of the Mental Health Act 1993)
- Dementia Support Services in the community.

3.2.5 One part of the recommendation is to give the Adult Department the right to charge for these services, subject to a financial assessment.

3.3 Unpaid carers

3.3.1 The second part of the recommendation is to adjust the wording and make the clause on unpaid carers within the charging policy clearer.

3.3.2 An unpaid carer is defined as:

"anyone who is caring or intends to provide unpaid care to an adult due to a physical or mental illness, age, disability, substance dependence, or caring for a disabled child" (Carers Trust, 2024)

3.3.3 In relation to unpaid carers, the Act states:

"Where a local authority provides or arranges care and support to meet a carer's needs, or provides direct payments to enable them to obtain support, it has discretion to charge for this".

3.3.4 Although it has the discretion to do so, the Council has not been charging a fee for direct care for unpaid carers and it is recommended that this policy continues. There are a number of reasons why, but mostly, we know that unpaid carers provide valuable care and support to individuals and that this takes significant pressure off care and support services. The Council needs to continue to support unpaid carers to fulfil this valuable role. The principles that the Council will follow in deciding whether a fee will be charged for a service are as follows:

1. The council will not charge for direct services to support unpaid carers (i.e. a service that is in the name of the carer where there is no element of care/responsibility for the person in need of care).
2. Any service where there is an element of care for the person receiving support should be charged e.g. personal care, companionship service or supervision. This service would be part of the care and support plan of the person in need of care and they would be responsible for the fee, rather than the unpaid carer. Of course, how much an individual contributes will depend on a financial assessment.
3. The usual exceptions cited from the code of practice in part 3.2 above would apply.

3.4 Employment and training support

3.4.1 In the Learning Disabilities service in particular, but within other services as well, emphasis is placed on trying to support individuals into employment or training opportunities where the individual is keen to do so. This is often a substitute for support in a traditional day centre. This again takes pressure off traditional care and support services, as well as contributing to the local economy and all the other benefits that come hand in hand. It is recommended not to charge for the service/support to help individuals into employment/training.

4. RATIONALE AND JUSTIFICATION FOR RECOMMENDING THE DECISION

4.1 Financial impact

4.1.1 In the current financial situation, it is unavoidable to consider charging for services where the Council has discretion to do so. There is pressure on the budget available to sustain care services, but the need for care is increasing. There is increasing pressure on care services as Gwynedd's population ages and lives longer with illness and/or disabilities (Bevan Commission, 2024).

4.1.2 The Llechen Lân report has highlighted the need to address the challenge facing us with a change in practice and a shift away from traditional services towards strength-based services, but adapting the charging policy to maximise contributions to our services is an important consideration hand in hand. The proposed changes are already being successfully implemented by some councils, for example 4 out of the 6 Councils in North Wales already charge for day services.

4.1.3 It is difficult to give a precise figure on how much income the changes would generate as everyone is eligible for a financial assessment, but it is expected that it would be around an additional £100,000 a year. Everyone in care and support would have the right to an assessment of their financial situation before having to contribute, with a maximum of £100 per week set by the Welsh Government.

4.2 Consistency

4.2.1 The code of practice also sets out the following principles that should be at the core of care charging policies:

- be consistent, to remove variation in the way people are financially assessed and charged;
- apply charging equally so those with similar needs for care and support are treated the same and minimise anomalies between charging for different types of care and support;
- encourage and enable those who wish to stay in or take up employment, education or training, or plan for the future costs of meeting their needs, to do so;
- be sustainable for local authorities in the long-term.

4.2.2 The proposed changes will enable consistent charging for care and support services, wherever and to whomever it is given. The changes will also encourage and enable individuals, where it's an option, to access training, education, employment etc rather than promoting the traditional model of a single site care/support service.

5. ANY CONSULTATIONS CARRIED OUT PRIOR TO THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE DECISION

5.1.1 The act's code of practice states ;

"Where authorities design new policies, or significantly amend existing polices, they must consult those affected locally and take their views into account before deciding upon what policy, or what amendments to their policy, they should operate."

5.1.2 A consultation took place between 14/11/2024 and 23/12/2024. 73 responses were received and the results of the consultation can be found in full in appendix 1. To summarise:

- Overall, around half of respondents were not confident that they had an understanding of the policy and what services are currently attracting a fee, particularly from the perspective of unpaid carers.
- A strong view was highlighted that direct services to unpaid carers should remain free, but that the policy is unclear as it stands.
- 71% felt that there should be no charge for mental health support services. Comments included that charging would put more stress on individuals with mental health needs.
- 7 out of 66 responses specifically stated that day services should remain free.

5.2 Equality Act 2010

5.2.1 The Council is subject to public sector duties under the Equalities Act 2010 (including specific Welsh public sector duties). Pursuant to these legal duties Councils must in making decisions have due regard to the need to (1) eliminate unlawful discrimination, (2) advance equality of opportunity and (3) foster good relations on the basis of protected characteristics and having due regard to the socio economic duty under Section 1 of the Act. An equalities

impact assessment has been prepared and is appended at Appendix 2. The Cabinet will need to have regard to its findings when coming to a decision. E.g The assessment does not identify any particular negative impacts stemming from the decision. As there is a proactive effort to ensure that all individuals receive a financial assessment so that anyone who cannot afford to pay does not have to do so, the assessment does not identify any negative impact on individuals with equality characteristics. Rather, it recognises that ensuring consistency of fees promotes equal opportunity in terms of access to care and support across the board.

5.3 Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

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

6. NEXT STEPS AND TIMETABLE

6.1 It is recommended to update Cyngor Gwynedd's charging policy for care, and for the new policy to be implemented immediately (Appendix 4). It is recommended that we work with affected individuals over the coming months so that everyone has received support and a financial assessment by the next financial year commencing on 1/4/26. Here's a summary of the updates:

- Continue to provide direct services to unpaid carers free of charge, despite the Council having discretion to charge a fee.
- Clearly explain which services for carers will be free, and which services will be charged.
- Give the Adults Department the right within the policy to charge for 'traditional' day services at a particular site, which have historically been free. These fees will be determined annually like all other fees. For information, the cost of 1:1 support in a day service would be £24.21 per hour for 2025/26, and the cost of support in a group would be £10.90 per hour. A fee of up to a maximum of £100 per week is expected to be charged for this service, based on a financial assessment of each individual's situation. We will ensure support for individuals who are most affected by the increase in order to protect their access to the services that benefit them.
- Give the Adult Department the right to charge a fee of up to a maximum of £100 per week for all support services, including mental health support services (but excluding services provided under Section 117 of the Mental Health Act). This will ensure consistency across all services.
- Not charging for services to support individuals into employment and/or training.

6.2 It is emphasised that if the decision is made to update the charging policy, the following principles will continue to protect Gwynedd's vulnerable individuals:

- Everyone who receives care and/or support services will be eligible for a financial assessment. This assessment will consider the individual's assets and income level, and determine a contribution that is affordable for the individual. Individuals have the right to refuse the financial assessment, but will pay for the full cost of their care if they do so, up to a maximum of £100 per week.

- If the assessment shows that an individual has to contribute, support will be available from the Council to ensure that they receive the benefits they are eligible for.
- If the financial assessment shows that the individual does not have the financial means to contribute to the care, they will receive the service free of charge. This will be reassessed if the individual's situation changes.
- A maximum contribution is set by the Welsh Government of £100 per week. No one will contribute more than £100 a week for their non-residential care package.

6.3 In practice, the above principles should mean that no one will contribute more than they can afford for care and/or support. If anyone disagrees with the financial assessment, it's possible to appeal, and the information on how to do this is made clear to individuals as they go through the Financial assessment.

7. VIEWS OF THE STATUTORY OFFICERS

3.1 Chief Finance Officer

I welcome the update to this policy which harmonises fees for adult social care in Gwynedd. As the report notes, the financial position of adult care services is facing ongoing pressures, as has been highlighted with the Llechen Lân work. The updating of the Charging Policy is a key part of the governance of the service, and its contents will be considered when moving forward with the budgeting arrangements.

3.2 Monitoring Officer

The report is based on a consultation process and consideration of the requirements regarding care fees. An impact assessment was provided along with a summary of the overall statutory context. I have no further comments to make in relation to propriety

Attachment List:

Appendix 1 - Report outlining consultation responses

Appendix 2 - Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix 3 - Current Care Charging Policy

Appendix 4 – Revised Care Charging Policy

Social Care Charging Policy Consultation

Closing Date 23/12/2024

Summary

As a summary, the main results are as follows:

- There were 73 responses to the consultation.

- 38% of respondents were a family member of a care services user, 25% an unpaid carer and 4% a care services user. 33% noted ‘other’.

- 55% were aware of Cyngor Gwynedd's care charging policy, and the care services where a fee is currently charged, 45% were unaware.
    - 15 respondents noted comments to accompany this question, the most common theme being that the Council had not contacted families or carers or heard from others.

- 72% of respondents chose 'no' as a response to the question of whether the charging policy makes it clear what fees unpaid carers must pay, while 28% chose 'yes'.
    - 14 respondents noted comments to accompany this question, the most common theme being unclear/not understanding the policy.

- 71% of respondents chose to continue the policy where the Council has not been charging a fee for direct care for unpaid carers (where the service is in the name of the carer), 14% chose that it should not and 15% no strong opinion.
    - 17 respondents noted comments to accompany this question, the most common theme being that charging would financially penalise carers / carers unable to afford to pay.

- 71% of respondents responded that the Council should not charge a fee for Mental Health support services for individuals not covered by Section 117 of the Mental Health act, with 21% stating it should and 8% no strong opinion.
    - 15 respondents noted comments to accompany this question, the most common theme being that it should be free.

- As a response to the question 'if the Council charges a fee for attending day services, the fee should be charged by:' 42% chose a nominal 'flat' fee payable by all, 39% chose a fee that fully funds the cost of the service, but everyone has the right to an assessment to determine their contribution (up to the current maximum of £100 per week), and 18% no strong opinion.
    - 26 respondents noted comments to accompany this question, the most common theme being should be free / disagree with charging a fee.

- 51% of respondents chose that the Council should not charge a fee for transport that does not qualify under part 4 and 5 of the Code of Practice (2014), with 32% choosing it should and 17% choosing no strong opinion.
    - 14 respondents noted comments to accompany this question, the most common theme being already providing their own transport.

- 48% of respondents chose that the changes would have a negative or little negative impact on the Welsh language, the opportunities for people to use Welsh and its status within the community, while 44% chose no impact, and 7% chose a positive or little positive impact.

- The majority 69% chose that the changes would have a negative or little negative impact on socio-economically disadvantaged people, while 17% chose no impact, and 14% chose a positive impact or little positive impact.

- Where appropriate, further analysis has been undertaken to show a response to the questions asked in the survey per response to the question 'Are you:'. This analysis has been included in Appendix A. As the number of respondents in some of the groups is low, care needs to be taken when looking at this analysis.

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Appendix A

1.0 Introduction

Cyngor Gwynedd's charge for care policy is intended to be updated to ensure that the policy is still in-keeping with the requirements of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, which requires that no one pay more than they can reasonably afford.

The Council is required to review its fees in a timely manner to ensure that the fees charged reflect the actual costs of providing services.

To ensure a balanced and sustainable budget into the future, one consideration will be to implement the right for the Council to charge for certain services that have historically been free (for example day services).

The purpose of the consultation was to get your views on some of the aspects within the policy. The results of the consultation will feed into recommendations of policy modifications that will be presented to the Council's cabinet in early 2025.

The consultation closed on the 23rd of December 2024 at 5 o'clock.

There were 73 responses to the consultation.

2.0 Survey Results

2.1 Respondents

There were 72 responses to the question 'Are you:', the results are in the table below (Table 1).

Table 1 – Responses to the question 'Are you:' as number and percentage

Are you:	**Number**	**Percentage**
Other	24	33%
Family member of a care services user	27	38%
Care services user	3	4%
Unpaid carer	18	25%
Total	**72**	**100%**

38% (n=27) of respondents responding to the above question chose to be a 'care services user family member', 33% (n=24) chose 'other', 25% (n=18) chose 'unpaid carer' and 4% (n=3) chose 'care services user'.

Of the 24 respondents who chose other, the majority (n=18) did not indicate any additional comment. The remaining 6 respondents identified themselves as a social worker (n=2), a family member of a deceased person who was in care (n=1), a member of the public (n=1), a carer who is being paid (n=1) and an older person (n=1).

Where appropriate, further analysis has been undertaken to show the response of the different groups identified in table 1 to the questions asked in the survey. This analysis has been included in Appendix A. Some care should be used when looking at the responses by group in this table, as the number of respondents in some of the groups is low.

2.2 Awareness of Cyngor Gwynedd's charge for care policy, and the care services where a fee is currently charged

There were 73 responses to the question 'How aware are you of Cyngor Gwynedd's charge for care policy, and the care services where a fee is currently charged?:', the results are in the table below (Table 2).

Table 2 – Responses to the question 'How aware are you of Cyngor Gwynedd's care charging policy, and the care services where a fee is currently charged?' as number and percentage

Awareness	**Number**	**Percentage**
Not aware	33	45%
Aware	40	55%
Total	**73**	**100%**

55% (n=40) of respondents were aware of Cyngor Gwynedd's charge for care policy, and the care services where a fee is currently charged, while 45% (n=33) were unaware. An analysis of the responses to the above question was made by response to the question 'Are you', and the table is included in Appendix A.

There was an opportunity for additional comments on this question, and there were 15 comments. The main themes have been set out in the table below (Table 3).

Table 3 – The themes of the comments accompanying the question 'How aware are you of Cyngor Gwynedd's charge for care policy, and the care services where a fee is currently charged?' as a number

Theme	**Number (15 responses)**
Advice without contacting families or carers or having heard from others	5
Pay/contribute already	2
Aware but don't understand how it works	2
Need to contact individual users about charging fees	1
Need to be clearer what the 'Minimum Income Amount' equation is	1
Disagree with council charging fee	1
Consultation not open for long enough and at a busy time	1
Agree but need clarity	1
The person's personal situation	1
Is this free for adults who need it	1
Total Themes (not comments)	**16**

There were 16 main themes in these comments. The most common theme was that the Council had not contacted families or carers or having heard from others (n=5), then that they are paying/contributing already (n=2) and are aware but don't understand how it works (n=2).

2.3 Clarity of Charging Policy

There were 71 responses to the question 'Does the charging policy make it clear what fees unpaid carers must pay?', the results are in the table below (Table 4).

Table 4 – Responses to the question 'Does the charging policy make it clear what fees unpaid carers must pay?' as number and percentage

Does the charging policy make it clear	**Number**	**Percentage**
No	51	72%
Yes	20	28%
Total Everything	**71**	**100%**

The majority of respondents (72%, n=51) chose 'no' as a response to the question about the clarity of the fee charging policy unpaid carers must pay, with 28% (n=20) choosing 'yes'. An analysis of the responses to the above question was made by response to the question 'Are you', and the table is included in Appendix A.

There was an opportunity for additional comments on this question, and there were 14 comments. The main themes have been set out in the table below (Table 5)

Table 5 – Themes of comments accompanying the question 'Does the charging policy make it clear what fees unpaid carers must pay?' as a number

Theme	**Number (14 responses)**
Unclear / don’t understand the policy	4
Report not referring to unpaid carers	1
Not sure how it works	1
Already contribute towards respite care	1
Not sure what's available for free for unpaid carers	1
Most carers are unaware of the policy, disabled people don't know a fee can be charged	1
No reply	1
Charging a fee for time in a unit can prevent carers from being able to work	1
Caring is a long-term responsibility	1
Haven't read the policy	1

Yes	1
Total Themes	**14**

The most common theme in the comments was unclear / don't understand the policy (n=4). A number of comments followed a similar theme including not sure how it works (n=1), not sure what is free for unpaid carers (n=1) and most carers not aware of the policy, disabled people not knowing a fee can be charged (n=1).

2.4 Fee for Direct Care for Unpaid Carers

There were 72 responses to the question 'Although it has the discretion to do so, the Council has not been charging a fee for direct care for unpaid carers (where the service is in the name of the carer). Should this policy continue?', the results are in the table below (Table 6).

Table 6 – Responses to question 'Although it has the discretion to do so, the Council has not been charging a fee for direct care for unpaid carers (where the service is in the name of the carer). Should this policy continue?' as number and percentage

Should this policy remain	**Number**	**Percentage**
No strong opinion	11	15%
Yes it should	51	71%
No it shouldn't	10	14%
Total Everything	**72**	**100%**

The majority, 71%, of respondents chose 'Yes it should' as a response to the question on whether this policy should remain (n=51), with 15% (n=11) choosing 'no strong opinion' and 14% (n=10) 'no it shouldn't'. An analysis of the responses to the above question was made by response to the question 'Are you', and the table is included in Appendix A.

There was an opportunity for additional comment on this question, and 17 comments were noted. The main themes have been set out in the table below (Table 7)

Table 7 – Themes of comments accompanying the question 'Although it has the discretion to do so, the Council has not been charging a fee for direct care for unpaid carers (where the service is in the name of the carer). Should this policy remain?' as a number

Theme	**Number (17 responses)**
Charging would financially penalise carers / carers unable to afford to pay	5
This can cause poverty or create financial pressure	2
The impact of caring on a person's ability to work	2

Don't understand what this is talking about	2
Need to make sure this doesn't cause hardship	1
Carers need to have time for their well-being to ensure they stay healthy	1
How have carers been consulted	1
The Council is in a challenging financial situation	1
Not sure	1
Adult day services should be free	1
It would be difficult for people without this service	1
Unpaid carers save money for council / person who needs care doesn't get the support they need	1
Total Themes	**19**

The most common theme in the comments was that charging a fee would financially penalise carers / carers unable to afford to pay (n=5). Further comments followed similar themes including this can cause poverty or create financial pressure (n=2) and need to ensure this does not cause hardship (n=1). Other themes came up including the impact of caring on a person's ability to work (n=2) and not understanding what this is talking about (n=2) among others.

2.5 Fee for Mental Health Support Services

There were 72 responses to the question 'The Council does not have the right to charge a fee for Mental Health services provided under Section 117 of the Mental Health Act (1983). Should the Council charge a fee for Mental Health support services for individuals not covered by Section 117 of the Mental Health act?', the results are in the table below (Table 9).

Table 8 – Responses to the question 'The Council does not have the right to charge a fee for Mental Health services provided under Section 117 of the Mental Health Act (1983). Should the Council charge a fee for Mental Health supportive services for individuals not covered by Section 117 of the Mental Health act?' as a number and percentage

Should the Council charge a fee	**Number**	**Percentage**
No strong opinion	6	8%
Yes	15	21%
No	51	71%
Total Everything	**72**	**100%**

The majority of respondents chose 'no' (71%, n=51) as a response to the question of whether the Council should charge a fee, with 21% (n=15) choosing 'yes' and 8% (n=6) 'no strong opinion'. An analysis of the responses to the above question was made by response to the question 'Are you', and the table is included in Appendix A.

There was an opportunity for additional comments on this question, and there were 15 comments. The main themes have been set out in the table below (Table 9).

Table 9 – The themes of the comments accompanying the question 'The Council does not have the right to charge a fee for Mental Health services provided under Section 117 of the Mental Health Act (1983). Should the Council charge a fee for Mental Health support services for individuals not covered by Section 117 of the Mental Health act?' as a number

Theme	**Number (15 responses)**
It should be free	4
Would this put more pressure or burden on the individual (financial or stress)	3
NHS should achieve this	2
Need to treat everyone the same	1
Patients not having to pay for long-term physical condition	1
Do not understand	1
Fee should be charged	1
Perhaps	1
Reducing independence	1
Unclear response - no category	1
Total Themes	**16**

The most common theme in the comments was that it should be free (n=4), this would put more pressure or burden on the individual (financial or stress) (n=3) and an NHS should achieve this (n=2).

2.6 Charge a fee for Attending Day Services

There were 66 responses to the question 'If the Council charges a fee for attending day services (service at a day centre outside the home, staffed). Should the fee be charged by:', the results are in the table below (Table 10).

Table 10 – Responses to question 'If the Council charges a fee for attending day services (service at a day centre outside the home, staffed). Should the fee be charged by:' as number and percentage

Should the fee be charged by	**Number**	**Percentage**
No strong opinion	12	18%
Nominal 'flat' fee payable by all	28	42%

A fee that fully funds the cost of the service, but everyone has the right to an assessment to determine their contribution (up to the current maximum of £100 per week).	26	39%
Total Everything	66	100%

Of those who responded to this question, 42% (n=28) chose 'a nominal 'flat' fee payable by all' and 39% (n=26) 'A fee that fully funds the cost of the service, but everyone has the right to an assessment to determine their contribution (up to the current maximum of £100 per week)'. 18% (n=12) chose 'no strong opinion'. An analysis of the responses to the above question was made by response to the question 'Are you', and the table is included in Appendix A.

There was an opportunity to provide additional comments on this question, and there were 26 comments. The main themes have been set out in the table below (Table 11)

Table 11 – Themes of comments accompanying the question 'If the Council charges a fee for attending day services (service in a day centre outside the home, staffed). Should the fee be charged by:' as a number

Theme	**Number (26 responses)**
Should be free / disagree with charging a fee	7
Daycare has an impact on well-being and independence	5
The question should include an option not to charge a fee	3
Day services enable carers to work	2
Additional pressure	2
Charging a fee leads to care staff being cut	2
Charging a fee leads to unpaid carers stopping working to provide care	2
Understand that the Council needs to raise money but this should be in other departments	1
Assessment required if fee is to be charged	1
Charging a fee negatively impacts care and leads people to seek residential care that is not available.	1
Don't understand why dementia isn't part of the NHS	1
Discretion if 2 family members are in daycare	1
Fee should be different depending on care needs	1
Any fee is likely to have a negative impact on the households that need them	1
Day services give time to carers, and provide a change to the person being looked after	1

Happy to pay if the service is improved	1
Some can't afford to pay a fee	1
Total Themes	**33**

The most common theme in these comments was that it should be free / disagree with charging a fee (n=7), discussing daycare having an impact on well-being and independence (n=5) and the question should include an option not to charge a fee (n=3).

2.7 Charging a Fee for Transport

There were 72 responses to the question 'Should the Council charge a fee for transport that does not qualify under part 4 and 5 of the Code of Practice (2014)?', the results are in the table below (Table 12).

Table 12 – Responses to the question 'Should the Council charge a fee for transport that does not qualify under part 4 and 5 of the Code of Practice (2014)?' as number and percentage

Charging a fee for transport	**Number**	**Percentage**
No strong opinion	12	17%
Yes	23	32%
No	37	51%
Total Everything	72	100%

Just over half of respondents (51%, n=37) chose 'no' as a response to the question of charging a fee for transport, while 32% (n=23) chose 'yes' and 17% (n=12) chose 'no strong opinion'. An analysis of the responses to the above question was made by response to the question 'Are you', and the table is included in Appendix A.

There was an opportunity for additional comments on this question, and there were 14 comments. The main themes have been set out in the table below (Table 13)

Table 13 – Themes of comments accompanying the question 'Should the Council charge a fee for transport that does not qualify under part 4 and 5 of the Code of Practice (2014)?' as a number

Theme	**Number (14 responses)**
Provide transport themselves already	3
Transport should be free / unfair for the individual to pay	2
Maybe make a contribution	2
Unfair to put financial restrictions on users	1
Charging the individual an affordable OS fee	1
I hope to be able to avoid charging a fee but if essential, a fair fee should be charged	1
Not Everyone is able to pay any extra fee	1

Pay for transport already	1
Fair to pay for transport	1
Unclear response - no theme specified	1
Total Themes	**14**

The most common themes as a response to this question were already providing their own transport (n=3), transport should be free / unfair for the individual to pay (n=2) ans perhaps make a contribution (n=2).

3.0 Results: Your Opinion

3.1 Impact on the Welsh language, opportunities for people to use Welsh and its status within the community

There were 70 responses to the question 'What do you think the impact of these changes would be on the Welsh language, the opportunities for people to use Welsh and its status within the community', the results are in the table below (Table 14).

Table 14 – Responses to the question 'What do you think would be the impact of these changes on the Welsh language, the opportunities for people to use Welsh and its status within the community:' as a number and percentage

Impact on the Welsh language	**Number**	**Percentage**
Positive impact	4	6%
Little positive impact	1	1%
No impact	31	44%
Negative impact	26	37%
Little negative impact	8	11%
Total Everything	70	100%

The majority (48%, n=34) chose that the changes would have a 'negative impact' or 'little negative impact' on the Welsh language, the opportunities for people to use Welsh and its status within the community, while 44% (n=31) chose 'no impact', and 7% (n=5) chose 'positive impact' or 'little positive impact'.

There was an opportunity for additional comments on this question, and there were 15 comments. The main themes have been set out in the table below (Table 15).

Table 15 – Themes of comments accompanying the question 'What do you think the impact of these changes would be on the Welsh language, the opportunities for people to use Welsh and its status within the community:' as a number

Theme	Number (15 responses)
Don’t see an impact on the Welsh language	2
Don't see how this is relevant	2
Bilingual where possible if not affecting quality of care	1
Need more support for people with additional communication needs	1
Welsh language local services will close	1
Local care is often in Welsh	1
Gwynedd is poorer will the language therefore be affected	1
Help to socialise if able to meet Welsh speaking people	1
Welsh language can be a barrier to the level of care available as it affects the ability of non-Welsh speakers to be carers	1
Reduced access to services negatively impacts Number of things including Welsh	1
Not being able to meet other Welsh speakers as you cannot afford travel or the services is discriminatory	1
Is the language seen as more important than care?	1
No theme	1
No response	1
Total Themes	**16**

3.2 Impact on socio-economic disadvantaged people

There were 70 responses to the question 'What do you think would be the impact of these changes on people facing socio-economic disadvantage? ', the results are in the table below (Table 16).

Table 16 – Responses to the question 'What do you think would be the impact of these changes on socio-economic disadvantaged people?' as number and percentage

Impact on socioeconomically disadvantaged people	Number	Percentage
Positive impact	7	10%
Little positive impact	3	4%
No impact	12	17%
Negative impact	41	59%
Little negative impact	7	10%
Total Everything	**70**	**100%**

The majority (69%, n=48) chose that the changes would have a 'negative impact' or 'little negative impact' on socio-economically disadvantaged people, while 17% (n=12) chose 'no impact', and 14% (n=10) chose 'positive impact' or 'little positive impact'.

4.0 Equality Question Results – About You

The tables below (Table 17 - 25) contain responses to the equality questions included in the consultation.

4.1 Gender

Table 17 – Responses to the question of 'Gender'

Sex	**Number**	**Percentage**
I identify in a different way	1	1%
Male	26	36%
Female	41	57%
I prefer not to say	4	6%
Total Everything	**72**	100%

4.2 Age Group

Table 18 – Responses to the question 'Identify your age group'

Age Group	**Number**	**Percentage**
25 – 34 years old	4	6%
35 – 44 years old	13	18%
45 - 54 years old	19	26%
55 – 64 years old	14	19%
65 – 74 years old	12	17%
75 – 84 years old	5	7%
I prefer not to say	5	7%
Total Everything	**72**	100%

4.3 Welsh language skilld

Table 19 – Responses to the question 'How would you describe your Welsh language skills?'

How would you describe your Welsh language skills?	**Number**	**Percentage**
Other	4	6%
Can't speak or understand Welsh	11	16%
I prefer not to say	6	9%
Speak, read and write – learning	4	6%
Speak, read and write fluently	34	49%
Speak, read and write, but not very confidently	8	11%
Speak, but don't read or write	3	4%
Total Everything	**70**	100%

4.4 Nationality or national identity

Table 20 – Responses to the question 'Nationality or national identity?'

Nationality or national identity	Number	Percentage
Other	3	4%
Welsh	46	65%
I prefer not to say	4	6%
British	12	17%
English	6	8%
Total Everything	**71**	100%

4.5 Race

Table 21 – Responses to the question 'What is your race?'

Race	Number	Percentage
Other	2	3%
Asian	1	1%
I prefer not to say	4	6%
White	64	90%
Total Everything	**71**	100%

4.6 Religion

Table 22 – Responses to the question 'What is your religion?'

Religion	Number	Percentage
Other	3	4%
Buddhist	2	3%
Christian	35	49%
No religion	25	35%
I prefer not to say	6	8%
Total Everything	**71**	100%

4.7 Sexuality

Table 23 – Responses to the question 'Which of these best describes you?'

Sexuality	Number	Percentage
Other	3	4%
Bisexual	2	3%
Gay / lesbian	1	1%
I prefer not to say	8	11%
Heterosexual / Straight	56	80%
Total Everything	**70**	100%

4.8 Gender Identity

Table 24 – Responses to the question 'Has your gender identity changed from what was determined at birth? (for example you are transgender or trans etc)'

Has your gender identity changed from what was set at birth?	**Number**	**Percentage**
I prefer not to say	8	11%
No	61	87%
Yes	1	1%
Total Everything	**70**	100%

4.9 Disability

Table 25 – Responses to the question 'Section 6 (1) of the Equality Act 2010 states that an individual is disabled if: a. the person has a physical or mental impairment, and b. The impairment has a significant and long-term adverse impact on the individual's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Using this definition, do you consider yourself a disabled person?'

Do you consider yourself a disabled person?	**Number**	**Percentage**
I prefer not to say	10	14%
No	47	66%
Yes	14	20%
Total Everything	**71**	100%

Appendix A

Where appropriate, further analysis has been undertaken to show the response of the different groups identified in table 1 to the questions asked in the survey. This analysis is included below. Some care should be used when looking at the responses by group in this table, as the number of respondents in some of the groups is low.

Table 26 – Responses to the question 'How aware are you of Cyngor Gwynedd's charge for care policy, and those care services where a fee is currently charged?' as a number and percentage per response to the question 'Are you:'

Are you:	Awareness of the charge for care policy	Number	Percentage
Other	Not aware	10	42%
	Aware	14	58%
Family member of a care services user	Not aware	13	48%
	Aware	14	52%
Care services user	Not aware	3	100%
	Aware	0	0%
Unpaid carer	Not aware	7	39%
	Aware	11	61%
Not specified	Aware	1	
	Total Everything	**73**	

Table 27 – Responses to the question 'Does the charging policy make it clear what fees unpaid carers must pay?' as a number and percentage per response to the question 'Are you:'

Are you:	Is the policy clear	Number	Percentage
Other	No	17	74%
	Yes	6	26%
Family member of a care services user	No	20	77%
	Yes	6	23%
Care services user	No	2	67%
	Yes	1	33%
Unpaid carer	No	12	67%
	Yes	6	33%
Not specified	Yes	1	
	Total Everything	71	

Table 28 – Responses to the question 'Although it has the discretion to do so, the Council has not been charging a fee for direct care for unpaid carers (where the service is in the name of the carer). Should this policy remain? ' as a number and percentage per response to the question 'Are you:'

Are you:	This policy should remain?	Number	Percentage
Other	No strong opinion	4	17%
	Yes	13	54%
	No	7	29%
Family member of a care services user	No strong opinion	4	15%
	Yes	20	74%
	No	3	11%
	No strong opinion	1	33%

Care services user	Yes	2	67%
Unpaid carer	No strong opinion	1	6%
	Yes	16	94%
Not specified	No strong opinion	1	
	Total	72	

Table 29 – Responses to the question ''The Council is not entitled to charge a fee for Mental Health services provided under Section 117 of the Mental Health Act (1983). Should the Council charge a fee for Mental Health support services for individuals not covered by Section 117 of the Mental Health act?' as a number and percentage per response to the question 'Are you:'

Are you:	The Council should charge a fee?	Number	Percentage
Other	Yes	11	46%
	No	13	54%
Family member of a care services user	No strong opinion	3	11%
	Yes	3	11%
	No	21	78%
Care services user	No	2	100%
Unpaid carer	No strong opinion	3	17%
	Yes	1	6%
	No	14	78%
Not specified	No	1	
	Total Everything	72	

Table 30 – Responses to the question 'If the Council charges a fee for attending day services (service at a day centre outside the home, staffed). Should the fee be charged by: ' as a number and percentage per response to the question 'Are you:'

Are you:	Row labels	Number	Percentage
Other	No strong opinion	1	4%
	Nominal 'flat' fee payable by all	10	43%
	A fee that fully funds the cost of the service, but everyone has the right to an assessment to determine their contribution (up to the current maximum of £100 per week).	12	52%
Family member of a care services user	No strong opinion	8	33%
	Nominal 'flat' fee payable by all	9	38%
	A fee that fully funds the cost of the service, but everyone has the right to an assessment	7	29%

	to determine their contribution (up to the current maximum of £100 per week).		
Care services user	No strong opinion	3	100%
Unpaid carer	Nominal 'flat' fee payable by all	8	53%
	A fee that fully funds the cost of the service, but everyone has the right to an assessment to determine their contribution (up to the current maximum of £100 per week).	7	47%
Not specified	Nominal 'flat' fee payable by all	1	
	Total Everything	66	

Table 31 – Responses to the question ' Should the Council charge a fee for transport that does not qualify under part 4 and 5 of the Code of Practice (2014)? *as a number and percentage per response to the question 'Are you:'*

Are you:	**The Council should charge a fee?**	**Number**	**Percentage**
Other	No strong opinion	3	13%
	Yes	12	50%
	No	9	38%
Family member of a care services user	No strong opinion	6	22%
	Yes	7	26%
	No	14	52%
Care services user	No strong opinion	1	33%
	No	2	67%
Unpaid carer	No strong opinion	2	12%
	Yes	4	24%
	No	11	65%
Not specified	No	1	
	Total Everything	72	

Assessing the Impact on Equality Characteristics, the Welsh language and Socio-Economic Disadvantage

Please see the *How to Make an Equality Impact Assessment* sheet for support 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 that any changes in any policy or procedure (or the creation of a new policy or procedure), will have on people with protected equality characteristics. The Council also has additional general duties to ensure fairness and to foster good relationships. Therefore, a timely assessment must be made before a decision is taken on any relevant change (i.e., that affects people with protected equality characteristics).

The Council is also required, under the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (Section 44 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011), to consider the impact that any change in policy or procedure (or creation of a new policy or procedure), will have on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and to ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than English. This document therefore ensures that these decisions safeguard and promote the use made of the Welsh language.

From 1 April 2021 onwards, the Council has a duty to give due attention to addressing socio-economic disadvantage in strategic decisions.

1) Details

1.1 What is the name of the policy / service in question?

Ensuring consistency of fees for adults care in Gwynedd

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

To update Cyngor Gwynedd's care charging policy, which determines under what circumstances people will financially contribute towards their care and/or support from the Social Services. The current charging policy has been in place since 2017, and updates are being considered in order to maintain sustainable services, but also to ensure fairness across the Adults Department's various services. The Council has a right to charge individuals for care or support services (with some exemptions) in accordance with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, and

Cyngor Gwynedd already charges individuals for most of the care and/or support services, depending on a financial assessment. Nobody will pay more than they are able to afford following an assessment.

1.3 Who is responsible for this assessment?

Alun Gwilym Williams – Assistant Head of Care Business and Commissioning

1.4 When did you commence the assessment? Which version is this?

01/11/24

2) Implementation

2.1 Who are the stakeholders or partners with whom we will have to work to carry out this assessment?

- Individuals receiving care services
- Families and unpaid carers of individuals receiving care services
- Care and support service providers
- The Council's income and welfare team.
- Gwynedd residents

2.2 What steps have you taken to engage with people with protected characteristics, regarding the Welsh language or with communities (either due to location or due to need), who are living with a socio-economic disadvantage?

A consultation was held between November 2024 and January 2025 to present and explain the charging policy to the public, partners and local organisations and to raise awareness of the opportunity for them to take part in the exercise by completing a short online questionnaire on www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/ymgynghori.

Paper copies were also available in local libraries and local Siopau Gwynedd. We encouraged as many as possible of Gwynedd's residents to complete and return the questionnaire by using the Council's website, the local press, spreading the message through our partners, social websites and elected members' e-newsletter and through Council staff.

We contacted organisations that represent or work with Adults receiving care or support to inform them of the engagement and to ask them to notify their users of the questionnaire. This included third sector organisations representing or working with unpaid carers, individuals with learning disabilities and others.

2.3 What was the outcome of the engagement?

See the full report in appendix 1 of the main report.

2.4 On the basis of what other evidence are you acting?

It has emerged that there are inconsistencies between which care and support services are subject to a charge, and which do not. The development of the policy and the attempt to ensure consistency therefore tries to come to a fairer and more balanced situation across all our care and support services. The code of practice in Part 4 and 5 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 specifically notes that councils must:

- be consistent, in order to remove variations in the way people are financially assessed and are charged;
- apply fees equally so that those with similar care and support needs are treated in the same manner and minimise inconsistencies between charging for different types of care and support;

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

We will monitor the impact of the policy continually. If the recommendation is implemented, there will be a need to gather evidence again after a specific period (e.g. a year) to monitor the impact.

3) Identifying the Impact

3.1 The Council must duly address the impact that any changes will have on people with the following equality characteristics. What impact will the new policy/service or the proposed changes in the policy or service have on people with these characteristics? It is also necessary to consider the impact on Socio-Economic disadvantage and on the Welsh Language.

Characteristics	What type of impact? *	In what way? What is the evidence?
Race (including nationality)	None	A detailed financial assessment is undertaken with every individual before they contribute to their care and support. This will safeguard those people with the equality characteristics that are most vulnerable to living in poverty.
Disability	None	Individuals with disabilities are more likely to use the care and support services. However, although the policy is likely to impact more individuals with disabilities than individuals without disabilities, there is a procedure in place to conduct a financial assessment with every individual before they contribute to their care and/or support. Consequently, no individual will contribute if they are unable to afford it. Support will also be available to ensure that individuals receive the benefits that they are eligible for.
Gender	None	A detailed financial assessment is undertaken with every individual before they contribute to their care and support. This will safeguard those people with the equality characteristics that are most vulnerable to living in poverty.
Age	None	Older individuals are more likely to use the care and support services. However, although the policy is likely to impact more older individuals than younger individuals, there is a procedure in place to conduct a financial assessment with every individual before they contribute to their care and/or support. Consequently, no individual will contribute if they are unable to afford it. Support will also be available to ensure that individuals receive the benefits that they are eligible for.
Sexual orientation	None	A detailed financial assessment is undertaken with every individual before they contribute to their care and support. This will safeguard those people with the equality characteristics that are most vulnerable to living in poverty.
Religion or belief (or non-belief)	None	A detailed financial assessment is undertaken with every individual before they contribute to their care and support. This will safeguard those people with the equality characteristics that are most vulnerable to living in poverty.
Gender reassignment	None	A detailed financial assessment is undertaken with every individual before they contribute to their care and support. This will safeguard those people with the equality characteristics that are most vulnerable to living in poverty.
Pregnancy and maternity	None	A detailed financial assessment is undertaken with every individual before they contribute to their care and support. This will safeguard those people with the equality characteristics that are most vulnerable to living in poverty.

Marriage and civil partnership	None	A detailed financial assessment is undertaken with every individual before they contribute to their care and support. This will safeguard those people with the equality characteristics that are most vulnerable to living in poverty.
The Welsh Language	None	There is no evidence to suggest that the change would have more impact on Welsh speakers than others in the county.
Socio-Economic Disadvantage	None	The policy means that everyone eligible for care and support services receives a full assessment of their financial situation before having to contribute to their care and support. This will ensure that anyone who is unable to afford to contribute will not do so. Support will also be available to ensure that individuals receive the benefits that they are eligible for.

* Delete as required

3.2 The Council has a duty under the Equality 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, pregnancy and maternity. The Council must duly address the way any change impacts on these duties.

General Duties of the Equality Act	Does it have an impact?*	In what way? What is the evidence?
Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation	No	
Promote equal opportunities	Yes	By ensuring that everyone is eligible for an assessment of their financial situation before having to contribute, and making this known, the policy promotes an equal opportunity for everyone to have access to care and/or support. Currently, some care and/or support services are free, whilst a fee is charged for other services. Whilst it is at the Council's discretion to determine which care services are charged, by reconciling the policy across the services, it will ensure that there is no discrimination. It will therefore have a positive impact.
Building good relationships	No	

* Delete as required

3.3 How does your proposal ensure that you work in accordance with the Welsh Language Standards (Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011), to ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than English, and that every opportunity to promote the Welsh language is taken (beyond providing bilingual services) and increase opportunities to use and learn the language in the community?

The policy has no direct impact on the Welsh language as there is no change to the provision and the services available, only the way people financially contribute to them.

However, it must be noted that anyone has the right to a care assessment or a service in Welsh without having to ask – the active offer. This is also true for a financial assessment. The Council has a team of staff who conduct assessments in Welsh or English.

3.4 What other measures or changes could you include to strengthen or change the policy / practice so as to have a positive impact on people's opportunities to use the Welsh language, and to reduce or prevent any detrimental impacts that the policy/practice could have on the Welsh language?

3.5 How does the proposal show that you have given due regard to the need to address inequality due to socio-economic disadvantage? (Please note that this relates to closing the inequality gap, rather than just improving outcomes for everyone).

The policy means that everyone eligible for care and support services receives a full assessment of their financial situation before having to contribute to their care and support. This will ensure that anyone who is unable to afford to contribute will not do so, but that those individuals who are able to will contribute financially to ensure sustainable services for everyone. In addition, every individual who will be required to contribute will receive support to ensure that they receive all the benefits that they are eligible for.

3.6 What other measures or changes can you include to strengthen or change the policy / practice to demonstrate that you have given due regard to the need to reduce disproportionate outcomes as a result of socio-economic disadvantage, in accordance with the Socio-Economic Act?

4) Analysing the results

4.1 Is the policy therefore likely to have a significant, positive impact on any of the above? What is the reason for this?

No

4.2 Is the policy therefore likely to have a significant, negative impact on any of the above? What is the reason for this?

No

4.3 What should be done?

Please select one of the following:

Continue with the policy / service as it is robust	Yes
Revise the policy to remove any barriers	
Suspend and abolish the policy as the harmful impacts are too great	
Continue with the policy as any harmful impact can be justified	
No further steps at present, it is premature to decide, or there is insufficient evidence	

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

We will continue to ensure that everyone eligible for care or support services who are likely to have to be charged will receive a comprehensive financial assessment, and we will actively go out to offer assessments. In addition, there is a team of officers within the Care Business and Commissioning Service available to support individuals to ensure that they receive those benefits that they are eligible to receive to contribute towards any fee that they owe following an assessment.

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

5) Monitoring

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

We will continue to monitor the impact of the policy consistently. If the recommendation is implemented, there will be a need to gather evidence again after a specific period (e.g. a year) to monitor the impact. This will include monitoring how many people receive the different types of care or support services, to ensure that the new policy does not lead to unexpected results.

Adult, Health and Wellbeing Department

Charging Policy for Adult Care and Support Services

Title:	Charging Policy for Adult Care Services			
Form:	Policy	☑	Guideline	☐
	Procedure	☐	Protocol	☐
	Other ☐ Note here ……			
Policy Level:	Department	☐	Service	☑
	Team / Unit	☐	Partnership / Multi Agency	☐
	Other ☐ Note here ……			
Status:	New Policy	☑	Review Policy	☐
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1. Introduction

Introduction

On 6 April 2016 the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 ("the Act") came into force. The 'Act' gives to Local Authorities in Wales the right to charge for care services. When Local Authorities do decide to charge they must do so in accordance with the regulations and code of practice set out in the 'Act'.

Regulations

The regulations in relation to financial assessment and charging are:

- The Care and Support (Choice of Accommodation) (Wales) Regulations 2015
- The Care and Support (Charging) (Wales) Regulations 2015
- The Care and Support (Financial Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2015
- The Care and Support (Deferred Payment) (Wales) Regulations 2015
- The Care and Support (Review of Charging Decisions and Determinations) Wales Regulations 2015

Codes of Practice

The code of Practice in relation to financial assessment and charging is:

- Part 4 & 5 Code of Practice (Charging and Financial Assessments)

2. Purpose of this Policy

The purpose of this policy is as follows:

- To confirm that Gwynedd Council will charge for both Residential/ Nursing and Non-residential care services.
- To confirm that all the requirements in both the regulations and code of practice will be adopted as Gwynedd Council Policy.
- Where the regulations and code of practice allow or require Gwynedd Council to use its discretion, for example, in setting charging rules that may be more generous than the minimum requirements of the regulations. Unless it is specified to the contrary in this policy it is confirmed that Gwynedd Council will always adopt the minimum requirements of the regulations. Furthermore, if the Welsh Government decides to periodically change its minimum requirements, it is Gwynedd Council policy to always mirror these changes. The following are examples of two minimum requirements that are regularly reviewed by the Welsh Government:

    - 'Capital Limits' for residential and non-residential care.
    - 'Minimum Income Amounts' for residential and non-residential care.

3. **Who does this Policy effect?**

This Policy will affect all Adults who receive care and support from Gwynedd Council. They include current and future Service Users, their carers, families and representatives. The Policy is also relevant to staff within the Department who are expected to conform to this Policy.

4. **Chargeable and Non Chargeable Services**

This section specifies the different Care and Support Services provided by Gwynedd Council. It shows which services will incur a charge for the service user and which services will be provided free of charge. Please note that any of the below can change.

4.1 Services that must be provided free of charge according to the regulations

- Transport to Day Services where the transport is provided as part of meeting a person's needs.
- Aftercare Services provided under Section 117 of the *1983 Mental Health Act*
- Services provided to sufferers of Creuzfeldt Jacob Disease
- Intermediate Care Services.
- Reablement Care Services.

4.2 Services that are provided free of charge due to Gwynedd Council Policy

- Day care
- Second Carer (specifically in attendance to support the first carer with duties such as lifting or moving the Service User and to maintain the health and safety of the first carer)
- Carer Services provided under Section 2 of the *Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000*
- Supporting People Services

4.3 Services that are Chargeable

- Residential and Nursing Care provided in a Care Home. Includes Permanent, Temporary and Respite care.
- Home Care Services purchased by the Authority directly. Includes a range of personal care, which in some cases may include social and leisure activity all aimed at enabling a person to live at home or in a non-residential setting.
- Home Care Services provided during night time hours.
- Telecare Services*
- Adult Placement Scheme
- Supported Accommodation
- Direct Payments, unless provided to purchase a service for which there is no charge.
- Meals and Refreshments provided at Day Care Centres*

*Refer to: 5. 'Flat Rate Charges'

4.4 Appendix '2' contains a complete list of the current standard fees charged by Gwynedd Council for all chargeable services within the county of Gwynedd. Specialist, non-standard and out of county care and support may incur different standard charges. In some circumstances obtaining adequate provision of care may not be possible at the standard rate. Service users will be informed of the total cost of their care at the time it is arranged.

4.5 Residential/ Nursing care purchased in out of county care homes will normally be purchased at the standard rate set by Local Authority in which that care home is located.

5. Flat Rate Charges

5.1 A flat rate charge is permitted by the Act for low level, low cost care and support. It is also permitted as a means of charging for preventative services and assistance.

5.2 A flat rate charge is payable by all recipients of these services. Gwynedd Council will not offer a means assessment to the recipients of these services. If a means assessment is conducted with regards to the provision of other chargeable services, the flat rate charge will be payable in addition to any maximum weekly charge set. The Flat Rate Charge is also payable when the recipient is assessed to pay no contribution for other services that they may receive.

5.3 In the process of calculating a means assessment the amount paid as a flat rate charge will be included as an allowable expense in the calculation of the recipients 'minimum income amount'. This will have the effect of increasing the amount of money a service user can retain before being charged for other services.

6. Treatment of Capital

6.1 Annex A of the Welsh Government Code of Practice contains detailed guidance on the treatment of capital. A copy of the code of practice is attached to this policy as Annex 1. Gwynedd Council will adopt as its own policy the guidance contained in the Code of Practice.

6.2 All of a service users' savings and capital will be taken into account in charging assessments for residential / nursing and non-residential care, with the exception of all capital and property disregards as detailed in the code of practice.

6.3 The only difference between the treatment of capital for residential/ nursing and non-residential care is that the value of the property occupied by the service user as their main or only home, is disregarded from a non-residential care means assessment.

6.4 Ownership of Savings and Capital in excess of the Capital Limit (Appendix '2') as set by the Welsh Government will result in the Service User paying the full standard rate for their care in a residential/ nursing care home. In the case of non-residential care it will result in the service user paying the full standard rate for all of the services that they receive up to the maximum weekly charge amount as set by the Welsh Government.

6.5 If a service user has capital below the capital limit, their contribution towards the cost of their care will be based on what they can afford to pay form their income. This will be determined by a means assessment.

7. Treatment of Income

7.1 Annex A of the Welsh Government Code of Practice contains detailed guidance on the treatment of income. A copy of the code of practice is attached to this policy as Annex 1. Gwynedd Council will adopt as its own policy the guidance contained in the Code of Practice.

7.2 All of a service users' income will be taken into account in charging assessments for residential / nursing and non-residential care, with the exception of all income disregards required as detailed in the code of practice.

7.3 Income that must be disregarded

- Earnings- from employment as defined in the regulations and code of practice.
- Direct Payments
- Guaranteed Income Payments made to Veterans under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme
- The Mobility component of DLA & PIP (& Mobility Supplement)
- Working Tax Credit
- Annuity income when purchased with: a loan secured against the service users main/ only home, or with a gallantry award such as the Victoria Cross Annuity or George Cross Annuity. See code of practice for further details
- Mortgage Protection Insurance. See code of practice for further details
- Armed Forces Independence Payments and Mobility Supplements
- Child Support Maintenance Payments and Child Benefit
- Child Tax Credit
- Council Tax Reduction Schemes where this involves a payment to the person
- Christmas Bonus
- Dependency increases paid with certain benefits
- Discretionary Trust
- Gallantry Awards
- Guardian's Allowance
- Income frozen abroad
- Income in kind
- Pensioners' Christmas Payments
- Personal injury trust, including those administered by a court
- Resettlement benefit
- Social Fund payments (including winter fuel payments)
- War widows and War Widowers special payments
- Any payments received as a holder of the Victoria Cross, George Cross or equivalent
- Any grants or loans paid for the purpose of education

- Payments made in relation to training for employment
- Any payment from the:
  - Macfarlane Trust
  - Macfarlane (Special Payments) Trust
  - Macfarlane (Special Payments) (No 2) Trust
  - Caxton Foundation
  - The Fund (payments to non-haemophiliacs infected with HIV)
  - Eileen Trust
  - MFET Limited
  - Independent Living Fund (2006)
  - Any amount paid under or by the Welsh Independent Living Scheme
  - Skipton Fund
  - London Bombings Relief Charitable Fund

- Charitable and voluntary payments. Refer to code of practice.
- Housing Benefit
- War Widows and War Widowers pension, survivors Guaranteed Income Payments from the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme, Civilian War Injury pension and payments to victims of National Socialist persecution (paid under German or Austrian law):
- War Disablement Pension.

7.4 Partially Disregarded Income

- Savings Credit Disregard as set by the Welsh Government.

7.5 Income that will be taken fully into account

- Attendance Allowance, including Constant Attendance Allowance and Exceptionally Severe Disablement Allowance. (At the highest rate paid).
- Bereavement Allowance
- Carers Allowance
- Disability Living Allowance (Care Component at the highest rate paid).
- Employment and Support Allowance or the benefits this replaces such as Severe Disablement Allowance and Incapacity Benefit
- Income Support
- Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit or equivalent benefit
- Jobseeker's Allowance
- Maternity Allowance
- Pension Credit
- Personal Independence Payment (Daily Living Component - at the highest rate paid)
- State Pension
- Universal Credit
- Private/ Occupational Pension/ Annuity

Any Income that is not listed in 7.3, 7.4 & 7.5 above should be taken fully into account.

7.6 Notional Income

Service Users may be treated as being in receipt of notional income under certain circumstances. This may be as a result of being entitled to claim an income that has not yet been applied for, or intentionally depriving themselves of an income in order to avoid charges for care. Gwynedd Council will take account of notional income in accordance with the guidelines detailed in the code of practice.

8. Minimum Income Amount

When undertaking a financial assessment a local authority must leave a service user with a minimum amount of income (MIA). Different MIA's are set for Residential/ Nursing and Non-Residential care services.

8.1 Residential/ Nursing Care

The minimum, MIA for residential and nursing care is set by the Welsh Government. It is a set monetary amount, details of which are noted in Appendix '2'.

It is Gwynedd Council policy to use the MIA set by the Welsh Government as its standard MIA. This does not preclude service users from requesting a higher MIA under certain circumstances. All requests to increase the standard MIA will be treated in accordance with the guidance provided in the Welsh Government Code of Practice.

8.2 Non-Residential Care

The MIA for recipients of non-residential care is calculated in accordance with a formula set out by the Welsh government in its regulations. Rather than being a set monetary amount, the MIA for non-residential care is based on each individual's 'Basic entitlement to relevant welfare benefit'. Full details of how to calculate the MIA for non-residential care are set out in the regulations and code of practice. A simplified illustration would be as follows:

Basic Entitlement to Benefit + 35% + 10% = Minimum Income Amount

It is Gwynedd Council Policy to give all Service Users a Minimum Income Amount based on their individual basic entitlement to welfare benefit.

8.3 Basic Entitlement

The basic entitlement to benefit is calculated as follows:

- Income Support/ JSA: the personal allowance and any premiums to which a Service User is entitled, but need not include the Severe Disability Premium ("SDP") where it is paid, and where a Service User is a carer, includes any carer premium that person receives.

- Employment & Support Allowance: the personal allowance and any premiums and components to which a Service User is entitled, but need not include the SDP where it is paid, and where a Service User is a carer it includes any carer premium that person receives.

- Pension Credit Minimum Guarantee: the personal allowance and any additional amount to which a Service User is entitled, but need not include the additional amount added for severe disability where it is paid, and where a Service User is a carer it includes any additional amount applicable for carers that person receives

In general, but not in all instances, the MIA for service users of a working age, compared to those of retirement age will be lower. This is due to the fact that their basic entitlement to benefit is lower. Appendix '3' contains detailed calculations for the MIA for all ages of service user.

8.4 Buffer

The minimum buffer is currently set by the Welsh Government at 35% of a service users' basic entitlement to benefits. The Gwynedd Council Policy is to always apply the minimum buffer as required by the regulations.

8.5 Disability Related Expenditure (DRE)

The Minimum amount that must be allowed for disability related expenditure is currently set by the Welsh Government at 10% of the basic entitlement to benefits. It is Gwynedd Council Policy to always apply the minimum requirement for DRE as required by the regulations.

This does not preclude a service user from requesting a review of their charges if they are of the opinion that their disability related expenditure is in excess of the 10% standard amount allowed.

9. **Maximum Weekly Charge for Services**

9.1 Residential / Nursing Care in a Care Home

There is no maximum weekly charge for residential/ nursing care. The service user is liable to pay the full cost for their care. If a service user requires financial assistance from Gwynedd Council to meet the cost of their care they are required to apply for a means assessment. A means assessment will confirm the level of the service user contribution required. This could be the full cost of the care, or a lesser amount.

As required by the regulations and code of practice. The required contribution towards the cost of the first eight weeks of a temporary or respite stay in a care home will be assessed in accordance with the rules for non-residential care. As a result the maximum weekly charge in accordance with the regulations and policy for non-residential care will apply.

9.2 Non-Residential Care

The Welsh Government has set a maximum weekly charge for non-residential care services. Please refer to section 7 of the code of practice (Annex 1 of this policy). The current maximum weekly charge is noted in Annex '2' of this policy.

It is Gwynedd Council policy to apply the maximum weekly charge as set by the Welsh Government. This maximum charge will apply to all recipients of non-residential care services, unless, as a result of their individual means assessment a lower maximum weekly charge is set on the basis of what they are deemed to be able to afford.

10. **Procedure for determining a charge**

10.1 Residential / Nursing Care

For residential/ nursing care, the service user contribution will be confirmed either before the care starts, or at the earliest possible opportunity following the start of the placement. All contributions for Residential and Nursing care are payable from the first day that the service is provided.

Any subsequent changes to the service user contribution will be communicated in writing, or in an alternative agreed format. Any changes to contributions following the initial assessment will apply from the date of the notification.

When terminating a residential or nursing care placement, service users are required to pay a notice period.

When absent from the care home the service user contribution will still be payable. A reduced rate may apply, see Appendix '2' for details.

10.2 Non-residential Care

To calculate the amount that a Service User needs to pay for a Service or combination of Services in any one week (a week will always be from Monday to the following Sunday) Gwynedd Council will proceed as follows:

a) Identify all the actual chargeable Services that the Service User receives on a weekly basis. If this is not possible by the time an invoice is generated (calendar month in arrears), the charge will be based on the specific care plan of the individual.
b) Apply the relevant Standard Charge to each Service. (E.g. £16.00 per hour for Home Care).
c) Add all Standard Charges for Services provided to give a total charge for the week.
d) Apply the Maximum Weekly Charge, (This may not be relevant if the total weekly charge is less than the maximum), or if it is lower:
e) Apply the individual Service User's Maximum Weekly Charge as determined by the Service Users individual Means Assessment (if one was requested).

All contributions for non-residential care are payable from the first day that the service is provided. The service user contribution will be confirmed either before the care starts, or at the earliest possible opportunity following the start of the care. Any subsequent changes to the initial service user contribution will be communicated in writing, or in an alternative agreed format. A change to a charge will apply from the date of the notification.

11. The Financial Assessment

11.1 All Service Users who receive chargeable Service with the exception of those services for which a flat rate charge is made will be informed that they have the right to request financial assistance from Gwynedd Council to pay for their care. This request can be made by completing a request form for a financial assessment.

Service users will be given 15 working days to complete and return the financial assessment form. If the form is not returned within this time Gwynedd Council will assume that the service user does not wish to apply for financial assistance form the Council and an invoice for the full weekly charge will be sent to the service user.

Service users are liable to pay for their care from the first day that it is received. Before any charge is made Gwynedd Council will issue the service user with a statement detailing what amount they are to pay and how this amount has been calculated. Periodically the amount that is to be paid will change, this may be because of :

- A change to the type of care received
- A change in the service users means (financial assessment)
- A change in the cost to the Council of providing the care.

Any change to the amount to be paid will be communicated to the service user by statement. Any changes will apply from the date of that statement.

11.2 Service Users have the right to request a Means Assessment at any time, even if they have decided not to request one in the past.

Social Services are under no obligation to back date any assessment conducted at a later date if no request has been made by the Service User for a mean assessment previously. The Service User will remain liable for any amount due between the date of the original financial assessment and the date of the new financial assessment if one is requested.

12. Assessment of Service Users as Single People or Couples (Non-Residential Care)

12.1 Unless otherwise requested by the Service User, Gwynedd Council will assess the Service User's ability to pay based on their individual means and ignore any income, Savings or Capital held or received in the sole name of the partner.

If the Service User requests, a Means Assessment can be completed for the couple. In addition to the Service Users details the partner must also submit all their personal financial details.

12.2 Individual Assessment

In circumstances where a Service User requests an individual assessment, the assessment will take into consideration the following:

- 100% of all income received in Service Users name alone
- 50% of capital / savings held jointly
- 100% of capital held in the Service Users name alone.

12.3 Couple Assessment

In calculating a couple assessments the income disregard will be calculated using the relevant Benefit basic entitlement for couples plus 45%. (See Appendix 3)

It is not possible to provide a Service User with advice prior to performing a Means Assessment. For example, if they are likely to be better off being assessed as a single person or as a couple. However, when the result of the assessment is known, the assessment that is most favourable for the Service User will be used.

12.4 What if a Couple are both Service Users?

When both partners in a couple are Service Users they will also have a choice of being assessed as individuals or as a couple.

If a couple assessment is used the charge should be applied to the Service User receiving the highest level of care first.

If the level of Service received by the first user is not sufficient when translated in monetary terms to reach the Maximum Reasonable Charge for Service for the couple, then the remainder of the charge should be passed over to the second Service User.

Example: If the Cap set as a result of the Means Assessment for the couple is £60 per week and the chargeable Service received by the first Service User is equal to a charge of £30, then the second user can be charged up to £30 per week for the care that they receive).

When assessing a couple the capital limit will be doubled. If the joint savings or capital of the couple exceed this level they will be charged at the full standard rate for the Service that they receive up to the Maximum Reasonable Weekly charge as set by the Welsh Government.

For the purpose of assessing a couple, when both are in receipt of care the Maximum Reasonable Weekly Charge will apply to each Service User in isolation.

13. **Expenses and Costs**

(Non-Residential Care)

13.1 In some circumstances certain expenses and costs must be taken into account when conducting a means assessment. When a service user incurs these costs, the 'minimum income amount' will be increased by a corresponding weekly amount. This will allow the service user to retain sufficient monies to pay these expenses before they have to start paying for care.

The following expenses will be taken account of in a non-residential means assessment:

- Mortgage Payments
- Rent Payments (Net of housing benefits)
- Council Tax (net of Council Tax reduction)
- Insurance-specifically home (buildings & contents), and mortgage protection insurance.

A service user must present proof that any expenses are paid, and are due to be paid into the future before they can be accounted for in the means assessment. Financial assessments will not be changed retrospectively if the necessary information was not supplied when required for the initial financial assessment.

13.2 Any expenses or costs incurred by a Service User living alone will be taken into consideration in full. If the Service User lives with a partner or other adults over the age of 18 that are not in full time education, any expenses or costs will be halved or divided in equal portion to reflect each adult resident's contribution to the costs of the household.

(Residential/ Nursing Care)

13.3 A service user requiring permanent residential or nursing care should not normally be granted an increase to their Minimum Income Amount to cover expenses. Any such application should be considered on its own merits. Annex B of the Welsh Government Code of Practice lists some examples of circumstances in which Local Authorities may consider increasing the Minimum Income Amount. A copy of the code of practice is attached to this policy as Annex 1.

14. Deferred Payment Agreements (Residential/ Nursing Care)

14.1 After the first 12 weeks of permanent residential/ nursing care the value of a service users main or only home will be included as capital in their financial means assessment. This will normally mean that their capital will exceed the capital limit, and as a consequence they will be assessed to pay the full cost for their care. At this point, if they have no other assets or means of paying the full cost they will then be eligible to ask Gwynedd Council to defer payment of a portion of their care fees using their property as security. This arrangement is known as a deferred payment agreement. Deferring payment can help the service user to delay the need to sell their home at a time that can be challenging for them and their family as they make the transition into residential care.

14.2 Gwynedd Council will adopt as its policy the requirements and guidance relating to deferred payments as set out in Annex D of the Welsh Governments Code of practice. (Annex 1 of this policy)

14.3 Gwynedd Council will charge compound interest on all deferred charges agreements at the maximum rate allowable by the regulations. This is 0.15% above the 'relevant rate'. The relevant rate being the market gilts rate specified in the most recently published report by the Office for Budget Responsibility. The relevant rate can change every six months on the 1st of January and on the 1st of July.

14.4 Interest is chargeable from the first day of the agreement on all amounts due, including any unpaid interest or fees that have been incurred in relation to the agreement. Interest will stop accruing only when the debt is repaid in full.

14.5 Gwynedd Council will charge administration fees for setting up a deferred payment agreement. This will cover the administration, legal and valuation costs incurred in setting up the agreement. Further fees may be charged during the life of the agreement if further valuations are required. Details of all the fees chargeable are included in Appendix 2.

15 Top Up Payments- Additional Cost (Residential/ Nursing Care Only)

15.1 Gwynedd Council will not normally contract with care homes that do not accept the Gwynedd Council standard fee for the type of care being commissioned. However, in circumstances where a service user expresses a desire to reside in a care home that charges more than the Gwynedd Council standard fee, an arrangement may be possible if there is a third party willing to pay the additional cost.

The Additional Cost is the difference between the amount that Gwynedd Council will pay and the cost of the chosen care home.

15.2 Annex 'C' of the Welsh Government's Guidelines (Appendix1 of this policy) outlines the requirements placed on the Authority when dealing with additional costs.

15.3 Gwynedd Council will require any third party to enter into a formal contract with the Council before any placement requiring an additional cost is agreed to. The third party will have to provide proof that they will be able to sustain payment of the additional cost for the duration of the placement.

15.4 Gwynedd Council will pay the total cost of the placement to the care home. The third party will reimburse Gwynedd Council with the agreed amount upon receipt of a periodic invoice.

15.5 Gwynedd Council will allow the service user to pay their own additional cost:

- when they are subject to a 12 week property disregard,
- when they agree to enter into a deferred charges contract.

15.6 Deferring payment of the additional costs will not be allowed in circumstances where the available equity in the property that is to be used as security is limited. An additional cost will have to be paid for the duration of placement. Therefore, Gwynedd Council will assess the sustainability of each request to defer an additional cost. If it is deemed that there is insufficient equity in the property to enable the service user to pay the full cost for their care for the duration of their placement, a request to defer an additional cost will be refused.

15.7 If a third party should cease to pay the additional cost that they have agreed to pay, they will remain liable for this cost. Gwynedd Council may take legal action to recover the cost. In addition it may have to make alternative arrangements to meet the needs of the service user in an alternative care home that does not charge additional costs.

16. Recovery of Debt and Deprivation of Assets

Annex F of the Welsh Government's code of practice (copy- Annex 1 of this policy) sets out the requirements placed on Local Authorities when dealing with debt and deprivation of assets. Gwynedd Council will consider non-payment of an assessed contribution or deprivation of assets in order to avoid a charge as a serious matter. Where all other options as described in the Code of Practice have failed to secure the required payment, Gwynedd Council will pursue debt through the civil courts.

17. **Reviews and Complaints**

Any Service User or Direct Payment recipient can request a review of their charge. A review of a charge can involve a wide range of scenarios ranging from a Service User requesting a simple review of a mathematical calculation in their assessed charge or monthly invoice to a Service User asking for additional disability related expenses to be considered in the calculation of their assessed charge.

The Welsh Government sets out in detail the process that should be followed by Local Authorities in dealing with reviews of charges in Annex E of their Code of Practice (Annex 1 of this policy). It is Gwynedd Council policy to follow all the requirements as detailed in the Code of practice.

All requests for a review of charges should be forwarded to the Income and Welfare Unit. This Section will manage and coordinate responses to all charging reviews on behalf of Adult Services. In all cases a Service User shall be provided with the name and contact number of the officer dealing with their review.

Some reviews can be resolved quickly by the Income and Welfare Unit e.g. mathematical errors in calculations. Some reviews may take more time and result in the Income and Welfare Unit needing confirmation from providers of Service and/or Care Co-ordinators regarding the levels of Service provided and commissioned in order that a review can be answered.

All requests for a review that cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the Service User whilst complying with charging Policy will be referred for a decision to the Head of Adult Services or their appointed representative.

If a Service User is not satisfied with the response received to their request for a review they have the right to make a formal complaint to Social Services and the formal Complaints process will be followed in all cases. Information regarding how a Service User can make a formal complaint is available in the leaflet: Listening, Responding, Improving: How to make Complaints, Comments or Compliments about Social Care Services.

Any request by a Service User for review must state clearly the grounds upon which a review is being sought. A request can be made orally or in writing and can be made at any time after a statement of charge has been issued.

Adult Services may refuse a request for a review if it is believed that there has been no relevant change in any of the Service User's circumstances following a previous request for a review. In this case a statement will be sent to the Service User stating that the request for a review will not be considered by Adult Services because there has been no relevant change in any circumstances and/or the Service User has not stated any other additional circumstances.

A review may be requested by the Service User or a Representative acting on behalf of a Service User.

When Social Services are in a position to make a decision on a review within five working days of receiving a request that decision should be provided to the Service User within that time frame. Where this is not possible the Income and Welfare Unit will send out a statement within five working days stating:

a) The date on which the request was received.
b) The nature of the request.
c) The right of the Service User to appoint a Representative.
d) How Social Services will carry out the review.
e) That the Service User does not need to pay the charge that is subject to the review during the period of the review. But do need to inform the Income and Welfare Unit of their decision to pay or not.
f) That Adult Services will peruse payment of any charge accrued during the review period if it becomes payable as a result of the review.
g) If the Service User requesting the review is in receipt of a Direct Payment. Social Services will make gross payments during the review period. However this may be recovered at a later date after the review.
h) What additional information Social Services require in order to make a decision, and within what time frame (15 working days) this information needs to be provided.
i) That if requested a home visit can be requested by the Service User to assist in the provision of the additional information.
j) The need to contact the Income & Welfare Unit to arrange a home visit.
k) The name and contact details of the officer in the Income and Welfare Unit dealing with the review.
l) The contact details of any organisation that may be able to assist the Service User during the review period. This information will be in the Paying for Non-Residential Care Services leaflet.

Any request by a Service User for an extension of time within which to supply any additional information will be granted if reasonable. Social Services will confirm in writing any extension to the original deadline.

If a request for an extension of time is refused by Social Services this will be confirmed in writing and a reason for the decision will be provided.

If no response or request for an extension of time is received by Social Services to a request for further information by the deadline set. The Income and Welfare Unit will consider the request for review as having been withdrawn. A letter will be sent to the Service User confirming this and that the charge set is now payable with details of the amount accrued if any during the review period and by what date this needs to be paid.

A request for a review may be withdrawn orally or in writing by a Service User at any time during the review period.

Once Social Services have received sufficient information and documentation to carry out the review, they will have 10 working days to:

a) Make a decision on the review and take any action that is necessary to implement it.
b) Send a statement to the Service User and any Representative stating the decision, the reasons for that decision and that they have the right to make a complaint under the Social Services Complaints Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2005 if they are dissatisfied with the decision.
c) If the Service Users charge has been amended as a result of the review, a statement should be sent to the Service User explaining the decision and the consequence of this decision.
d) A Statement of Charges.

If Social Services are unable to meet the deadline for responding to the request for a review (10 working days), they must send out a statement to the Service User stating that they will not be able to provide a decision within the 10 working days deadline, the reason why and the date by which it will be provided.

If a decision cannot be provided by the deadline, Social Services will not be able to charge the Service User for Service received during the period of time between the deadline and the date that a decision is provided.

17.1 Payment of the Charge, Reimbursement or Contribution during and after the Review Period

If a Service User requests a review, they may elect not to pay their charge, reimbursement or contribution or the part which is the subject of the review, during the whole of the review period but any unpaid amount will accrue.

If the Service User decides not to pay during their review period they must notify the Income and Welfare Unit either orally or in writing within five working days.

With regards to Direct Payments users if the Service User decides not to pay their contribution during the whole or remainder of the review period the Adult Services must make gross payments to the Service User during this period.

The Adult Services may recover any unpaid amount that has accrued during the review period after the review period. The accrued amount that may be recovered is the amount of the charge, reimbursement or contribution that the Adult Services have decided is correct following the review.

If Adult Services decide that the charge or contribution payable by the Service User, is **less** than that previously imposed prior to the review, then the Social Services must within 10 working days of sending its decision to the Service User, pay the Service User the difference between the amount that should be payable and the amount, if any, that has already been paid by the Service User.

If Adult Services decide that the charge or contribution that should be payable by the Service User is **more** than that previously imposed prior to the review, then the Adult Services may recover the difference between the amount of the charge or contribution

that should be payable and the amount, if any, that has already been paid by the Service User.

If recovering any amount from the Service User, the Adult Services must have regard to the Service Users personal financial circumstances; and be satisfied that the recovery of the amount will not cause the Service User to suffer financial hardship. If the Adult Services believe that the recovery of the amount would cause the Service User to suffer financial hardship, then they should offer the Service User the option of repaying the amount in periodic instalments.

18. **The Independent Living Fund**

All Service Users in receipt of funding from the ILF will have their Maximum Reasonable Weekly Charge set at £9 per week. This is a Gwynedd Council Policy and is more generous than the minimum requirement set by the Welsh Government regulations. The reason for this is historical and reflects the fact that the ILF fund is now frozen and no changes can be made to increase previous client contributions under Local Authority charging policies.

The means assessment process for Service Users in receipt of funding from the ILF should resemble the same process for all other Service Users in every other respect.

Appendix 1- The Welsh Government Code of Practice



Appendix 1- Welsh Government Code of

Adult, Health and Wellbeing Department

Charging Policy for Adult Care and Support Services

Title:	Charging Policy for Adult Care Services			
Form:	Policy	☑	Guideline	☐
	Procedure	☐	Protocol	☐
	Other ☐ Note here ……			
Policy Level:	Department	☐	Service	☑
	Team / Unit	☐	Partnership / Multi Agency	☐
	Other ☐ Note here ……			
Status:	New Policy ☐		Review Policy	☒
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Review Date:				

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1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

On 6 April 2016 the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 ("the Act") came into force. The 'Act' gives to Local Authorities in Wales the right to charge for care services. When local authorities do decide to charge, they must do so in accordance with the regulations and code of practice set out in the 'Act'.

1.2 Regulations

The regulations in relation to financial assessment and charging are:

- The Care and Support (Choice of Accommodation) (Wales) Regulations 2015
- The Care and Support (Charging) (Wales) Regulations 2015
- The Care and Support (Financial Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2015
- The Care and Support (Deferred Payment) (Wales) Regulations 2015
- The Care and Support (Review of Charging Decisions and Determinations) Wales Regulations 2015

1.3 Codes of Practice

The code of Practice within the act in relation to financial assessment and charging is:

- Part 4 & 5 Code of Practice (Charging and Financial Assessments)

2. Purpose of this policy

The purpose of this policy is as follows:

- To confirm that Cyngor Gwynedd will charge for both residential/nursing and non-residential care services.
- To confirm that all the requirements in both the regulations and code of practice will be adopted as Cyngor Gwynedd Policy.
- The regulations and code of practice allow or require Cyngor Gwynedd to use its discretion, for example, in setting charging rules that may be more generous than the minimum requirements of the regulations. Unless it is specified to the contrary in this policy, it is confirmed that Cyngor Gwynedd will always adopt the minimum requirements of the regulations.

3. Who does this Policy effect?

This policy will affect all adults who receive care and support from Cyngor Gwynedd. They include current and future service users, their carers, families and representatives. The policy is also relevant to staff within the Department who are expected to conform to this policy.

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4. Chargeable and Non Chargeable Services

This section specifies the different care and support services provided by Cyngor Gwynedd. It shows which services will incur a charge for the service user and which services will be provided free of charge. Please note that any of the below can change.

In some cases services may be a mix of chargeable and non-chargeable services.

4.1 Services that must be provided free of charge according to the regulations

- transport to day services where the transport is provided as part of meeting a person's needs.
- aftercare services provided under Section 117 of the *1983 Mental Health Act* (provided jointly with a Health Board)
- services provided to sufferers of Creuzfeldt Jacob Disease
- reablement care services *(Definition in Glossary: Appendix 1)*.
- assessment of needs, care planning, care plans, provision of statements of a charge and undertaking a review of a determination of a charge or a charge itself, must not be charged for since these processes do not constitute the provision of care and support. This includes the provision of information and advice;
- independent professional advocacy where a local authority has arranged for the provision of this in accordance with the code of practice on advocacy under Part 10 (Complaints, Representatives and Advocacy Services) of the Act.

4.2 Services that are provided free of charge due to Cyngor Gwynedd Policy

- Direct services to unpaid carers provided under the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act (2014) where there is no element of care/responsibility for the person who needs care and support. *(Definition in Glossary: Appendix 1)*
- Supporting People Services – services financed through the Housing Support Grant
- Standalone telecare *(Definition in Glossary: Appendix 1)* packages not monitored by Galw Gofal call centre *(Definition in Glossary: Appendix 1)*
- Training and employment support *(Definition in Glossary: Appendix 1)*

4.3 Services that are Chargeable

- Residential and nursing care provided in a care home. Includes permanent, temporary and respite care *(Definition in Glossary: Appendix 1)*.
- Rehabilitation centre – drug and alcohol
- Home care services commissioned by the Authority directly. Includes a range of personal care, which in some cases may include social and leisure activity all aimed at enabling a person to live at home or in a non-residential care setting. These services may be provided during the day or night.
- Support services out in the community.
- Telecare services or technology that are monitored by a call centre for example, Galw Gofal*
- Adult Placement Scheme *(Definition in Glossary: Appendix 1)*.
- Care and/or support provided in supported accommodation.

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- Direct Payments *(Definition in Glossary: Appendix 1)*, unless provided to purchase a service for which there is no charge (see 4.1 and 4.2 above).
- Meals and refreshments provided at day care centres*
- Day care *(Definition in Glossary: Appendix 1)* provided in a day centre / location outside the home.
- Second carer (specifically in attendance to support the first carer with duties such as lifting or moving the service user and to maintain the health and safety of the first carer)

*Refer to: 5. 'Flat Rate Charges' below.

5. Flat Rate Charges

5.1 A flat rate charge is permitted by the Act (Section 6) for low-level, low-cost care and support. It is also permitted as a means of charging for preventative services and assistance.

5.2 A flat rate charge is payable by all recipients of these services. Cyngor Gwynedd will not offer a means assessment to the recipients of these services. If a means assessment is conducted with regards to the provision of other chargeable services, the flat rate charge will be payable in addition to any maximum weekly charge set. The flat rate charge is also payable when the recipient is assessed to pay no contribution for other services that they may receive.

6. Treatment of Capital

6.1 Annex A of the Welsh Government Code of Practice contains detailed guidance on the treatment of capital. Cyngor Gwynedd will adopt the guidance contained in the Code of Practice, as its policy.

6.2 All of a service users' savings and capital will be considered when assessing a charge for residential / nursing and non-residential care, with the exception of all capital and property disregards as detailed in the code of practice.

6.3 The only difference between the treatment of capital for residential/ nursing and non-residential care is that the value of the property occupied by the service user as their main or only home, is disregarded from a non-residential care means assessment.

6.4 Ownership of savings and capital in excess of the Capital Limit as set by the Welsh Government will result in the service user paying the full standard rate for their care in a residential/nursing care home. In the case of non-residential care it will result in the service user paying the full standard rate for all of the services that they receive up to the maximum weekly charge amount as set by the Welsh Government.

6.5 If a service user has capital below the capital limit, their contribution towards the cost of their care will be based on what they can afford to pay from their income. This will be determined by a means assessment.

7. Treatment of Income

7.1 Annex A of the Welsh Government Code of Practice contains detailed guidance on the treatment of income. Cyngor Gwynedd will adopt the guidance contained in the code of practice as its own policy.

7.2 All of a service users' income will be considered in charging assessments for residential / nursing and non-residential care, with the exception of all income disregards required as detailed in the code of practice.

7.3 For a full list of income that must be disregarded, income that should be partly disregarded, and income that will not be fully considered, see Annex B of Code of Practice.

7.4 Notional Income

Service Users may be treated as being in receipt of notional income under certain circumstances. This may be as a result of being entitled to claim an income that has not yet been applied for, or intentionally depriving themselves of an income in order to avoid charges for care. Cyngor Gwynedd will take account of notional income in accordance with the guidelines detailed in the code of practice.

8. Minimum Income Amount (MIA)

When undertaking a financial assessment, a local authority must leave a service user with a minimum amount of income (MIA). Different MIA's are set for residential/ nursing and non-residential care services.

8.1 Residential/ Nursing Care

The MIA for residential and nursing care is set by the Welsh Government. It is a set monetary amount, details of which are noted on Cyngor Gwynedd's website annually.

It is Cyngor Gwynedd policy to use the MIA set by the Welsh Government as its standard MIA. This does not preclude service users from requesting a higher MIA under certain circumstances. All requests to increase the standard MIA will be treated in accordance with the guidance provided in the Welsh Government Code of Practice.

8.2 Non-Residential Care

The MIA for recipients of non-residential care is calculated in accordance with a formula set out by the Welsh government in its regulations. Rather than being a set monetary amount, the MIA for non-residential care is based on each individual's 'basic entitlement *(Definition in Glossary: Appendix 1)* to relevant welfare benefit'. Full details of how to calculate the MIA for non-residential care are set out in the regulations and code of practice. A simplified illustration would be as follows:

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Basic Entitlement to Benefit + 35% + 10% = Minimum Income Amount

(Help to calculate Basic Entitlement Benefit provided in 8.3)

It is Cyngor Gwynedd Policy to give all service users a Minimum Income Amount based on their individual basic entitlement to welfare benefit.

8.3 Basic Entitlement

The basic entitlement to benefit is calculated as follows:

- Income Support/ JSA: the personal allowance and any premiums to which a Service User is entitled but need not include the Severe Disability Premium ("SDP") where it is paid, and where a service user is a carer, includes any carer premium that person receives.

- Employment & Support Allowance: the personal allowance and any premiums and components to which a service user is entitled, but need not include the SDP where it is paid, and where a service user is a carer it includes any carer premium that person receives.

- Pension Credit Minimum Guarantee: the personal allowance and any additional amount to which a service user is entitled, but need not include the additional amount added for severe disability where it is paid, and where a service user is a carer it includes any additional amount applicable for carers that person receives.

In general, but not in all instances, the MIA for service users of a working age, compared to those of retirement age will be lower. This is because their basic entitlement to benefit is lower. Detailed calculations for the MIA for all ages of service user are available on request (01286 682753 / unedincwmalles@gwynedd.llyw.cymru).

8.4 Buffer

The minimum buffer is currently set by the Welsh Government at 35% of a service users' basic entitlement to benefits. The Cyngor Gwynedd policy is to always apply the minimum buffer as required by the regulations.

8.5 Disability Related Expenditure (DRE)

The minimum amount that must be allowed for disability related expenditure is currently set by the Welsh Government at 10% of the basic entitlement to benefits. It is Cyngor Gwynedd Policy to always apply the minimum requirement for DRE as required by the regulations.

This does not preclude a service user from requesting a review of their charges if they are of the opinion that their disability related expenditure is in excess of the 10% standard amount allowed.

9. Maximum Weekly Charge for Services

9.1 Residential / Nursing Care in a Care Home

There is no maximum weekly charge for residential/ nursing care. The service user is liable to pay the full cost for their care. If a service user requires financial assistance from Cyngor Gwynedd to meet the cost of their care they are required to apply for a means assessment. A means assessment will confirm the level of the service user contribution required. This could be the full cost of the care, or a lesser amount.

As required by the regulations and code of practice, the required contribution towards the cost of the first eight weeks of a temporary or respite stay in a care home will be assessed in accordance with the rules for non-residential care. As a result, the maximum weekly charge in accordance with the regulations and policy for non-residential care will apply.

To apply for a means tested assessment service users will need to contact the Income and Welfare Unit.

9.2 Non-Residential Care

The Welsh Government has set a maximum weekly charge for non-residential care services. Please refer to section 7 of the code of practice. The current maximum weekly charge is noted on Cyngor Gwynedd's website annually or by getting in touch with the income and welfare team.

It is Cyngor Gwynedd policy to apply the maximum weekly charge as set by the Welsh Government. This maximum charge will apply to all recipients of non-residential care services, unless, as a result of their individual means assessment a lower maximum weekly charge is set on the basis of what they are deemed to be able to afford.

10. Procedure for determining a charge

10.1 Residential / Nursing Care

For residential/ nursing care, the service user contribution will be confirmed either before the care starts, or at the earliest possible opportunity following the start of the placement. All contributions for residential and nursing care are payable from the first day that the service is provided.

Any subsequent changes to the service user contribution will be communicated in writing, or in an alternative agreed format. Any changes to contributions following the initial assessment will apply from the date of the notification.

When terminating a residential or nursing care placement, service users are required to pay a notice period. The notice period is 7 days and individuals must pay the cost that has been calculated through assessment, for this period.

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When absent from the care home the service user contribution will still be payable. A reduced rate may apply, at the discretion of Cyngor Gwynedd.

10.2 Non-residential Care

To calculate the amount that a service user needs to pay for a service or combination of services in any one week (a week will always be from Monday to the following Sunday) Cyngor Gwynedd will proceed as follows:

a) Identify all the actual chargeable services that the service user receives on a weekly basis. If this is not possible by the time an invoice is generated (calendar month in arrears), the charge will be based on the specific care plan of the individual. If the individual receives both chargeable and non-chargeable services, only the chargeable services will be taken into account.
b) Apply the relevant Standard Charge to each service. (E.g. £X.00 per hour for Home Care).
c) Add all Standard Charges for Services provided to give a total charge for the week.
d) Apply the Maximum Weekly Charge, (This may not be relevant if the total weekly charge is less than the maximum), or if it is lower:
e) Apply the individual Service User's Maximum Weekly Charge as determined by the Service Users individual Means Assessment (if one was requested).

All contributions for non-residential care are payable from the first day that the service is provided. The service user contribution will be confirmed either before the care starts, or at the earliest possible opportunity following the start of the care. Any subsequent changes to the initial service user contribution will be communicated in writing, or in an alternative agreed format. A change to a charge will apply from the date of the notification.

11. **The Financial Assessment**

11.1 All service users who receive chargeable service by Cyngor Gwynedd will be informed that they have the right to request financial assistance from Cyngor Gwynedd to pay for their care. This request can be made by completing a request form (contact 01286 682753 / unedincwmalles@gwynedd.llyw.cymru to request a form) for a financial assessment. The only exemption is where a flat rate fee is payable by all and no financial assessment is offered.

Service users will be given 15 working days to complete and return the financial assessment form. If the form is not returned within this time Cyngor Gwynedd will assume that the service user does not wish to apply for financial assistance form the Council and an invoice for the full weekly charge will be sent to the service user.

Service users are liable to pay for their care from the first day that it is received. Before any charge is made Cyngor Gwynedd will issue the service user with a statement detailing what amount they are to pay and how this amount has been calculated. Periodically the amount that is to be paid will change, this may be because of :

- A change to the type of care received

- A change in the service user's means (financial assessment)
- A change in the cost to the Council of providing the care

Any change to the amount to be paid will be communicated to the service user by statement. Any changes will apply from the date of that statement.

11.2 There is appropriate advice and support on welfare benefits available for all those that are assessed as being able to contribute financially towards their care and support, as well as to unpaid carers, and support to help them understand the benefits they may be entitled to.

11.3 Service users have the right to request a means assessment at any time, even if they have decided not to request one in the past.

11.4 Cyngor Gwynedd are under no obligation to back date any assessment conducted at a later date if no request has been made by the service user for a means assessment previously. The service user will remain liable for any amount due between the date of the original financial assessment and the date of the new financial assessment if one is requested.

12. Assessment of Service Users as Single People or Couples (Non-Residential Care)

12.1 Unless otherwise requested by the service user, Cyngor Gwynedd will assess the service user's ability to pay based on their individual means and ignore any income, Savings or Capital held or received in the sole name of the partner.

If the service user requests, a means assessment can be completed for the couple. In addition to the service users details the partner must also submit all their personal financial details.

12.2 Individual Assessment

In circumstances where a Service user requests an individual assessment, the assessment will take into consideration the following:

- 100% of all income received in service users name alone.
- 50% of capital / savings held jointly.
- 100% of capital held in the service users name alone.

12.3 Couple Assessment

In calculating a couple assessment the income disregard will be calculated using the relevant Benefit basic entitlement for couples plus 45%.

It is not possible to provide a service user with advice prior to performing a means assessment. For example, if they are likely to be better off being assessed as a single person or as a couple. However, when the result of the assessment is known, the assessment that is most favourable for the service user will be used.

12.4 What if a couple are both service users?

When both partners in a couple are service users they will also have a choice of being assessed as individuals or as a couple, and this also applies when one partner is an unpaid carer. Couples that have previously been assessed separately can also be re-assessed as a couple, or vice versa.

If a couple assessment is used the charge should be applied to the service user receiving the highest level of care first.

If the level of service received by the first user is not sufficient when translated in monetary terms to reach the Maximum Reasonable Charge for Service for the couple, then the remainder of the charge should be passed over to the second service user.

Example: If the cap set as a result of the means assessment for the couple is £60 per week and the chargeable service received by the first service user is equal to a charge of £30, then the second user can be charged up to £30 per week for the care that they receive).

When assessing a couple the capital limit will be doubled. If the joint savings or capital of the couple exceed this level they will be charged at the full standard rate for the service that they receive up to the Maximum Reasonable Weekly charge as set by the Welsh Government.

For the purpose of assessing a couple, when both are in receipt of care the Maximum Reasonable Weekly Charge will apply to each Service User in isolation.

13. **Expenses and Costs**

(Non-Residential Care)

13.1 In some circumstances certain expenses and costs must be taken into account when conducting a means assessment. When a service user incurs these costs, the 'minimum income amount' will be increased by a corresponding weekly amount. This will allow the service user to retain sufficient monies to pay these expenses before they have to start paying for care.

The following expenses will be taken account of in a non-residential means assessment:

- Mortgage Payments
- Rent Payments (Net of housing benefits)
- Council Tax (net of Council Tax reduction)
- Insurance-specifically home (buildings & contents), and mortgage protection insurance.

A service user must present proof that any expenses are paid and are due to be paid into the future before they can be accounted for in the means assessment. Financial

assessments will not be changed retrospectively if the necessary information was not supplied when required for the initial financial assessment.

13.2 Any expenses or costs incurred by a service user living alone will be taken into consideration in full. If the service user lives with a partner or other adults over the age of 18 that are not in full time education, any expenses or costs will be halved or divided in equal portion to reflect each adult resident's contribution to the costs of the household.

(Residential/ Nursing Care)

13.3 A service user requiring permanent residential, or nursing care should not normally be granted an increase to their Minimum Income Amount to cover expenses. Any such application should be considered on its own merits. Annex B of the Welsh Government Code of Practice lists some examples of circumstances in which Local Authorities may consider increasing the Minimum Income Amount.

14. Deferred Payment Agreements (Residential/ Nursing Care)

14.1 After the first 12 weeks of permanent residential/ nursing care the value of a service users main or only home will be included as capital in their financial means assessment. This will normally mean that their capital will exceed the capital limit, and as a consequence they will be assessed to pay the full cost for their care. At this point, if they have no other assets or means of paying the full cost they will then be eligible to ask Cyngor Gwynedd to defer payment of a portion of their care fees using their property as security. This arrangement is known as a deferred payment agreement. Deferring payment can help the service user to delay the need to sell their home at a time that can be challenging for them and their family as they make the transition into residential care.

14.2 Cyngor Gwynedd will adopt as its policy the requirements and guidance relating to deferred payments as set out in Annex D of the Welsh Governments Code of practice.

14.3 Cyngor Gwynedd retains the right to charge compound interest on all deferred charges agreements at the maximum rate allowable by the regulations. This is 0.15% above the 'relevant rate'. The relevant rate being the market gilts rate specified in the most recently published report by the Office for Budget Responsibility. The relevant rate can change every six months on the 1st of January and on the 1st of July.

14.4 Interest is chargeable from the first day of the agreement on all amounts due, including any unpaid interest or fees that have been incurred in relation to the agreement. Interest will stop accruing only when the debt is repaid in full.

14.5 Cyngor Gwynedd has the right to charge administration fees for setting up a deferred payment agreement. This will cover the administration, legal and valuation costs incurred in setting up the agreement. Further fees may be charged during the life of the agreement if further valuations are required. Details of all the fees chargeable are

available on Cyngor Gwynedd's website or by contacting the income and welfare team.

15 Top Up Payments- Additional Cost (Residential/ Nursing Care Only)

15.1 In circumstances where a service user expresses a desire to reside in a care home that charges more than the Cyngor Gwynedd standard fee, having been presented with options within the Cyngor Gwynedd standard fee, an arrangement may be possible if there is a third party willing to pay the additional cost.

The additional cost is the difference between the amount that Cyngor Gwynedd would usually be expected to pay and the cost of the chosen care home.

15.2 Annex C of the Welsh Government's Guidelines outlines the requirements placed on the Authority when dealing with additional costs.

15.3 Cyngor Gwynedd will require any third party to enter into a formal contract with the Council before any placement requiring an additional cost is agreed to.

15.4 Cyngor Gwynedd will pay the total cost of the placement to the care home. The third party will reimburse Cyngor Gwynedd with the agreed amount upon receipt of a periodic invoice.

15.5 Cyngor Gwynedd will allow the service user to pay their own additional cost:

- when they are subject to a 12 week property disregard,
- when they agree to enter into a deferred charges contract.

15.6 Deferring payment of the additional costs will not be allowed in circumstances where the available equity in the property that is to be used as security is limited. Cyngor Gwynedd will assess the sustainability of each request to defer an additional cost. If it is deemed that there is insufficient equity in the property to enable the service user to pay the full cost for their care for the duration of their placement, a request to defer an additional cost may be refused.

15.7 If a third party should cease to pay the additional cost that they have agreed to pay, they will remain liable for this cost. Cyngor Gwynedd may take legal action to recover the cost. In addition, it may have to make alternative arrangements to meet the needs of the service user in an alternative care home that does not charge additional costs.

16. Recovery of Debt and Deprivation of Assets

Annex F of the Welsh Government's code of practice sets out the requirements placed on Local Authorities when dealing with debt and deprivation of assets. Cyngor Gwynedd will consider non-payment of an assessed contribution, or deprivation of assets in order to avoid a charge, as a serious matter. Where all other options as described in the Code of Practice have failed to secure the required payment, Cyngor Gwynedd will pursue debt through the civil courts.

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17. **Reviews and Complaints**

17.1 Any service user can request a review of their charge. A review of a charge can involve a wide range of scenarios ranging from a service user requesting a simple review of a mathematical calculation in their assessed charge, or monthly invoice to a service user asking for additional disability related expenses to be considered in the calculation of their assessed charge.

The Welsh Government sets out in detail the process that should be followed by Local Authorities in dealing with reviews of charges in Annex E of their code of practice. It is Cyngor Gwynedd policy to follow all the requirements as detailed in the code of practice.

All requests for a review of charges should be forwarded to the Income and Welfare Unit on: 01286 682753 / unedincwmalles@gwynedd.llyw.cymru. This unit will manage and coordinate responses to all charging reviews on behalf of Adult Services. In all cases a service user shall be provided with the name and contact number of the officer dealing with their review.

Some reviews can be resolved quickly by the Income and Welfare Unit e.g., mathematical errors in calculations. Some reviews may take more time and result in the Income and Welfare Unit needing confirmation from providers of service and/or Care Co-ordinators regarding the levels of service provided and commissioned in order that a review can be answered.

All requests for a review that cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the service user, whilst complying with charging policy will be referred for a decision to the Head of Adult Services or their appointed representative.

If a service user is not satisfied with the response received to their request for a review, they have the right to make a formal complaint to Social Services and the formal Complaints process will be followed in all cases. Information regarding how a service user can make a formal complaint is available here.

Any request by a service user for review must clearly state the grounds upon which a review is being sought. A request can be made orally or in writing and can be made at any time after a statement of charge has been issued.

Adult Services may refuse a request for a review if it is believed that there has been no relevant change in any of the service user's circumstances following a previous request for a review. In this case a statement will be sent to the service user stating outlining the reason for refusing the request.

A review may be requested by the service user or a representative acting on their behalf.

When Social Services are in a position to make a decision on a review within five working days of receiving a request that decision should be provided to the service user

within that time frame. Where this is not possible the Income and Welfare Unit will send out a statement within five working days stating:

a) The date on which the request was received.
b) The nature of the request.
c) The right of the service user to appoint a representative.
d) How Social Services will carry out the review.
e) That the service user does not need to pay the charge that is subject to the review during the period of the review.
f) Adult Services will pursue payment of any charge accrued during the review period if it becomes payable as a result of the review.
g) What additional information Social Services require in order to make a decision, and within what time frame (15 working days) this information needs to be provided.
h) A home visit can be requested by the service user for the Income & Welfare unit to assist in the provision of the additional information.
i) The name and contact details of the officer in the Income and Welfare Unit dealing with the review.
j) The contact details of any organisation that may be able to assist the service user during the review period.

Any request by a service user for an extension of time within which to supply any additional information will be granted if reasonable. Social Services will confirm in writing any extension to the original deadline.

If a request for an extension of time is refused by Social Services, this will be confirmed in writing and a reason for the decision will be provided.

If no response or request for an extension of time is received by Social Services by the deadline set, the Income and Welfare Unit will consider the request for review as having been withdrawn. A letter will be sent to the service user confirming this, and that the charge set is now payable. The details of the amount accrued (if any) during the review period, and by what date this needs to be paid will be included.

A request for a review may be withdrawn orally or in writing by a service user at any time during the review period.

Once Social Services have received sufficient information and documentation to carry out the review, they will have 10 working days to:

a) Make a decision on the review and take any action that is necessary to implement it.
b) Send a statement to the service user and any representative stating the decision, the reasons for that decision and that they have the right to make a complaint under the Social Services Complaints Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014 if they are dissatisfied with the decision.
c) If the service user's charge has been amended as a result of the review, a statement should be sent to the service user explaining the decision and the consequence of this decision.
d) Provide a Statement of Charges.

If Social Services are unable to meet the deadline for responding to the request for a review (10 working days), they must send out a statement to the service user stating that they will not be able to provide a decision within the 10 working days deadline, the reason why and the date by which it will be provided.

If a decision cannot be provided by the deadline, Social Services will not be able to charge the service user for service received during the period of time between the deadline and the date that a decision is provided.

17.2 Payment of the Charge, Reimbursement or Contribution during and after the Review Period

If a service user requests a review, they may elect not to pay the contribution that is subject of the review during the whole of the review period, but any unpaid amount will accrue.

If the service user decides not to pay during the review period they must notify the Income and Welfare Unit either orally or in writing within five working days.

The Adult Services may recover any unpaid amount that has accrued during the review period after the review period. The accrued amount that may be recovered is the amount of the contribution that the Adult Services have decided is correct, following the review.

If Adult Services decide that the contribution payable by the service user, is **less** than that previously imposed prior to the review, then the Social Services must within 10 working days of sending its decision to the service user, pay the service user the difference between the amount that should be payable and the amount, if any, that has already been paid by the service user.

If Adult Services decide that the contribution that should be payable by the service user is **more** than that previously imposed prior to the review, then the Adult Services may recover the difference between the amount of the charge or contribution that should be payable and the amount, if any, that has already been paid by the service user.

If recovering any amount from the service user, the Adult Services must have regard to the service user's personal financial circumstances; and be satisfied that the recovery of the amount will not cause the service user's to suffer financial hardship. If the Adult Services believe that the recovery of the amount would cause the service user to suffer financial hardship, then they should offer the service user the option of repaying the amount in periodic instalments.

Appendix 1 – Glossary

Adult Placement Scheme: Also known as shared lives is an arrangement where members of the community (approved carers) provide accommodation and/or support for a wide range of individuals with care and support needs (Social Care Wales, 2022).

Basic Entitlement: A calculation conducted to compute an individual's entitlement to welfare benefits.

Day Care: Provide support to individuals to access a broad range of activities aimed at increasing individual well-being and social inclusion. These may take place within the community or at a day centre.

Direct Payments: Involve local authorities making cash payments to individuals instead of providing care services, to enable the individual to arrange their own care (Social Care Wales, 2022).

Employment and training support: Refers to the personal, practical and emotional assistance provided to individuals with care and support needs to enable them to engage in training opportunities, skills development, work experience or employment. This may include help with accessing and maintaining a place on training programmes, mentoring, confidence building, managing health and wellbeing, communicating with potential employers, and support during transitions into the workplace or training setting."

Galw Gofal: A bilingual 24/7 emergency call monitoring service that helps protect older and vulnerable people in their own homes. Galw Gofal was founded in 2011 when Conwy, Anglesey and Gwynedd County Borough Councils formed a partnership to provide industry leading telecare services to residents in the region and beyond (Galw Gofal, 2024).

Minimum Income Amount (MIA): The amount a local authority must leave a service user with for day-to-day expenditure. It is Cyngor Gwynedd Policy to use the MIA set by the Welsh Government.

Reablement Care Services: Reablement is a type of care to help you relearn how to do daily activities, like cooking meals and washing after illness or hospital discharge.

Respite Care: Respite care means taking a break from caring, while the person you care for is looked after by someone else(Social Care Wales, 2022)

Telecare: A monitoring service that allows you to call for help day or night, through a touch of a button, or by using a series of automatic sensors fitted in the home. Telecare is a preventative way of providing remote care to residents (Cyngor Gwynedd, 2024).

Unpaid Carer: Someone who cares or intends to provide unpaid care for an adult due to physical or mental illness, age, disability, substance dependence or caring for a disabled child.

CYNGOR GWYNEDD CABINET

Report for Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet meeting

Date of meeting:	**11 November 2025**
Cabinet Member:	**Councillor Llio Elenid Owen** **Cabinet Member for Corporate Services**
Relevant Officer:	**Vera Jones** **Democracy and Language Manager**
Title of Item:	**Welsh Government Consultation on Extending the duty on Local Authorities to broadcast meetings.**

1 THE DECISION SOUGHT

Adopt the draft response to the questions in the Welsh Government Consultation on extending the duty on Local Authorities to broadcast meetings (as noted in Appendix A), in order to respond to the consultation on behalf of the Council.

2 THE REASON FOR THE NEED FOR A DECISION

2.1. The Welsh Government has launched a formal consultation seeking views on whether the statutory duty to broadcast local authority meetings should be extended, beyond the full council meetings which are already subject to the duty under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

2.2. Currently, only full Council meetings are required to be broadcast. The consultation seeks views on extending the duty to include other committees, and there are financial and resource implications for the Council deriving from the decision.

2.3 Due to the far reaching implication which could arise from a decision to extend the requirements to broadcast, the Cabinet is asked for political guidance on Cyngor Gwynedd's response to the consultation.

3 INTRODUCTION

3.1 The Welsh Government has launched a formal consultation seeking views on whether the statutory duty to broadcast local authority meetings should be extended, beyond the full council meetings which are already subject to the duty under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. A copy of the full consultation can be accessed through the following link:

Consultation on extending the duty on local authorities to broadcast meetings [HTML] | GOV. WALES

3.2 Currently, only full Council meetings are required to be broadcast, but a number of authorities are streaming other meetings voluntarily. Cyngor Gwynedd broadcasts the following meetings:

- Full Council
- Cabinet
- Planning
- Scrutiny (the three Scrutiny committees)

3.3 It should be noted that the above meetings are also hybrid (multi-venue) meetings in Gwynedd. Should the requirement to broadcast committees be extended, those meetings would not be required to be hybrid meetings. However, the work of preparing and running the webcast would be equivalent to holding a multi-venue meeting.

Objectives of the Consultation

3.4 The consultation seeks views on:

- whether the **duty should be extended to include other committees** such as the Cabinet, Scrutiny and Planning Committees;
- whether **similar duties should be imposed on Fire and Rescue Authorities** and **National Park Authorities**;
- what the **retention period** should be for recordings of broadcast meetings;
- the **costs, impact and practicality** for local authorities.

3.5 The Welsh Ministers' proposal is to require the following statutory committee meetings of the principal councils to be broadcast:

- Democratic Services Committees, *
- Governance and Audit, *
- Licensing*
- Planning,
- Overview and Scrutiny,
- and Standards, *
- also Cabinet meetings

3.6 Note that * above indicates the additional requirements to the current practice that would affect Cyngor Gwynedd. These meetings would not be required to be hybrid meetings, but officers would have to be on location in the chambers for the webcasting, and the 'set-up' work and resources for running the meetings would be similar to the hosting of a hybrid meeting that is broadcast.

3.7 Evidently there are specific resource implications in extending the provision further, particularly as current technology for webcasting in Cyngor Gwynedd is on very weak footing as it is based on analogue provision from different companies, and is therefore vulnerable to failure. The upgrading of the chambers, adequate and specialist staffing resources, costs of broadcast licences etc must be taken into account when considering the response.

3.8 It is noted that there is no standard system for webcasting committee meetings in Wales, with each authority having developed their own systems individually in order to webcast and hold hybrid meetings. There is no standard system for webcasting virtual meetins in Wales either. Due to the fragile position across the country, it is noted that a standard flexible technical solution is required for the whole of Wales, lead by the government of Wales, in order for all authorities and corporate joint committees to benefit easily from the the technology.

National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities

3.9 The report also consults on whether the duty to broadcast should be extended to National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities. While it is considered that it is a matter for those public bodies to respond, the principle of ensuring transparency to the public is equally applicable to these bodies as to local authorities. Note that the consultation does not extend to including the duty to broadcast Joint Corporate Committees.

Retention Periods

3.10 The consultation notes that the 2021 Act states that in relation to the broadcasting of full meetings of principal councils, a recording of the broadcast must be available electronically for a specified period after the meeting. The term 'specified period' has not been defined in law and therefore it is a matter for all principal councils to determine. Practices vary across Wales. The Welsh Minister is seeking views regarding the retention period of meeting recordings, and asks whether the period should be the same as the retention period for electronic minutes of meetings, i.e. six years.

3.11 The website states that the retention period for recordings of Cyngor Gwynedd committees is 6 months and that a copy is available upon request outside this period. The recordings are live on the website for

almost 12 months, and there is a specific cost to the authority for accessing any recording outside this period.

4. NEXT STEPS AND TIMETABLE

4.1 The deadline for responses is 28 November 2025.

5 ANY CONSULTATIONS HELD BEFORE RECOMMENDING THE DECISION

5.1 The draft response to the consultation was presented to the Democratic Services Committee for their comments on 4 November 2025. The views of the committee Members will be presented verbally to the Cabinet meeting.

5.2 Statutory Officers

Head of Finance:

"The draft response presented here unequivocally highlights the concern about the additional resources that might be necessary if the duty on local authorities to broadcast meetings were to be extended. I support the decision sought."

Monitoring Officer:

The in-depth consultation is on extending the statutory necessity to broadcast a democratic meeting of the Council. As can be seen from the report, the Council is already acting beyond legal requirement and is broadcasting a range of meetings. However, by imposing a legal requirement on the webcast of all relevant meetings, which is to be welcomed, it also means that the resources need to be provided meet the duty continuously . The response gives appropriate attention to the need to address the need for resources but also for effective systems to meet the demand.

APPENDIX A

Consultation questions.

Question 1 - Do you agree the duty to broadcast meetings live should be extended to additional meetings of a principal council?
The Council welcomes the principle of democratic transparency and the attempt to widen public access to the work of local government and as a means of strengthening public accountability. However, there are a number of practical and financial issues that must be considered before implementing any new duty. The Council is concerned that the new duty could result in significant financial pressures, particularly for broadcasting equipment, video storage and staffing resources. It would be appropriate for the Welsh Government to provide specific ongoing funding to support the extended duty. Given the current requirement to webcast the meetings of the Full Council, it is recommended that this is identified as Phase 1 of the journey. It is suggested that consideration should be given to extending the legal requirement to include meetings of the highest public interest in Phase 2, specifically the Cabinet, Planning Committees and Scrutiny Committees. It should then be extended to Phase 3 to include the Democracy Services, Governance and Audit, Licensing and Standards Committees, as a step in the future. There are specific resource implications in extending the provision further, particularly as current technology for webcasting is on very weak footing. It is noted that there is no standard system for webcasting committee meetings in Wales, with each authority having developed their own systems individually in order to webcast and hold hybrid meetings. There is no standard system for webcasting virtual meetins in Wales either. Due to the fragile position across the country, it is noted that a standard flexible technical solution is required for the whole of Wales, lead by the government of Wales, in order for all authorities and corporate joint committees to benefit easily from the the technology.
Question 2 - Are there other committees' meetings of a principal council you think the duty should be extended?
See the last paragraph of the response to question 1.
Question 3 - Do you agree the requirement to broadcast meetings should be extended to National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities?
The principle of ensuring transparency to the public applies equally to those bodies as it does to local authorities. It is recommended that these authorities commence their broadcasting arrangements as part of the extension referred to as 'phase 2' in Cyngor Gwynedd's response to question 1 above.

Question 4 - Should the broadcasting of National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authority meetings be extended to meetings beyond that of the full authority, e.g. standards committees?

It is a matter for the relevant authorities to provide guidance in their responses, however the principle of transparency is crucial.

Question 5 - In relation to principal councils, NPAs and FRAs, do you agree that recordings of meetings required to be broadcast should be retained?

A specific retention period should be identified for keeping recordings of meetings that must be broadcast, such as 6 or 12 months. It should be noted that the formal record of the committee is the written minutes of the meeting and not a recording of the webcast.

In addition, consideration should be given to the cost for retaining the recordings, as they are large digital files.

Question 6 - What, in your opinion, would be the likely effects of extending the duty to broadcast meetings on the Welsh language? We are particularly interested in any possible impact on opportunities to use the Welsh language and not treating the Welsh language less favourably than English. Do you think that there are opportunities to promote any positive effects? Do you think that there are opportunities to mitigate any adverse effects?

For Wales as a whole, the impact of extending the duty to broadcast council committees will have a positive impact on the Welsh language, with the language being heard in live discussions in Local Authorities. It would be necessary for legislation to clearly state that all committees are expected to be broadcast in Welsh and English, and not solely the Full Council meeting.

In Cyngor Gwynedd, extending the requirements would have a positive impact on the Welsh language. As all committees are already held through the medium of Welsh, broadcasting them would ensure that the Welsh language is heard more frequently online. We ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than English.

Please note that the arrangement of holding meetings through the medium of Welsh language is the DEFAULT arrangement in Gwynedd. No one has to submit a request in advance to speak Welsh. The requirement for all Local Authorities to provide simultaneous translation by default for all meetings, and a duty for Chairs to encourage speakers to contribute in Welsh would promote the Welsh language and mitigate any negative impacts.

If Welsh speakers have to submit a request to speak Welsh in a meeting, the Welsh language is therefore treated less favourably.

Question 7 - In your opinion, could extending the duty to broadcast meetings be formulated or changed so as to: • have positive effects or more positive effects on using the Welsh language and on not treating the Welsh language less

favourably than English; or • mitigate any negative effects on using the Welsh language and on not treating the Welsh language less favourably than English?
See the above answer regarding the default position to be able to contribute in Welsh at meetings. This would offer more opportunities for people to listen to the Welsh language live in committees or listen to a recording afterwards. This in turn will support the development and provision of Artificial Intelligence in Welsh. However, it must also be ensured that there are enough officers who have the right language skills to ensure accuracy and quality in the use of artificial intelligence. Some authorities are also using or considering using subtitles in webcasting – it should be ensured that Welsh subtitles are available as a matter of equality for all.
Question 8 - Please explain how you think broadcasting of council meetings impacts different social, economic and cultural groups, both positively and negatively and what measures can be undertaken to ensure equitable access and representation
In general, broadcasting more Council meetings has a positive impact on different social, economic and cultural groups while also reducing inequality. Ensuring open democracy for all is an important principle that should be respected. However, webcasting does not answer everyone's needs. It must be emphasised that there are some people in deprived and rural areas who do not have access to adequate web provision, or who lack access to equipment to watch webcasts. Not everyone is going to find it easy to listen via a computer, and viewing a screen is going to be difficult for some people.
Question 9 We have asked a number of specific questions. I If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them:
Please note that there is no reference in the consultation to the need to broadcast meetings of Joint Corporate Committees. It is considered that the Welsh Government should provide specific guidance on this, together with a budget for delivering this important element.

CYNGOR GWYNEDD – Report to Cyngor Gwynedd's Cabinet

Item title:	**COUNCIL TAX: DISCRETIONARY POWERS TO ALLOW DISCOUNTS AND/OR RAISE A PREMIUM ON SECOND HOMES AND LONG-TERM EMPTY DWELLINGS**
Cabinet Member:	**Councillor Huw Wyn Jones Cabinet Member for Finance**
Relevant Officer:	**Dewi Morgan, Head of Finance**
Meeting date:	**11 November 2025**

1. DECISION SOUGHT:

Recommend to the full Council on 4 December 2025 that the following is the favoured option of the Cabinet with regards to the level of Premium on the Council Tax of Second Homes and Long-Term Empty Dwellings for the 2026/27 financial year:

- **That Gwynedd Council allows NO discount on class A second homes, under Section 12 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (i.e. no change).**
- **That Gwynedd Council allows NO discount and RAISES A PREMIUM OF 150% on class B second homes, under Section 12B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (i.e. no change).**
- **That Gwynedd Council allows NO discount on homes that have been empty for 6 months or more and RAISES A PREMIUM OF 150% on homes that have been empty for 12 months or more, under Section 12A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992) (i.e. increase the premium from 100% to 150%).**

2. THE REASON WHY CABINET NEEDS TO MAKE THE DECISION:

2.1 In accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, the Council must make an annual decision if it wishes to levy a Council Tax Premium on long-term vacant properties and second homes ("periodically occupied dwellings"). Without a decision, a 50% discount on Council Tax on such properties would have to be offered.

2.2 While the final decision on the Council Tax discount or premium, and the level of the discount or premium, must be made by the full Council, in accordance with the Council's Constitution the Cabinet needs to make a recommendation to the full Council.

2.3 For the 2024/25 and 2025/26 financial years, the Council has charged a Council Tax Premium of 150% on second homes and 100% on long-term empty properties, but legislation allows the Council to charge a Premium of up to 300%.

2.4 However, if the Council were to increase the Premium rate, it will have to consider whether such a decision would be reasonable having regard to the statutory guidance, the outcome of research and legal advice that the authority has obtained.

2.5 A copy of the latest Statutory Guidance can be found at Appendix 2.

3. INTRODUCTION AND LOGIC

Background/ Introduction

3.1 The Local Government Finance Act 1992 allows the Council discretion to levy full Council Tax, allow a discount of up to 50%, or charge an additional Premium on Council Tax on certain classes of second homes and long-term empty properties.

3.2 The Council has adopted annually, since 1998, to allow NO discount for second homes.

3.3 The Council has adopted annually, since 2009, to allow NO discount for properties that have been vacant for 6 months or more.

3.4 Section 139 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 added Sections 12A and 12B to the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to include a discretionary right for Councils to raise an additional "Premium" of no more than 100% on dwellings that have been empty for 12 months or more (Section 12A) and relevant second homes (Section 12B).

3.5 On 8 December 2016, the Council resolved to charge a 50% Premium on Council Tax on second homes and long-term empty properties, with effect from 1 April 2018. On 4 March 2021, the Council resolved to increase the Premium to 100%, which was the highest possible level under the legislation, for the 2021/22 financial year, and on 2 December 2021 decided to maintain the level of the Premium at 100% for 2022/23.

3.6 *The Council Tax (Long-term Empty Dwellings and Dwellings Occupied Periodically) (Wales) Regulations 2022 (SI 2022/370 W.90*) have amended Sections 12A and 12B of the 1992 Act giving billing authorities the power to raise a Premium of up to 300% on the Council Tax of second homes and long-term empty dwellings for the 2023/24 and subsequent financial years.

3.7 In response to this legislative change, on 1 December 2022 the Council decided to increase the Premium on second homes to 150% and keep the Premium on long-term empty properties at 100% for the 2023/24 financial year. This followed a comprehensive public consultation being carried out during autumn 2022. On 7 December 2023 the Council decided to keep the Premium at the same level in 2024/25 and on the 5 December 2024 the Council decided to keep the Premium at the same level in 2025/26.

3.8 The Council's report on 1 December 2022, when the current level of the Premium was first set, is included in Appendix 1. This report explains all the rationale for setting those levels.

3.9 In 2022 it was concluded:

> *"12.6. The Cabinet has made its recommendation concluding that a similar justification cannot be established to increase the premium above the rate of 150%. Many of these further steps such as changes to the planning regime or business tax have not yet become operational and therefore we have not had the opportunity to assess the impact of these policies in the face of a very significant change in the Premium, or the practical implications."*

3.10 This followed an extensive consultation process considering the range of open increases of up to 300%. By now, several changes have come into effect and started to have an impact on the market. The business rates system has changed since 1 April 2023 increasing the requirements to allow the transfer of holiday properties to business tax to let for 182 days and an availability of 282 days.

3.11 In order to be able to defend a decision to raise a Premium at a higher rate than it currently is, a basis and rationale is needed for review.

3.12 The decision sought in this report would build on and be a development of the 2022 decision using the findings from the consultation to provide information and understanding of the impacts.

3.13 According to the statutory guidance:

> Any decision to vary or revoke a determination to apply a premium must be made before the beginning of the financial year to which it applies.
>
> Local authorities are also strongly encouraged to consult before making a determination to increase a premium to a level above 100% and to do so at least 6 months before the beginning of the financial year to which the proposed premium increase relates.
>
> This will enable the premium to be taken into account when setting council tax levels for the forthcoming year and allow taxpayers sufficient time to consider the impact of a higher premium on their own personal financial circumstances and make choices regarding their property

3.14 Whilst the new Guidance therefore gives the impression that Councils should carry out consultation before deciding to raise a premium and in particular before deciding to raise a premium above 100%, there is no requirement to do this every time a Council decides to raise the premium higher. The proposed resolution proposes to keep the premium rate on second homes as it is and raise the premium rate on empty properties.

3.15 As Cabinet considers reforming the rates, particular attention will be paid to the results of the consultation in 2022. The consultation was broad, received a significant response and was based on seeking views on an increase of up to 300% (the 2022 decision report is attached). But, appropriately and reflecting on the December 2022 decision, the findings of the research together with the wider information and assessments should be considered when considering the context and justification for a decision. The recommendation regarding long term empty properties is based on statistics and information which highlights the impact of the premium on the property of this particular type. It is noted that the level of long-term empty properties has remained effectively unchanged since the decision in 2022. The assumption taken at the time as a result of the consultation was to set a particular level to achieve the intention of the premium. The current statistics leads to the conclusion that the level needs to be revised. In consequence there is basis to continue to rely on the consultation and outcome when considering the latest information to review the long-term empty property premium level.

3.16 The risk of a legal challenge can never be completely removed, but the Research Work presented in the remainder of this report and in Appendix 3 could be weighed and measured to conclude whether this risk can be mitigated to an acceptable level.

4. RESEARCH WORK

4.1 Specific research was commissioned in 2024 by the full Council in order to analyse the impact that the Premium was having on the communities of Gwynedd.

4.2 The result of that research was published in November 2024, and they were used to make a premium rate decision for 2025/26.

4.3 That research shows that, (although it must be remembered that other factors may also be influencing the situation) the premium has made a contribution to bringing second homes back into use as primary residences.

4.4 The change in holiday accommodation regulations also appears to have influenced and continues to influence – resulting in a flow of properties from holiday accommodation to second homes, somewhat offsetting the impact of the trend (above) for second homes to switch to primary residences.

4.5 As for the impact of the premium on long-term vacant properties, it is difficult to find any definite pattern. A higher number had transferred after a premium increase in 2021, but subsequently the numbers have been very variable. It states that "there is no obvious long-lasting effect", over a period where the rate has remained at 100% since 2021.

4.6 Since that in-depth research, we have updated the data and analysed any further patterns or changes since November 2024. The result of the update to the Research is in Appendices 3(a) and 3(b).

4.7 As in the previous Research Work, no definite pattern is to be seen. The numbers of long-term vacant properties remain unchanged.

Other considerations

4.8 The research shows that the number of second homes has increased since 2024/25 after several years of decline, with the change more pronounced than it was in the November 2024 research. This change is the result of a legislative change whereby a property must now be let for 182 days a year to qualify for inclusion on the non-domestic rates list (see paragraph 3.10 above).

4.9 As a result of this change the Valuation Office Agency has transferred a number of properties within Gwynedd from the non-domestic rates regime to a Council Tax band and as there is no resident in the property these dwellings are also subject to a Premium.

4.10 Nevertheless, we understand that a large number of appeals have been lodged with the Valuation Office against the decision to transfer properties from one regime to another which means that the situation in terms of the number of second homes remains volatile at present. That is to say, although the trend of reduction in the number of second homes has ceased, that is as a result of a legislative change and this is not seen as a justification for changing the Premium rate on second homes (Section 12B of the 1992 Act) for 2026/27.

4.11 The Welsh Government is currently consulting on refining the classification of self-catering properties for local tax purposes, which may lead to changes to the "182 day" rules and this may change the situation in the coming year. This uncertainty is also an issue to consider and suggests that it would be premature to switch the premium rate to second homes at this time.

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Statistics and research over several years suggest that the Premium on second homes is realising its intention, and that the recent increase in numbers is the result of other legislative factors as highlighted above. Taking into account all the issues highlighted above, it is not seen that there is justification for increasing the Premium on second homes for 2026/27.

5.2 On the other hand, the research has shown that keeping the Premium rate for long-term empty properties at a lower level than the Premium on second homes has not had an impact on reducing the number of empty properties. The Council has a Empty Homes Scheme in place which aims to bring long-term empty properties back into use, but nevertheless the number of dwellings that have been vacant for a number of years remains a concern and as the research work notes (Part 4 above) a 100% Premium level is not to be seen to have had an impact on this.

5.3 It is appropriate, therefore, that the level of the Premium on long-term empty properties be reviewed.

5.4 The Statutory Guidance states:

> There are a range of factors which could help inform local authorities in deciding whether to charge a premium. Whilst some factors will be specific to either longterm empty properties or second homes, others will be common to both. A list of these factors is set out below to assist local authorities. It is not intended to be exhaustive.
>
> - Numbers and percentages of long-term empty properties and/or second homes in the local area.
> - Distribution of long-term empty properties and/or second homes and other housing throughout the authority and an assessment of their impact on property values in particular areas.
> - Potential impact on local economies and the tourism industry.
> - Patterns of demand for, and availability of, affordable homes.
> - Potential impact on local public services.
> - Potential impact on the local Community
> - Potential impact on the Welsh language.
> - Other measures that are available to authorities to increase housing supplyand the availability of affordable housing.
> - Other measures that are available to authorities to help bring empty properties back into use

5.5 Any increase in the rate of the Premium may be subject to a legal challenge and in that respect, consideration must be given to what has changed in the last year since the Council resolved in December 2024 that the Premium is 100% appropriate level for the Premium on long-term empty properties.

5.6 As of June 2025 there were 1,121 long-term vacant properties in the county as follows:

vacant for between 1 and 3 years	vacant for between 3 and 5 years	has been vacant for more than 5 years.
574	231	316

5.7 It can be seen that over 500 dwellings have been vacant in Gwynedd for over 3 years, in the context of a situation where a housing crisis has been identified. The Empty Homes Team within the Housing and Property Department is addressing the situation in the face of limited resources, and this was the subject of a report to the Care Scrutiny Committee on 25 September 2025: Report . The Committee was keen to be assured that suitable plans were in place to bring empty properties back into use. Further to that, a group of officers from a range of departments are considering action to be taken with problematic vacant properties. Against this backdrop, therefore, the latest research and scrutiny highlights that it is increasingly difficult to justify different ratings for a long-term empty property premium compared to second homes.

5.8 Should there be a desire to increase the level of the Premium on long-term empty properties beyond 150%, a new public consultation would need to be carried out.

6. USE OF THE PREMIUM

6.1 Since the introduction of the Premium at the start of the 2018/19 financial year, money raised through the Premium has contributed to funding the Housing Action Plan. Since the 2023/24 financial year £3m has been used in the revenue budget towards funding services for homeless people.

6.2 The Housing Action Plan aims to build, purchase or refurbish over 2,000 units that will help over 15,000 people in Gwynedd over the life of the Scheme.

6.3 Following changes to the housing situation, the needs of the people of Gwynedd and financial sources in recent years, particularly in light of the Covid-19 pandemic and Brexit, we recently took the opportunity to review the Plan and extend it to 2028/29, taking advantage of new opportunities to expand and help even more residents of the county with their housing situation.

6.4 The Housing Action Plan will invest over £190m over the period of the Scheme, drawing on a number of financial sources, such as the Welsh Government's Housing Support Grant and Social Housing Grant, the Council's Asset Management Plan and of course the Council Tax Premium on Second Homes and Empty Houses.

6.5 The funding received from the Council Tax Premium fund (approximately 26% of the total value of the Scheme) is fully earmarked against several projects in the Housing Action Plan, such as supported accommodation schemes, building our own houses, contributing to residential elements in community schemes, bringing the county's empty houses back into use, and ensuring disabled people can continue to live in their current homes.

6.6 Being able to include the Premium as a financial source has enabled the Department to attract several additional grants. We prioritised spending those grants first because they had a time limit, which in turn has allowed us to prioritise premium spending and ensure that that benefits the people of Gwynedd the most.

6.7 Of all the Scheme's financial expenditure/commitments to date, around £15.5m has come from the Premium fund (up to the end of the 24/25 financial year).

6.8 This funding has been spent on several schemes in several areas, which has led to helping 11,385 of Gwynedd people. Some of the highlights over the past year includes:

- **Supported Housing Schemes (Scheme 1a):** Work is ongoing on preparing and adapting the former Crown Buildings, Penrallt, Caernarfon, to be transformed into supported accommodation for those in housing need. Recently the purchase of Tŷ Glyn, Bangor was completed in order to address the housing need in Bangor.
- **Buy to Let Scheme (Scheme 2c):** 51 homes were purchased under the banner of the Buy to Let Scheme to date, and 20 of those have been let to locals in housing need, with another 6 expected to be let in the next few weeks, and renovation work is expected to complete on another 13 before the end of December. Through this Scheme, the Council offers a suitable home for our residents, residents like Ffion and Rhodri who moved into their new home in Porthmadog recently – more on their story here: Cyngor Gwynedd's Buy to Let Scheme offers a key to the future for a young couple
- **Tŷ Gwynedd (Scheme 3a):** Work on the Llanberis and Coed Mawr sites are making good progress. The construction work at Llanberis is expected to complete in the next few months, and the process of marketing the homes for prospective residents has begun. We expect the handover to be completed in November, soon after which they will be sold. Good progress is being made on the Coed Mawr site too, with structural work almost complete.
- **Engaging and communicating with communities (Scheme 3c):** During April, May and June this year, the second set of events in the Tai ar Daith

series were held. Tai ar Daith takes officers in the housing and connected fields out to the community to speak to the residents of Gwynedd. This time, visits were held at Bethesda (where 43 members of the public and Members came to see us), Porthmadog (40), Tywyn (38) and Nefyn (37). We intend to hold a third series in 2026, and discussions on locations and arrangements are already underway.

- **Gwynedd Empty Homes Grant (Scheme 3dd):** in August this year, the Council announced a change to the Empty Homes Grant criteria, which now means even more people can be eligible. The income threshold was raised to £60,000, and a maximum grant of £25,000 is now available. The eligibility criteria for the property has also changed, where Council tax bands are now used. More information can be found here: More Gwynedd residents now eligible for empty home renovation grant. To date, a total of 331 empty homes have been restored as a result of the Council's Support, with 136 of those being brought back into use as a result of the Gwynedd Empty Homes Grant.
- **Council Tax Exemption on Empty homes (Cynllun 3e):** Scheme 3e offers an exemption of up to a year on Council Tax on empty homes for owners who need to complete essential renovation works on their homes. To date 142 households have benefitted from this support, which has therefore contributed to bringing 142 empty homes back into use in Gwynedd.
- **Siop un Stop for housing matters (Scheme 6)**: On 15 September, 2025, the One Stop Shop launched, which offers one front door for all Gwynedd housing enquiries. The service's aim is to make access to information and advice on housing matters simpler and easier for the county's residents, and the feedback so far is positive, which 83 people (between 15-30 September) having been helped. In the period leading up to the launch date, drop-in sessions were held for Elected Members, and the new arrangements were promoted on our social media channels and through the media (click here to read the press release).

6.9 If the Full Council decides to increase the level of the Premium on long-term empty properties from 100% to 150% for 2026/27 a formal decision on the use of the additional income will be made when setting the 2026/27 Budget on 5 March 2026, taking into account the requirements of the Statutory Guidance (Appendix 2).

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 The Equality Impact Assessment contained in the Appendix 1c reflects recent requirements and developments, changing circumstances, and the results of the comprehensive consultation carried out in 2022.

7.2 The outcome of the Equality Impact Assessment completed in 2022 in setting the current level of the Premium is that there is little evidence that increasing the premium on second homes would discriminate against a protected group, with data suggesting that second home owners tend to be older people and identify themselves as English. The policy from a Council Tax Premium perspective is intended to recognise that long-term empty properties and second homes increase some of Gwynedd's social problems, and owners should make a financial contribution to mitigate some of the disadvantages they cause.

7.3 The 2022 assessment also concluded that the Premium would have an overall positive impact on the Welsh language and the balance of communities as the premium product funds the Housing Action Plan which supports local families to buy an affordable home. However, it is noted that this is the result of a number of positive and negative factors affecting the Language, which are covered in a number of places in this report and the appendices.

7.4 The assessment has been updated in October 2025, and comes to the same conclusions set out in the previous one.

8. THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS (WALES) ACT 2015

8.1 There is a duty to act in accordance with the principle of sustainable development, which is to seek to ensure that the needs of the present are met without jeopardising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. In acting in accordance with this general duty the Council needs to take into account the importance of long-term impact, being integrated, inclusive, collaborative and preventive in the development and implementation of the proposal before it.

8.2 In accordance with the requirements of the Act, Cyngor Gwynedd has adopted well-being objectives. Particular attention is drawn to the following objectives:

- Communities that thrive and thrive for the long term
- Healthy and Independent Residents with a Good Quality of Life

8.3 The current Premium funds the Council's Housing Action Plan, which is a proactive attempt to strengthen the sustainability of those communities within Gwynedd that have a high number of second homes and long-term empty homes.

8.4 The Council's Housing Strategy sets out the vision of "Ensuring that the people of Gwynedd have access to a suitable and high-quality, affordable home that improves their quality of life".

8.5 The Strategy identifies five objectives that had to be met if the Council was to achieve this vision:

1. Nobody is homeless in Gwynedd
2. Social housing available to everyone who needs one
3. Everyone's home in Gwynedd is affordable for them
4. Tai Gwynedd is environmentally friendly
5. Homes have a positive influence on the health and well-being of the people of Gwynedd.

8.6 The Housing Action Plan includes a number of projects which, taken together, deliver on these objectives.

9. NEXT STEPS

9.1 The Cabinet recommendation will be presented to the full Council at its meeting on 4 December.

THE VIEWS OF STATUTORY OFFICERS:

Monitoring Officer:

I have had the opportunity to advise on the report. The procedure for the decision and the steps to make a recommendation are in line with the legal guidance that has been provided.

Head of Finance:

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

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

MEETING:	**Full Council**
DATE:	**1 December 2022**
CABINET MEMBER:	**Councillor Ioan Thomas** **Cabinet Member for Finance**
TITLE:	**COUNCIL TAX: DISCRETIONARY POWERS TO ALLOW DISCOUNTS AND/OR RAISE A PREMIUM**
OBJECTIVE:	**Formal ratification for 2022/23 of previous decisions not to allow any discounts for second homes and to disallow discount on empty properties, and to raise a Premium of 150% or 100% on relevant properties.**
CONTACT OFFICER:	**Dewi Morgan, Head of Finance**

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1. The Local Government Finance Act 1992 provides the Council with the discretion to charge full Council Tax, allow a discount of up to 50%, or to charge a Premium of up to an additional 100% on the Council Tax of certain classes of second homes and long-term empty properties.

1.2. The Council has resolved annually since 1998 to allow NO discounts to second homes.

1.3. The Council has resolved annually since 2009 to allow NO discounts in respect of properties that have been empty for 6 months or more.

1.4. Section 139 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 added Sections 12A and 12B to the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to include a discretionary right for Councils to raise an additional "Premium" of no more than 100% on dwellings that have been empty for 12 months or more (Section 12A) and relevant second homes (Section 12B).

1.5. On 8 December 2016, the Council resolved to raise a Premium of 50% on the Council Tax of relevant second homes and long-term empty dwellings, to be implemented from 1 April 2018. On 4 March 2021, the Council resolved to increase the Premium 100%, which is the maximum level allowed by legislation, for the 2021/22 financial year.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that for the financial year 2023/24 Gwynedd Council:

- **Allows NO discount on class A second homes, under Section 12 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (i.e. no change from 2022/23).**
- **Allows NO discount and RAISES A PREMIUM OF 100% on class B second homes, under Section 12B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (i.e. increase from 100% to 150%).**
- **Allows NO discount on homes that have been empty for 6 months or more and RAISES A PREMIUM OF 100% on homes that have been empty for 12 months or more, under Section 12A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (i.e. no change from 2022/23).**

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1. The Local Government Finance Act 1992 provides the Council with the discretion to charge full Council Tax, allow a discount of up to 50%, or to charge a Premium of up to an additional 100% on the Council Tax of certain classes of second homes and long-term empty properties.

2.2. The Council has resolved annually since 1998 to allow NO discounts to second homes.

2.3. The Council has resolved annually since 2009 to allow NO discounts in respect of properties that have been empty for 6 months or more.

2.4. Section 139 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 added Sections 12A and 12B to the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to include a discretionary right for Councils to raise an additional "Premium" of no more than 100% on dwellings that have been empty for 12 months or more (Section 12A) and relevant second homes (Section 12B).

2.5. On 8 December 2016, the Council resolved to raise a Premium of 50% on the Council Tax of relevant second homes and long-term empty dwellings, to be implemented from 1 April 2018. On 4 March 2021, the Council resolved to increase the Premium 100%, which is the maximum level allowed by legislation, for the 2021/22 financial year, and on 2 December 2021 it resolved to maintain the Premium level at 100% for 2022/23.

2.6. The *Council Tax (Long-term Empty Dwellings and Dwellings Occupied Periodically) (Wales) Regulations 2022 (SI 2022/370 W.90)* have amended Sections 12A and 12B of the 1992 Act giving billing authorities the power to raise a Premium of up to 300% on the Council Tax of second homes and long-term empty dwellings for the 2023/24 and subsequent financial years.

2.7. To enable it to make a recommendation at its meeting on 22 November 2022, Cabinet resolved on 27 September 2022 that it would hold a public consultation in order to obtain public opinion on how the change in the Act should be responded to. The consultation period has concluded, and the purpose of this report is to present the results of the consultation, as well as other relevant considerations, so that Cabinet can weigh up the feedback that has been received before deciding on a recommendation to be presented to the full Council.

2.8. The results of the public consultation are included in Part 4 of this report.

3. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

Context

3.1. The terminology used in Section 12B is not "second homes" or "holiday homes" but rather "dwellings occupied periodically". The Act states that the conditions for a property to be subject to a "second home" Council Tax premium is, "***there is no resident of the dwelling, and the dwelling is substantially furnished***". That is, the property is not anyone's main home, but it has been furnished. The Act does not include any provision to be able to distinguish on the basis of where the owner lives, or if it is used for the purposes of holidays.

3.2. For the purposes of collecting Council Tax, *The Council Tax (Prescribed Classes of Dwellings) (Wales) Regulations 1998 (SI 1998/105)* have categorised 'second homes' into two classes, namely classes A and B. Class C refers to empty properties:

- **Class A** – Second homes which are unoccupied and furnished, with a restriction on occupancy for a period of at least 28 consecutive days in any 12-month period.
- **Class B** – Second homes which are unoccupied and furnished.
- **Class C** – empty and unfurnished properties, and have been such for a period of over 6 months.

3.3. A "resident" in relation to any dwelling means an individual who has attained the age of 18 years and has his sole or main residence in the dwelling (Section 6(5)) Local Government Finance Act 1992).

3.4. As a result of the changes that came into force as a result of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, the matter was considered by the Full Council on 8 December 2016, which resolved to raise a Premium of 50% on class B second homes and on class C long-term empty properties (empty for 12 months or more) in 2018/19.

3.5. All background papers in relation to the first determination to raise a Premium are to be found on the Gwynedd Council website:

https://democracy.cyngor.gwynedd.gov.uk/ielistdocuments.aspx?cid=130&mid=1656&ver=4

3.6. On 4 March 2021 the Council decided that it would increase the level of premium to 100% on relevant properties. All background papers in relation to this decision can be found on Gwynedd Council's website:

https://democracy.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/ielistdocuments.aspx?cid=130&mid=4215&ver=4

3.7. The Local Government Finance Act 1992 states that any determination with regards to Section 12, 12A and 12B must be made annually, by the full Council.

3.8. The financial strategy for 2022/23, and the Council's grant settlement from the Welsh Government, is based on continuation of the policy to allow NO discounts, and any change to that policy would need to be funded by the Council in 2022/23.

3.9. The regulations for setting the tax base have been written so that a decision to raise a Premium does not affect the Council's grant settlement from the Welsh Government.

3.10. On 9 November 2022 there were:

- **4,564** dwellings subject to the Premium on second homes (Class B)
- **229** of further second homes in Class B but not paying the Premium as they were subject to one of the exemptions outlined in Part 8 below.
- **753** properties within Class A where occupation is prohibited for a consecutive period of at least 28 days in the relevant year.

3.11. At the same time, **1,099** properties were subject to the Premium on a long-term empty dwelling.

3.12. Changes over time can be seen in the table below:

	July 2016	November 2020	November 2022
Class B Second Homes	4,841	4,718	4,564
Annedd gwag hirdymor	1,115	1,130	1,099

** exemption not applicable*

Statutory Requirements

3.13. When giving councils powers to raise a Premium (originally up to 100% and then up to 300%) on the Council Tax of second homes and long-term empty dwellings, the Welsh Government published statutory guidance, *Guidance on the Implementation of the Council Tax Premiums on Long-Term Empty Homes and Second Homes in Wales*. A copy of the Statutory Guidance is found in Appendix 1.

3.14. Paragraphs 20 to 22 of the Guidance outline what a local authority needs to consider when planning to introduce a Premium. These were considered in detail in 2016 when Gwynedd Council decided to introduce a 50% Premium on second homes and long-term empty dwellings, and then every year when coming to a decision on the Premium for the following year. If Cabinet decides to recommend an increase in the level of premium it will need to consider the following again, and how the evidence collected achieves the following.

20. The discretion given to local authorities to charge a premium is intended to be a tool to help local authorities to:

- **bring long-term empty homes back into use to provide safe, secure and affordable homes; and**
- **support local authorities in increasing the supply of affordable housing and enhancing the sustainability of local communities.**

21. In considering whether or not to charge a premium, regard should be given to these aims. Authorities should take into account the particular housing need and circumstances in their area.

22. There are a range of factors which could help inform local authorities in deciding whether to charge a premium. Whilst some factors will be specific to either long-term empty homes or second homes, others will be common to both. A list of these factors is set out below to assist local authorities. It is not intended to be exhaustive.

- **Numbers and percentages of long-term empty homes or second homes in the area;**
- **Distribution of long-term empty homes or second homes and other housing throughout the authority and an assessment of their impact on property values in particular areas;**
- **Potential impact on local economies and the tourism industry;**
- **Patterns of demand for, and availability of, affordable homes**
- **Potential impact on local public services;**
- **Potential impact on the local community;**

- **Other measures that are available to authorities to increase housing supply;**
- **Other measures that are available to authorities to help bring empty properties back into use.**

3.15. When introducing of the 50% Premium, particular attention was paid to two studies. Firstly, a detailed analysis undertaken in 2013 supported the introduction of a premium, whilst also noting a need for action to control / block the transfer of second homes to being commercial holiday lets subject to non-domestic rates. The document included a detailed analysis supporting the Council's position that it should be given the right to raise a Premium on second homes. The outcome of this analysis was shared with members at the time, and was a key consideration in making the decision to raise a Premium on second homes.

3.16. Similarly, the Housing Strategy 2013-17 addressed empty properties within Gwynedd, and the Empty Homes Strategy's mission statement was: "Gwynedd Council will endeavour to bring empty properties back into use. Our aim is to contribute to the well-being of neighbourhoods, increase the supply of housing, reduce homelessness or the possibility of homelessness, while at the same time reducing the pressure on the Housing Waiting List".

3.17. The Council has now adopted a new Housing Strategy (full Council, 18 July 2019), and three key reports have been addressed by Cabinet in December 2020 and June 2021:

<u>15 December 2020</u>

Holiday Homes Research Work

Housing Action Plan

<u>15 June 2021</u>

Second Homes – Developing New Policies in Wales

3.18. The above is key evidence when considering if there is justification for changing the current level of the Premium.

Second Homes

Holiday Homes Research Work

3.19. The outcome of the Holiday Homes Research Work provides a background of the current situation in Gwynedd in terms of "holiday homes", and the combined effect of second homes and self-catering holiday units on Gwynedd society:

Cabinet Report:
https://democracy.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/documents/s27960/Item%208%20-%20Report%20Holiday%20Homes.pdf

Appendix – Research:
https://democracy.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/documents/s27959/Item%208%20-%20Appendix%20-%20Holiday%20Homes%20Research%20Work.pdf

3.20. This research was approved by Cabinet for submission to the Welsh Government. The decision was made "in light of the need to obtain better control of houses being taken out of the supply available for local people, and thus benefit local residents first".

3.21. The research considered "holiday homes" as a combination of second homes and self-catering holiday units. The study highlighted the high number of dwellings used within Gwynedd for holiday purposes, with over 4,800 re-homes and around 2,000 self-catering holiday units (November 2020):

	Gwynedd	Cymru
Number of residential units	61,645	988,418
Number of second homes	4,873	18,547
Total holiday accommodation (nondomestic business units)	1,976	6,906
Combined total	6,849	25453
Combined percentage of holiday homes	10.76%	2.56%

Source: Holiday Homes Research Work, December 2020

3.22. The conclusion of this report was that research work recognised there are some regions in the UK and countries/cities on the continent that have implemented, or are in the process of implementing, measures in order to attempt to control short-term holiday accommodation. The control methods vary and often depend on contextual factors in terms of the impact of holiday accommodation on the local area and beyond. The research shows without any doubt that high rates of holiday accommodation have a detrimental impact on communities economically, socially and culturally.

3.23. Over 1 in 10 residential units in Gwynedd are holiday accommodation with 8% being second homes. Self-catering holiday units are not subject to the Council Tax regime as they have transferred to the non-domestic rating list, and more attention is given to these properties in Part 8 of this report.

3.24. As the Holiday Homes Research notes, since the introduction of a council tax premium on second homes in 2018 and the introduction of the rates relief scheme for eligible self-catering holiday accommodation units paying the non-domestic rates, the number of second homes has gradually decreased with the number of properties paying non-domestic rates gradually increasing.

3.25. However, legislative changes that will take effect in April 2023 are expected to likely slow this transition. More details on this can be found in Part 6 below.

Second Homes: Developing new policies in Wales

3.26. In March 2021 a comprehensive report titled "Second Homes – Developing New Policies in Wales" (author Dr Simon Brooks) was published in response to a commission by the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol and the Minister for Mental Health, Wellbeing and the Welsh Language in the Welsh Government. A copy of the report can be found here:

Second Homes: Developing new policies in Wales

3.27. The report is comprehensive, but one of the points raised within it is that "*much current discourse surrounding second homes and their impact on the sustainability of Welsh communities and the Welsh language is anecdotal and not based on detailed research. It is 19 years since the publication of the last comprehensive study of the field. As a result, many assumptions and claims made in public debate in Wales today about second homes require further consideration.*" The report goes on to list four common assumptions:

- Assumption 1: Second homes are responsible for the increase in house prices in specific communities
- Assumption 2: If there were fewer second homes, local people would move to these communities to live
- Assumption 3: Reducing house prices is desirable
- Assumption 4: Second homes harm the Welsh language

3.28. The report goes on to consider these four assumptions in turn, and comes to the following conclusion.

3.29. "The complete elimination of second homes would not the best solution for communities where they form a significant part of the housing stock. For the reasons noted, it is probable that suddenly reverting second homes to use as principal residencies would lead to a significant increase in permanent population movement to rural Wales which could have a harmful effect on the Welsh language.

3.30. "In Welsh-speaking coastal communities in an area such as Dwyfor where 20% and more of the housing stock are second homes, converting second homes into principle residencies in an uncontrolled manner could be catastrophic.

3.31. "However increasing the percentage of second homes in these communities would also be detrimental as it would reduce the absolute numbers of Welsh speakers locally. The cruelty of the situation facing the Welsh-speaking community is that converting more dwelling houses into second homes is detrimental to the Welsh language, but a large or sudden reduction in the number of second homes would also be detrimental. Both things are true as they are associated with the same phenomenon, which is the inability of local people to compete in the housing market against buyers from outside the community.

3.32. *"There is an argument therefore for drafting public policy which aims to ensure stability in the number of second homes in affected communities, or which aims to reduce the number of second homes gradually over a number of years*".

3.33. Dr Brooks' report contains 12 recommendations and on 15 June 2021 Cabinet discussed the Council's response to the report:

Cyngor Gwynedd's Response to the report "Second Homes: Developing new policies in Wales"

3.34. The Cabinet's decision was as follows:

"To agree the Council's response to the report "Second Homes - Developing New Policies in Wales" as set out in part 9 of this report and in particular highlighting the need to modify recommendation number 7 - Short-term Holiday Accommodation and Business Rates.

The Leader agreed to formally communicate the response to the Welsh Government and call on them to adopt and implement the most effective recommendations as a matter of urgency in order to respond to the housing crisis facing the communities of Gwynedd".

Empty Dwellings

3.35. Since the Premium was first introduced in 2018 Gwynedd Council has raised the same meeting on second homes and long-term empty properties. One of the reasons for this was the practicality of keeping an overview of the properties that are furnished and those that are not (which is the practical difference between the two types of properties).

3.36. However, some billing authorities in Wales charge a different rate of Premium on long-term empty properties and second homes, and this is also an option in Gwynedd.

3.37. It should also be noted that a total of 1,099 long-term empty properties, while relatively low compared to the number of second homes within Gwynedd, is a high figure when considering the demand for affordable homes within the county and this is recognised in the Housing Strategy. According to Stats Wales, estimates suggest that Gwynedd is 5th out of the 22 local authorities in Wales in terms of a number of long-term empty properties.

3.38. In comparison with the second homes and properties that have transferred, it is seen that the long-term empty properties within Gwynedd tend to be in lower Council Tax bands than Gwynedd properties as a whole; it is particularly seen that over 20% of them are in Band A, compared to less than 15% of the overall stock.

Housing Strategy 2019-2024

3.39. The Council adopted its Housing Strategy 2019-2024, "Homes for People in Gwynedd" in July 2019:

https://www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/en/Council/Documents---Council/Strategies-and-policies/Housing/Strategaeth-Tai-v29-Terf-English.pdf

3.40. The Strategy notes the vision of "Ensure that the people of Gwynedd have access to a suitable Home of a high standard that is affordable and improves their quality of life.". The Strategy notes the following on empty homes: "*We have identified approximately 1,300 empty houses across the County. These are houses that have been empty for some time and their condition can be very poor. This is a waste of a Resource when you consider that nearly 2,000 people are on the Council's waiting list. We believe that the list of empty houses is not complete, and efforts need to be increased to find them and return them into use as homes for our residents*".

4. HOUSING ACTION PLAN

4.1. The Housing Action Plan translates the Strategy into specific projects to address the situation.

4.2. In 2019 the Council established the new Housing and Property Department as it had identified the need to achieve more in the field of housing. Gwynedd residents were facing a number of challenges at the time, which means that it was extremely challenging to gain access to suitable housing within our communities. The Council has clearly stated that this is not a sustainable situation, and that we need to respond in every way possible.

Cabinet Report:
https://democracy.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/documents/s27956/Item%206%20-%20Housing%20Action%20Plan.pdf

A link to the Housing Action Plan is here:
https://democracy.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/documents/s27957/Item%206%20-%20Appendix%20A%20-%20Housing%20Action%20Plan.pdf

4.3. When adopting the Plan, the Council knew that a number of measures would be needed, many of which were beyond the direct control of the Council, if we are to be able to achieve genuine fairness for local residents in the field of housing. This Housing Action Plan is one of these measures and allows us to aim to directly act to the best of our abilities in order to attempt to reconcile the current situation.

4.4. In order to ensure that the Council takes every opportunity within its direct control in the field of housing, the Housing Action Plan includes 33 various projects tailored in an attempt to respond to each of our objectives in this field, which are:

- No one is homeless in Gwynedd
- Social housing available to all who need one
- Everyone's home in Gwynedd is affordable to them
- Gwynedd Housing are environmentally friendly
- Homes having a positive influence on the health and well-being of the people of Gwynedd.

5. PUBLIC CONSULTATION

5.1. It was explained to the Cabinet in September 2022 that the statutory guidance*, Guidance on the Implementation of the Council Tax Premiums on Long-Term Empty Homes and Second Homes in Wales*, also notes:

> **23. The determination by a local authority to charge a premium under section 12A or 12B of the 1992 Act must be made by full Council. Prior to doing so, a local authority must give due consideration to its statutory duties to carry out equality impact assessments under the Equality Act 2010 and the Welsh Public Sector Equality Duties 2011 and to all other relevant considerations. A local authority should also give consideration to engagement and consultation with key stakeholders, including the local electorate, before taking a decision as to whether or not to charge one or both of the premiums.**

5.2. The *LimeSurvey* software usually used by the Council was used to produce a questionnaire. The public consultation was launched on 30 September 2022 and it was open until 28 October 2022. Press releases resulted in a number of press and media articles and items. Messages started to be published on social media at the same time to promote the consultation. A second press release was issued in October in good time before the deadline, and there have been several reminders on the Council's Facebook and Twitter accounts.

<u>Social Media and Mailing</u>

5.3. To ensure that awareness of the consultation was as wide as possible, on 29 September a letter was sent to owners of all second home and long-term empty properties informing them of the consultation; where there was a correspondence address on the Council Tax system that differed from the address of the property in question, the correspondence address was used.

5.4. We are therefore confident that reasonable efforts have been made to raise awareness amongst the people of Gwynedd and owners of second homes and long-term empty properties to inform them of the consultation so that they can respond, and that this is evidence that a clear effort has been made to engage with key stakeholders.

5.5. It is not possible to include a checking facility that would ensure that an individual could only express an opinion once. It is important to note that this exercise is not a public vote or referendum but rather a consultation exercise designed to gather the views of the full-time residents of Gwynedd as well as owners of dwellings occupied periodically and long-term empty dwellings on ongoing issues. That is, a crude account of the solutions for and against increasing the Premium will not be the main factor that will need to be considered, but nevertheless the figures below give Cabinet members a sense of the number and direction of responses.

5.6. It is a fundamental principle that any consultation is carried out when the proposals are formulated and that the results of the consultation are taken into account conscientiously in reaching a position. Therefore, in making its recommendation, Cabinet will need to give due consideration to the issues and concerns contained in the consultation responses, so that there is a full picture of the issues that have been drawn to its attention.

5.7. The Research and Information Team has made considerable efforts since the consultation closing date on 28 October to analyse the results. The full outcome of their work can be found in Appendix 2.

<u>The Number of Responses</u>

5.8. A total of **7,330** responses were received to the questionnaire. There were 7,277 online questionnaire responses and 53 paper responses. This is the largest number of responses the Council has seen to any consultation in recent years.

5.9. Of the respondents, 3,518 (48.0%) stated their main home was in Gwynedd, and 2,690 (36.7%) stated their main home was outside Gwynedd.

5.10. Of the respondents:

- 3,646 (49.7%) said that they did not own a second home or a long-term empty dwelling
- 3,447 (47.0%) said they owned a second home
- 201 (2.7%) said they owned a long-term empty dwelling
- 36 (0.5%) said they owned a second home and a long-term empty dwelling

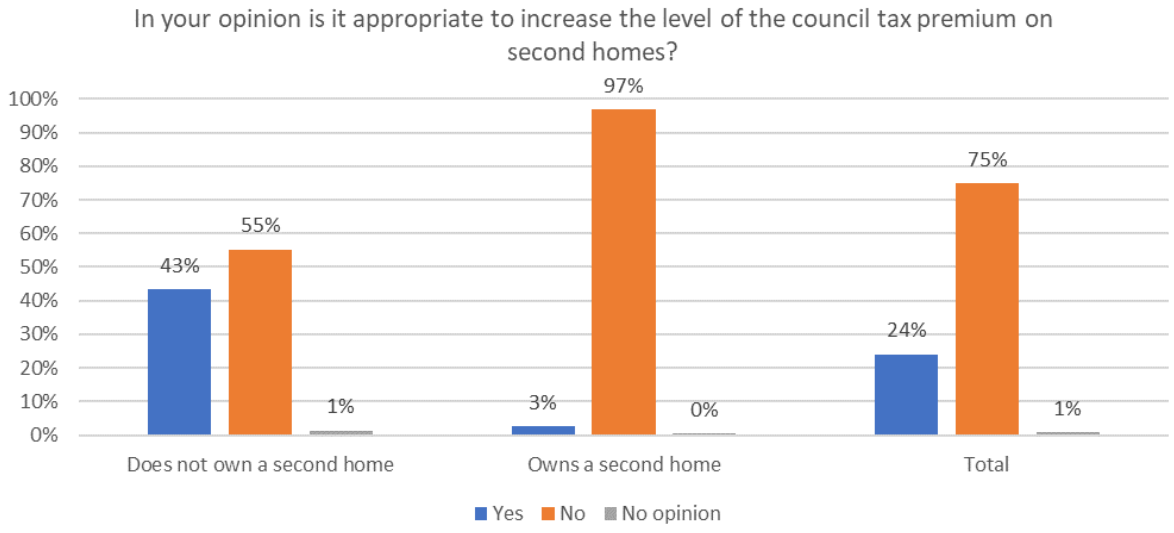
5.11. Just over half of respondents, therefore, (50.3%) owned either a second home or a long-term empty dwelling in Gwynedd (or both).

<u>Analysing the Results – Second Homes</u>

5.12. In total, over half of respondents (58.7%, N=4,304) thought that second homes were currently having a positive impact on local communities, while 27.7% thought they were having a negative impact, with 8.2% thinking they were having no impact. 5.4% of respondents had no opinion on this.

5.13. However, by looking at differences between respondents who own a second home and those who do not, a significant difference in opinion is seen, with 80.5% of respondents who own a second home thinking that second homes currently have a positive effect on local communities, while around 40% of respondents who do not own a second home or long-term vacant property are of this opinion.

5.14. A key question in the consultation was ***Currently the Council Tax Premium on second homes is 100%. The Council is considering whether to increase the level of the Council Tax Premium. Do you think this is appropriate?***



5.15. In total, 75% of respondents considered it not appropriate to increase the level of Council Tax Premium on second homes. 24.1% thought it appropriate to increase it, with 0.9% not having an opinion.

5.16. However, by separating the answers between respondents who own a second home and those who do not there is some difference of opinion, with the overwhelming majority of respondents who own a second home opposing increasing the premium level. Among respondents who do not own a second home the view was more divided, but with a majority here also (54.1%) of the view that it would not be appropriate to increase the premium.

5.17. Of the 24% who supported increasing the Premium, 66% wanted to increase it to 300%, and to do so immediately.

5.18. While emphasising again that the process was not a referendum, but a consultation seeking views and comments to assist the authority in reaching a decision, the responses give a sense of public opinion on the proposal.

5.19. In total over half of respondents (59.0%,) felt that the level of premium on second homes would have no impact on the Welsh language. 73.9% of respondents who own a second home believe that increasing the level of premium would have no impact on the Welsh language, with 18.7% believing that increasing the premium would have a negative impact. Among respondents who do not own a second home or long-term empty property, opinion is somewhat more divided with 45.6% believing it would not have an impact on the Welsh language, 36.4% believing it would have a positive impact and 13.8% believing it would have a negative impact.

5.20. In total a majority of respondents (62.3%) thought that increasing the council tax premium on second homes would have a negative impact on the local community. 23.0% thought increasing the premium would have a positive impact on the local community and 12.3% thought it would not have an impact.

5.21. However, the vast majority (81.4%) of respondents who own a second home believe increasing the premium level would have a negative impact on the local community. 13.7% thought increasing the premium would have no impact.

5.22. Among respondents who do not own a second home or long-term empty property, opinion is very divided with 44.8% believing increasing the premium would have a negative impact on the local community, 42.4% believing it would have a positive impact and 10.6% believing there would be no impact.

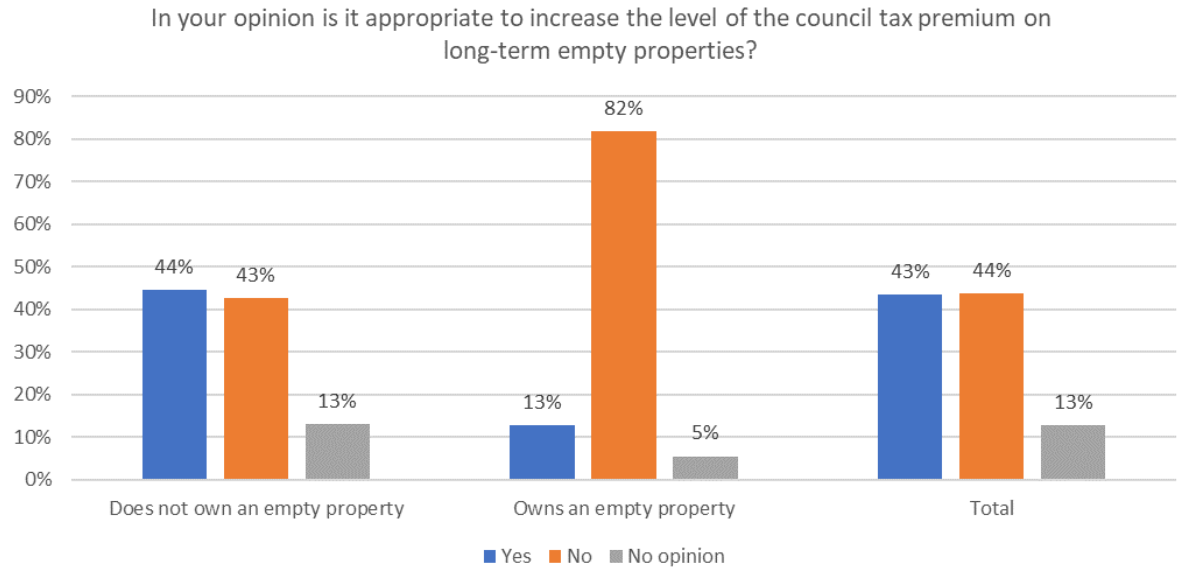
5.23. One of the very common arguments in the comments by second home owners was the economic benefit they said they were contributing to Gwynedd, giving work to other local builders and traders, as well as the support given to local shops. In total a majority of respondents (70.9%) thought that increasing the level of the council tax premium on second homes would have a negative impact on the local economy. 16.4% thought increasing the premium would have a positive impact on the local economy and 9.6% thought it would not have an impact.

5.24. The vast majority (90.8%) of respondents who own a second home believe increasing the premium level would have a negative impact on the local economy. Among respondents who do not own a second home or long-term empty property, 52.6% believed increasing the premium would have a negative impact on the local economy, 30.7% believed it would have a positive impact and 12.9% believed there would be no impact.

Analysing the Results – Long-term empty dwellings

5.25. In total 72.9% of respondents thought that long-term vacant properties were currently having a negative impact on local communities, while 16.2% thought they were not having an impact and 1.3% thought they had a positive effect. 9.6% of respondents had no opinion on the matter. Respondents who own a long-term empty property are more likely than other respondents to think it has no impact on local communities

5.26. Overall the views of respondents were very divided on whether it would be appropriate to increase the Premium on long-term empty dwellings, with 43.8% thinking that increasing the premium on long-term empty properties would not be appropriate, and 43.4% thinking it would be appropriate. 12.8% of respondents had no opinion on this. The vast majority (84.1%) of respondents who own long-term empty properties oppose increasing the level of premium on these properties, while among respondents who do not own a second home or long-term vacant property, the majority (55.8%) were in favour of increasing the Premium.



5.27. Just over half of respondents (55.1%) thought that increasing the level of premium on long-term empty properties would not have any effect on the Welsh language. 21.7% thought there would be a positive effect and 10.2% thought there would be a negative effect.

5.28. In terms of the effect on the local community, opinion was quite divided with 40.0% of respondents thinking that increasing the level of premium on long term empty property would have a positive impact on the local community, 26.0% believing there would be no impact and 22.1% thought there would be a negative impact. 11.9% of respondents had no opinion on this.

5.29. Overall there was also considerable difference of opinion on the effect that increasing the Premium on long-term empty properties would have on the local economy. 37.5% of all respondents believe that increasing the premium on long-term vacant properties would have a positive impact on the local economy. 26.8% thought there would be no impact, and 23.7% thought there would be a negative impact. 11.9% (N=874) of respondents had no opinion on this.

5.30. However, by looking at differences between respondents who own long-term empty properties and those who do not, a significant difference in opinion is seen. 48.3% of respondents who own long-term empty properties believe increasing the premium level would have a negative impact on the local economy.

<u>Other correspondence</u>

5.31. In addition to the 7,330 responses to the formal questionnaire, the Council's officers and members have received several letters from members of the public expressing their views on the Council Tax Premium. The table below is a summary of the points raised in the letters and which are appropriate to consider when as part of this process.

Properties in an estate that have been purpose-built as holiday homes and unsuitable as homes	25
"Natives" / locally bred / Welsh people / Welsh people / Inherited / Property that has been in the family for years should be excluded	11
The property would have to be sold	8
Oppose Premium in general	8
The local economy will be negatively impacted	7
Owners targeted due to years of lack of suitable housing	2
Those who have purchased the property prior to the entry of the Premium should be excluded	2
It will not be possible to continue to come to the area (some have come for over 60 years)	2
Requests for exemption due to personal circumstances	1
Houses worth less than £200,000 should be excluded	1
There will be a reduction in tourism	1
The Council steals the pensions of the elderly	1
Oppose consultation questions	1
Had to leave the property to give care	1
Wealthier people would buy the property if they had to sell	1
Companion buried in the area	1
The Council is targeting the wrong people	1
Why target people who have come to the area for years?	1
Fairbourne should be excluded because of the circumstances there	1

5.32. It should be noted that holiday home owners in one development in particular have worked together to correspond to express that properties in an estate originally built and marketed as holiday units should not be charged a Premium; the owners say properties like this are not suitable as homes.

5.33. It will also be seen that individuals have corresponded to identify the Premium targeting Welsh people who have moved to live outside Gwynedd due to work but keep properties within the county as they want to return to visit their area in which they were raised as often as possible. They have indicated that forcing them to sell would mean a decline in Welsh in these villages, not strengthen it.

6. TRANSFER OF SELF-CATERING HOLIDAY UNITS

6.1. When the original decision to charge a Premium was made, the risk was identified of an increase in the number of properties transferring to being self-catering holiday units, which are subject to non-domestic rates. This would happen because the Valuation Office Agency had ruled that they met the threshold to be able to do so.

6.2. The Council has for several years been pressing the Welsh Government to change Section 66 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 to control the transfer of domestic homes to self-catering holiday units subject to non-domestic rates, with the vast majority avoiding any local taxation because they receive small business rates relief. The Council's Plan states that the Council intends to continue to maintain our pressure in this area over the next few years, using evidence we are continually gathering, in order to get Welsh Ministers to understand the scale of the problem that exists in Gwynedd.

6.3. The Welsh Government has introduced a legislative change that will have an impact on April 1 on self-catering holiday units. The effect of *The Non-Domestic Rating (Amendment of Definition of Domestic Property) (Wales) Order 2022 (W. 129))* is that Section 66 of the 1988 Act has been modified so that a dwelling will need to have been available for let for 252 days in the last year, that it is intended to be let for 252 days in the next year, and that property has been truly let for 182 days in the last year (compared to 70 days currently).

6.4. In reaching a decision on the Premium in previous years, consideration was given to the risk that increasing the Premium would incentivise more second home owners to let their property and transfer it to the non-domestic rate list. While this risk remains, the significant increase in the number of days in which properties must be let is likely to result in a significant slowdown in the rate of transfer.

6.5. The latest figures (to the end of October 2022) show that a total of 2,908 properties in Gwynedd have transferred from the Council Tax list to the Non-Domestic Rating list, after the Valuation Office Agency designated the property as self-catering holiday units, in accordance with Section 66(2BB) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988. Approximately 90% of the transferring properties receive full Small Business Rates Relief, which means that no local taxation is payable on them:

Financial Year	Number of transfers
2022-23 (to 31/10/2022)	246
2021-22	469
2020-21	506

2019-20	397
2018-19	454
2017-18	282
2016-17	199
2015-16	167
2014-15	188
Total	**2,908**

6.6. Experiences over the last three years, e.g. in administering Government Covid-19 business grants, have shown that a number of individuals and companies are now buying properties in Gwynedd specifically with the intention of converting them into self-catering holiday units, rather than using them as a second home. As part of this investment they are striving to keep the property within the Council Tax regime for as little as possible before being able to transfer.

7. EXEMPTIONS

7.1. The 1992 Act also contains a provision giving the Welsh Ministers the right to impose certain exceptions (in classes) where a Council Tax premium cannot be imposed. This was done through the Council Tax (Exceptions to Higher Amounts) (Wales) Regulations 2015 (SI 2015/2068) which came into force on 31 January 2016. The table below outlines the exemptions where a Premium cannot be raised:

Classes of Dwellings	**Definition**	**Type of property that is eligible for an exemption from paying the premium**
Class 1	Dwellings being marketed for sale – time-limited for one year	Long-term Empty Properties and Second Homes
Class 2	Dwellings being marketed for let – time-limited for one year	
Class 3	Annexes forming part of, or being treated as part of, the main dwelling	
Class 4	Dwellings which would be someone's sole or main residence if they were not residing in armed forces accommodation	
Class 5	Occupied caravan pitches and boat moorings	Second Homes
Class 6	Seasonal homes where year-round occupation is prohibited	
Class 7	Job-related dwellings	

7.2. Cabinet attention is drawn to two issues in particular when dealing with exceptions. First, the Welsh Government launched a consultation on 11 November 2022 on changes to the 2015 Regulations. The draft regulations recommend amending Class 6 in the above table so that the following properties are exempt from being subject to the Premium where planning restrictions:

(a) prevent occupancy for a continuous period of at least 28 days in any one-year period;

(b) specify that the dwelling may be used for short term holiday let only; or

(c) prevent occupancy as a person's sole or main residence.

7.3. Details of the public consultation, which will close on 22 December 2022, are found here: Draft council tax (exceptions to higher amounts) (Wales) (amendment) Regulations 2023 | GOV.WALES

7.4. The second issue that needs to be considered is that Section 13A of the 1992 Act would need to be used to introduce any local, discretionary exemptions. The use of Section 13A is a matter for the Cabinet, it is not a matter that requires the decision of a full Council.

7.5. Therefore, exceptions can be dealt with as in a separate Cabinet report before the end of March 2023.

8. USE OF THE PREMIUM

8.1. Since the introduction of the Premium at the start of the 2018/19 financial year, the money collected through the Premium has been placed in a dedicated fund, to fund specific projects that have been outlined in the Housing Action Plan.

8.2. The Housing Action Plan clearly sets out which individual schemes are to be funded with Premium money.

8.3. This is consistent with the aspiration of Council members and the Welsh Government, who set out a watch, but not enforcement, that the money be used in housing.

8.4. Many of the projects in the Housing Action Plan are scalable if more resources were available to them. On the other hand, inflation means that construction project costs have increased significantly since the adoption of the Housing Action Plan in 2020.

8.5. In recent years, following the Covid-19 pandemic, the end of the Welsh Government's Hardship Grant, the pressure on families as a result of the cost of living crisis and landlords' decision to end tenancies, the pressure on the Council's Homelessness Service has increased dramatically.

8.6. Every 50% premium increase would contribute around £3m to the Council Tax Premium Fund.

8.7. It was reported to Cabinet on 25 October that spending in dealing with Homelessness is expected to exceed the budget by around £3.2 million this year. This was a net figure, having transferred some budgets for the year. The gross overspend is around £4.7m in 2022/23, and is estimated to be £6m in 2023/24. We believe that temporary factors are responsible for a portion of the overspending, but there is also a long-term budget gap of around £3m.

8.8. In considering the level of Premium for 2023/24, members will be asked to consider the possibility of using any additional Premium yield to assist in addressing the significant cost overruns in the homelessness area, or to divert some of the existing product to these purposes. Some of the Premium money could be diverted for this purpose, as it is clearly within the Housing area, but that would be money that would not then be available to fund the Housing Action Plan.

8.9. The significant increase in the costs of homelessness is not entirely down to the number of second homes in Gwynedd of course, but they are one contributing factor. If local people are unable to buy houses, they are unable to leave tenancies and that in turn causes pressure on homelessness services when demand for new tenancies rises but housing stock is not available to meet demand.

8.10. Second homes do not have to be set at the same Premium rate as long-term empty properties, and although Gwynedd has charged the same rate since the Premium was introduced in 2018, we recognise that the arguments differ between the two, particularly when it comes to properties that are empty and unfit to let without further renovation. There is currently a 100% premium on long-term empty properties, and the purpose of this Premium is to apply pressure to renovate the property when the period of tax relief for renovation has come to an end. There is a risk that raising it higher would likely force a sale and the property then become a second home rather than coming back into the local housing stock.

8.11. At the time of its adoption in 2020, the total estimated cost of all schemes in the Housing Action Plan (for the period 2020/21 – 2026/27) was £77.1m, with £22.9m of this funded out of the Council Tax Premium. Since the approval of the Plan, high inflation has increased the approximation of many of these projects.

8.12. By November 2022, the Council has spent £15m since the start of the Housing Action Plan, from a variety of sources including the Council Tax Premium and grants.

- Council Tax Premium - £1.5m
- Grants – £6.8m
- Asset Management Plan – £6.5m

8.13. The Housing Action Plan is a 6 year plan and the Council has been successful in attracting a number of grants that have provided protection for the Premium which will enable us to achieve more in the long run.

8.14. It is therefore noted that spending of the premium has been relatively low do date because the Council has had to prioritise spending these grants which have a deadline to spend. Also note that 2021/22 was the first full financial year of the Housing Action Plan, and research and scoping was taking place at that time, so spending will increase during 2022/23.

8.15. Since the start of the Housing Action Plan:

- At least 350 units have either been purchased, developed, or converted to give people a suitable home
- At least 2700 people have been helped through the schemes.

9. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

9.1. As with all far-reaching decisions, the Council must give due consideration to its statutory duties to carry out equality impact assessments under the Equality Act 2010 and the Welsh Public Sector Equality Duties 2011 and to all other relevant considerations.

9.2. The initial decision to introduce a Premium was made in December 2016, following consideration of an Equality Impact Assessment that had been carried out in accordance with the statutory requirements on the Council.

9.3. A comprehensive Equality Impact Assessment was completed when considering the increase of the Premium in March 2021. Since then, the Public sector duty regarding socio-economic inequalities came into force in Wales on 31 March 2021, which is relevant to Gwynedd Council. The means that the Council, when making "strategic decisions" such as deciding priorities and setting objectives, must consider how its decisions might help to reduce the inequalities associated with socio-economic disadvantage. It would appear that the Premium rate on second homes and long-term empty dwellings is a "strategic decision" in accordance with these duties.

9.4. As noted in "Legislative Background" above, the powers to raise a premium was introduced by the Housing Act, with the fundamental expectation that those who can afford more than one property should assist local authorities financially to deal with housing problems in their areas, in particular the most vulnerable in society who cannot find a home.

9.5. When resolving in February 2021 to recommend to the full Council that the Premium level should be increased to 100%, members of the Cabinet noted that there was a housing crisis within the county. The principle that the Council was eager for residents to have homes in their own communities was emphasised, in order to ensure thriving communities. It was added that housing was a priority and that it was a requirement to ensure additional resources in order to implement the Housing Strategy.

9.6. We believe, therefore, that the core aim of the Premium is to reduce the inequalities associated with socio-economic disadvantage.

9.7. The Equality Impact Assessment has been updated to reflect recent requirements and developments, changing circumstances and the results of the recent consultation. The revised assessment is included in the Appendix.

9.8. The result of the Equality Impact Assessment is that there is some evidence that increasing the premium on second homes would be discriminate against a protected group, with data suggesting that second home owners tend to be older people and identify themselves as English. The policy in relation to Council Tax Premium is intended to recognise that long-term empty properties and second homes increase some of Gwynedd's social problems, and the owners should make a financial contribution to alleviate some of the disadvantages they cause.

9.9. There is a claim that the policy of raising the Premium is racist because of where second home owners live, but a number of those who have answered the consultation note that Welsh people own a property in Gwynedd while their main home is outside Wales. The Premium will be charged based on the characteristics of the property, not the characteristics of the owner and there is a positive impact if local families can afford to buy a property in their local area rather than having to move away to get a home. There is recognition that there is a negative financial impact on people living outside Gwynedd, with a large number of them identifying themselves as English. In line with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, increasing the level of the Premium is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim, which is to fund a Housing Action Plan that addresses some of the damage that second homes and empty dwellings cause to the communities of Gwynedd.

9.10. The assessment also concludes that there will be a positive impact on the balance of communities as the premium yield funds the Housing Action Plan which supports local families to buy an affordable home. However, it is noted that this is the result of a number of positive and negative factors which affect the Language, which receive attention in several places in the report and appendices.

10. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS (WALES) ACT 2015

10.1. There is a duty to act in accordance with the sustainable development principle, which is to try to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. When acting in accordance with this general duty the Council needs to consider the importance of the long-term impact, being integrated and inclusive, collaboration and prevention in developing and implementing the proposal.

10.2. In accordance with the requirement of the Act, Gwynedd Council (in collaboration with Isle of Anglesey County Council) has developed well-being objectives. These are:

- Communities which thrive and are prosperous in the long-term
- Healthy and independent residents with a good quality of life

10.3. The current Premium funds the Council's Housing Action Plan, which is a proactive attempt to strengthen the sustainability of those communities within Gwynedd with a high number of second and long-term empty homes.

10.4. The Council's Housing Strategy sets out the vision of "Ensuring that the people of Gwynedd have access to a suitable Home of a high standard that is affordable and improves their quality of life".

10.5. The Strategy identifies five objectives that had to be sought if the Council was to achieve this vision:

1. No one is homeless in Gwynedd
2. Social housing available to all who need one
3. Everyone's home in Gwynedd is affordable to them
4. Gwynedd Housing are environmentally friendly
5. Homes having a positive influence on the health and well-being of the people of Gwynedd

10.6. The Housing Action Plan includes a number of projects that together set out to deliver these objectives.

11. ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO MAKING THE DECISION

11.1. The report describes the results of the public consultation.

11.2. This matter has been pre-scrutinised by the Governance and Audit Committee on 17 November before it was considered by the Cabinet on 22 November. The role of the Governance and Audit Committee was not to give an opinion on the Premium level for 2023/24 but rather to take into account the evidence that has gathered and to come to a conclusion if it is sufficient to enable the Cabinet to make a recommendation and the full Council to reach a reasoned decision.

11.3. The decision of the Governance and Audit Committee was to accept that the information in the report and appendices complies with statutory guidance and legislative requirements.

11.4. It also resolved to propose the following comments for Cabinet to consider when deciding on a recommendation for the Full Council to make a final decision on the premium levels:

- That a comprehensive language assessment needs to be completed in accordance with the Council's Language Policy
- That the impact of the premium on the ability of 'natives' to make a living needs to be considered
- That statistics showing the impact of the premium on restoring empty houses need to be seen
- That evidence is needed for the success of the premium. What has been achieved so far?
- That further consultation is needed on the use of the premium.
- What is the justification of using a second home premium to fund homelessness? Accept that the principle is acceptable, but what is the evidence behind the decision?
- That premium considerations need to be intertwined with Welsh Government legislation and measures of managing second houses

11.5. These points were reported verbally to the Cabinet at its meeting on 22 November. The comments have also been considered when preparing this report to the Full Council.

12. OPTIONS

12.1. The Council needs to give specific consideration to local factors affecting the housing market and the availability of homes, and in particular the studies and findings referred to in Part 4 of this report. Attention should also given to the results of the public consultation and the Equality Impact Assessment and the information and conclusions deriving from these elements of the report.

12.2. The main conclusions can be summarised as follows.

12.3. In keeping the premium at its current level, it will be possible to continue to earmark an annual sum of around £6m to the fund which finances the wide range of projects in the Council's Housing Action Plan. Since that scheme was established, inflation has had an impact on the viability of the business case of several individual projects with construction costs having increased significantly over the past two years. In addition to that, house prices have of course increased in the same way as well. But, as our Scheme's costs are based on when the premium was at a rate of 50%, the additional income from 100% premium should be sufficient to cope with the price increase.

12.4. However, as this report outlines, the second home situation (among other factors) is also now having an impact on homelessness creating likely financial pressures in the region of £6m a year. We cannot avoid meeting this cost and we do not have resources available within the Council's basic budgets for it. Keeping the premium at a 100% rate would offer no help towards coping with those financial pressures without us reducing the funding available to greet the other elements of our Housing Action Plan, and therefore delivering fewer schemes.

12.5. On the other hand, increasing the premium to a rate of 150% would add around £3m of extra annual income and that would be a contribution towards funding the financial pressures we face in the area of homelessness. That means that it would be possible to continue to earmark the income currently collected for the funding of the Housing Action Plan and achieve all that is in it without having to curtail the Council's ambition in this area.

12.6. Currently, there is no way of establishing equivalent justification for increasing the premium above a 150% rate. A number of these further steps such as changes to the planning regime and to business rates have not yet become operational and therefore we have not had an opportunity to assess the impact of these policies in the face of a very significant change in the Premium, or the practical implications.

12.7. It is stated in paragraph 8.10 above that a rational justification exists for keeping the tax on long-term vacant properties unchanged (i.e. at 100%) to enable owners to repair their property if necessary and bring the property back into use.

12.8. Having considered the above options in the context of the information in this report, appendices and studies referred to, the Council needs to reach a decision at the Premium level to be set for 2023/24. The Council's Cabinet, at its meeting on 22 November, resolved:

Recommend to the full Council on 1 December 2022 that the following is the favoured option of the Cabinet with regards to the level of Premium on the Council Tax of Second Homes and Long-Term Empty Dwellings for the 2023/24 financial year:

- **That Gwynedd Council allows NO discount on class A second homes, under Section 12 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (i.e. no change).**
- **That Gwynedd Council allows NO discount and RAISES A PREMIUM OF 100% on class B second homes, under Section 12B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (i.e. increase from 100% to 150%).**
- **That Gwynedd Council allows NO discount on homes that have been empty for 6 months or more and RAISES A PREMIUM OF 100% on homes that have been empty for 12 months or more, under Section 12A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (i.e. no change).**

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

1. Holiday Homes Research Work (December 2020)
2. Housing Strategy
3. Housing Action Plan
4. Second Homes – Developing New Policies in Wales (Dr Simon Brooks)
5. Council's response to the Brooks report.
6. Responses to the Consultation (except documents that contain exempted information about individuals).

OPINION OF STATUTORY OFFICERS

Monitoring Officer:

As explained and highlighted in the report there are arrange of factors which need to be assessed in coming to the Cabinet's recommendation. The report correctly notes that the statutory power to set a council tax premium on "second homes" and long term empty properties was increased to maximum of 300% by amendments to the Local Government Finance Act 1992 which came into force on the 1st of April 2022. In considering a review of the premium and possible increases from the previous statutory maximum of 100% it is important that the Council gives full consideration to the context and challenges in Gwynedd, the results of the consultation and the information and views gathered which were received and the results of the Equalities Impact Assessment. The report explains the matters which are relevant to the decision and the results of the processes and the Cabinet's recommendation is based on its assessment and weighing up of these factors.

Head of Finance:

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

APPENDIX 1B

Results of Council Tax Premium Consultation on Second Homes and Long-Term Empty Properties – October 2022

Submission Date: 2022-11-04

Authors: Research and Analytics Team

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1. Introduction

The public consultation was launched on 30th September and was open until 28th October. The questionnaire was posted on the Council's website with letters sent to all owners of second homes and long-term empty properties, and reminders posted on the Council's social media pages.

7,330 responses were received to the questionnaire. There were 7,277 online questionnaire responses and 53 paper responses. This is the largest number of responses the Council has seen to any consultation in recent years.

The consultation was split into two sections, one for second homes and the other for long-term empty properties.

2. Consultation responses

There were 7,330 responses to the consultation.

2.1 Your situation?

The first question of the questionnaire asked respondents to select one or more statements describing their situation. Here are the number, and percentage, of respondents who chose the different statements:

Situation	Number	%age
My main home is in Gwynedd	3,518	48.0%
My main home is outside Gwynedd	2,690	36.7%
I have a second home in Gwynedd	3,483	47.5%
I have a long-term empty property in Gwynedd	237	3.2%

Since individual respondents could be in more than one of the above situations, it is easier to categorize the respondents as follows:

Category	Number	%age
With no second home or empty property in Gwynedd*	3,646	49.7%
Own a second home in Gwynedd (but no long-term empty properties)	3,447	47.0%
Owning a long-term empty property in Gwynedd (but no second home)	201	2.7%
Owning a second home and long-term empty property in Gwynedd	36	0.5%
Total respondents	**7,330**	**100.0%**

**This category can include respondents who live in and outside Gwynedd, who do not have a second home or long-term empty property in Gwynedd*

Just over half of respondents therefore (50.3%, N=3,684) owned either a second home or a long-term empty dwelling in Gwynedd (or both).

Within this figure 47.0% owned a second home, 2.7% owned a long-term empty dwelling, and 0.5% owned both (i.e. a long-term empty dwelling and a second home in Gwynedd).

49.7% of respondents did not own a second home or long-term empty dwelling in Gwynedd. Within this figure, 8.5% (N=625) also indicated that their main home was outside Gwynedd.

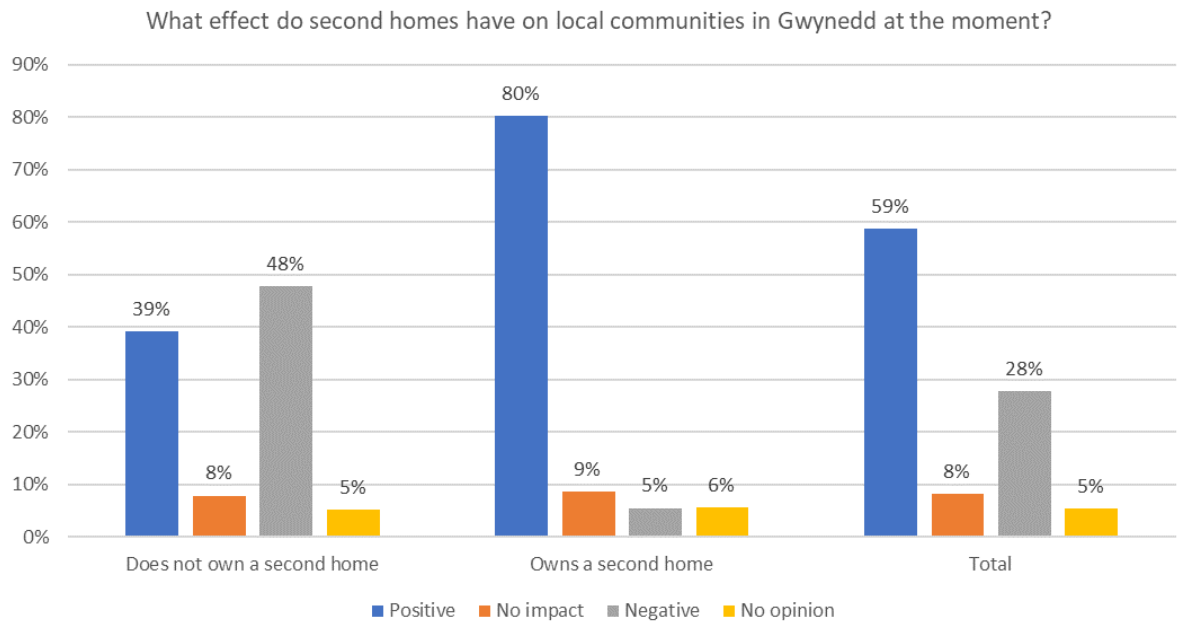
3. Results for Second Homes

This part looks specifically at the consequences of the questions about second homes.

3.1 What effect do second homes have on local communities in Gwynedd at the moment?

In total, over half of respondents (58.7%, N=4,304) thought that second homes were currently having a positive impact on local communities, while 27.7% (N=2,030) thought they were having a negative impact, with 8.2% (N=603) thinking they were having no impact. 5.4% (N=393) of respondents had no opinion on this.

However, by looking at differences between respondents who own a second home and those who do not, a significant difference in opinion is seen as shown in the chart below.



"Do not own a second home" in the chart includes respondents who owned a long-term empty dwelling (but not a second home), as well as respondents who did not own either

"Owning a second home" includes all respondents who owned a second home, whether or not they also owned a long-term empty property

The table below details the responses by category, and shows that 80.5% of respondents who own a second home think second homes currently have a positive effect on local communities, while less than half (39.4%) of respondents who do not own a second home or long-term empty property are of

this opinion. 48.7% of respondents who do not own a second home or long-term empty property think second homes are currently having a negative impact on local communities, while only 5.3% of respondents who own a second home are of this opinion.

The responses of those who own long-term empty properties are found to be quite equal, with slightly more (35.3%) feeling that second homes are currently having a positive impact on local communities.

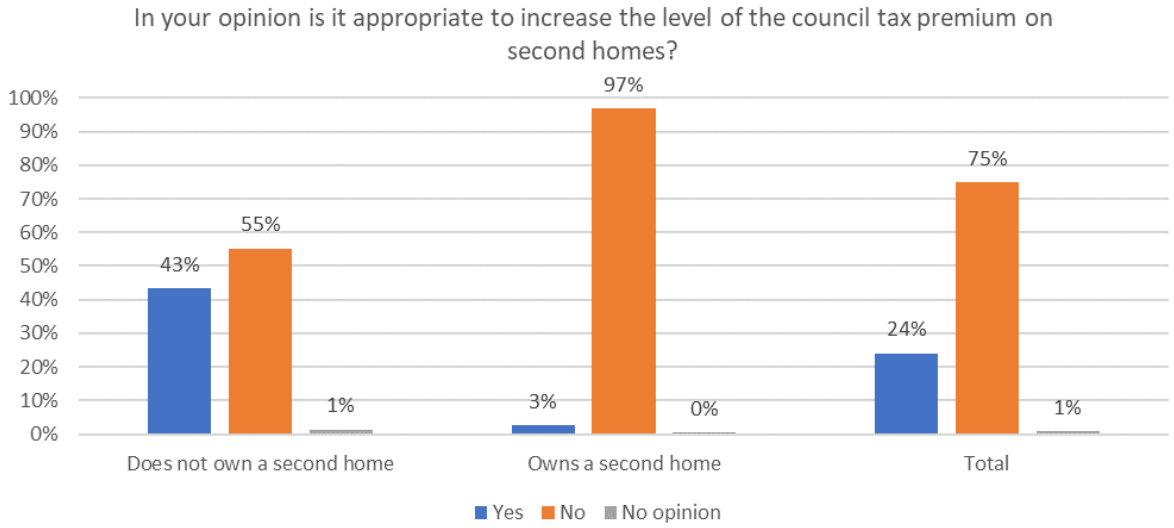
Among the small number of respondents who own long-term empty properties and second homes the view is again more divided but with the majority (55.6%) believing second homes are currently having a positive impact.

	Positive effect		No effect		Negative effect		No opinion		Total	
	No.	**%age**	**No.**	**%age**	**No.**	**%age**	**No.**	**%age**	**No.**	**%age**
Owning neither a second home nor empty property	1,437	39.4%	275	7.5%	1,776	48.7%	158	4.3%	3,646	100.0%
Own a second home	2,776	80.5%	298	8.6%	184	5.3%	189	5.5%	3,447	100.0%
Own a long-term empty property	71	35.3%	27	13.4%	64	31.8%	39	19.4%	201	100.0%
Owning a second home and long-term empty property	20	55.6%	3	8.3%	6	16.7%	7	19.4%	36	100.0%
Total	**4,304**	**58.7%**	**603**	**8.2%**	**2,030**	**27.7%**	**393**	**5.4%**	**7,330**	**100.0%**

3.2 Currently the Council Tax Premium on second homes is 100%. The Council is considering whether to increase the level of the Council Tax Premium. Do you think this is appropriate?

In total, three-quarters of respondents (75.0%, N=5,497) considered it not appropriate to increase the level of Council Tax Premium on second homes. 24.1% (N=1,764) thought it appropriate to increase it, with 0.9% (N=69) not having an opinion.

However, by separating the answers between respondents who own a second home and those who do not (chart below), there is some difference of opinion with the overwhelming majority of respondents who own a second home opposing increasing the premium level. Among respondents who do not own a second home the view was more divided, but with a majority here also of the view that it would not be appropriate to increase the premium.



"Do not own a second home" in the chart includes respondents who owned a long-term empty dwelling (but not a second home), as well as respondents who did not own either

"Owning a second home" includes all respondents who owned a second home, whether or not they also owned a long-term empty property

The table below details the responses by category, and shows that an overwhelming majority (96.9%) of respondents who own a second home oppose increasing the level of premium on second homes, with a smaller majority (54.1%) of respondents not owning a second home nor a long-term empty propertie sharing the same view. 44.6% of respondents who do not own a second home or long-term empty property thought increasing the level of premium on second homes would be appropriate, but only 2.7% of second home owners we of this opinion.

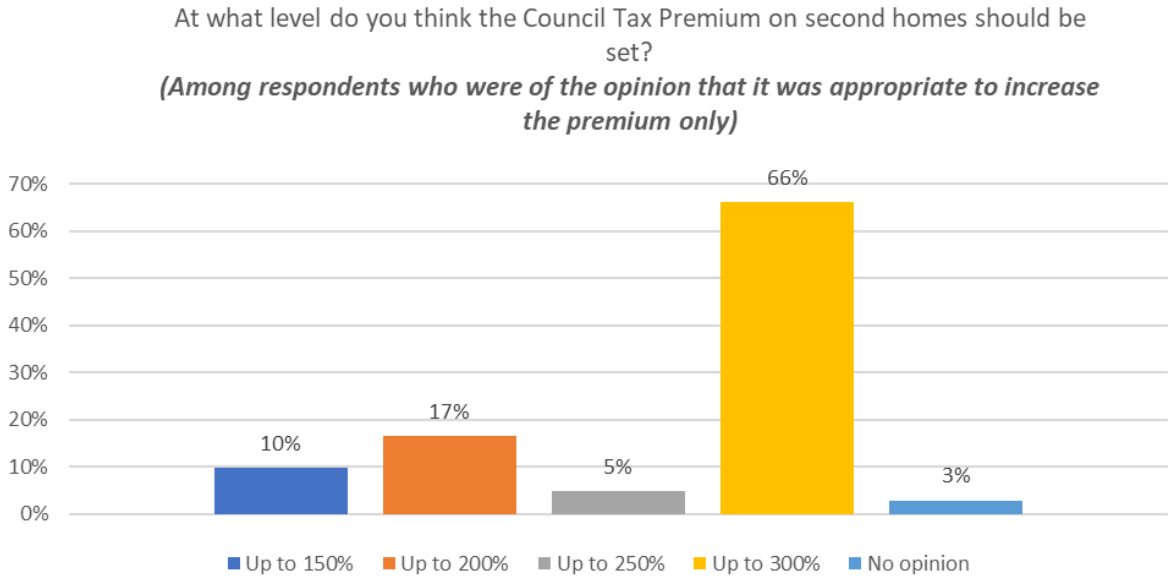
A majority (76.1%) of respondents who own long-term empty properties also opposed increasing the premium on second homes. Among the small number of respondents who own long-term empty properties and second homes, 88.9% opposed increasing the premium on second homes.

	Yes		No		No opinion		Total	
	No.	**%age**	**No.**	**%age**	**No.**	**%age**	**No.**	**%age**
Owning neither a second home nor empty property	1,626	44.6%	1,973	54.1%	47	1.3%	3,646	100.0%
Own a second home	94	2.7%	3,339	96.9%	14	0.4%	3,447	100.0%
Own a long-term empty property	42	20.9%	153	76.1%	6	3.0%	201	100.0%
Owning a second home and long-term empty property	2	5.6%	32	88.9%	2	5.6%	36	100.0%
Total	**1,764**	**24.1%**	**5,497**	**75.0%**	**69**	**0.9%**	**7,330**	**100.0%**

3.3 At what level do you think the Council Tax Premium on second homes should be set?

There was an opportunity for the 1,764 respondents who thought it would be appropriate to increase the council tax premium level on second homes to then give their views on the level at which it should be set.

Among these respondents, about two-thirds (66.1%, N=1,166) believed the premium should be increased by up to 300% with a further 16.6% (N=292) believing it should be set up to 200% (chart below).



The full results by respondent category are shown in the table below but it should be noted that as many respondents who own a second home / long-term empty property were not in favour of increasing the premium at all, the percentages in these categories were based on small numbers.

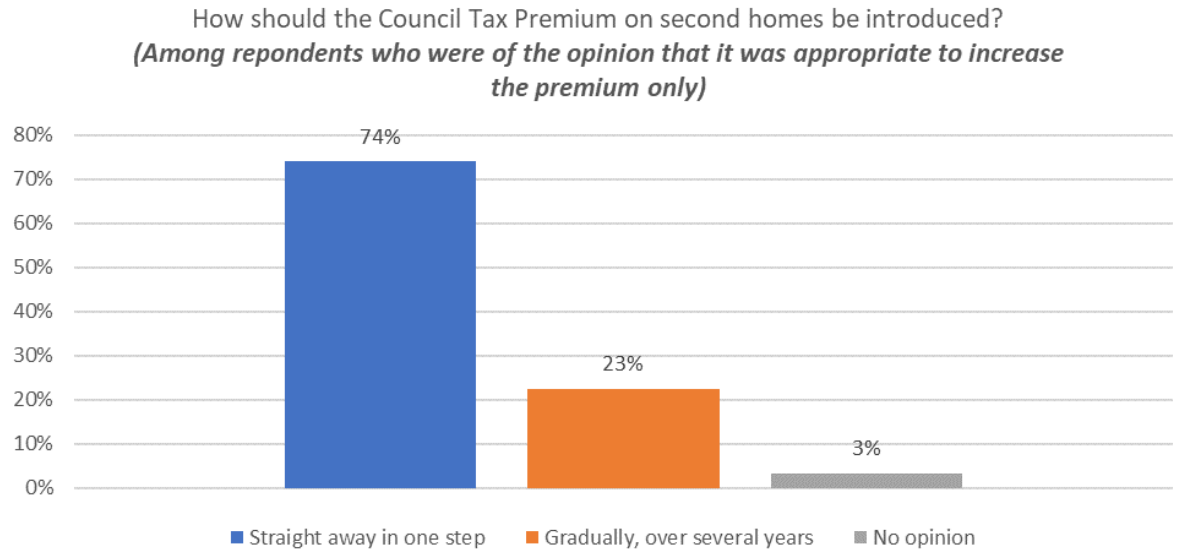
	Up to 150%		Up to 200%		Up to 250%		Up to 300%		No opinion		Total
	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.
Owning neither a second home nor empty property	124	7.6%	268	16.5%	82	5.0%	1,119	68.8%	33	2.0%	1,626
Own a second home	44	46.8%	19	20.2%	1	1.1%	20	21.3%	10	10.6%	94
Own a long-term empty property	3	7.1%	5	11.9%	2	4.8%	26	61.9%	6	14.3%	42
Owning a second home and long-term empty property	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	50.0%	1	50.0%	2
Total	**171**	**9.7%**	**292**	**16.6%**	**85**	**4.8%**	**1,166**	**66.1%**	**50**	**2.8%**	**1,764**

Question only relevant to respondents who supported increasing the premium on second homes

3.4 How should the Council Tax Premium increase for second homes be introduced?

There was also an opportunity for the 1,764 respondents who were in favour of increasing the council tax increase on second homes to give their views on how the increase should be introduced.

Among these respondents, around three-quarters (74.1%, N=1,308) believed the premium should be increased immediately in a single step, with 22.5% (N=397) believing it should be phased in over several years (chart below).



Again, the full results by respondent category are shown below but noting again that since many respondents who own a second home / long-term empty property were not in favour of increasing the premium at all, the percentages within these categories were based on small numbers.

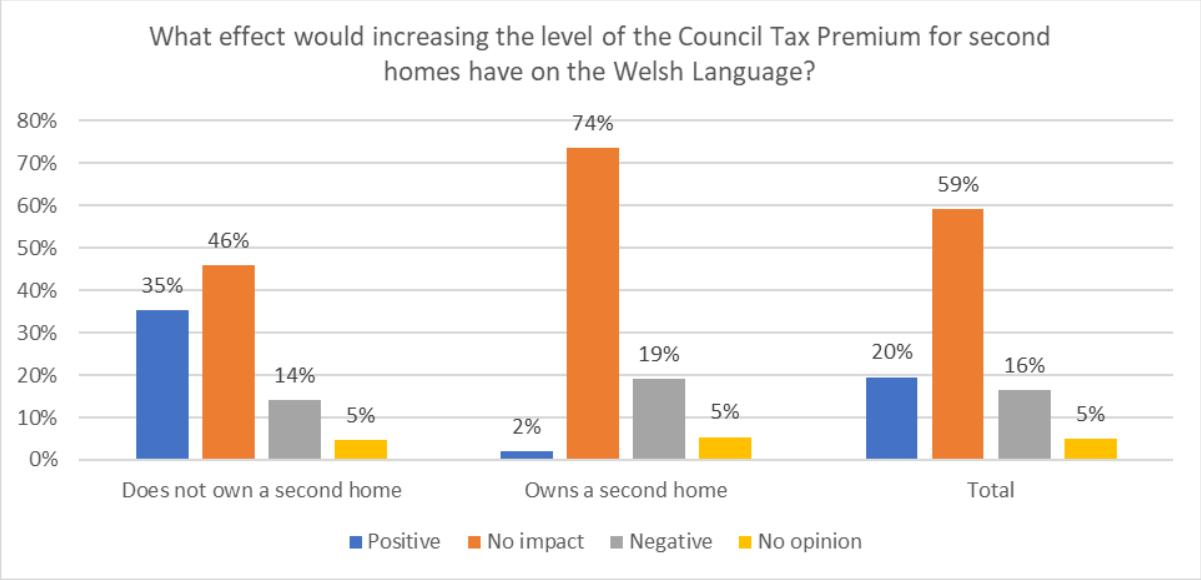
	Immediately, in one step		Gradually, over several year		No opinion		Total	
	No.	**%age**	**No.**	**%age**	**No.**	**%age**	**No.**	**%age**
Owning neither a second home nor empty property	1,256	77.2%	320	19.7%	50	3.1%	1,626	100.0%
Own a second home	26	27.7%	61	64.9%	7	7.4%	94	100.0%
Own a long-term empty property	25	59.5%	15	35.7%	2	4.8%	42	100.0%
Owning a second home and long-term empty property	1	50.0%	1	50.0%	-	-	2	100.0%
Total	**1,308**	**74.1%**	**397**	**22.5%**	**59**	**3.3%**	**1,764**	**100.0%**

Question only relevant to respondents who were in favour of increasing the premium on second homes

3.5 What impact would increasing the level of Council Tax Premium for second homes have on the Welsh language?

In total over half of respondents (59.0%, N=4,327) felt that the level of premium on second homes would have no impact on the Welsh language. The remaining responses were pretty even with 19.5% (N=1,432) thinking it would have a positive impact on the Welsh language and 16.5% (N=1,207) thinking it would have a negative impact.

However, looking at differences between respondents who own a second home and those who do not, there is some difference in opinion as shown in the chart below.



"Do not own a second home" in the chart includes respondents who owned a long-term empty dwelling (but not a second home), as well as respondents who did not own either

"Owning a second home" includes all respondents who owned a second home, whether or not they also owned a long-term empty property

The table below details the response by category, and shows that 73.9% of respondents who own a second home believe that increasing the level of premium would have no impact on the Welsh language, with 18.7% believing that increasing the premium would have a negative impact.

Among respondentswho do not own a second home or long-term empty property opinion is somewhat more divided with 45.6% believing it would not have an impact on the Welsh language, 36.4% believing it would have a positive impact and 13.8% believing it would have a negative impact.

Among those who own long-term empty properties the majority (52.2%) felt that increasing the premium would not have an impact on the Welsh language.

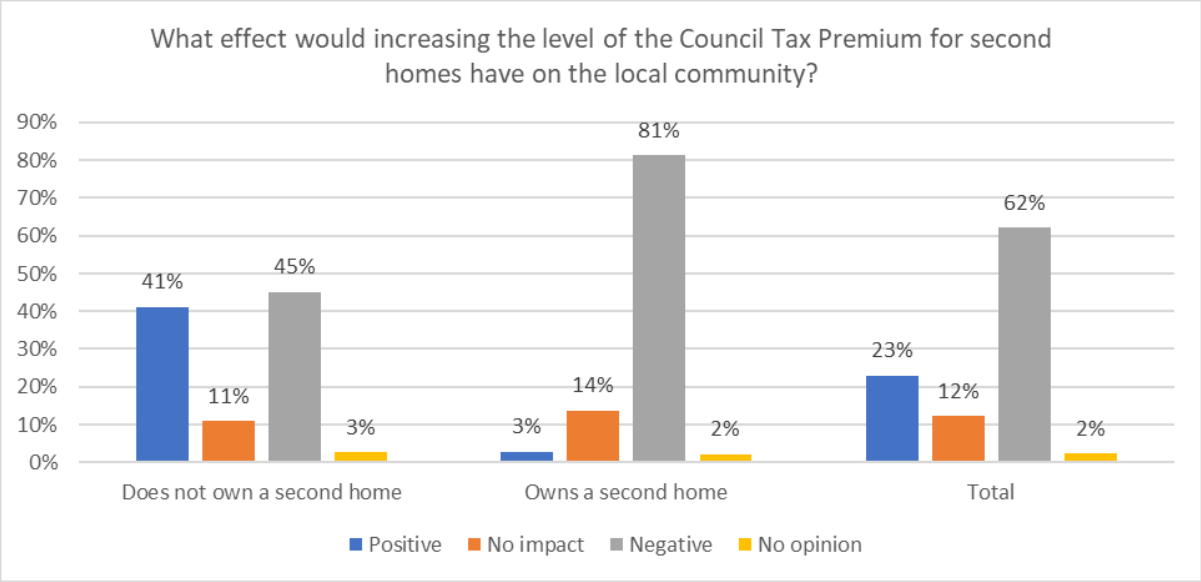
Among the small number of respondents who own long-term empty properties and a second home, half (50.0%) believed increasing the premium would have a negative impact on the Welsh language and a third (33.3%) believed it would have no impact.

	Positive effect		No effect		Negative effect		No opinion		Total	
	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age
Own neither a second home nor empty property	1,328	36.4%	1,661	45.6%	502	13.8%	155	4.3%	3,646	100.0%
Own a second home	68	2.0%	2,549	73.9%	646	18.7%	184	5.3%	3,447	100.0%
Own a long-term empty property	33	16.4%	105	52.2%	41	20.4%	22	10.9%	201	100.0%
Owning a second home and long-term empty property	3	8.3%	12	33.3%	18	50.0%	3	8.3%	36	100.0%
Total	**1,432**	**19.5%**	**4,327**	**59.0%**	**1,207**	**16.5%**	**364**	**5.0%**	**7,330**	**100.0%**

3.6 What effect would increasing the level of the Council Tax Premium for second homes have on the local community?

In total a majority of respondents (62.3%, N=4,566) thought that increasing the council tax premium on second homes would have a negative impact on the local community. 23.0% (N=1,685) thought increasing the premium would have a positive impact on the local community and 12.3% (N=902) thought it would not have an impact.

However, by looking at differences between respondents who own a second home and those who do not, some difference in opinion is seen as shown in the chart below.



"Do not own a second home" in the chart includes respondents who owned a long-term empty dwelling (but not a second home), as well as respondents who did not own either

"Owning a second home" includes all respondents who owned a second home, whether or not they also owned a long-term empty property

The table below details the response by category, and shows that the vast majority (81.4%) of respondents who own a second home believe increasing the premium level would have a negative impact on the local community. 13.7% thought increasing the premium would have no impact.

Among respondents who do not own a second home or long-term empty propertym opinion is very divided with 44.8% believing increasing the premium would have a negative impact on the local community, 42.4% believing it would have a positive impact and 10.6% believing there would be no impact.

Among those owning long-term empty properties, the majority (51.2%) felt increasing the premium would have a negative impact on the local community.

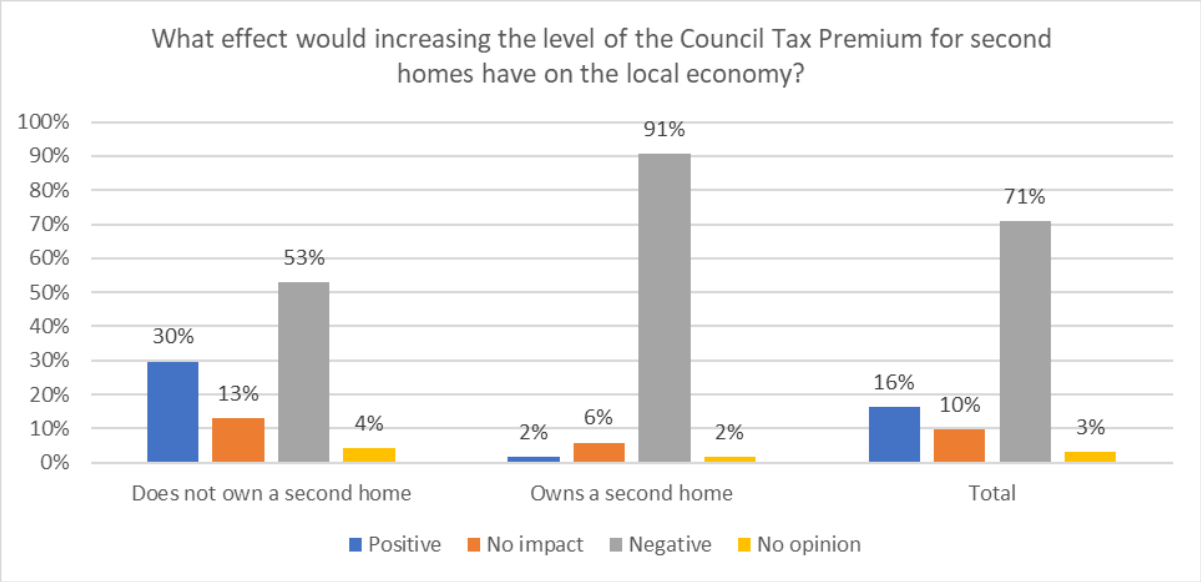
Among the small number of respondents who own long-term empty properties and a second home, the majority (63.9%) believed that increasing the premium would have a negative impact on the local community.

	Positive effect		No effect		Negative effect		No opinion		Total	
	No.	**%age**	**No.**	**%age**	**No.**	**%age**	**No.**	**%age**	**No.**	**%age**
Owning neither a second home nor empty property	1,547	42.4%	386	10.6%	1,634	44.8%	79	2.2%	3,646	100.0%
Own a second home	96	2.8%	472	13.7%	2,806	81.4%	73	2.1%	3,447	100.0%
Own a long-term empty property	39	19.4%	37	18.4%	103	51.2%	22	10.9%	201	100.0%
Owning a second home and long-term empty property	3	8.3%	7	19.4%	23	63.9%	3	8.3%	36	100.0%
Total	**1,685**	**23.0%**	**902**	**12.3%**	**4,566**	**62.3%**	**177**	**2.4%**	**7,330**	**100.0%**

3.7 What effect would increasing the level of the Council Tax Premium for second homes have on the local economy?

In total a majority of respondents (70.9%, N=5,200) thought that increasing the level of increasing the council tax premium on second homes would have a negative impact on the local economy. 16.4% (N=1,203) thought increasing the premium would have a positive impact on the local economy and 9.6% (N=703) thought it would not have an impact.

By looking at differences between respondents who own a second home and those who do not, some difference is seen in the opinion as shown in the chart below.



"Do not own a second home" in the chart includes respondents who owned a long-term empty dwelling (but not a second home), as well as respondents who did not own either

"Owning a second home" includes all respondents who owned a second home, whether or not they also owned a long-term empty property

The table below details the response by category, and shows that the vast majority (90.8%) of respondents who own a second home believe increasing the premium level would have a negative impact on the local economy. 5.8% believed increasing the premium would have no impact.

Among respondents who do not own a second home or long-term empty property, 52.6% believed increasing the premium would have a negative impact on the local economy, 30.7% believed it would have a positive impact and 12.9% believed there would be no impact.

Among those owning long-term empty properties the majority (61.7%) felt increasing the premium would have a negative impact on the local economy.

Among the small number of respondents whoown long-term empty properties and a second home, the majority (75.0%) believed that increasing the premium would have a negative impact on the local economy.

	Positive effect		No effect		Negative effect		No opinion		Total	
	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age
Owning neither a second home nor empty property	1,119	30.7%	469	12.9%	1,918	52.6%	140	3.8%	3,646	100.0%
Own a second home	59	1.7%	201	5.8%	3,131	90.8%	56	1.6%	3,447	100.0%
Own a long-term empty property	24	11.9%	29	14.4%	124	61.7%	24	11.9%	201	100.0%
Owning a second home and long-term empty property	1	2.8%	4	11.1%	27	75.0%	4	11.1%	36	100.0%
Total	**1,203**	**16.4%**	**703**	**9.6%**	**5,200**	**70.9%**	**224**	**3.1%**	**7,330**	**100.0%**

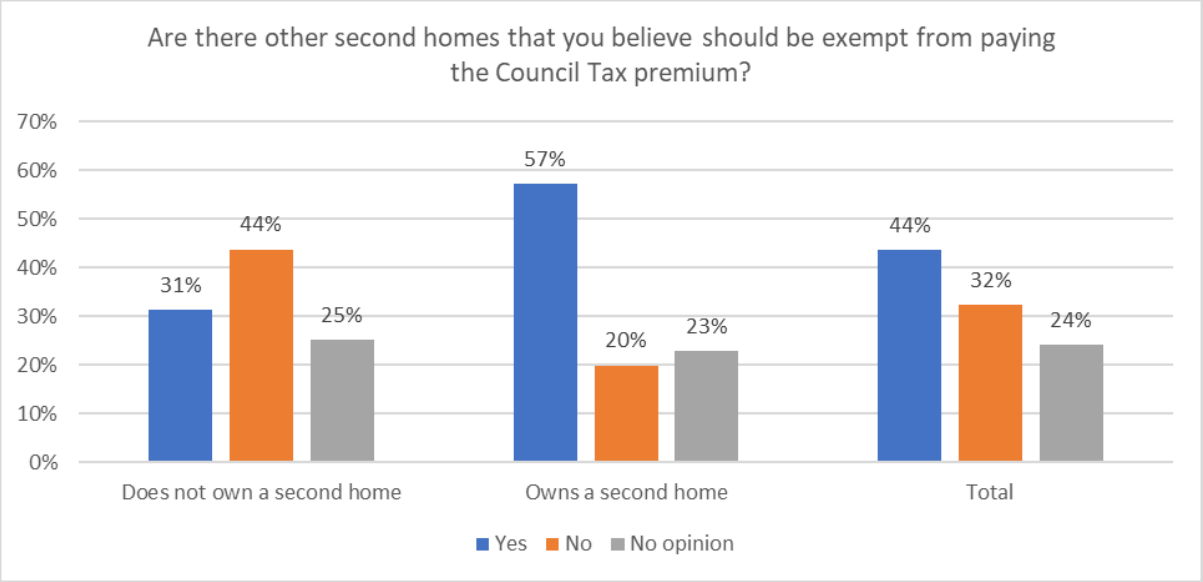
3.8 Are there other second homes that you believe should be exempt from paying the Council Tax Premium?

The following second homes are statutorily exempt from being subject to the Premium:

- Dwellings being marketed for sale – time-limited for one year
- Dwellings being marketed for let – time-limited for one year
- Annexes forming part of, or being treated as part of, the main dwelling
- Dwellings which would be someone's sole or main residence if they were not residing in armed forces accommodation
- Occupied caravan pitches and boat moorings
- Seasonal homes where year-round occupation is prohibited
- Job-related dwellings

Respondents had an opportunity to consider whether any other type of second home needed to be added to the list. 43.6% (N=3,195) of respondents rated this as necessary, with 32.4% (N=2,375) indicating no need to add to the list and 24.0% (N=1,760) not having an opinion.

As shown in the chart below second home owners were more likely than other respondents to suggest premium exemptions, with 57.2% (N=1,994) of all second home owners reporting this compared to 31.2% (N=1,201) of all other respondents.



"Do not own a second home" in the chart includes respondents who owned a long-term empty dwelling (but not a second home), as well as respondents who did not own either

"Owning a second home" includes all respondents who owned a second home, whether or not they also owned a long-term empty property

3.9 Note any other second homes that you believe should be exempt from paying the Council Tax Premium

Those who identified the need to add to the exemption list had a chance to detail this. Of the 3,195 who reported "Yes" 97.7% (N=3,122) detailed that in comments.

Comments	Number of comments	% of thoes who gave comments
Second homes let for holidays or businesses or for tourism purposes	523	16.8%
Frequently used second homes	373	11.9%
All second homes	366	11.7%
Homes inherited and now used as second homes / inherited and intend to keep / homes that have been 'in the family' for a period	268	8.6%
Second homes that have been owned for a certain period of time or purchased before a specified date	191	6.1%

Properties built as Holiday Homes or where permanent residence is prohibited	152	4.9%
Second homes of individuals with a local connection (e.g. family, have lived in Gwynedd or Wales etc) or whose main home is local	146	4.7%
Dwellings on the same site as permanent residence e.g. annex, farm buildings	108	3.5%
Undesirable location / Remote dwellings / Limited access / Limited facilities / Limited use of Council facilities	105	3.4%
Personal use only or not generating income	101	3.2%
Being renovated or awaiting planning permission	92	2.9%
A property that is not suitable for year-round living due to the size or condition of the house, or is a seasonal home, caravan, holiday cabins etc	88	2.8%
Depending on the owner's circumstances e.g. pensioners, illness, where the owner is in a care home or single person	85	2.7%
Related to a job or university - working elsewhere or living elsewhere and working in Gwynedd	76	2.4%
Properties purchased before premium	70	2.2%
Unsuitable homes for locals or first-time buyers	63	2.0%
Properties that have or to be let for long-term rent	59	1.9%
The second home will become the main residence in the future	58	1.9%
A time to consider after a bereavement and inheriting a home	55	1.8%
Charitable, socially useful or enabling charity work e.g. Ukraine, volunteering while there, carting key workers etc	53	1.7%
Holiday homes	42	1.3%
Properties for sale or will be sold	41	1.3%
A second home that has or will be built, developed or improved by the owner	25	0.8%
Second homes under a lease that prohibits letting or subletting property or restricting for personal use only	22	0.7%
Location - Homes in areas of high demand or in areas with few second homes	22	0.7%
Buildings in poor condition	18	0.6%
Second housing that benefits the economy or local (excluding tourism or other category) e.g. employing staff	17	0.5%
Listed buildings	12	0.4%
Second home which is part of another business (not related to tourism) e.g. farm	9	0.3%
High value homes	7	0.2%
Rarely used second homes	7	0.2%
Low value homes	6	0.2%
Empty property	6	0.2%
Registered to vote in their second houses	5	0.2%

Second houses at their only property in the UK	2	0.1%
Lease property	1	0.0%
Owned by an individual not a property company	1	0.0%
Where one of the two homes is rented by the individual	1	0.0%
Properties that are not empty for a long time	1	0.0%

As multiple respondents have made more than one comment the numbers add up to more than 100%

3.10 Any other comments you have about second homes

7 2.7% (N=5,329) of respondents commented further on second homes.

Comments	Number of comments	% of thoes who gave comments
Second home owners contribute to the local economy / local community. Restricting second homes would damage the economy	2731	51.2%
A higher CT premium would target people with a second home, unfairly / unreasonably	892	16.7%
Second homes are a barrier to an affordable housing market for local people / viable communities	548	10.3%
Unfair on families who have inherited a home (including local people) / Unfair on families who have invested in Gwynedd for decades / Unfair on all those who have saved for years to buy a second house	508	9.5%
Local people don't want to buy the houses / The house unsuitable for a family (condition/location) / The house had been on the market for a while before they bought it / Spent thousands renovating an unsuitable house	459	8.6%
The Council should do more to provide and promote affordable housing	426	8.0%
I / people I know would sell their second home if the premium increased	384	7.2%
A premium increase would not help make housing affordable	371	7.0%
Local people also own a second house / Punishment of local people who have invested due to tourism	235	4.4%
Creating jobs / a viable economy is the answer rather than charging a premium	216	4.1%
Need to increase CT premium on second homes as soon as possible	206	3.9%
Second homeowners with their main house outside Gwynedd / North Wales / Wales only charge a premium - no penalising Gwynedd residents	160	3.0%

Need to close any loopholes in terms of taxation (including holiday accommodation taxation)	157	2.9%
The problem of affordable housing should be dealt with in other ways, e.g. planning regulations / restrictions on purchases	156	2.9%
A premium increase would target English people / racially / against human rights	131	2.5%
Council Tax changes should only be introduced in certain areas, depending on local circumstances	122	2.3%
Not fair to pay more tax, when using fewer services than local residents	121	2.3%
Need restrictions on, and better manage the short-term holiday accommodation market	118	2.2%
The '182 day' rule for holiday accommodation to be counted as a business is unrealistic / unfair and means more will have to pay the premium	110	2.1%
An increase in premium would cause an increase in the number of holiday accommodation	98	1.8%
Not clear how the money from any increase (and/or the previous increase) would be used	77	1.4%
Increasing the premium would lead to a change in the nature of second home ownership, with only investors and wealthy people able to afford them	71	1.3%
Any premium should be limited to new purchases, not to people who had previously bought houses	57	1.1%
Increasing premium would cause a collapse in house prices locally, with significant / harmful consequences	44	0.8%
Second homes have no impact on the Welsh language (or are less harmful than if they went to non-Welsh speaking permanent residents)	27	0.5%
Second homes are a complex problem, and any action needs to be taken with care / based on detailed evidence	26	0.5%
Houses that are in the process of being repaired should be exempt / Houses that are not in condition to be sold or rented	23	0.4%
Some houses have been built specifically as second homes and/or restrictions on the amount of time there can be	19	0.4%
It wouldn't 'look good' for Gwynedd to be increasing CT premiums - unsupportive / introspective image	18	0.3%
Not a good time to make any change, due to the state of the economy	8	0.2%
Increasing the premium would only move the problem to another part of Wales	7	0.1%
Not-for-profit social enterprises that run holiday units should be excluded	1	0.0%

As multiple respondents have made more than one comment the numbers add up to more than 100%

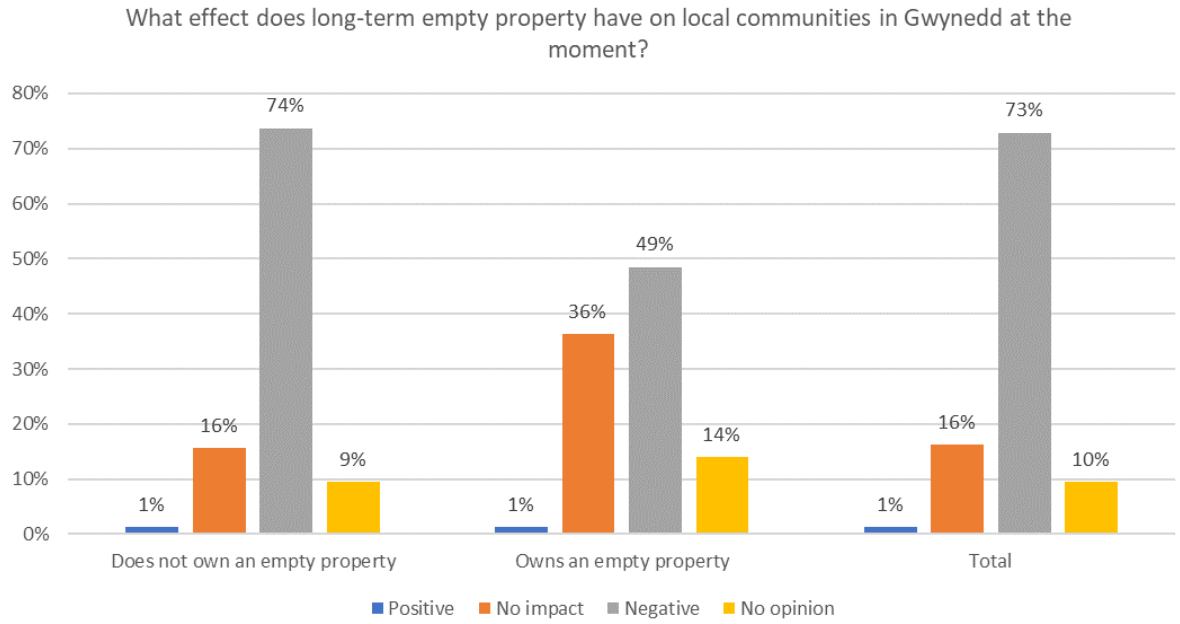
4. Results for Long-Term Empty Properties

This section looks specifically at the results of the questions regarding long-term empty properties.

4.1 What effect does long-term empty property have on local communities in Gwynedd at the moment?

In total the majority of respondents (72.9%, N=5,342) thought long-term empty properties were currently having a negative impact on local communities, while 16.2% (N=1,191) thought they were not having an impact and 1.3% (N=96) thought they had a positive impact. 9.6% (N=701) of respondents had no opinion on this.

However, by looking at differences between respondents who own long-term empty properties and those who do not, there is some difference in the opinion as shown in the chart below.



"Do not own long-term empty property" includes respondents who owned a second home (but not a long-term empty property), as well as respondents who did not own either

"Owning a long-term empty property" includes all respondents who owned long-term empty properties, whether or not they also owned a second home.

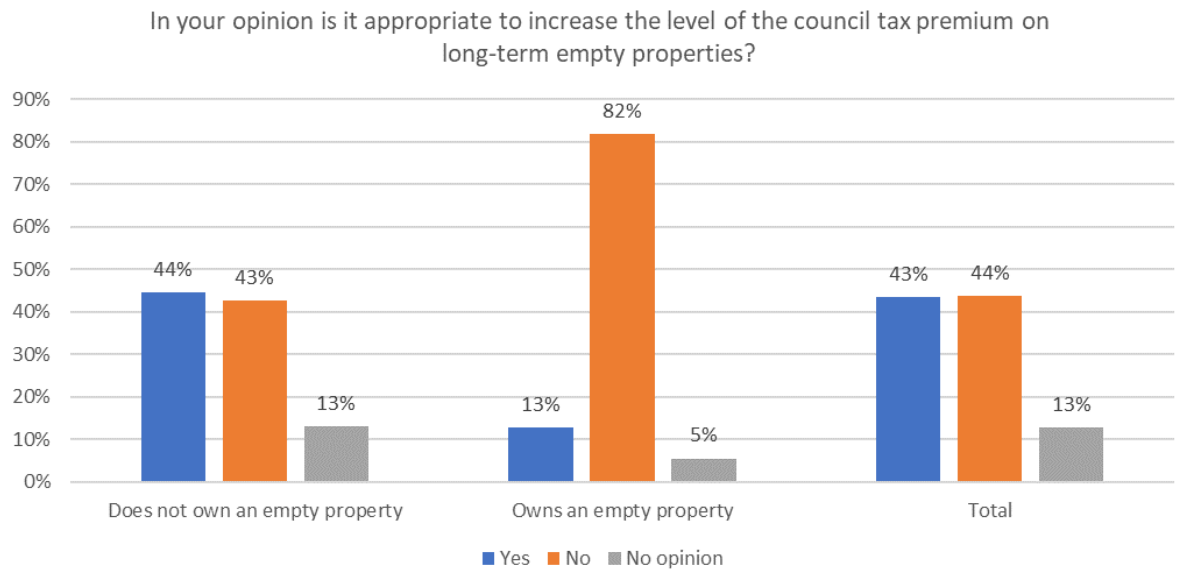
The table below details the responses by category of respondents. The main clear difference is that respondents who own a long-term empty property are more likely than other respondents to think it has no impact on local communities: 37.3% of those with long-term empty properties, and 30.6% of those with long-term empty properties and a second home thought there is no impact. This compares to 13.4% of respondents who did not have a long-term empty property or a second home, and 17.9% of respondents who have a second home.

	Positive effect		No effect		Negative effect		No opinion		Total	
	No.	**%age**	**No.**	**%age**	**No.**	**%age**	**No.**	**%age**	**No.**	**%age**
Owning neither a second home nor empty property	45	1.2%	487	13.4%	2,886	79.2%	228	6.3%	3,646	100.0%
Own a second home	48	1.4%	618	17.9%	2,341	67.9%	440	12.8%	3,447	100.0%
Own a long-term empty property	3	1.5%	75	37.3%	95	47.3%	28	13.9%	201	100.0%
Owning a second home and long-term empty property	-	-	11	30.6%	20	55.6%	5	13.9%	36	100.0%
Total	**96**	**1.3%**	**1,191**	**16.2%**	**5,342**	**72.9%**	**701**	**9.6%**	**7,330**	**100.0%**

4.2 Currently the Council Tax Premium on long-term empty properties is 100%. The Council is considering whether to increase the level of the Council Tax Premium. Do you think this is appropriate?

Overall the views of respondents were very divided with 43.8% (N=3,210) thinking that increasing the premium on long-term empty properties would not be appropriate, and 43.4% (N=3,181) thinking it would be appropriate. 12.8% (N=939) of respondents had no opinion on this.

However, looking at differences between respondents who own long-term empty properties and those who do not, a significant difference in opinion is seen as shown in the chart below.



"Do not own long-term empty property" includes respondents who owned a second home (but not a long-term empty property), as well as respondents who did not own either

"Owning a long-term empty property" includes all respondents who owned long-term empty properties, whether or not they also owned a second home.

The table below details the responses by category, and shows that the vast majority (84.1%) of respondents who own long-term empty properties oppose increasing the level of premium on these properties, while among respondents who do not own a second home or long-term empty property, the majority (55.8%) were in favour of increasing the premium.

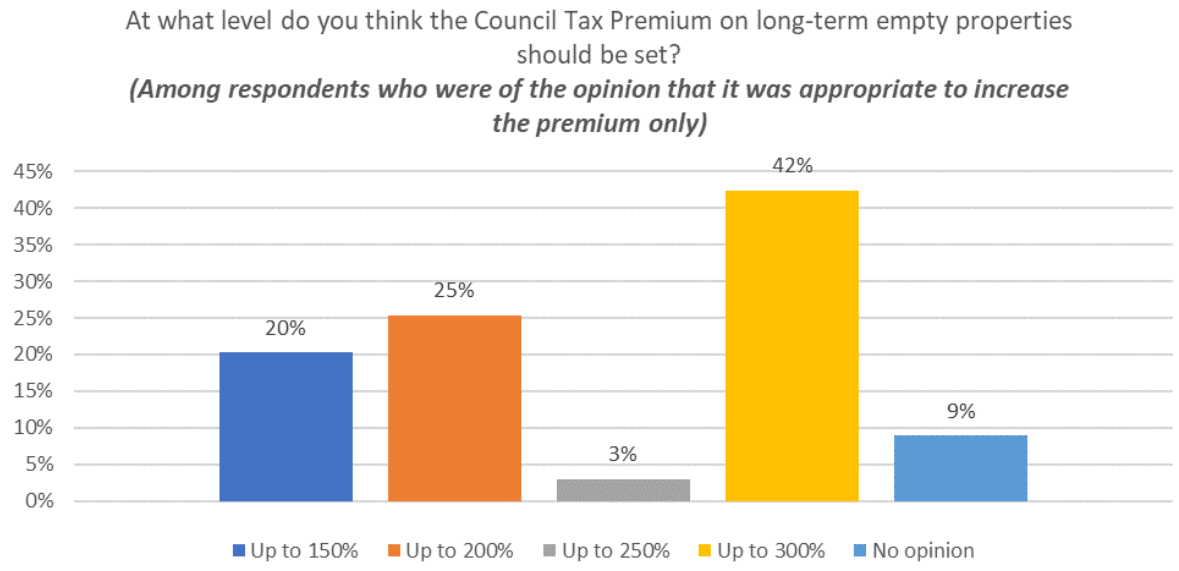
Among second home owners the response was more mixed with 48.9% opposed to increasing the premium on long-term empty properties and 32.4% in favour of increasing it. For the small number of respondents who own long-term empty and second homes, 69.4% opposed increasing the premium on long-term empty properties.

	Yes		No		No opinion		Total	
	No.	**%age**	**No.**	**%age**	**No.**	**%age**	**No.**	**%age**
Owning neither a second home nor empty property	2,035	55.8%	1,330	36.5%	281	7.7%	3,646	100.0%
Own a second home	1,116	32.4%	1,686	48.9%	645	18.7%	3,447	100.0%
Own a long-term empty property	23	11.4%	169	84.1%	9	4.5%	201	100.0%
Owning a second home and long-term empty property	7	19.4%	25	69.4%	4	11.1%	36	100.0%
Total	**3,181**	**43.4%**	**3,210**	**43.8%**	**939**	**12.8%**	**7,330**	**100.0%**

4.3 At what level do you think the Council Tax Premium on long-term empty properties should be set?

The 3,181 respondents who thought increasing the council tax premium level on long-term empty properties was appropriate, had the opportunity to then give their views on the level that should be set.

Among these respondents, 42.4% (N=1,350) believed the premium should be increased by up to 300%, with a further 25.4% (N=808) believing it should be increased by up to 200% and 20.3% (N=645) for increasing it up to 150% (chart below).



The full results by respondent category are shown in the table below but noting that since many respondents who own long-term empty properties were not in favour of increasing the premium at all, the percentages in these categories were based on small numbers.

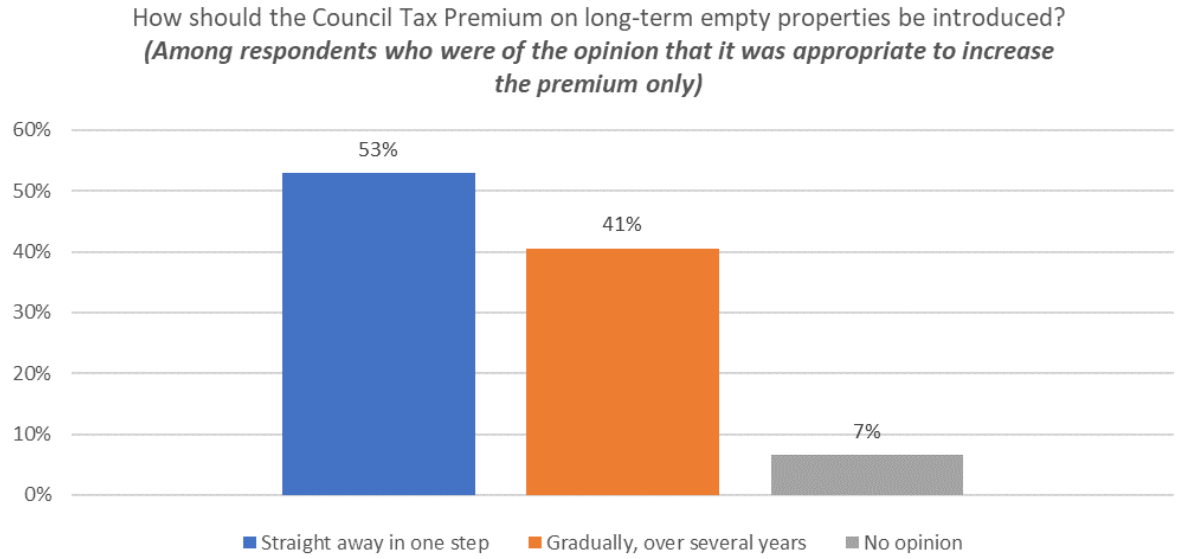
	Up to 150%		Up to 200%		Up to 250%		Up to 300%		No opinion		Total
	No.	**%age**	**No.**	**%age**	**No.**	**%age**	**No.**	**%age**	**No.**	**%age**	**No.**
Owning neither a second home nor empty property	320	15.7%	462	22.7%	70	3.44%	1,083	53.2%	100	4.9%	2,035
Own a second home	317	28.4%	338	30.3%	25	2.2%	259	23.2%	177	15.9%	1,116
Own a long-term empty property	6	26.1%	8	34.8%	-	-	7	30.4%	2	8.7%	23
Owning a second home and long-term empty property	2	28.6%	-	-	-	-	1	14.3%	4	57.1%	7
Total	**645**	**20.3%**	**808**	**25.4%**	**95**	**3.0%**	**1,350**	**42.4%**	**283**	**8.9%**	**3,181**

A question only relevant to therespondents who were in favour of increasing the premium on long-term empty properties

4.4 How should the Council Tax Premium on long-term empty properties be introduced?

There was also an opportunity for the 3,181 respondents who thought increasing the council tax premium level on long-term empty properties was appropriate, to give their views on how the increase should be delivered.

Among these respondents, about half (52.9%, N=1,684) believed the premium should be increased immediately in a single step, with 40.6% (N=1,290) believing it should be phased in over several years (chart below).



Again, the full results by respondent category are shown below but noting again that as many respondents who own long-term empty properties were not in favour of increasing the premium at all, the percentages within these categories were based on small numbers.

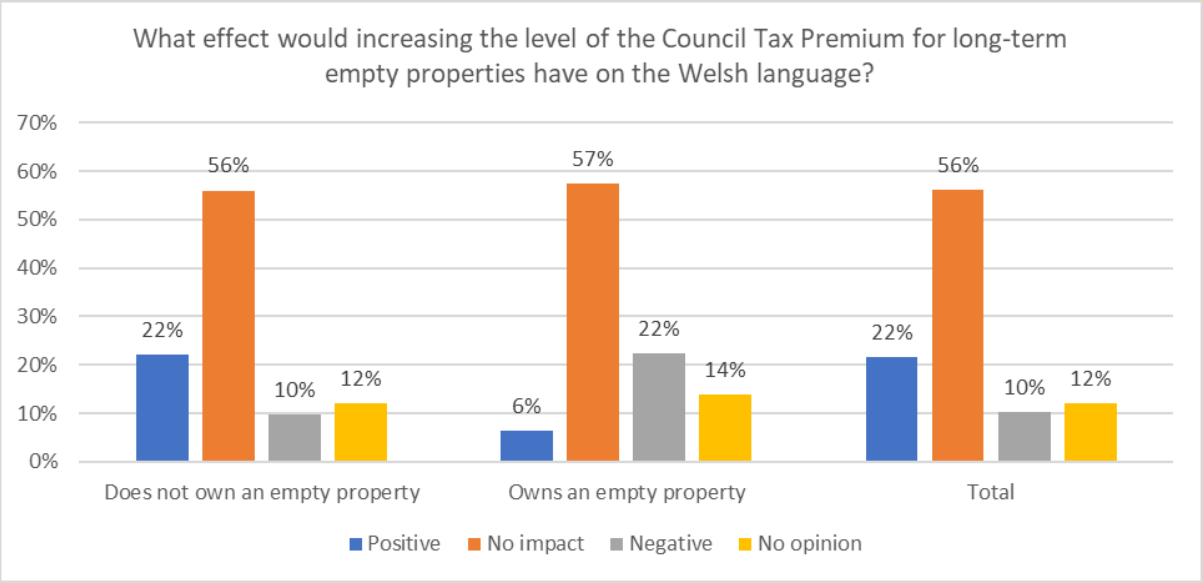
	Immediately, in one step		Gradually, over several years		No opinion		Total	
	No.	**%age**	**No.**	**%age**	**No.**	**%age**	**No.**	**%age**
Owning neither a second home nor empty property	1,313	64.5%	645	31.7%	77	3.8%	2,035	100.0%
Own a second home	365	32.7%	623	55.8%	128	11.5%	1,116	100.0%
Own a long-term empty property	5	21.7%	17	73.9%	1	4.3%	23	100.0%
Owning a second home and long-term empty property	1	14.3%	5	71.4%	1	14.2%	7	100.0%
Total	**1,684**	**52.9%**	**1,290**	**40.6%**	**207**	**6.5%**	**3,181**	**100.0%**

A question only relevant to therespondents who were in favour of increasing the premium on long-term empty properties

4.5 What effect would increasing the level of the Council Tax Premium for long-term empty properties have on the Welsh language?

In total just over half of respondents (55.1%, N=3,433) thought that increasing the level of premium on long-term empty properties would not have any effect on the Welsh language. 21.7% (N=1,588) thought there would be a positive effect and 10.2% (N=748) thought there would be a negative effect.

Looking at differences between respondents who own long-term empty properties and those who do not, it is seen (chart below) that owners of long-term empty properties are somewhat more inclined to believe that the Welsh language would be negatively impacted if the premium was increased (and less inclined to believe that there would be a positive impact).



"Do not own long-term empty property" includes respondents who owned a second home (but not a long-term empty property), as well as respondents who did not own either

"Owning a long-term empty property" includes all respondents who owned long-term empty properties, whether or not they also owned a second home.

The table below details the response by category, and shows that 58.7% of respondents who own long-term empty properties believe that increasing the level of premium would have no impact on the Welsh language, with 21.4% believing that increasing the premium would have a negative impact.

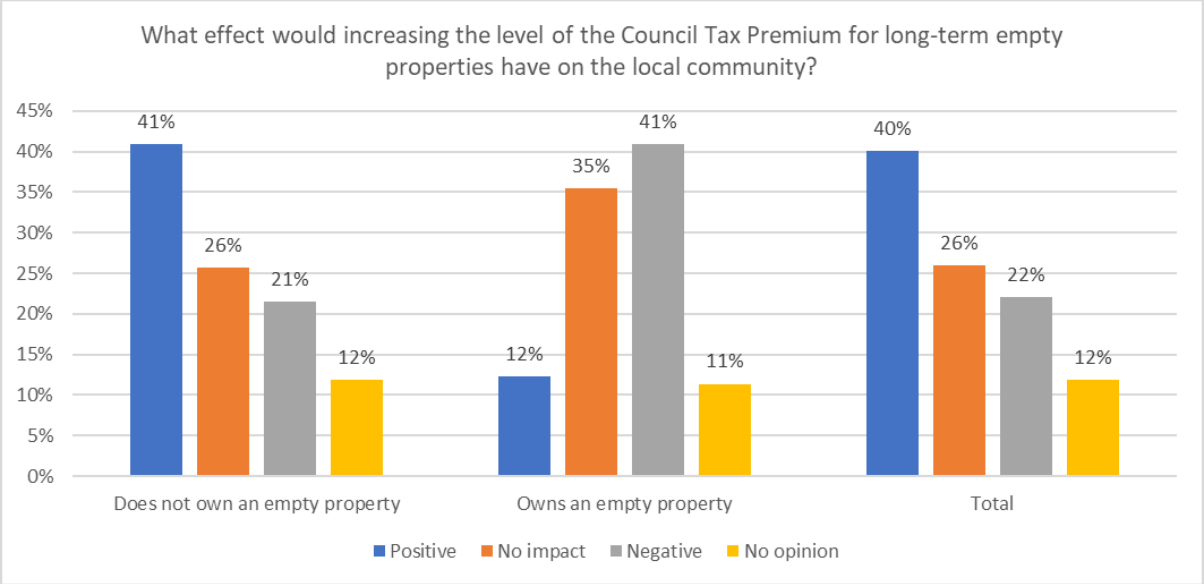
The majority of second home owners (67.3%) felt that increasing the premium on long-term empty properties would have no impact on the Welsh language. But among respondents who do not own a second home or long-term empty property, opinion was somewhat more divided with 45.3% believing it would not have an impact on the Welsh language, 36.7% believing it would have a positive impact and 9.5% believing it would have a negative impact.

	Positive effect		No effect		Negative effect		No opinion		Total	
	No.	**%age**	**No.**	**%age**	**No.**	**%age**	**No.**	**%age**	**No.**	**%age**
Owning neither a second home nor empty property	1,339	36.7%	1,650	45.3%	346	9.5%	311	8.5%	3,646	100.0%
Own a second home	234	6.8%	2,321	67.3%	349	10.1%	543	15.8%	3,447	100.0%
Own a long-term empty property	14	7.0%	118	58.7%	43	21.4%	26	12.9%	201	100.0%
Owning a second home and long-term empty property	1	2.8%	18	50.0%	10	27.8%	7	19.4%	36	100.0%
Total	**1,588**	**21.7%**	**4,107**	**56.0%**	**748**	**10.2%**	**887**	**12.1%**	**7,330**	**100.0%**

4.6 What effect would increasing the level of the Council Tax Premium for long-term empty properties have on the local community?

In total opinion on this question was quite divided with 40.0% (N=2,935) of respondents thinking that increasing the level of premium on long term empty property would have a positive impact on the local community, 26.0% (N=1,905) believing there would be no impact and 22.1% (N=1,619) thought there would be a negative impact. 11.9% (N=871) of respondents had no opinion on this.

However looking separately at the responses of those who own long-term empty properties and those who do not, a significant difference in opinion is seen as shown in the chart below.



"Do not own long-term empty property" includes respondents who owned a second home (but not a long-term empty property), as well as respondents who did not own either

"Owning a long-term empty property" includes all respondents who owned long-term empty properties, whether or not they also owned a second home

The table below details the response by category, and shows that 42.3% of respondents who own long-term empty properties believe that increasing the level of premium would have a negative impact on the local community, with 34.8% believing it would have no impact.

Among respondents who do not own a second home or long-term empty property, the majority (53.6%) believed increasing the premium would have a positive impact on the local community, 21.5% believed there would be no impact, and 17.7% believed there would be a negative impact.

Among those owning a second home, opinion was sharply divided with 30.1% believing there would be no impact, 27.6% thought there would be a positive impact and 25.4% thought there would be a negative impact.

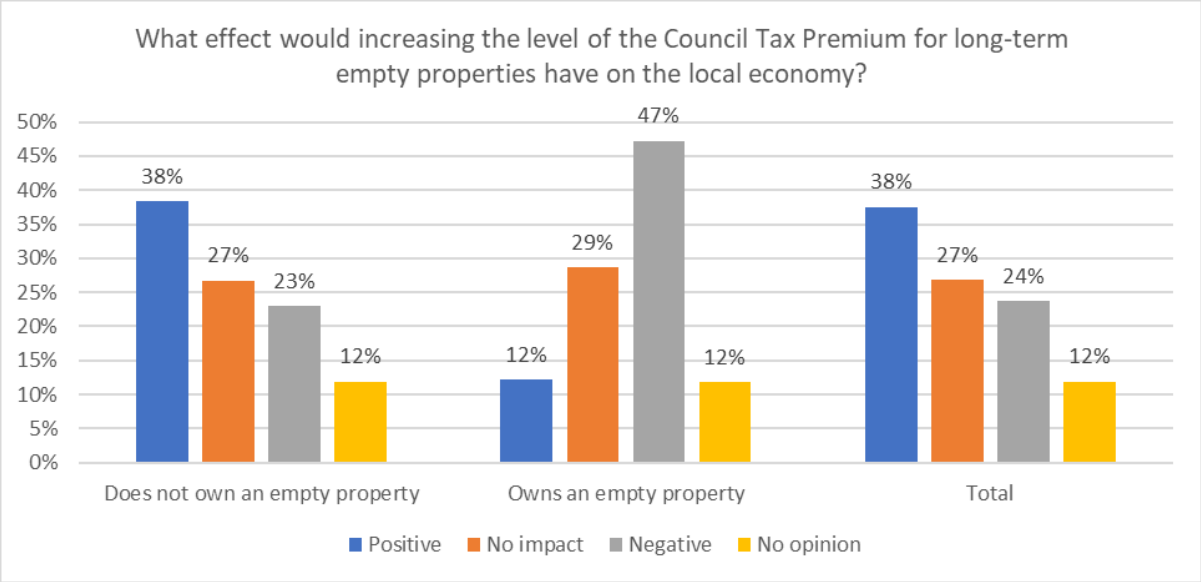
Among the small number of respondents who own long-term empty properties and a second home, 38.9% thought there would be no impact on the local community, and 33.3% thought there would be a negative impact.

	Positive effect		No effect		Negative effect		No opinion		Total	
	No.	**%age**	**No.**	**%age**	**No.**	**%age**	**No.**	**%age**	**No.**	**%age**
Owning neither a second home nor empty property	1,954	53.6%	783	21.5%	645	17.7%	264	7.2%	3,646	100.0%
Own a second home	952	27.6%	1,038	30.1%	877	25.4%	580	16.8%	3,447	100.0%
Own a long-term empty property	27	13.4%	70	34.8%	85	42.3%	19	9.5%	201	100.0%
Owning a second home and long-term empty property	2	5.6%	14	38.9%	12	33.3%	8	22.2%	36	100.0%
Total	**2,935**	**40.0%**	**1,905**	**26.0%**	**1,619**	**22.1%**	**871**	**11.9%**	**7,330**	**100.0%**

4.7 What effect would increasing the level of the Council Tax Premium for long-term empty properties have on the local economy?

Overall there was also considerable difference of opinion on this question with 37.5% (N=2,752) of all respondents believing that increasing the premium on long-term empty properties would have a positive impact on the local economy. 26.8% (N=1,964) thought there would be no impact, and 23.7% (N=1,740) thought there would be a negative impact. 11.9% (N=874) of respondents had no opinion on this.

However, by looking at differences between respondents who own long-term empty properties and those who do not, a significant difference in opinion is seen as shown in the chart below.



"Do not own long-term empty property" includes respondents who owned a second home (but not a long-term empty property), as well as respondents who did not own either

"Owning a long-term empty property" includes all respondents who owned long-term empty properties, whether or not they also owned a second home

The table below details the response by category, and shows that 48.3% of respondents who own long-term empty properties believe increasing the premium level would have a negative impact on the local economy. 29.4% thought increasing the premium would have no effect.

Among respondents who do not own a second home or long-term empty property, 49.3% believed increasing the premium would have a positive impact on the local economy, 23.4% believed it would have no impact and 19.6% believed it would have a negative impact.

Among those owning a second home, opinion was split with 30.2% feeling that increasing the premium on long-term empty properties would have no impact on the local economy, 26.8% thinking there would be a positive impact and 26.5% believing there would be a negative impact .

Among the small number of respondents whoown long-term empty properties and a second home, 41.7% believed that increasing the premium would have a negative impact on the local economy, while 25.0% believed it would have no impact.

	Positive effect		No effect		Negative effect		No opinion		Total	
	No.	**%age**	**No.**	**%age**	**No.**	**%age**	**No.**	**%age**	**No.**	**%age**
Owning neither a second home nor empty property	1,799	49.3%	854	23.4%	714	19.6%	279	7.7%	3,646	100.0%
Own a second home	924	26.8%	1,042	30.2%	914	26.5%	567	16.4%	3,447	100.0%
Own a long-term empty property	24	11.9%	59	29.4%	97	48.3%	21	10.4%	201	100.0%
Owning a second home and long-term empty property	5	13.9%	9	25.0%	15	41.7%	7	19.4%	36	100.0%
Total	**2,752**	**37.5%**	**1,964**	**26.8%**	**1,740**	**23.7%**	**874**	**11.9%**	**7,330**	**100.0%**

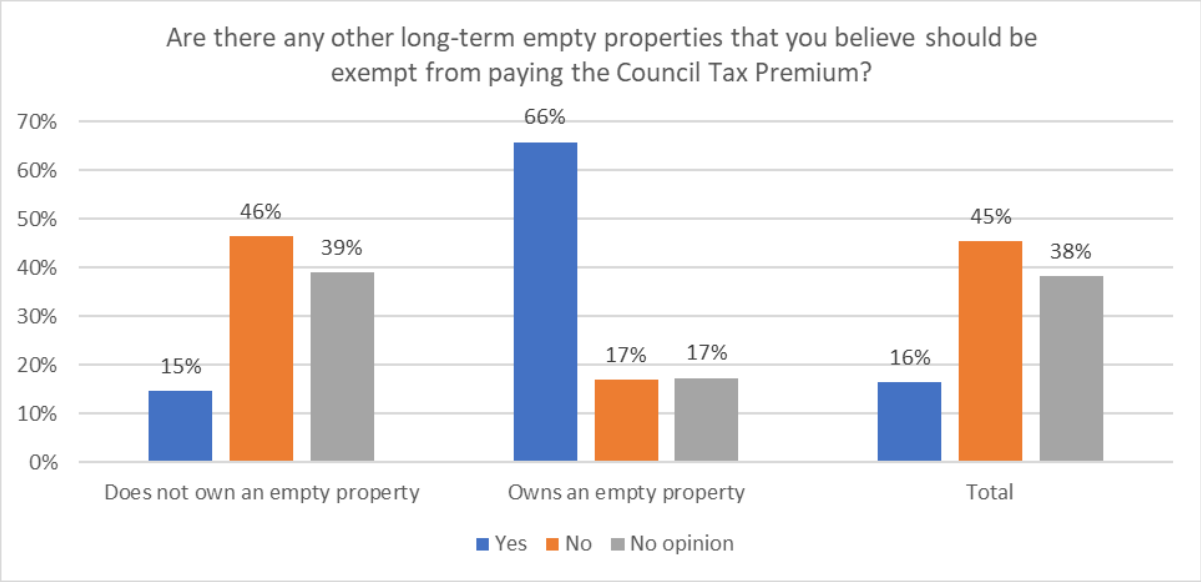
4.8 Are there other long-term empty properties that you believe should be exempt from paying the Council Tax Premium?

The following long-term empty properties are statutorily exempt from being subject to the Premium:

- Dwellings being marketed for sale – time-limited for one year
- Dwellings being marketed for let – time-limited for one year
- Annexes forming part of, or being treated as part of, the main dwelling
- Dwellings which would be someone's sole or main residence if they were not residing in armed forces accommodation

Respondents had an opportunity to consider whether any type of other long-term empty property needed to be added to the list. 16.3% (N=1,196) of respondents rated this as necessary, with 45.4% (N=3,329) indicating no need to add to the list and 38.3% (N=2,805) not having an opinion.

As shown in the chart below respondents owning long-term empty properties were more likely than other respondents to suggest premium exemptions, with 65.8% (N=156) of all long-term empty property owners reporting this compared to 14.7% (N=1,040) of all other respondents.



"Do not own long-term empty property" includes respondents who owned a second home (but not a long-term empty property), as well as respondents who did not own either

"Owning a long-term empty property" includes all respondents who owned long-term empty properties, whether or not they also owned a second home

4.9 Note any other long-term empty properties that you believe should be exempt from paying the Council Tax Premium

Those who identified the need to add to the exemption list had a chance to detail this. Of the 1,196 who reported "Yes", 92.7% (N=1,109) detailed that in comments.

Comment	Number of comments	% of number who gave comments
Properties undergoing major renovations (difficult to get workers)	230	20.7%
Inherited/"probate" properties	188	17.0%
Empty due to having to go to care/hospital	111	10.0%
Properties that have been for sale/for rent for a long time	95	8.6%
Need to increase the exemption period to more than 12months	89	8.0%
Properties that are not fit for habitation	79	7.1%
All long-term empty properties	78	7.0%
Holiday accommodation	49	4.4%
Second homes in use	48	4.3%
Agree with list	39	3.5%

Empty properties that are part of the main home and difficult to separate for sale/rent e.g. farm properties	36	3.2%
Property has been owned by the family for generations	34	3.1%
Property awaiting planning permission/change of use / through the courts	32	2.9%
Welsh owned property/local person	30	2.7%
Properties where the owner has had to go away to work but plans to return in the future	26	2.3%
Properties with historic/listed value	26	2.3%
Empty property with business involved	16	1.4%
Properties not receiving services from the Council	15	1.4%
No more tax should be levied on any property whether empty or not	14	1.3%
Need better definition of "long term"	12	1.1%
Eto it void where the owner intends to come to live permanently in the future	12	1.1%
Empty property owned by charity/community	10	0.9%
Powers for the Council to compel someone to sell the property to them if it has been empty for a certain period	9	0.8%
Property with restrictions or deeds of covenant	9	0.8%
Empty property owned by pensioners	8	0.7%
Property where a holiday home was the original purpose	7	0.6%
Static caravans / chalet/annex	5	0.5%
Empty property because the owner is in jail	3	0.3%
Empty houses in multiple occupation (HMO)	3	0.3%
Need to look at each request individually	3	0.3%
Properties that have been empty for less than 5 years	2	0.2%
Properties where people have owned them for years e.g. 10 years	2	0.2%
Property owner with disability or long-term illness	1	0.1%
Commercial properties	1	0.1%
Need to charge premium on empty commercial buildings	1	0.1%
Don't agree with the list - annex shouldn't be excluded	1	0.1%

4.10 Please provide any other comments you have about long-term empty properties

Of the respondents, 32.9% (N=2,415) gave further commetns about long term empty dwellings.

Comment	Number of comments	% of number who gave comments
With such a shortage of housing in the area needing to encourage/motivate owners of long-term empty properties to sell/rent to local people	477	19.8%
Compulsory Purchase by the Council after a certain period of property being empty - developing into homes for local people	306	12.7%
Has the Council spoken to owners of empty properties to understand why it is empty rather than raising the premium - need to decide the premium level case by case	274	11.3%
Long term empty properties can be messy and have an impact on neighbouring properties/image of the area/vandalism	260	10.8%
Long-term empty properties much more of a problem for communities than second homes	259	10.7%
Premium is a good idea but there must be exceptions e.g. when someone has to go into a care home/go through "probate"/major renovations	238	9.9%
Long-term empty properties no help to local economy	200	8.3%
The premium should force owners to do something with them	152	6.3%
Need to increase the exemption period - more than 12 months	127	5.3%
Grants for local people to develop empty properties	122	5.1%
Council's lazy way to raise money instead of looking at their spending	98	4.1%
Need a better definition of "long term" and the difference between a second home/holiday accommodation and an empty property	97	4.0%
Long-term empty properties have impact on local community and Welsh language	93	3.9%
Figures on the number of empty properties in Gwynedd would have been useful in answering the consultation	80	3.3%
This will lead to more empty properties being put on the market	78	3.2%
Now is not the time to raise council tax - the cost of living high enough already	77	3.2%
Empty properties become harder to sell/rent due to economic situation	71	2.9%
It will have a negative impact on tourism	69	2.9%
Raising the premium may have the opposite effect to what it intends to have	64	2.7%
Premium would be a barrier to investment/expenditure in the area	59	2.4%

Many of these empty properties are not going to be suitable for housing needs in the community, including young families	56	2.3%
Need to ensure that some do not take advantage of the exemptions to avoid paying extra tax	49	2.0%
Gwynedd Council needs to focus on creating more jobs in the area	46	1.9%
Long-term empty properties where there are no improvement or sale plans should pay the premium	45	1.9%
The Council should have built far more affordable homes than they have done	42	1.7%
Is there evidence that the 100% premium is invested in the communities?	41	1.7%
Need to look at planning rules - making it easier to bring empty properties back into use / regulations that only allow local people	40	1.7%
The premium should remain 100%	39	1.6%
Questionnaire biased and narrow and not unbiased	34	1.4%
Further legislations are needed to protect property for the benefit of local communities and individuals and not punish them	33	1.4%
Some empty properties have been in family ownership for centuries	31	1.3%
Premium goes against human rights /racist	31	1.3%
People should be helped to renovate ruins	29	1.2%
Need to focus on empty commercial properties first	27	1.1%
Some empty properties bought for future living	26	1.1%
Empty properties should pay less council tax and not more - receive no services	20	0.8%
The Council should help owners bring properties into use rather than penalise them: co-operation	20	0.8%
Empty properties could not be faulted for a decline in the Welsh language	17	0.7%
Premium not fair if it's not used the same throughout the country	16	0.7%
Need to make clear/sufficient notice when the changes will happen	15	0.6%
Premium should be payable by locals identically	13	0.5%
Strict rules for landlords stop them renting the houses to people	12	0.5%
Properties furnished despite being uninhabited should not be included	11	0.5%
Raising the premium would have a negative impact on the economy	10	0.4%
Council tax should be levied on caravans that are re-homes	7	0.3%
This will lead to more empty properties turning into holiday accommodation	7	0.3%
Raising the premium would not have much impact in itself on the use of empty properties	6	0.2%
Raising the premium will create more work for Council staff e.g. going after non-paying	4	0.2%

Empty properties not a huge problem in the area	4	0.2%
Offer a different premium percentage	2	0.1%
No one from outside Gwynedd should be allowed to consult on Council Tax policy	1	0.0%
Changing property names to English names should not be allowed	1	0.0%
The premium should be dependent on income testing	1	0.0%

Appendix: Equality Questions

1. Sex

Category	Number	Percentage
Woman / Female	3,162	43.1%
Man / Male	3,491	47.6%
I identify in a different way:	25	0.3%
I prefer not to say	652	8.9%
Total Responses	**7,330**	**100.0%**

2. Age

Category	Number	Percentage
15 years old or younger	1	0.0%
16 - 24 years old	106	1.4%
25 - 34 years old	428	5.8%
35 - 44 years old	772	10.5%
45 - 54 years old	1,474	20.1%
55 - 64 years old	1,806	24.6%
65 - 74 years old	1,405	19.2%
75 - 84 years old	626	8.5%
85+ years old	101	1.4%
I prefer not to say	611	8.3%
Total Responses	**7,330**	**100.0%**

3. Nationality or national identity

Category	Number	Percentage
Scottish	41	0.6%
Welsh	2,556	34.9%
Northern Irish	20	0.3%
British	2,111	28.8%
English	1,702	23.2%
Other	249	3.4%
I prefer not to say	651	8.9%
Total Responses	**7,330**	**100.0%**

4. Race

Category	Number	Percentage
Asian	15	0.2%
Mixed / several ethnic groups	50	0.7%
Black / African Caribbean	7	0.1%
White	6,319	86.2%
Gypsy / Irish Traveller	1	0.0%
Other	52	0.7%
I prefer not to say	886	12.1%
Total Responses	**7,330**	**100.0%**

5. Religion

Category	Number	Percentage
Buddhist	15	0.2%
Christian	3,744	51.1%
Hindu	3	0.0%
Jewish	9	0.1%
Muslim	8	0.1%
Sikh	2	0.0%
No religion	2,249	30.7%
Other	115	1.6%
I prefer not to say	1,185	16.2%
Total Responses	**7,330**	**100.0%**

6. Sexuality

Category	Number	Percentage
Bisexual	49	0.7%
Gay man	61	0.8%
Gay woman / lesbian	28	0.4%
Heterosexual / Straight	5,660	77.2%
Other	109	1.5%
I prefer not to say	1,377	18.8%
Did not answer	46	0.6%
Total Responses	**7,330**	**100.0%**

7. Has your gender identification changed from that assigned to you at birth?

Category	Number	Percentage
No	6,086	83.0%
Yes	89	1.2%
I prefer not to say	1,076	14.7%
Did not answer	79	1.1%
Total Responses	**7,330**	**100.0%**

8. Disability

Category	Number	Percentage
No	5,989	81.7%
Yes	366	5.0%
I prefer not to say	975	13.3%
Total Responses	**7,330**	**100.0%**

9. Welsh Language skills

Category*	Number	Percentage
Speak Welsh	2,593	35.4%
Understand spoken Welsh	2,591	35.3%
Read Welsh	2,024	27.6%
Write in Welsh	1,670	22.8%
I can't understand Welsh	1,741	23.8%
I prefer not to say	1,580	21.6%
Other	229	3.1%

**could choose more than one category*

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Assessing the Impact on Protected Characteristics, the Welsh Language and Socio-Economic Disadvantage

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

The Council's is required (under the Equality Act 2010) to consider the effect any change in policy or procedure (or the creation of a new policy or procedure), has on people with protected equality characteristics. The Council also has a general duty to ensure fairness and foster good relations. A timely Equality Impact Assessment must be undertaken before making any decision on any relevant change (i.e. which has an effect on people with protected characteristics).

The Council is also required, under the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (Section 44 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011) to consider the effect of a change in any policy or procedure (or the creation of a new policy or procedure), in its opportunities for people to use Welsh and to ensure that Welsh is not treated less favourably than English. This document therefore ensures that these decisions protect and promote the use of the Welsh language.

From April 1st 2021 the Council has a duty to have due regard to tackling socio-economic disadvantage in strategic decisions.

1) Details

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

Council Tax Premium on Long-term Empty Dwellings and Second Homes

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

Between April 2018 and March 2021 the Council charged a premium of 50% on the Council Tax of second homes and long-term empty dwellings, and since 1 April 2021 the Premium level has increased to 100%. From 1 April 2023 the legislation will change and the Council will have the right to increase the Premium to 300%.

The full Council will need to make its decision at the Premium level for the 2023/24 financial year at its meeting on 1 December 2022 based on a recommendation to be decided by Cabinet at its meeting on 22 November.

At its meeting on 27 September 2022, Cabinet agreed to hold a public consultation on how it should respond to the change of legislation enabling the Council to increase the level of Premium beyond the current 100%.

The purpose of the policy is for a discretion given to local authorities to charge a premium to be a vehicle to assist local authorities to:

1. restore the use of long-term empty homes in order to provide safe, secure and affordable homes; and
2. assist local authorities in increasing the supply of affordable housing and improving the sustainability of local communities.

At its December 2024 meeting the Council decided to raise a premium of 150% on second homes and 100% on long-term empty properties.

The Council at its meeting on 4 December 2025 will be required to decide on the premium rate for 2026/27. The Connaught is considering keeping the second home premium at 150% but increasing the premium on long-term empty properties.

1.3 Who is responsible for this assessment?

Dewi Morgan, Head of Finance

1.4 When did you commence the assessment? Which version is this?

15 December 2020. This assessment began after Cabinet decided that it would undertake a public consultation to ascertain public opinion on the proposal to change the Premium rate.

The assessment has been reviewed and updated in November 2021 to take account of the duty to have due regard to tackling socio-economic disadvantage in strategic decisions.

It has been modified and updated again in October / November 2022 to take into account the results of the public consultation launched in September 2022.

The assessment was updated in October 2025

2) Action

2.1 Who are the stakeholders or partners you need to work with to undertake this assessment?

The Council has the power under the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended) to adjust the Level of Premium by up to 300% from 1 April 2023 onwards, after the Act was amended by *The Council Tax (Long-term Empty Dwellings and Dwellings Occupied Periodically) (Wales) Regulations 2022 (SI 2022/370 W.90).* The previous maximum was 100%. However, it is an explicit expectation that we should consult with the public and key stakeholders. A public consultation was held, with attention given in the local press and on social websites, and the Council wrote to owners of properties subject to the Premium.

The partners and key stakeholders were:

Gwynedd Residents
Taxpayers on empty properties and second homes

There was collaboration with several internal partners, e.g.:
Finance Department
Corporate Support Department
Gwynedd Council Cabinet Members
Full Council
Housing and Property Department

2.2 What measures have you taken to engage with people with equality characteristics, regarding the Welsh language or with communities (either of place or of need) that live with socio-economic disadvantage?

We have endeavoured to identify individuals with protected characteristics as the public consultation asks respondents to inform us of any protected characteristics so that these can be taken into account in the development of the policy.

The consultation was public and the questionnaire was available to anyone to complete online. Two press releases raising awareness of it were issued, and social media was used to raise awareness.

The Council wrote to all households subject to the Premium with a letter drawing their attention to the consultation. Where the different correspondence address was recorded in the Council Tax system, this was used. The letter referred to the Council's website and the opportunity to complete the questionnaire there, but the Council's website stated that anyone could contact the Council if they wished to receive a paper copy of the consultation.

2.3 What was the result of the engagement?

A public consultation was held between 30 September and 28 October 2022. 7,330 responses were received on the formal questionnaire, as well as around 100 separate letters and messages expressing dissatisfaction with the proposal. 7,330 responses were received to the questionnaire. There were 7,277 online questionnaire responses and 53 paper responses. This is the largest number of responses the Council has seen to any consultation in recent years.

Just over half of respondents (50.3%, N=3,684) owned either a second home or a long-term empty dwelling in Gwynedd (or both).

In total, three-quarters of respondents (75.0%, N=5,497) considered it not appropriate to increase the level of Council Tax Premium on second homes. 24.1% (N=1,764) thought it appropriate to increase it, with 0.9% (N=69) not having an opinion. However by separating the answers between respondents who own a second home and those who do not, there is some difference of opinion with the overwhelming majority of respondents who own a second home opposing increasing the premium level. Among respondents who do not own a second home the view was more divided, but with this majority also of the opinion that it would not be appropriate to increase the premium.

Respondents' comments were sought on the impact of the Premium on a number of aspects of social issues. A number of those who opposed the increase indicated that they had owned their property in Gwynedd for several years, and were very fond of the area. On the other hand, some of those responding claimed that there was a racist motive behind the intention to increase the Premium as the Council is against people from outside Gwynedd and that it is racist. No evidence was submitted to support this view.

There are two different categories of properties subject to the Premium, namely second homes and long-term empty properties.

Very few people want to pay more tax, and there was vehement opposition from second home owners in particular. It stands to reason that increasing the level of premium would have a financial impact on these individuals, but there was no evidence that any protected group would be affected. However, a number of those who have responded to the enquiry claim that the policy of raising the Premium is racist, anti-English, although no discrimination exists when setting the premium.

The consultation included an equality questionnaire. This suggested that a higher proportion of second home owners than the general population are older people.

In total the majority of respondents (72.9%, N=5,342) thought that long-term empty properties were currently having a negative impact on local communities, while 16.2% (N=1,191) thought they were not having an impact and 1.3% (N=96) thought they were having a positive impact. 9.6% (N=701) of respondents had no opinion on this.

2.4 On the basis of what other evidence are you operating?

The Equality Act 2010 allows the Council to act positively towards some cohorts if there is evidence of need ("take action to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these differ from the needs of others"). Several studies by the Council have identified that there is a problem with the availability of housing for young families in Gwynedd, so we have identified a problem and are taking steps to deal with that. Young people have been priced out of the local housing market.

On 9 November 2022 there were

- **4,564** dwellings subject to the Premium on second homes (Class B)
- **229** of further second homes in Class B but not paying the Premium as they were subject to one of the exemptions outlined in Part 8 below.
- **753** properties within Class A where occupation is prohibited for a consecutive period of at least 28 days in the relevant year.

At the same time, **1,099** properties were subject to the Premium on a long-term empty dwelling.

In June 2025 there were 1,121 long-term vacant properties (vacant for over 12 months) in the county as follows:

vacant for between 1 and 3 years	vacant for between 3 and 5 years	has been vacant for more than 5 years.
574	231	316

Study on the Effect of Holiday Homes

A key consideration by the Council when setting the Premium for 2023/24 will be the detailed report Holiday Homes Research Work that was submitted to the Cabinet meeting on 15 December 2020:

https://democracy.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/documents/s27960/Item%208%20-%20Report%20Holiday%20Homes.pdf

This follows a similar study carried out in 2013.

This report shows that the total number of holiday homes (second homes and self-catering holiday units) within Gwynedd continues to increase, and asks for the Cabinet's commitment to take decisive action to address the situation.

The study is the result of detailed research that has been undertaken over recent months, and highlights that there are a number of factors that influence Gwynedd's housing stock. It builds on studies that have been undertaken in the past and highlights that there are pressing issues

that continue to need attention, and that the situation within Gwynedd communities, particularly those that attract visitors, is intensifying.

Whilst the scope of the study also extends to planning issues, leading attention is given to the financial incentive that exists of owning a holiday home as well as the taxation advantage that exists of meeting the legal thresholds for transferring property to the non-domestic rates regime (these properties are not subject to the premium).

Property Values

Second home Council Tax bands are generally higher than Gwynedd properties as a whole. In October 2022, 32.1% of Gwynedd's second homes were in Council Tax Band E or above, compared with 22.1% of Gwynedd properties overall. On the other hand, long-term empty property bands are lower. Only 17.6% of these properties are in band E or above.

One of the themes emerging from the consultation was that a number of second homes were a family home that had been inherited and retained by the family, or that the property had been owned by the family as a second home for a number of years.

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

Apart from the sense of some respondents that Gwynedd Council is generally racist by considering raising the Premium and then increasing it, no evidence has been received to support that as studies have been undertaken suggesting that action is needed to address housing problems in rural areas of Gwynedd.

3) Identifying the Impact

3.1 The Council must give due regard to the effect any changes will have on people with the equality characteristics noted below. What impact will the new policy/service or the proposed changes in the policy or service have on people with these characteristics?

Characteristics	What type of impact?*	In what way? What is the evidence?
Race (including nationality)	Positive	The policy of charging a premium is intended to address the situation that housing is not available to local people, and the impact is positive on this cohort.
	Negative	The policy will affect people from outside Gwynedd and some respondents to the public consultation claim that the Policy would be racist as it targets people from outside Wales. However, there is no consideration of the race of the property owners when a premium is charged on second homes and long-term empty properties. The Premium is charged on all second homes and long-term empty properties without in any way discriminating on where the owners live or what their race or nationality is. However, we recognise that the public consultation shows that a significant proportion of second home owners identify themselves as English and therefore it is likely that the policy will have a negative financial impact on this cohort. However, the money will be used to develop the housing market for local People, which is a positive outcome.
Disability	Insignificant	There is a small possibility of differentiation indirectly on the grounds of disability if a disabled person keeps an

		adapted property in Gwynedd as they cannot have a holiday elsewhere.
Sex	None	No impact has been identified
Age	Positive	A 2013 study showed that the demographic makeup of communities with high proportions of second homes was different; in general, the resident population is 'older'. This affects the balance of communities and will have an impact on the future resilience and sustainability of these areas. It went on to note that the profiles of second home owners themselves suggested that they were generally middle-aged or retired, and richer than the national average. Shelter (2011) (*Taking Stock, an assessment of under-utilisation of housing stock in England*) estimated that 60% of second home owners nationally were aged between 45 and 60 compared with 40% across all owner-occupied in this age group. The responses from the current public consultation have suggested the same. Therefore, there is evidence that the financial losers are older, but it is expected that older people living in the relevant areas throughout the year will benefit as local society will be more resilient and sustainable. However, there is strong evidence that care providers face serious recruitment difficulties. Achieving community balance is vital to getting enough younger people to protect and care for older people, and the policy of raising a Premium is intended to help young people stay in the local area by being able to provide them with homes locally. Overall, therefore, the policy will have a positive impact as it helps young families to have a home. This will then have a more positive than negative impact on community balance.
Sexual orientation	None	No impact has been identified
Religion or belief (or non-belief)	None	No impact has been identified
Gender reassignment	None	No impact has been identified
Pregnancy and maternity	None	No impact has been identified

Marriage and civil partnership	None	No impact has been identified
The Welsh language	Positive	There will be an indirect impact on the language as the purpose of charging a premium is to encourage owners of long-term empty properties and second homes to return the property to the local housing stock, or to pay additional Council Tax. Premium yield to date has been used to meet local housing needs. Supporting the Welsh language is, therefore, a core part of this policy. In particular, there will be a positive impact on the balance of communities as premium products fund the Housing Action Plan which supports local families to buy an affordable home.
Socio-Economic Disadvantage	Positive	When resolving in February 2021 to recommend to the full Council that the Premium level should be increased to 100%, members of the Cabinet noted that there was a housing crisis within the county. The principle that the Council was eager for residents to have homes in their own communities was emphasised, in order to ensure thriving communities. It was added that housing was a priority and that it was a requirement to ensure additional resources in order to implement the Housing Strategy. The powers to raise a premium was introduced through the Housing (Wales) Act and the statutory guidelines note: *The discretion given to local authorities to charge a premium is intended to be a tool to help local authorities to:* • *bring long-term empty homes back into use to provide safe, secure and affordable homes; and* • *support local authorities in increasing the supply of affordable housing and enhancing the sustainability of local communities.*

3.2 The Council has a duty under the 2010 Equality Act to contribute positively to a fairer society by promoting equality and good relations in its activities regarding the following characteristics – age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, race, gender reassignment, 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	No	
Promoting equal opportunities	Yes	This will provide equal opportunity for local people who are currently unable to afford a home. The current housing situation is unequal and the decision is intended to stabilise and rectify this situation.
Encouraging good relationships	Yes	The policy of charging a Premium can promote good relationships with people within the communities of Gwynedd if the Policy gives them the opportunity to have a better home, or a first home, as the number of holiday homes and empty dwellings is found to have a detrimental effect on the ability of local people to have a place to live. A policy of charging a Council Tax Premium on second homes and empty dwellings can improve relationships if Gwynedd residents feel that the policy helps them to have a better chance of having a home in their local area. Some second home owners have claimed in their consultation response that increasing the level of the Premium will cause community ill feeling, but there is no evidence to support this claim. The current disparity is more likely to create resentment.

3.3 How does your proposal ensure that you work in accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011), to ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than English and that you seize every opportunity to promote the Welsh language (beyond providing services bilingually) and increase opportunities to use and learn the language in the community?

As noted in 3.1 above, there will be a positive impact on the balance of communities as the premium yield funds the Housing Action Plan which supports local families to buy an affordable home.

3.4 What other measures or changes could you include to strengthen or change the policy / practice in order to have a positive impact on people's opportunities to use the Welsh language, and to reduce or prevent any adverse effects that the policy / practice may have on the Welsh language?

This is a taxation policy, and we believe that the current policy goes to the best of our legal and statutory ability in that regard in terms of ca positive impact on the language.

3.5 How does the proposal show that you have had due regard to the need to address inequality caused by socio-economic disadvantage? (Note that this is about closing inequality gaps rather than just improving outcomes for everyone)?

The Council has adopted a Housing Action Plan in December2020 which includes a range of projects in place to make use of Premium products to tackle socio-economic disadvantage. The underlying principle is that those who can afford several properties help the most vulnerable in society who cannot get homes at all. The projects in the Housing Action Plan that make use of Premium funding are:

- Supported housing for the homeless schemes
- Supported housing for homeless young people
- Self-contained units for individuals with intensive social needs
- Support packages for private landlords
- Accommodation and extra support in Arfon
- Build more social housing than what can be funded through the social housing grant
- Develop our own housing in order to increase the opportunities for Gwynedd residents to compete in the housing market.
- Consult with communities to establish their housing needs
- Self-build plots

- First Time Buyers' Grants to renovate empty houses
- Council Tax Exemption on empty houses for first time buyers
- Homebuy scheme
- Finding and purchasing land for building in the future
- Residential element in community regeneration schemes
- Set up a new Energy Conservation service for home-owners in order to contribute towards our aspiration to address the climate crisis.
- Innovative Housing Pilot Scheme
- Funding the financial deficit in business cases for innovative housing
- Supported housing – youth
- Extra care housing for the elderly
- Supported Housing – adults with profound needs
- Suitable homes for children with severe physical needs
- Frondeg, Caernarfon
- Interest-free loans to improve housing conditions
- One-stop shop for Housing matters

3.6 What other measures or changes might you include to strengthen or change the policy / practice to show that you have had due regard to the need to reduce disproportionate outcomes as a result of socio-economic disadvantage, in accordance with the Socio-Economic Act?

We believe that the policy already shows a total commitment to giving due regard to the need to reduce unequal outcomes as a result of socio-economic disadvantage and that other measures or changes are not needed.

4) Analysing the Results

4.1 Is the policy therefore likely to have a significant, positive impact on any of the above and what is the reason for this?

One of the main outcomes of the Premium is the funding of the Housing Action Plan. This scheme will address social disparity within Gwynedd. The Equality Impact Assessment completed during the preparation of the Housing Action Plan sets out the very positive steps that will result from the implementation of the Scheme, with the financial support of the Premium:
https://democracy.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/documents/s27958/Item%206%20-%20Appendix%20B%20-%20Equality%20Impact%20Reprt.pdf

The Premium is intended to aim to reduce inequality within the communities of Gwynedd, and contributes to that by funding specific projects.

Details of an assessment of the Well-being of Future Generations Act can be found in the body of the Cabinet report.

4.2 Is the policy therefore likely to have a significant, negative impact on any of the above and what is the reason for this?

Two specific cohorts of the population will be subject to the Premium, namely second home owners, and owners of long-term empty homes.

It should be noted that consultation responses, together with national studies strongly suggest that second home owners tend to be older people. A number of the consultation responses suggest that some of these older owners are "asset rich / cash poor". That is, they have bought the property for several years or inherited it, but their income is not necessarily high. This ultimately raises a very small amount of doubt if the Council is fulfilling its statutory duties, but that must be weighed against the poverty, unemployment and homelessness in rural Gwynedd. According to the Housing Action Plan, 59% of Gwynedd residents have been priced out of the market in Gwynedd.

A number of the responses to the public consultation have stated that this Policy is racist as it targets individuals living outside Wales. However, the Premium is charged to all properties that are second or long-term empty properties without considering ownership. A significant proportion of second home owners identify themselves as English, and increasing the Premium would have a negative financial impact on this cohort.

Case law has established that indirect discrimination shall be taken to occur where an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice would put persons of a racial or ethnic origin at a particular disadvantage compared with other persons, unless that provision, criterion or practice is objectively justified by a legitimate aim and the means of achieving that aim are appropriate and necessary.

In making a decision on the Premium, therefore, one must be aware of the possibility that indirect discrimination exists. Although it is property use that means if a Premium is payable on it or not, not its ownership, the outcome of the consultation suggests that owners of such properties tend to be English and older people and it is necessary to be aware of the risk of indirect discrimination against these cohorts. However, the Equality Act 2010 states that this is legal if the policy is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim, and in this case it is a means of realising a positive action, namely tackling the housing crisis for local people.

4.3 What should be done?

Choose one of the following:

Continue with the policy / service as it is robust	
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	✓
No further action at this time because it is too soon to decide, or there is insufficient evidence	

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

There is some evidence that increasing the premium on second homes would be discriminate against a protected group, with data suggesting that second home owners tend to be older people and identify themselves as English. The policy in relation to Council Tax Premium is intended to recognise that long-term empty properties and second homes increase some of Gwynedd's social problems, and the owners should make a financial contribution to alleviate some of the disadvantages they cause.

There is a claim that the policy of raising the Premium is racist because of where second home owners live, but a number of those who have answered the consultation note that Welsh people own a property in Gwynedd while their main home is outside Wales. The Premium will be charged based on the characteristics of the property, not the characteristics of the owner and there is a positive impact if local families can afford to buy a property in their local area rather than having to move away to get a home. There is recognition that there is a negative financial impact on people living outside Gwynedd, with a large number of them identifying themselves as English. In line with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, increasing the level of the Premium is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim, which is to fund a Housing Action Plan that addresses some of the damage that second homes and empty dwellings cause to the communities of Gwynedd.

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

The level of premium is ultimately a political issue, taken on the basis of the evidence available. Elected members will reach a decision on the appropriate balance between the additional cost to owners of second homes and long-term empty properties and the associated incentive of bringing properties back into use, against the social well-being that would result from the ability to realise specific schemes to address social disparity.

5) Monitoring

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

The setting of the Premium level will require an annual decision by the full Council. The Finance Department will continue to keep track of changes to the status of long-term empty properties and second homes, and act as necessary to assess if there are equality issues behind transfer to non-domestic rating.

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

GUIDANCE

Council Tax on empty and second homes

Guidance for local authorities on council tax premiums on long-term empty properties and second homes.

First published: 9 March 2023

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Introduction

Since 1 April 2017, local authorities in Wales have been able to charge a premium of up to 100% of the standard rate of council tax on long-term empty dwellings and dwellings occupied periodically (more commonly referred to as second homes) in their areas. From 1 April 2023, the maximum level at which local authorities can set council tax premiums will increase to 300%. The powers given to local authorities are discretionary so whether to charge a premium on long-term empty properties or second homes (or both) is, therefore a decision to be made by each local authority.

The purpose of this guidance is to ensure a fair and consistent approach is applied across Wales and assist local authorities:

- in their decisions to charge or amend a premium in their local area
- with the administration and enforcement of premiums
- the application of the exceptions
- monitoring and reporting the use of premiums

All local authorities in Wales must have regard to any guidance issued by Welsh Ministers when determining a premium on the standard rate of council tax as set out in sections 12A (3) and 12B (4) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (‘the 1992 Act’) as inserted by the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 (‘the 2014 Act’).

This guidance should not be treated as an interpretation of the legislation. The interpretation of legislation is in the first instance a matter for the local authority, with definitive interpretation being the responsibility of the courts.

Part 1: implementation of the council tax premium on long term empty dwellings and

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dwellings periodically occupied in Wales

Legal framework for the council tax premiums

This section sets out the legal framework which is common to both the premium on long-term empty dwellings and on dwellings periodically occupied. Specific requirements for long-term empty properties are set out in Section 12A, and those specific to dwellings periodically occupied are detailed Section 12B.

Sections 12A and 12B to enable a billing authority (a county council or county borough council) in Wales to disapply any discount granted to long-term empty dwellings and dwellings occupied periodically and apply a higher amount of council tax (a premium).

The Council Tax (Long-term Empty Dwellings and Dwellings Occupied Periodically) (Wales) Regulations 2022 ('the 2022 Regulations') amended sections 12A and 12B of the 1992 Act increasing the higher amount of council tax a billing authority (a county council or county borough council) in Wales can apply to long-term empty dwellings and dwellings occupied periodically to 300% for the 2023 to 2024 financial year and for subsequent years.

Where a determination to charge a premium is made, a local authority must publish a notice of the determination in at least 1 newspaper circulating in its area within 21 days of the date of the determination.

A determination by a billing authority to charge a premium will also disapply any discount that is granted under section 11(2)(a) of the 1992 Act for dwellings in which there are no residents.

A billing authority can make, vary, or revoke a determination made under sections 12A and 12B of the 1992 Act, but only before the beginning of the financial year to which the determination applies. In using these powers, a billing

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authority can also determine the types or classes of properties within the categories of long-term empty dwellings or second homes to which they will apply a premium. This enables each authority to tailor its determination to local circumstances.

The Welsh Ministers also have powers under section 12A(4) and 12A(5), and 12B(5) and 12B(6) of the 1992 Act to prescribe through regulations certain classes of dwelling which may not be subject to a premium. The Council Tax (Exceptions to Higher Amounts Wales) Regulations 2015 prescribe the exceptions and are detailed later in this guidance.

The council tax system already provides several specific exemptions from council tax. The exempt groups are set out in the Council Tax (Exempt Dwellings) Order 1992 (as amended). There are several exemptions in place for unoccupied dwellings, for example:

- where the resident is in long-term residential care or hospital
- where a dwelling is being structurally repaired (for up to 1 year)
- where the resident has died (for up to 6 months after the grant of probate or letters of administration)

A dwelling that is exempt from council tax is not liable for a premium. However, where a dwelling is no longer eligible for an exemption, but remains unoccupied, it will become liable for the premium where 1 is applied. In the case of an empty dwelling, it will become liable for a premium after it has been empty for a continuous period of 1 year, and this will include the period that any exemption has been applied.

Section 12A: higher amount for long-term empty dwellings

A long-term empty dwelling is defined for the purpose of this section as a

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dwelling which is both unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for a continuous period of at least 1 year.

The furnishing or occupation of a dwelling for 1 or more periods of 6 weeks or less during the year will not affect its status as a long-term empty dwelling. In other words, a person cannot alter a dwelling's status as a long-term empty dwelling by taking up residence or installing furniture for a short period.

Where a local authority makes a determination to charge a premium on long-term empty dwellings, it may specify different percentages for different dwellings based on the length of time for which they have been empty. This enables local authorities to take a stepped approach, with incremental increases applying over time.

Section 12B: higher amount for dwellings periodically occupied

A second home is defined for the purpose of this section as a dwelling which is not a person's sole or main home and is substantially furnished. These dwellings are referred to in the 1992 Act as dwellings occupied periodically but they are commonly referred to as 'second homes'.

For a premium to apply to dwellings occupied periodically, a billing authority must make its first determination under section 12B at least 1 year before the beginning of the financial year to which the premium relates.

From here on the guidance will refer to long-term empty properties and second homes.

Making a determination to charge the council tax premiums on long-term empty properties and/or second

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homes

The discretion given to local authorities to charge a premium is intended to be a tool to help:

- bring long-term empty properties back into use to provide safe, secure and affordable homes
- support local authorities in increasing the supply of affordable housing and enhancing the sustainability of local communities

Local authorities can apply premiums to long-term empty properties or second homes or both and can set different levels of premium for each class.

The powers were deliberately designed as discretionary powers to allow local authorities to tailor their use to address local priorities and reflect the different patterns of housing availability and need across Wales.

There are a range of factors which could help inform local authorities in deciding whether to charge a premium. Whilst some factors will be specific to either long-term empty properties or second homes, others will be common to both. A list of these factors is set out below to assist local authorities. It is not intended to be exhaustive.

- Numbers and percentages of long-term empty properties and/or second homes in the local area.
- Distribution of long-term empty properties and/or second homes and other housing throughout the authority and an assessment of their impact on property values in particular areas.
- Potential impact on local economies and the tourism industry.
- Patterns of demand for, and availability of, affordable homes.
- Potential impact on local public services.
- Potential impact on the local community.

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- Potential impact on the Welsh language.
- Other measures that are available to authorities to increase housing supply and the availability of affordable housing.
- Other measures that are available to authorities to help bring empty properties back into use.

The determination by a local authority to charge a premium under section 12A or 12B of the 1992 Act will usually be part of the budget-setting process as it is likely to affect tax-setting and spending decisions. It will therefore normally be a decision made by full Council. Prior to doing so, a local authority must give due consideration to its statutory duties to carry out equality impact assessments under the Equality Act 2010 and the Welsh public sector equality Duty which came into force in 2011 and to all other relevant considerations. This will include consideration of how its policy meets the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and contribute specifically to the objectives of a prosperous Wales; a more equal Wales; and a Wales of cohesive communities.

Local authorities should also be mindful of the timing of any decisions to introduce or vary a premium for a financial year. Any change to a premium will alter an authority's revenue plans and should be taken into account in its budget-setting. A local authority is normally expected to reflect its proposed tax-base, including all discounts and premiums, by the end of December for the forthcoming financial year, so any decisions made after this point pose risks to the credibility of published data and could lead to criticism.

A local authority should consider how its engages and consults with key stakeholders, including the local electorate and second homeowners, before taking a decision to charge a premium.

Local authorities are strongly encouraged to consult before making a first determination to charge a premium. For second homes, the first determination to charge a premium must be made at least 12 months before the beginning of the

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financial year to which the proposed premium relates. The same does not apply to empty properties but as a dwelling must be empty for at least 12 months before a premium can apply, the Welsh Government recommends that a first determination to apply a premium to long-term empty dwellings should be made at least 6 months before the beginning of the financial year to which the premium relates. A local authority should make a full assessment of possible impacts, including on the local population, its communities, and the local economy.

Any decision to vary or revoke a determination to apply a premium must be made before the beginning of the financial year to which it applies. Local authorities are also strongly encouraged to consult before making a determination to increase a premium to a level above 100% and to do so at least 6 months before the beginning of the financial year to which the proposed premium increase relates. This will enable the premium to be taken into account when setting council tax levels for the forthcoming year and allow taxpayers sufficient time to consider the impact of a higher premium on their own personal financial circumstances and make choices regarding their property.

Having decided to introduce or vary a premium, in addition to the requirement to publish a notice in a local newspaper within 21 days, a local authority should consider how its decision is communicated more widely, particularly to those who might be affected. This may be through the publication of press notices, providing information on website pages or via other avenues to raise awareness such as, for example, direct communication with council taxpayers who are likely to be liable for the premium. A local authority should also give consideration as to how they advise or inform those who may be affected but may reside outside the local area.

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Exceptions to the council tax premiums on long-term empty properties and second homes

Sections 12A and 12B of the 1992 Act provide Welsh Ministers with powers to make regulations to prescribe 1 or more classes of dwellings in relation to which a billing authority may not make a determination to apply a premium. The Council Tax (Exceptions to Higher Amounts) (Wales) Regulations 2015 are made under these powers a premium may not be charged on a dwelling that falls within an exception. A local authority must have regard to these exceptions before deciding to implement a premium.

The regulations prescribe 7 classes of exempt dwellings. Classes 1, 2, 3 and 4 apply to both long-term empty properties and second homes. Classes 5, 6, and 7 apply only to second homes. The classes of dwelling are outlined below.

Class 1: dwellings being marketed for sale or where an offer to buy the dwelling has been accepted, time-limited for 1 year

Application

Long-term empty properties and second homes.

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Class 2: dwellings being marketed for let or where an offer to rent has been accepted, time-limited for 1 year

Application

Long-term empty properties and second homes.

Class 3: annexes forming part of, or being treated as part of, the main dwelling

Application

Long-term empty properties and second homes.

Class 4: dwellings which would be someone's sole or main residence if they were not residing in armed forces accommodation

Application

Long-term empty properties and second homes.

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Class 5: occupied caravan pitches and boat moorings

Application

Second homes.

Class 6: dwellings where by virtue of a planning condition, year-round or permanent occupation is prohibited or has been specified for use as holiday accommodation only or prevents occupancy as a person's sole or main residence

Application

Second homes.

Class 7: job-related dwellings

Application

Second homes.

Class 1: dwellings being marketed for sale

This exception applies to both the premium on long-term empty properties and

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on second homes. It excepts dwellings that are being marketed for sale. It also covers dwellings where an offer to buy the dwelling has been accepted but the sale has not yet been completed.

To qualify for this exception a dwelling must be on the market for sale at a reasonable price for that dwelling. In considering whether a price is reasonable, regard should be given to the sale price of comparable dwellings in the area. Additional guidance is provided in Part 2 Administration and Enforcement to assist local authorities in the application of this exception.

The exception period runs for up to 1 year from the granting of the exception. After an exception has ended, a dwelling being marketed for sale will not be eligible for a further exception period unless it has been sold.

Class 2: dwellings being marketed for let

This exception applies to both the premium on long-term empty properties and second homes. It excepts dwellings that are being marketed for let. It also covers dwellings where an offer to rent has been accepted but the tenant is not yet entitled to occupy the property because the tenancy has not yet started.

To be eligible for this exception, a dwelling must be on the market for let at a reasonable rent, that is, the rent the property would be expected to fetch having regard to the rent raised on comparable dwellings. Additional guidance is provided in Part 2 Administration and Enforcement to assist local authorities in the application of this exception.

The exception period runs for up to 1 year from the granting of the exception. After the end of the exception period, a dwelling being marketed for let will not be eligible for a further exception period unless it has been subject to a tenancy that was granted for a term or 6 months or more.

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Class 3: annexes forming part of, or being treated as part of, the main dwelling

This exception applies to both the premium on long-term empty properties and on second homes.

This exception applies where an owner has adapted their dwelling to provide an annexe and the annexe is now being used as part of the main dwelling.

Class 4: dwellings which would be someone's sole or main residence if they were not residing in armed forces accommodation

This exception applies to both the premium on long-term empty properties and on second homes.

This exception applies to dwellings that would be a person's sole or main residence but which is unoccupied because that person resides in armed forces accommodation.

This exception is also intended to cover armed forces personnel whose homes are unoccupied because they are living in armed forces accommodation overseas.

Class 5: occupied caravan pitches and boat moorings

This exception applies to the second home premium. It covers dwellings that consist of a pitch occupied by a caravan or a mooring occupied by a boat where the caravan or boat currently has no resident, but when next in use will be a

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person’s sole or main residence.

Class 6: seasonal homes or holiday lets where year-round or permanent occupation is prohibited

This exception applies to the second home premium. It is applicable to dwellings that are subject to planning conditions that prevent occupancy for a continuous period of at least 28 days in any 12 month period.

This exception is often applied to purpose-built holiday homes or chalets which are subject to planning conditions restricting year-round occupancy or to protect local features, for example where the site is near a fragile habitat which requires protection at particular times of year. The exception is based on the definition of the existing discretionary discount for seasonal homes (Class A) in The Council Tax (Prescribed Classes of Dwellings) (Wales) Regulations 1998.

From 1 April 2023, Class 6 is extended to include every dwelling restricted by a planning condition which:

- prevents occupancy for a continuous period of at least 28 days in any 1 year period
- specifies its use as a holiday let only
- prevents occupancy as a person’s sole or main residence

Class 7: job-related dwellings

This exception applies only in relation to the second home premium and applies to dwellings occupied by a person who is:

- a qualifying person in relation to the dwelling, but who is resident in another dwelling which is job-related (as defined in Schedule 1 to the Regulations)

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- a qualifying person in relation to a job-related dwelling

A qualifying person is defined as:

- a person who is liable for council tax in respect of a dwelling on a particular day, whether or not jointly with another person
- a person who would be liable for the council tax in respect of a dwelling on a particular day, whether or not jointly with another person if that dwelling did not fall within Class O of the Council Tax (Exempt Dwellings) Order 1992 or Class E of the Council Tax (Liability for Owners) Regulations 1992

This exception applies where a person is required to reside in a job-related dwelling. It applies to a second home that is occupied periodically because a person is required to live in job-related accommodation elsewhere. It also applies where the job-related accommodation is a person's second home.

The definition of a job-related dwelling is given in the Schedule to the Regulations. Although this exception is similar to the job-related discount under the Council Tax (Prescribed Classes of Dwellings) (Wales) Regulations 1998, it differs because the discount only applies if the job-related dwelling is a person's sole or main residence.

Another difference from the job-related dwelling discount is that there is no requirement for the taxpayer to be liable for council tax in respect of 2 dwellings, meaning that a person who has either a main home abroad or a job-related dwelling abroad can also benefit from the exception.

Additional guidance is provided in Part 2 Administration and Enforcement to assist local authorities in the application of this exception.

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Reducing liability for the council tax premiums on long-term empty properties and second homes

In exercising the power under section 12A and 12B of the 1992 Act, a billing authority may determine the particular types or classes of properties within the categories of long-term empty properties or second homes to which it will or will not apply a premium. In addition, under section 13A of the 1992 Act, billing authorities have discretionary powers to reduce council tax liability to such extent as the billing authority thinks fit. The power can be exercised in particular cases or by determining a class of cases. The power may be used to reduce council tax liability by any amount, including in circumstances where a local authority may otherwise charge a premium. Local authorities may use these powers for example to reduce or disapply a premium, and potentially as a means to target the use of premiums.

Some illustrative examples of where a local authority might consider using its powers include:

- where there are reasons why the dwelling could not be lived in as a permanent residence
- where there are reasons why a dwelling could not be sold or let
- where an offer has been accepted on a property but the sale has not yet been completed and the exception period has run out
- where the owner's use of a property is restricted by circumstances not covered by an exception from the premium
- where charging a premium might cause hardship

The above list is not exhaustive and billing authorities will want to consider all factors they think are relevant when deciding to reduce the council tax liability for a particular property or class of properties and to make an assessment of the potential impact.

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Self-catering accommodation

From 1 April 2023, if a self-catering property does not meet the new letting thresholds established by the Non-Domestic Rating (Amendment of Definition of Domestic Property) (Wales) Order 2022, it will be classified as a domestic property and will be liable for council tax. Where the local authority has determined to apply a premium to second homes, the owner will also be liable to pay the additional charge unless their property falls within an exception, or the local authority has determined not to charge a premium for the type or class of property.

There may be instances where some self-catering properties that would be considered unsuitable for permanent living will become subject to council tax and a premium because they do not fall within an exception. In such instances, local authorities are encouraged to consider using their discretionary powers to tailor a determination or to reduce council tax liability to moderate the impact, in effect, reducing the premium. Retaining liability for standard rate council tax, for properties which do not meet the letting criteria, would be consistent with the aim of ensuring all property owners ‘make a fair contribution’ to their local communities. Some illustrative examples of where a local authority might consider using these powers include:

- outbuildings or barns converted to holiday lets as part of farm diversification
- annexes or garage conversions that form part of an owner’s primary residence
- lodges, caravans or chalets

It is a matter for a local authority as to whether it uses the discretionary powers in sections 12A, 12B or 13A to reduce council tax liability in respect of a premium or to reduce the standard council tax liability, or both, as appropriate. This policy should cover a range of situations in which a local authority would consider using its discretionary powers, including properties which do not meet

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the criteria to be classed as non-domestic. In the interest of fairness and transparency, a local authority should have a clear policy on whether, and how, these powers will be used. The authority should, however, consider each case on its merits having considered the circumstances of the case.

It should be noted that deliberations around the use of the discretionary section 13A powers are likely to be different when they are considered to reduce council tax liability resulting from a premium compared to reducing liability from the standard rate of council tax. This is because dwellings liable to a premium are already liable for the standard rate of council tax.

Use of additional revenue generated from the council tax premiums

A local authority will be able to retain any additional funds generated by implementing the premiums and amendments to the calculation of the council tax tax-base have been made to facilitate this. Adjustments will be made to allow for the increase in the maximum premium which may be applied from 1 April 2023. Authorities may use the additional revenue for any purpose, but they are encouraged to use it to help to meet local housing needs, in line with the policy intentions for the premiums.

Specific requirements in relation to reporting on any additional revenue generated and its subsequent use are set out in Part 3 Monitoring and Evaluation.

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Part 2: administration and enforcement

Determining liability for the council tax premiums and eligibility for exceptions

In deciding to charge a premium, a local authority will need to identify whether a dwelling is a long-term empty property or a second home and whether it would therefore be liable for a premium.

It is reasonable for a local authority to request evidence such as utility bills showing use of services, a driving licence as proof of address, or receipts or other evidence of moving costs if a property is said to be occupied (not empty) or occupied as a sole or main home (not a second home). The process will be similar to existing practices used to assess eligibility for council tax exemptions and discounts.

The Welsh Ministers have prescribed certain exceptions to the council tax premiums and it will be a liable person's responsibility to apply to a local authority for an exception if they believe they are eligible, and to provide evidence in support of their application. Each local authority should clearly set out and explain the evidence required in the interests of transparency and fairness.

As with the monitoring and enforcement of existing council tax exemptions and discounts, it is expected that local authorities will take steps to verify the evidence provided in support of an application for an exception. A local authority may also conduct regular inspections or site visits to verify continued eligibility.

Local authorities will be aware that under the Local Government Finance Act 1992, civil penalties can be applied to a person who deliberately supplies false information.

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The following sections provide additional information to assist local authorities in applying the exceptions specifically for:

- dwellings being marketed for sale
- dwellings being marketed for let
- job-related dwellings

Class 1: dwellings being marketed for sale

This exception applies to both the premium on long-term empty properties and second homes. It excepts dwellings that are being marketed for sale. It also covers dwellings where an offer to buy the dwelling has been accepted but the sale has not yet been completed.

To qualify for this exception a dwelling must be on the market for sale at a reasonable price for that dwelling. A liable owner must demonstrate to the satisfaction of a local authority that they are actively marketing their property for sale at a reasonable price, ie what it would reasonably be expected to fetch on the open market.

In considering an application for an exception, a local authority may wish to consider a range of factors relating to the sale of dwellings, such as the following:

- how long properties in the area have been available for sale
- the average price and time on the market of similar properties in the local area
- whether unduly restrictive conditions, such as the price, are being placed on the dwelling to impede its sale
- any other reasonable factors

To determine whether a dwelling is genuinely on the market for sale a local

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authority may wish to consider different types of evidence which could include the following:

- listing on advertised websites, for example estate agent websites, Rightmove and Zoopla, or evidence of other ways in which the property is being marketed
- a contract with an estate agent
- estate agent listings or sales particulars if privately marketed
- an Energy Performance Certificate (required when a property is built or sold)

The exception period runs for up to 1 year from the granting of the exception but can be extended should the property sale have been agreed but not completed beyond the 1 year anniversary of the exception period commencing. The exception would end on the date of the sale of the property. After an exception has ended, a dwelling being marketed for sale will not be eligible for a further exception period unless it has been sold.

Class 2: dwellings being marketed for let

This exception also applies to both the premium on long-term empty properties and second homes. It excepts dwellings that are being marketed for let. It also covers dwellings where an offer to rent has been accepted but the tenant is not yet entitled to occupy the property because the tenancy has not yet started.

To be eligible for this exception, a liable owner must demonstrate to the satisfaction of a local authority that they are actively marketing the property for let at a reasonable price, ie the rent the property would reasonably be expected to fetch having regard to the rent raised on comparable dwellings.

In considering whether the exception applies, a local authority may wish to consider a range of factors relating to the letting of dwellings, such as the following:

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- how long properties in their area have been available for rent
- the average rent and time on the market for similar rental properties in the local area
- whether unduly restrictive conditions such as the rent is being placed on the property to impede its letting
- any other reasonable factors

For a local authority to determine whether a liable owner is actively or genuinely marketing their property for let, a local authority may wish to consider different types of evidence which could include the following:

- a contract with a letting agency
- estate agent listings or letting agent brochures
- registration and licensing of a landlord and agent for a dwelling being marketed for let, via Rent Smart Wales
- housing lists of properties being offered for rent provided by Registered Social Landlords
- an Energy Performance Certificate (required when a property is built or let)
- a valid gas safety certificate required for homes being let

The exception period runs for up to 1 year from the granting of the exception. After the end of the exception period, a dwelling being marketed for let will not be eligible for a further exception period unless it has been subject to a tenancy that was granted for a term of 6 months or more.

Exceptions 3 to 6 are more specific classes and are not covered further in this part of the guidance.

Class 7: job-related dwellings

This exception applies only in relation to the second home premium and applies to dwellings occupied by a qualifying person. The criteria for a qualifying person

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are set out under Class 7 in Part 1.

In considering eligibility for this exception, a local authority may request certain types of evidence, to prove that a liable person is required to live in a job-related dwelling. This could include the following:

- a contract of employment
- a council tax demand notice (to show liability in respect of another property if the main or second home is in the UK)
- tax returns or pay statements
- Denomination Letter (in respect of a Minister of Religion)
- Ministry of Defence letter or written contract (in respect of the Armed Forces)

Part 3: monitoring and reporting council tax premiums

During the summer of 2021, the Welsh Government consulted on local taxes for second homes and self-catering accommodation. This considered the effectiveness of the discretionary powers given to local authorities to apply council tax premiums to second homes and long-term empty properties. Many responses called for local authorities to be more transparent about how they spend the funds raised from the premium.

To assess the effectiveness of the premiums and ensure information on their use is clearly made available to local council taxpayers, the Welsh Government expects local authorities to report on the implementation of the premiums and the additional revenue generated.

In having regard to this guidance, local authorities should also give due consideration to publishing information to assist members of the public and must provide information to the Welsh Ministers when requested.

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Local authorities already report through the existing statutory CT1 (Council Tax Dwellings) Return the following information relating to premiums. This informs the annual statistical releases on council tax collection:

- number of properties liable for the premiums
- percentage of premium applied to long-term empty homes
- percentage of premium applied to second homes

From 1 April 2023, local authorities will be encouraged to publish on their websites, details relating to the income generated from charging a premium for the previous financial year.

As a minimum this should include the following:

- the total numbers of (i) long-term empty properties and (ii) second homes
- the numbers of properties liable for each premium (i) long-term empty properties and (ii) second homes
- the amount of income generated from charging a premium on long-term empty properties
- the amount of income generated from charging a premium on second homes
- how the additional income raised has been used to tackle the problems caused by long-term empty properties and second homes, or to address other local housing issues

Part 4: appeals

If a person is dissatisfied with their local authority due to a decision made regarding the calculation of their council tax liability, including their liability to pay a premium, they should, in the first instance, contact their local authority to discuss the decision.

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If a person remains dissatisfied after a discussion with their local authority, they may make an appeal to their local authority.

If a person disagrees with the outcome of the local authority appeals process or if the local authority does not provide a decision within the required timescales, the person may instigate an appeal to the Valuation Tribunal for Wales. A person may only do this only after they have exhausted the local authority's appeals process and complied with any processes required by the VTW before an appeal may be instigated.

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Evidence of the impact of the council tax premium on second homes and long-term empty properties in Gwynedd

Update November 2025

Produced by the Research and Information Service, Cyngor Gwynedd

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the report

Since April 2018 the Council has charged a council tax premium on the majority of second homes and long-term empty properties in the county. Over subsequent years, the premium level has been increased (see 'Key dates' below for details of relevant decisions / dates).

In discussions about the premium, the need to gather evidence about its impact was raised and as part of this we were commissioned by the Leadership Team to research the information that is available as part of the evidence base to help the Council in determining the appropriate level of premium on second homes and on empty long-term properties in the future.

Our previous research report[1] on this subject was published in November 2024 (which looked at the period October 2019 – April 2024). This report updates the findings of that report, including data up to October 2025.

In the same vein as the previous report therefore, this report will aim to answer the following questions:

- Has increasing the premium led to fewer second homes in Gwynedd?
- What happened to the properties that were formerly second homes – i.e. have they gone from paying council tax with a premium (second home), to paying basic council tax (main residence), or transferred to the business rates system (holiday accommodation), or any other category?
- Has the premium increase led to long-term empty houses being brought back into use?

This update does not include another element from the previous report, which attempted to find out more about the people living in houses that were formerly second homes but now main homes, by analysing the results of questionnaires sent to the residents of those houses. Due to the timing of the publication of this update, the amount of work that would be required and a question about how useful the previous results for this element were (due to low response rate) it was not possible to update this element but it is possible to refer to the results of the previous exercise in the last report.

[1] 'Evidence of the impact of the council tax premium on second homes and long-term empty properties in Gwynedd', Cyngor Gwynedd Research and Information Service, November 2024

1.2 Key dates

It is useful to summarise the key dates relating to the introduction, and increasing the level of, the premium in Gwynedd over the years (the three dates when the premium, or increases to it, came into force are indicated in bold).

Table 1: Key dates for introducing and increasing the premium level in Gwynedd over the years

Date	Event
October 2013	Welsh Government consults on right for authorities to charge a premium
September 2014	The Housing Act (Wales) allows a premium of up to 100% o be charged from April 2017
October 2016	Council consults on the principle of charging a premium, and its level
December 2016	Council decides to charge a 50% premium on second homes and long-term empty properties from April 2018
April 2018	**50% premium on second homes and long-term empty properties operational in Gwynedd**
December 2020	Council consults on the possibility of increasing the premium to 100%
March 2021	Council decides to increase the premium to 100%
April 2021	**Increase to 100% operational in Gwynedd, for second homes and long-term empty properties**
August 2021	Welsh Government consults on expanding powers to charge a premium
March 2022	Regulations allowing a premium of up to 300% to be charged on second homes and long-term empty properties from April 2023
September 2022	Council initiates consultation on how to respond to the change in regulations
December 2022	Council decides to increase premium on second homes to 150% (but keeps the premium on long-term empty properties at 100%)
April 2023	**Increase to 150% for second homes operational in Gwynedd (retain at 100% for long-term empty properties)**
December 2023, December 2024	Council decides to keep the premium at the same level but notes the intention to continue to look at evidence on the impact of the premium

In addition to the above, April 2023 is also significant as this is when the change to the criterion for defining self-catering accommodation (for taxation as a business rather than through council tax) became effective across Wales – namely, in general, that they need to be let for a minimum of 182 days rather than 70, and available for letting for 252 days, rather than 140 days. The timetable for implementing this was similar to the timetable for extending the power to charge a premium of up to 300% (i.e. Welsh Government commences consultation in August 2021, announced its intention to tighten the definition in March 2022, effective from April 2023).

In interpreting the results of the research below, it will be necessary to remember that any effect could have occurred over a period on either side of these dates, rather than at that exact time. For example – should an increase in the premium have prompted some second homeowners to sell their property, they might have sold as discussions began on the increase or when it was decided to increase it, rather than waiting until the change took effect. On the other hand, they might not

decide to sell until after the premium came into effect and a sale could also take a few months to complete, so this effect might not be noticeable for some time after the premium increase.

Of course, there are also a host of other factors – outside the local taxation system – that could have affected this area in the period under review, for example:

- The Covid period and the subsequent impact of it on the local housing market;
- Changes in the scale and nature of demand for holiday accommodation in Gwynedd (again, including impacts following from the Covid period);
- Devolution, and changes to the rates, of taxation on house purchases resulting in a change in the tax payable on the purchase of a second home, and differences in this respect between England and Wales;
- The nature of the economy and employment in Gwynedd and in general, including the cost of living crisis;
- Discussions on the Article 4 Direction, and its introduction in 2024.

Inevitably, therefore, the research findings need to be interpreted with care, bearing in mind that changes that occurred at the time the premium was raised, cannot always be assumed to have necessarily occurred because of the premium.

1.3 Scope of report

This research focuses on property use (houses changing to/from being a second home or long-term empty, and any different trends in this pattern around the time or following the increase to the premium). To this end, we analysed the details of property categories in the council tax system, and looked for patterns in this, particularly around the times of increasing the premium. More details on this can be found in the Methodology below.

Of course, there are other possible aspects of the 'premium impact' that this report is unable to consider (economic, linguistic, wider community, etc.); there may be other sources of information available that would help with this.

2.0 Methodology

As explained above, this research is based on tracking individual property movements in Gwynedd from one category to another, and from one period to the next. This means that comprehensive datasets, in a fully consistent and comparable form to each other, are needed to be able to accurately track the changes over time.

The council tax premium has existed in Gwynedd since April 2018; however we have been unable to find detailed, complete and consistent data going back that far (the need to preserve such information for research purposes was probably not identified at that time either). It was not possible, therefore, for us to use a time before the premium came into effect (or, ideally, a time before any discussion on introducing a premium at all) as the starting point of the research.

Having discussed potential data sources with the Finance department, the best source identified was data in the format reported to the National Fraud Initiative (NFI) data matching exercise. This includes details of the council tax category of each individual property in Gwynedd.

This data is available for different dates, going back to October 2019. This is a sensible starting point in any case as it allows us to compare the "normal" pattern (over about a year before there was mention of increasing the premium) with any different patterns around:

- the increase to 100% for second homes and long-term empty properties (April 2021); and
- the increase to 150% for second homes (April 2023).

This also keeps the analysis within practically feasible boundaries, as it gives us 14 sets of data on different dates between 1 October 2019 and 1 October 2025. As there are over 60,000 properties in Gwynedd this involves comparing data and tracking changes across a total of over 800,000 data items.

Since NFI data is reported based on specific dates and the gaps between these dates can vary, the analysis we can conduct for the years up to 2024 is based on specific periods, with some longer than others. However following the research work carried out last year, the Finance department and ourselves have now established arrangements whereby the relevant data is extracted regularly, quarterly (i.e. whether or not the data is required for NFI purposes at that time) which provides a more consistent basis for analysing changes over time. This is shown in the diagram below:

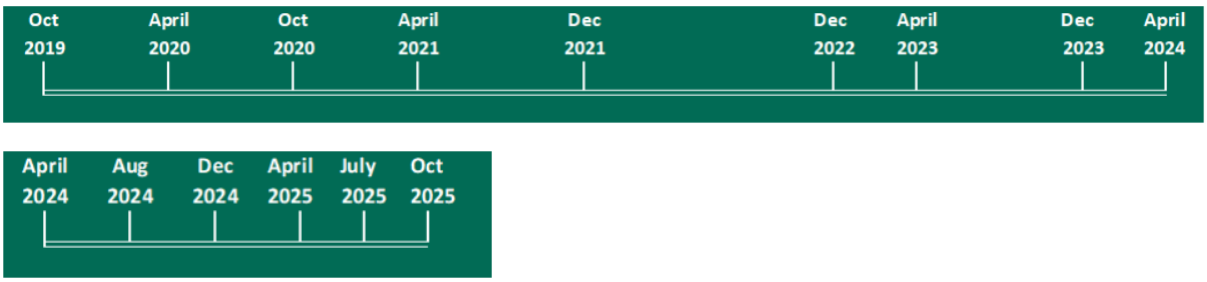


Figure 1: Dates/ periods where we have data for tracking category changes (exact date was 1st of the relevant months except October 2020 (2/10/20), December 2023 (18/12/23), August 2024 (7/8/24) and December 2024 (3/12/25)).

3.0 Definitions

In the remainder of this report, unless otherwise stated:

- **'Second home'** means property within the council tax system that is furnished, is not a main residence and does not have a planning restriction preventing it from being occupied on a full-time basis. The majority of these pay the council tax premium but there are some exceptions, e.g. (for a period) properties marketed for sale / to let, or work-related properties;

- **'Long-term empty properties'** means properties within the council tax system, which have been empty and unfurnished for more than 12 months and therefore the council tax premium is payable on them;

- **'Other housing'** means all properties within the council tax system except for the above 2 categories also excluding properties with a planning restriction preventing full-time occupation. The vast majority of these, therefore, are main residences (but also include properties that have been empty for less than 12 months);

- **'Holiday unit'** means a self-serviced holiday accommodation unit, which is taxed through the business rates system rather than through council tax;

- **'Total housing'** is the total of the above 4 categories, i.e. all properties in the council tax system except for second homes with a planning restriction preventing full-time occupation, also adding self-catering serviced holiday units that are in the business rates system.

For clarity, we do not include in this exercise second homes that have a planning restriction preventing full-time occupancy ('chalets' etc., known as 'Class A' in council tax regulations). These are considered to be effectively outside the 'normal' usable housing stock, and we will therefore not include them in this analysis.

4.0 Numbers and distribution of second homes, holiday units and long-term empty properties

- In October 2025 there were 4,847 second homes in Gwynedd (in line with this category in the council tax system). This represents 7.6% of total housing in Gwynedd. Out of the 4,847 second homes. 4,442 (91.6%) paid the premium.

- The map below shows the proportion of second homes per ward and shows that the distribution of second homes across the county is very uneven, ranging from no second homes in Hendre ward to 46.6% in Abersoch and Llanengan ward. The highest percentages are generally in the coastal areas of Llŷn, Eifionydd and Meirionnydd.

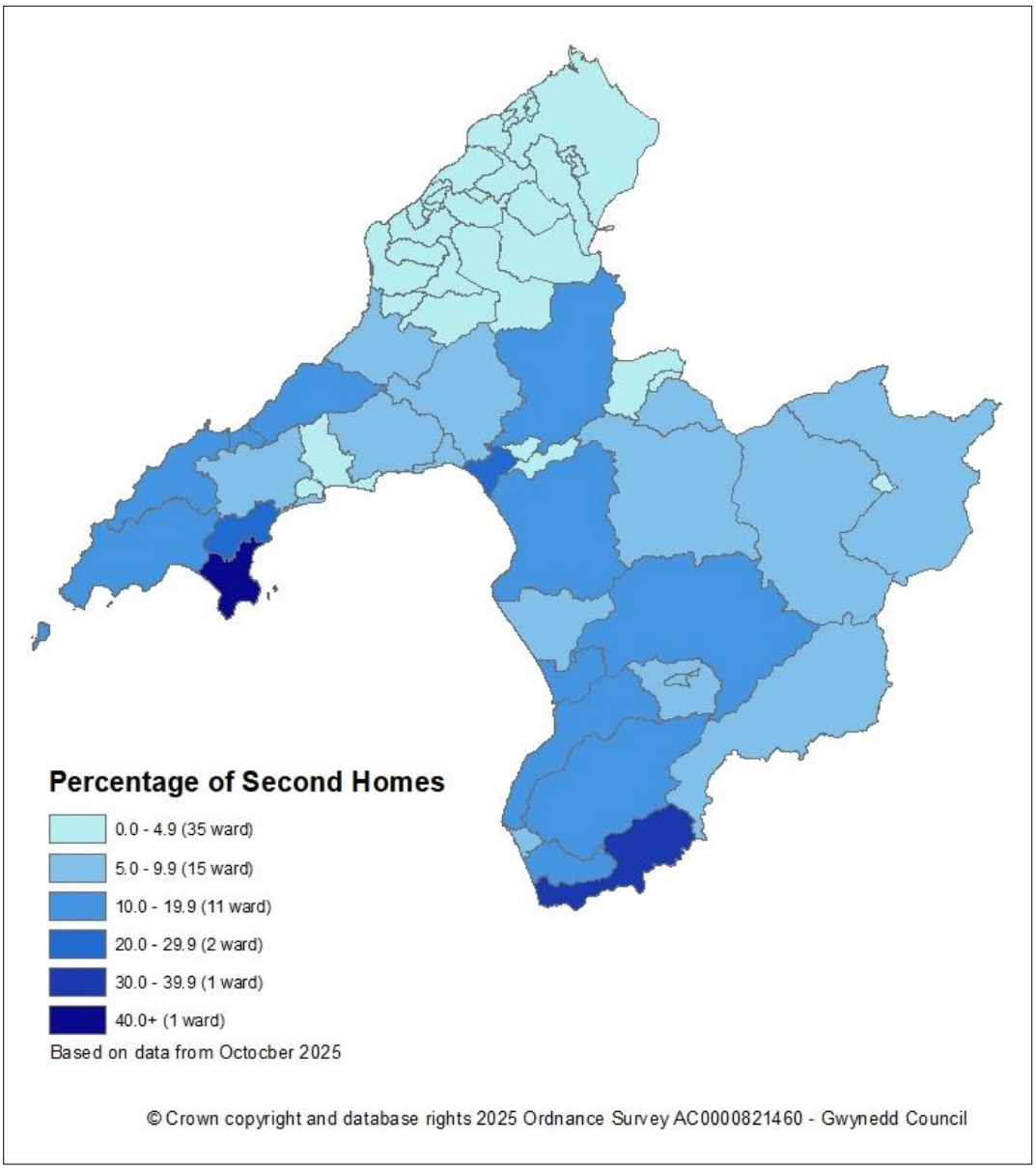


Figure 2: Map of the proportion of second homes by ward, October 2025

- Although this research is not directly related to them – holiday units (taxed as a business) are also a relevant consideration as a number of properties have been moving between the council tax system (as a second home) and the business rates system (as holiday accommodation), and these patterns and numbers can vary at different times. In October 2025 there were 1,900 holiday units in the business rates system in Gwynedd; this represents 3.0% of total housing. The distribution of these across Gwynedd is again uneven, as shown in the map below (ranging no holiday units in Hendre ward to 8.6% in Abersoch gyda Llanengan ward).

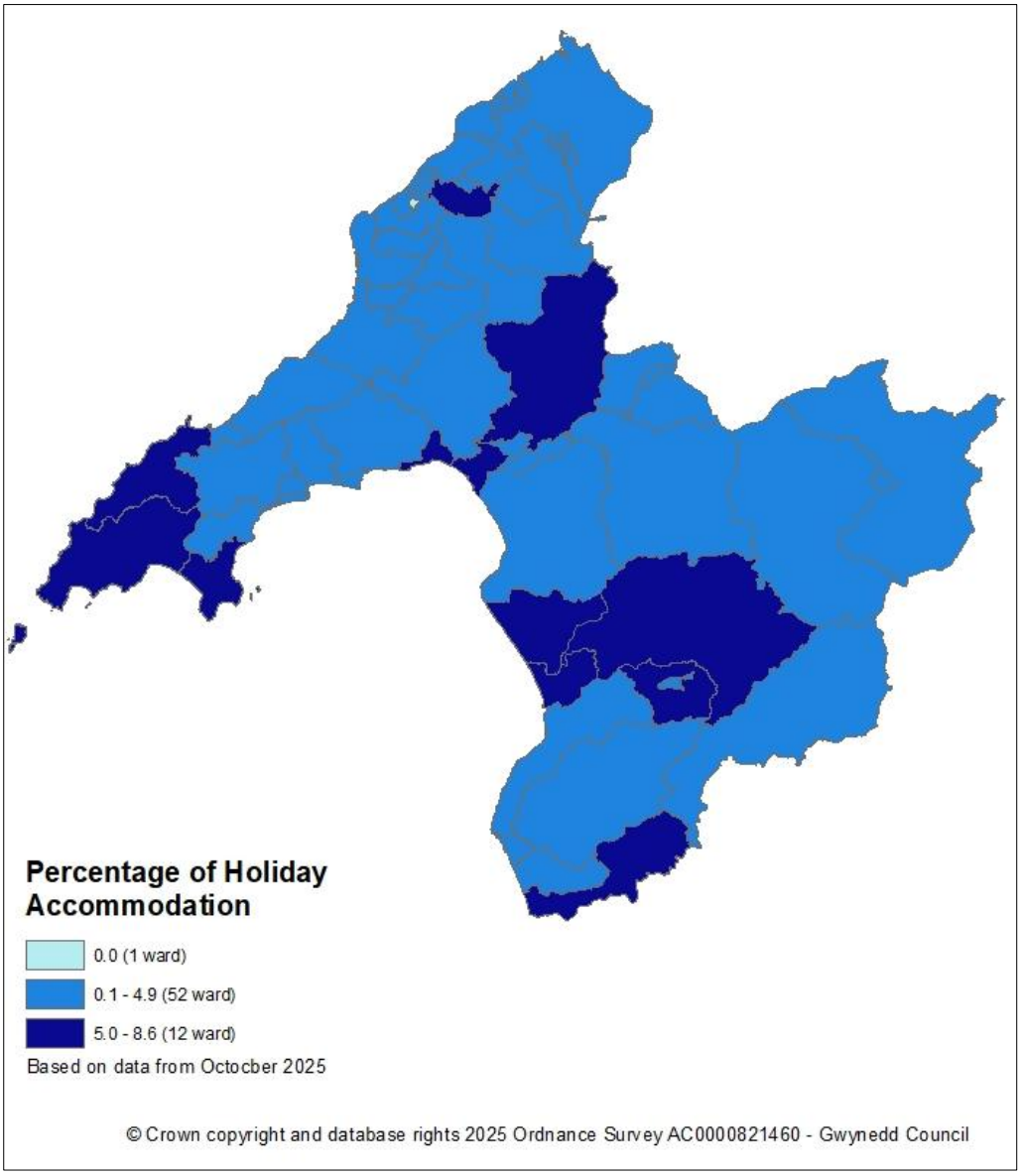


Figure 3: Map of the proportion of holiday accommodation by ward, October 2025

- In October 2025, there were 1,070 long-term empty properties in the council tax system in Gwynedd, representing 1.7% of total housing. The map below shows the proportion of these per ward and shows that the distribution of long-term empty properties across the county is very uneven, ranging from 0.2% in Hendre ward to 5.7% in Llanbedrog and Mynytho ward. By its nature, this pattern is also likely to vary over time (e.g. the former

Polish Home in Penrhos accounts for the majority of current empty units in the Llanbedrog and Mynytho ward).

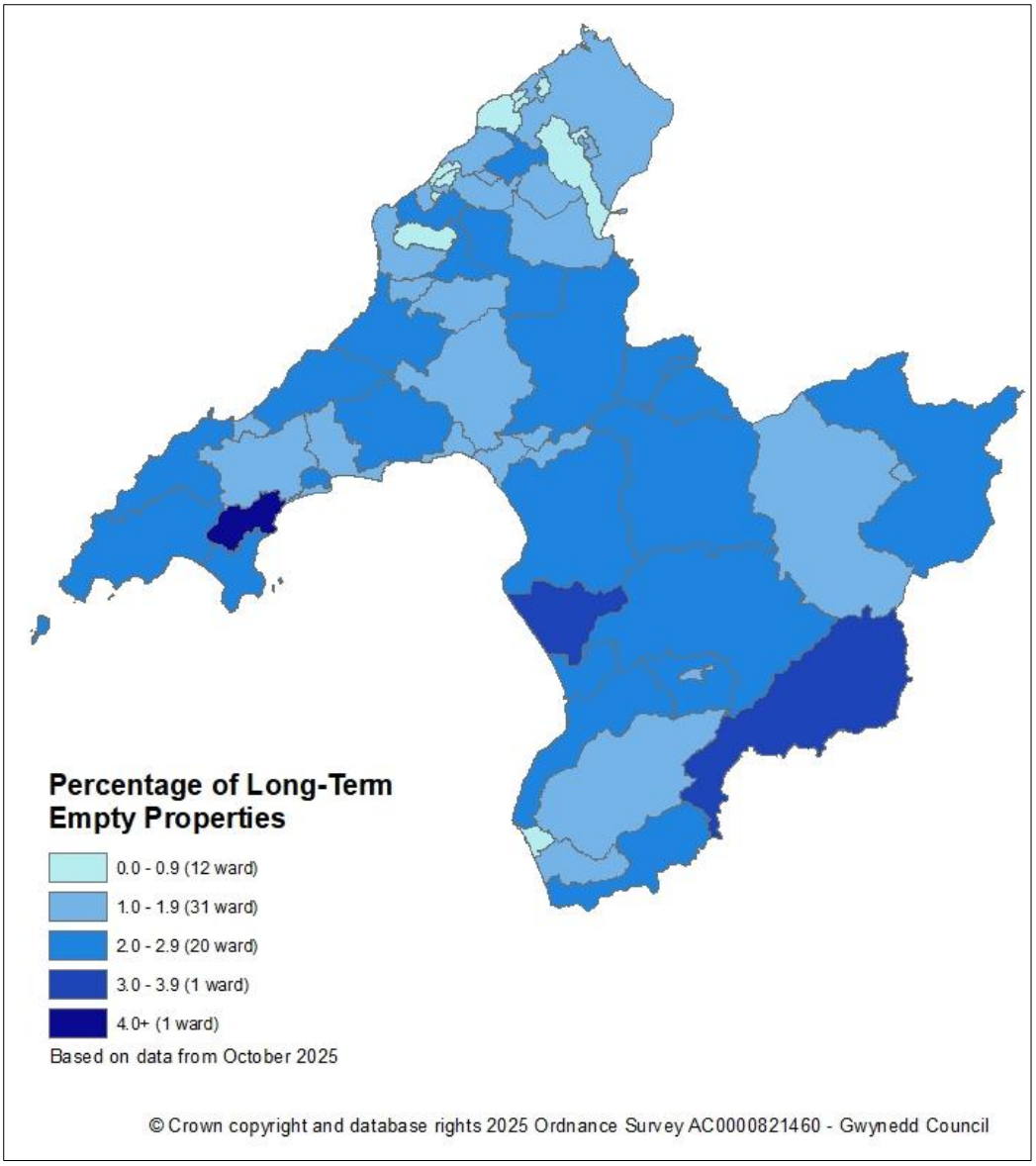


Figure 4: Map of proportion of long-term empty property by ward, October 2025

- The map below shows the composite percentage (total second homes, long-term empty properties and holiday units, as a percentage of total housing) per ward; Abersoch with Llanengan (57.8%), Aberdyfi (42.0%) and Llanbedrog gyda Mynytho (32.8%) wards are highest under this measure.

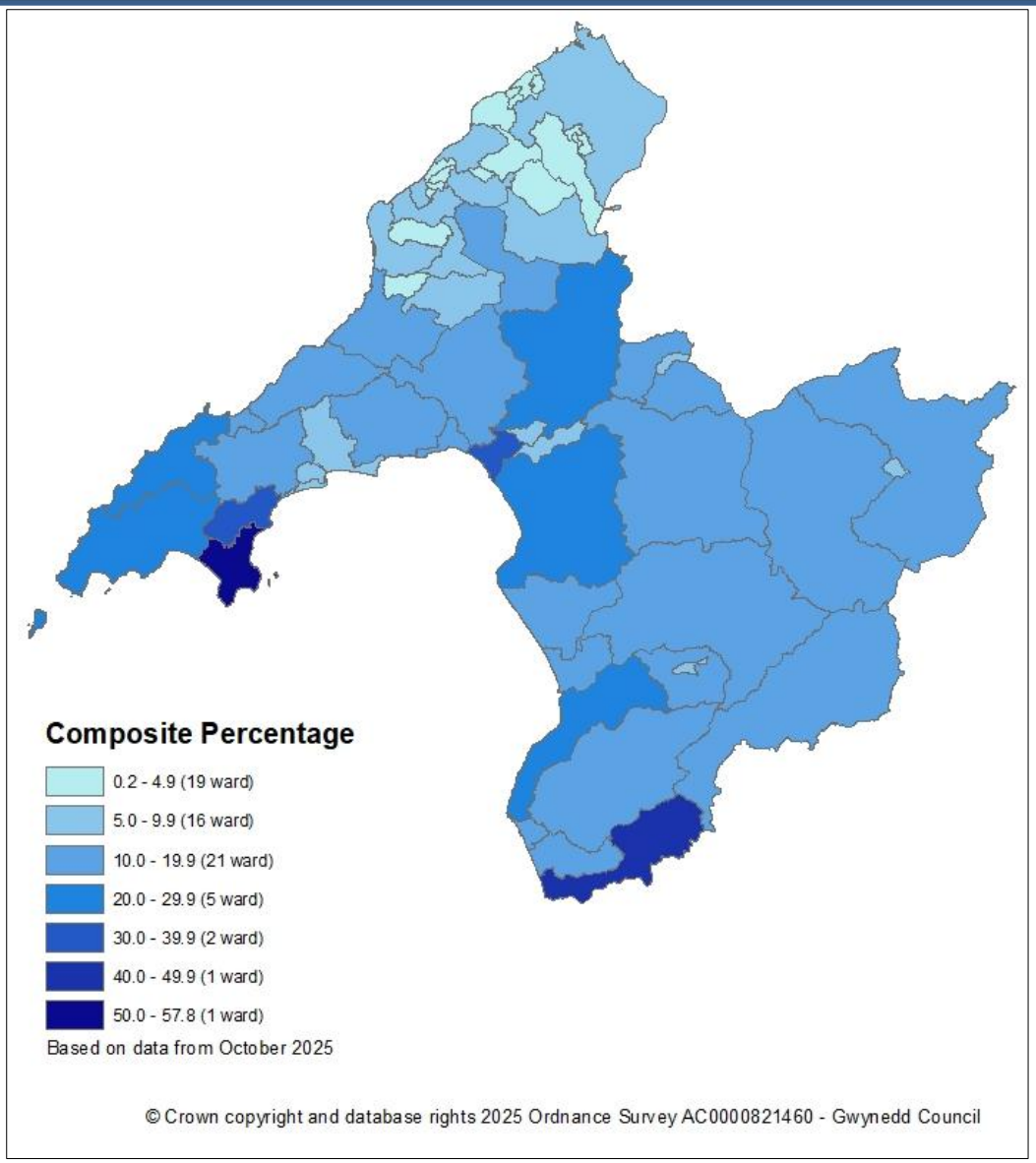


Figure 5: Map of composite proportion (total second homes, long-term empty properties and holiday units) by ward, October 2025

The detailed percentages per ward underpinning the above maps are shown in **Appendix 1** .

5.0 Overview of numbers by category from October 2019

The chart below shows the numbers of second homes and long-term empty properties (in the council tax system) and holiday units (in the business rates system) on different dates from October 2019.

(NFI data, but also since this shows the total figure across Gwynedd rather than detailed data, we have been able to find other data so that the analysis can include more dates)

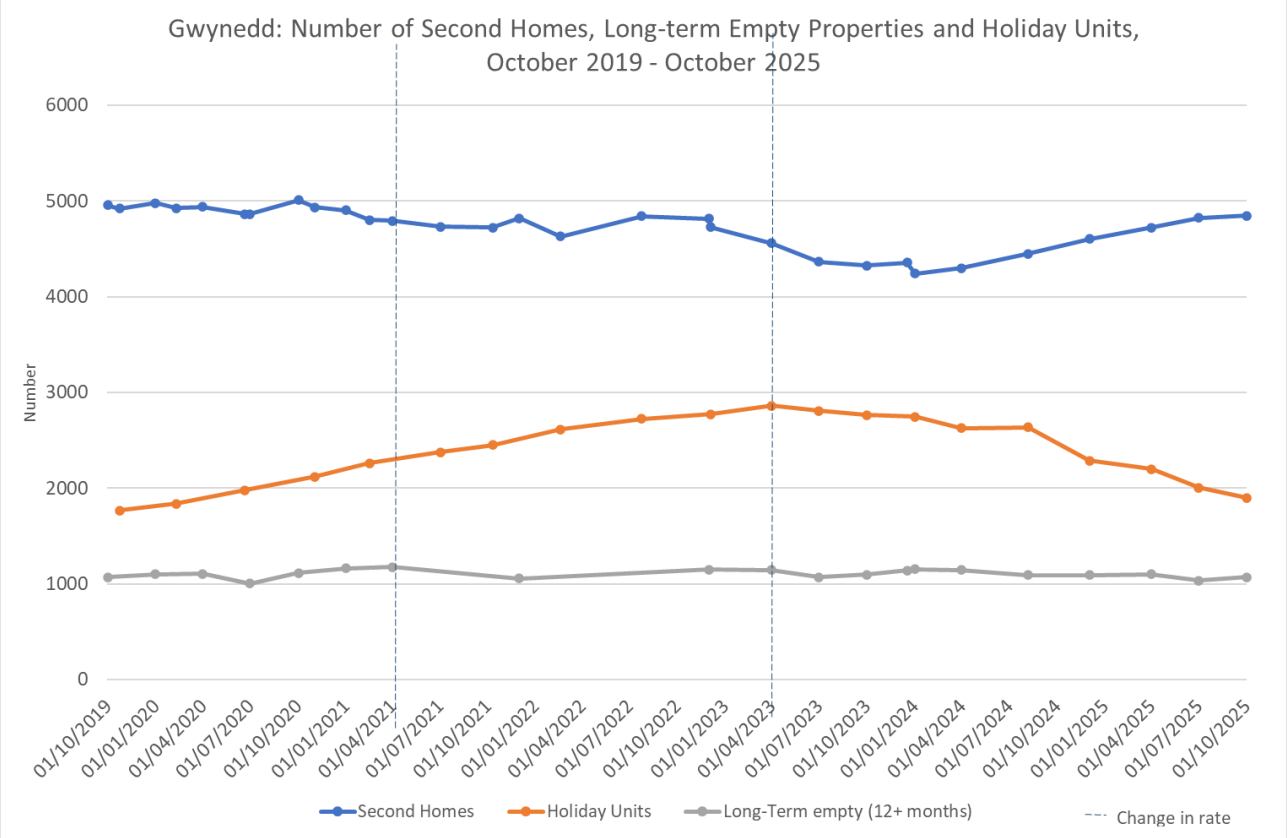


Figure 6: Number of second homes, long-term empty property and holiday units in Gwynedd, October 2019 – October 2025

From this chart, we can see some general patterns:

- **Until around January 2024, the number of second homes in Gwynedd was falling**. In 2019 and 2020 the number was quite stable, at around 4,900 to 5,000, but it then fell to about 4,200 by January 2024, with **most of this reduction occurring in two specific periods** (between around January 2021 and October 2021, and then a sharper reduction between December 2022 and January 2024).

- **From January 2024** however, the **number of second homes** (in that category in the council tax system) **has been increasing rapidly** and has now reached close to the level which existed at around early 2021 (around 4,850). There is a suggestion in the latest data that the increase may be slowing slightly but the increase is continuing to some extent.

- **Until around April 2023 the number of holiday units had been increasing**, going from around 1,800 (October 2019) to around 2,900 (April 2023). But since then, **and especially from August 2024 onwards, the number of holiday units has been constantly reducing**, reverting to around 1,900 at the current time.

- **Long-term empty property numbers have fluctuated slightly** (between around 1,000 and 1,200 across Gwynedd); on the surface there **is no obvious pattern** in these variations.

Even though these overall figures provide some idea as to the main trends over the period in question, they do not give much information about what happened to the properties in the various categories (e.g. what is the use of the houses that were previously second homes?). To get a better idea of what is going on therefore, we have tracked the status of individual properties throughout the period as shown in the next parts of the report.

6.0 Second homes: Tracking property movements over the period

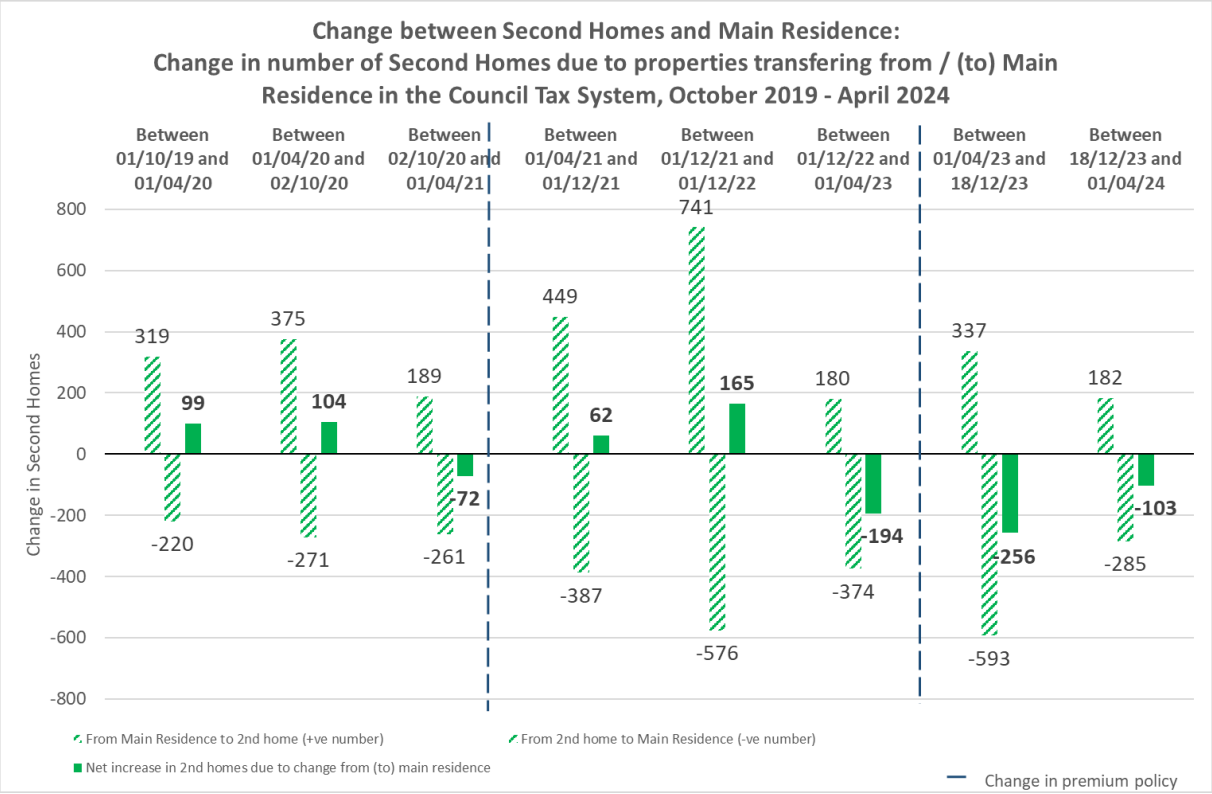
By tracking and analysing individual property categories in the council tax administration system (NFI data on 14 specific dates between October 2019 – October 2025, as explained in the Methodology above), we can take a closer look at the pattern of movements between categories and look for patterns in this, particularly around the times of premium increases.

The following charts analyse property movements to, and from, the Second Homes category in the council tax system by 3 different types of movements, namely (i) moving between a second home and a main residence (ii) moving between a second home and a holiday unit (iii) switching between a second home and other categories.

In all charts below, the 'gross' movements (number of properties moving to be a second home, and number of properties moving from being a second home), and then the 'net' movement (i.e. the difference between the above two figures), are shown in each of the periods. This also shows that the net position may be masking significant turnover (in and out of the second homes category) within the figures and highlights the need to take care in interpreting the net position, i.e. even in 'normal', stable conditions there are still significant shifts of property to, and from, second homes.

In all cases the chart from the previous report (analysing October 2019 – April 2024) is reproduced, and then the new chart (analysing April 2024 – October 2025) is included. The full data behind the latest charts (including more detailed analysis within the 'other categories') is in **Appendix 2**.

Change between Second Homes and Main Residence



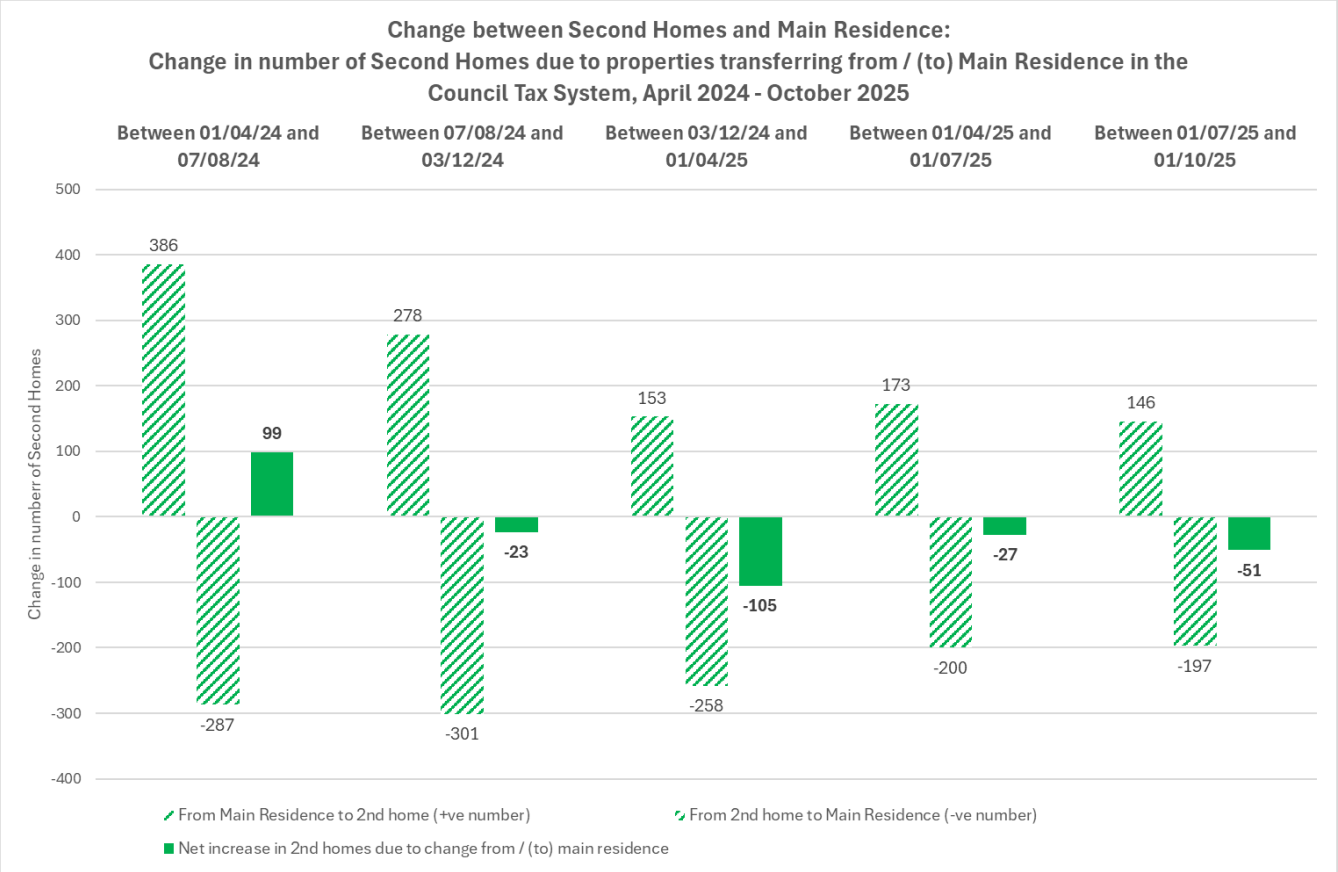
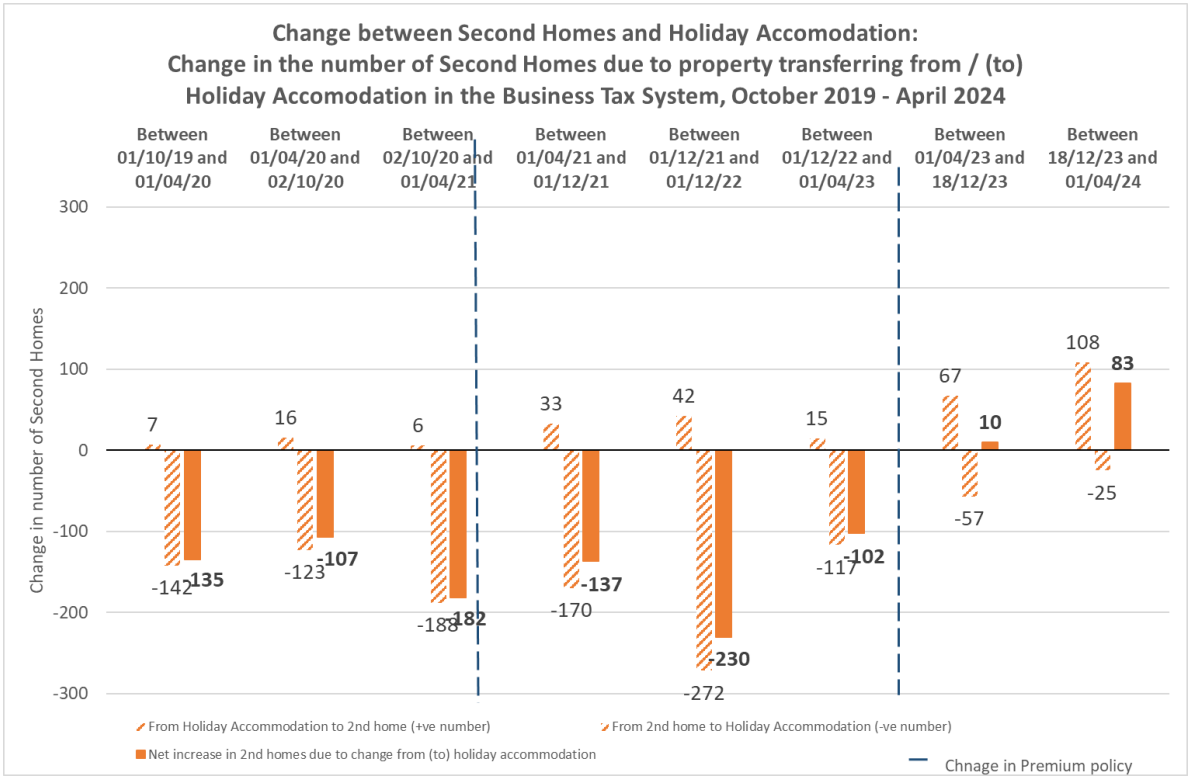


Figure 7: Change in number of second homes due to properties transferring from being or to being a main residence or second home in the Council Tax system by each period between October 2019 and October 2025, showing movements from main residence to second home, from second home to main residence and total net movement.

Change between Second Homes and Holiday Units



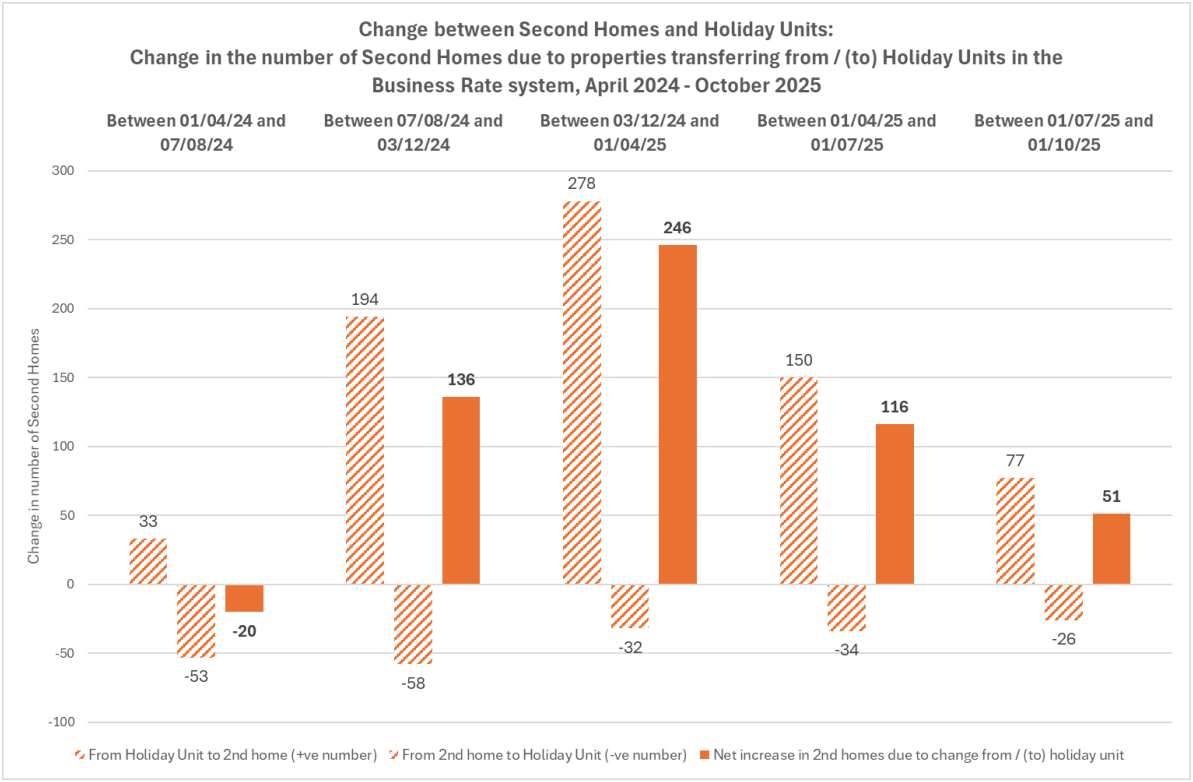
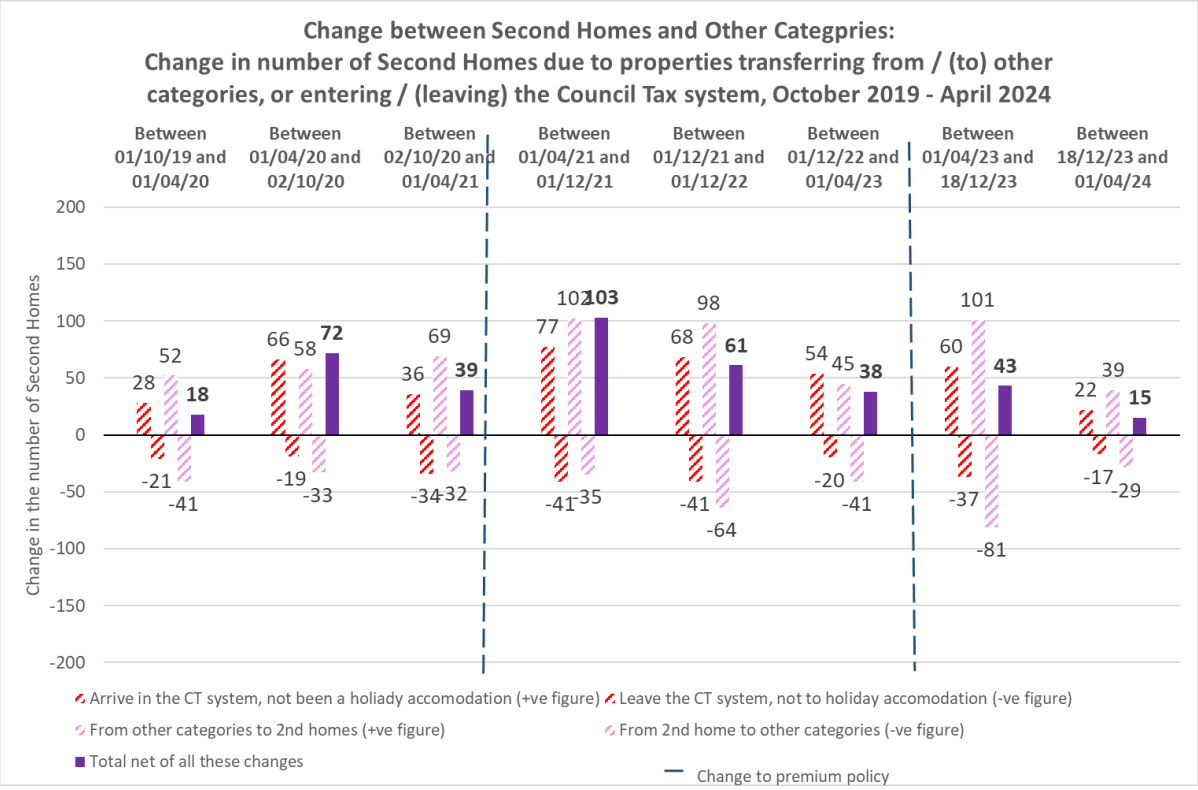


Figure 8: Change in number of second homes due to properties transferring from being or to being holiday units or second homes in the Council Tax system by each period between October 2019 and October 2025, showing movements from holiday units to second home, from second home to holiday units and total net movement.

Change between Second Homes and Other Categories



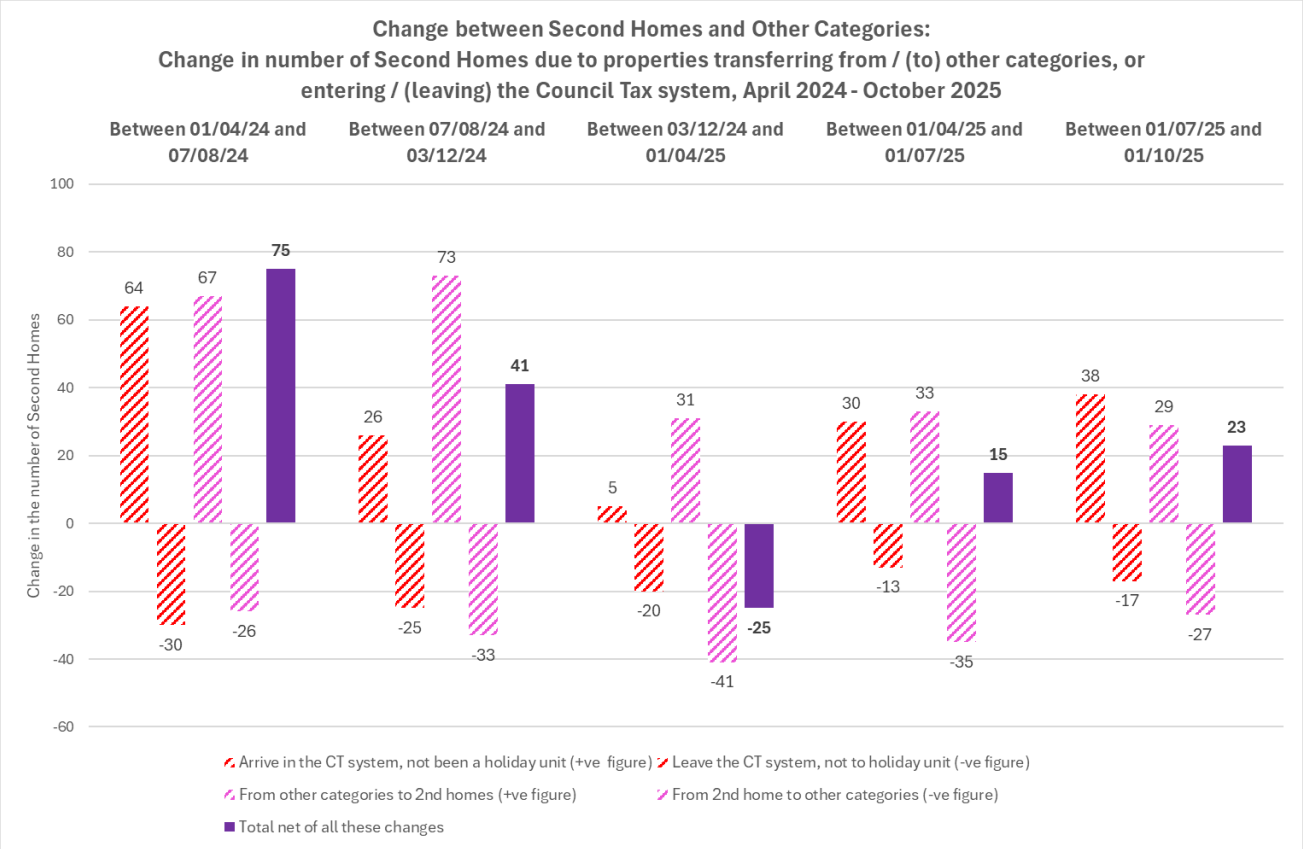
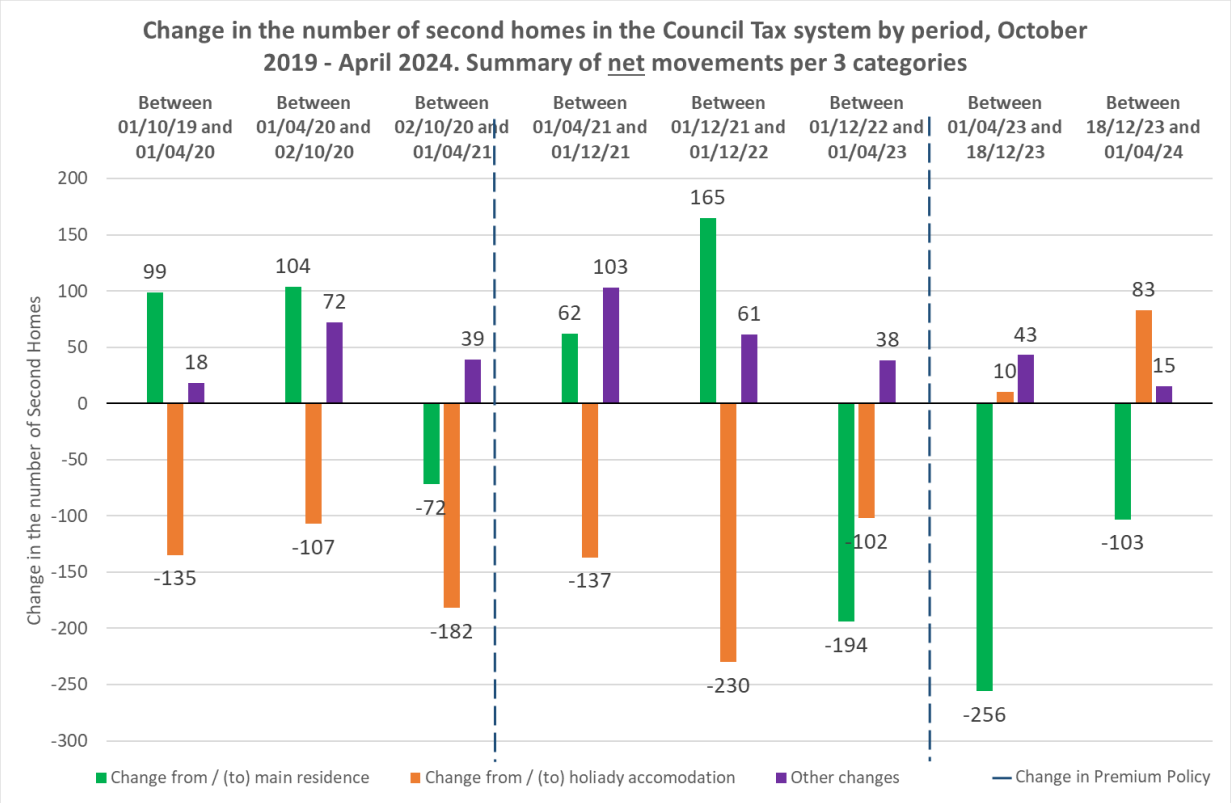


Figure 9: Change in number of second homes due to properties transferring from or into other categories in the Council Tax system by each period between October 2019 and October 2025, showing movements from other categories to second homes, from second home to other categories and total net movement.

Summarising the net movements

We can then pull together the headline figures from the 3 sets of charts above to show the net movement in each period per the three main categories, in the charts below. This clearly shows the main net trends at the different times during the period.



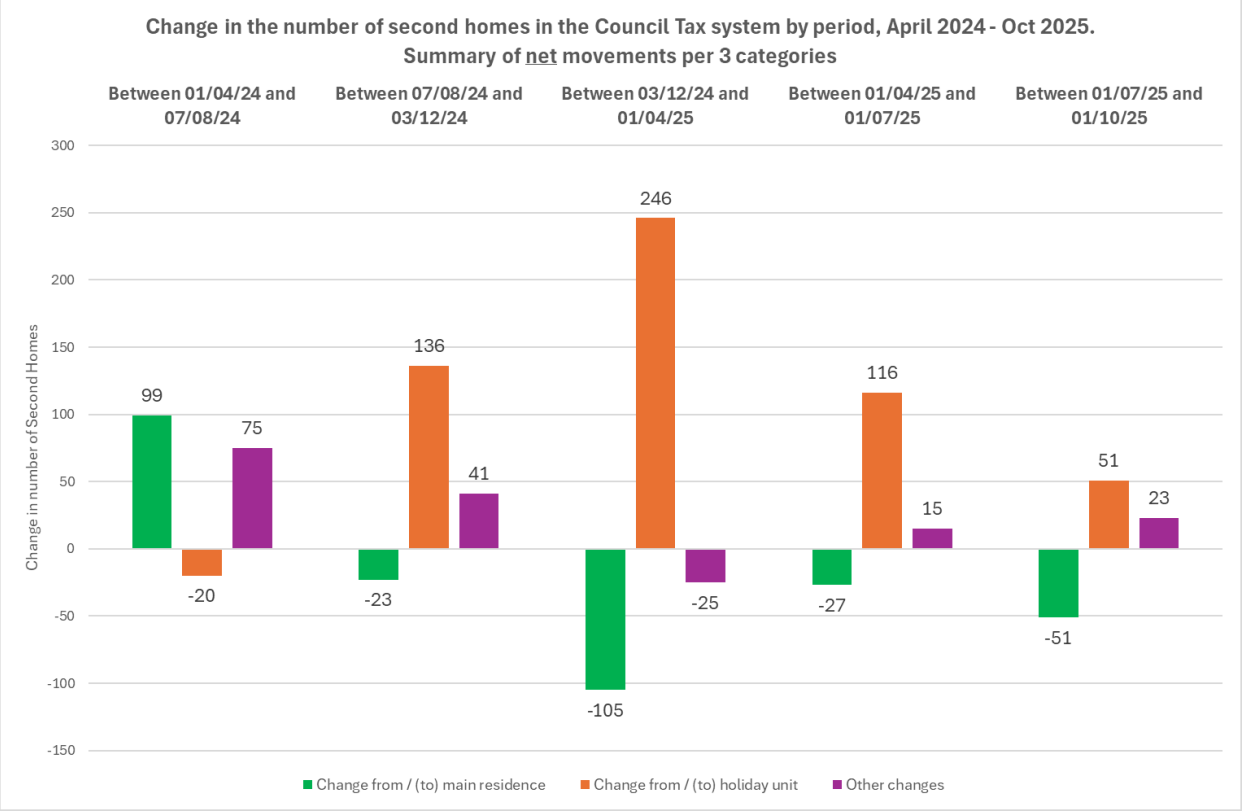
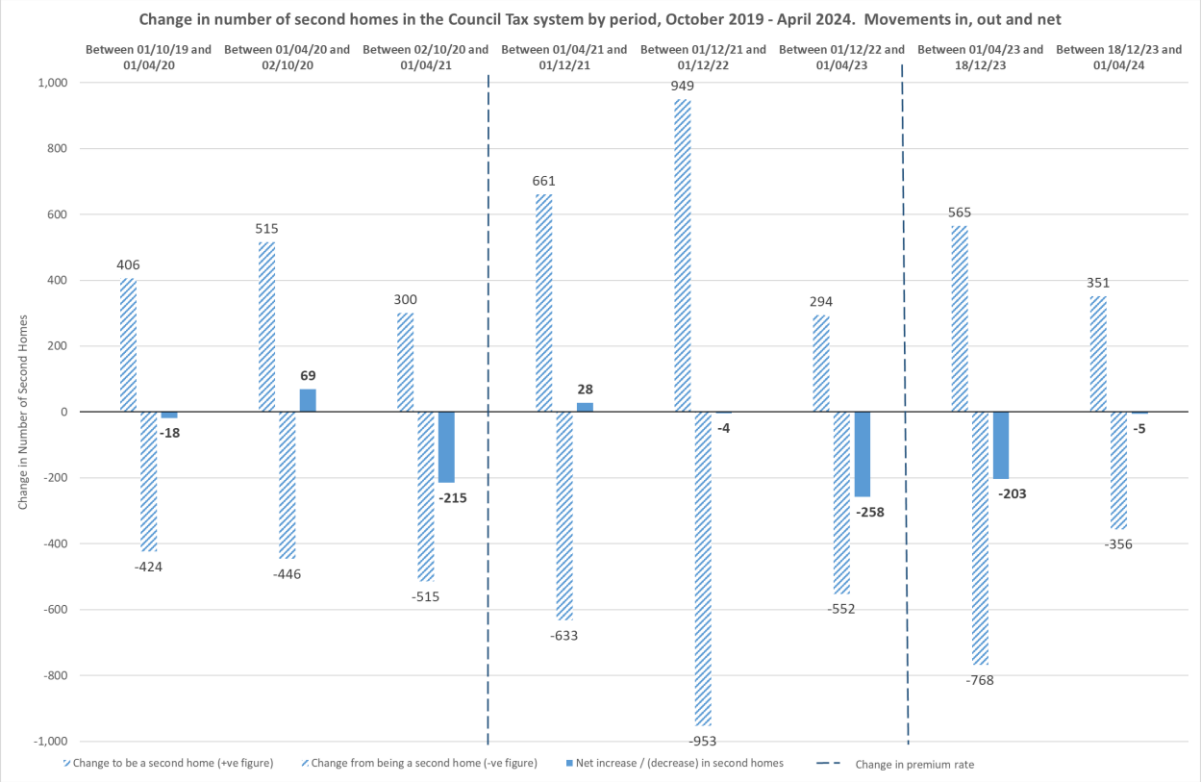


Figure 10: Change in number of second homes in the Council Tax system by period between October 2019 and October 2025 as total net movement per category (change from/to main residence, change from/to holiday units, other changes).

The charts below bring all of the above together to show the total movements into, and out of, the category of second homes in each period. They show the gross movements (in/out of the second home category) as well as the net change (the difference between the in and out movements), highlighting again that there is significant turnover in terms of individual property situations even at times where the total figure is fairly stable.



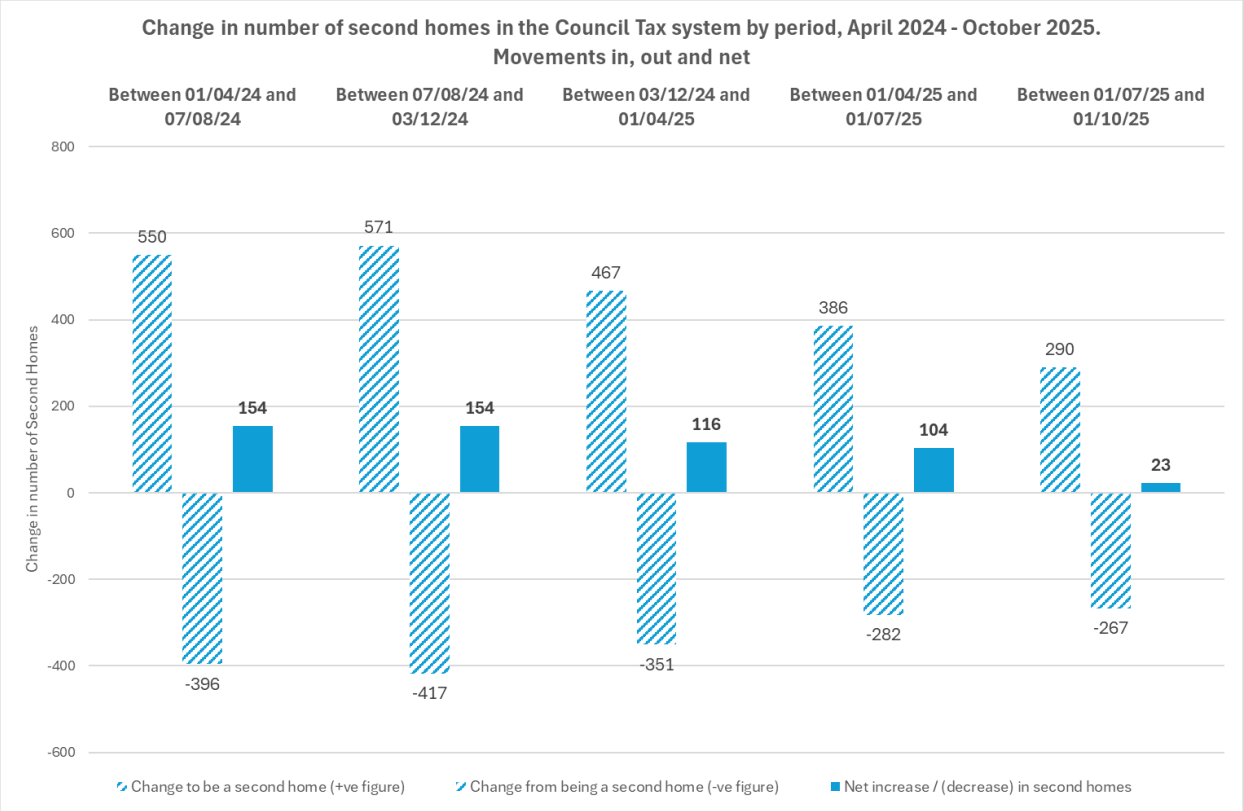


Figure 11: Change in number of second homes in the Council Tax system by periods between October 2019 and October 2025 showing movements in and out of second home category and total net movement.

6.1 Summarising the results - tracking second homes

When looking at property flows **between second homes and main residences** (which are the green bars in the charts in Figure 10 above):

- **Historically** (i.e. before October 2020; before there was discussion of increasing the premium level to 100%) it appears that the "natural" trend was a steady (net) flow of properties from primary residences to second homes.

- **At the time of the premium increase to 100%** in April 2021, this flow was reversed in the period immediately preceding the increase (net flow from second home to main residence, between October 2020 and April 2021). But any impact appears to have been small and short-lived, with the flow having returned to the historical pattern (i.e. from primary residences to second homes) after April 2021.

- **At the time of the premium increase to 150%** in April 2023, we saw the pattern reverse once again, with a net move from second homes to main residences from December 2022 onwards (which is around the time the premium increase was discussed/consulted on before it came into force).

- Unlike the previous time, however, this **change has proven much more long-lasting** with the net shift from second homes to main residences having continued in each period since then (with one exception being the period April 2024 – August 2024).

When looking at property flows **between second homes and holiday units** (which are the orange bars in the charts in Figure 10 above):

- **Historically** (i.e. before April 2023) the clear trend was for properties to move from being second homes to being holiday units.

- **From April 2023** however (coinciding with the time the criteria for taxation of self-catering accommodation were changed) this pattern has reversed, with now a net movement of holiday units (in the business tax regime) to being taxed as a second home (in the council tax regime). This has happened in all periods from April 2023 onwards, except one namely April 2024 – August 2024.

- This is **particularly true in the most recent period**, with around 550 properties (net) transitioning from a holiday unit to a second home between August 2024 and October 2025.

In terms of the impact on the total number of second homes in the council tax regime, therefore:

- **Historically**, the two main movements appear to effectively offset each other, so that the total number of second homes remained fairly constant (i.e. the flow from primary residences to second homes was about the same as the flow from second homes to holiday units).

- **For periods around the two premium increases** (i.e. before the increase to 100% in April 2021, and then more definitively before and after the increase to 150% in April 2023) the change in the direction of flow between second homes and main residences has been sufficient to cause the total number of second homes to fall in these periods.

- **From August 2024** onwards however, the flow of properties from holiday units to second homes has been much higher than the flow (which has continued to an extent) from second homes to primary residences. This means that the total number of second homes (taxed through the council tax regime) is now increasing.

7.0 Long-term empty properties

The chart below shows the number of long-term empty properties (i.e. vacant over 12 months and therefore paying a premium) in the council tax administration system between October 2019 and October 2025. This includes the time the premium last increased (from 50% to 100%, in April 2021).

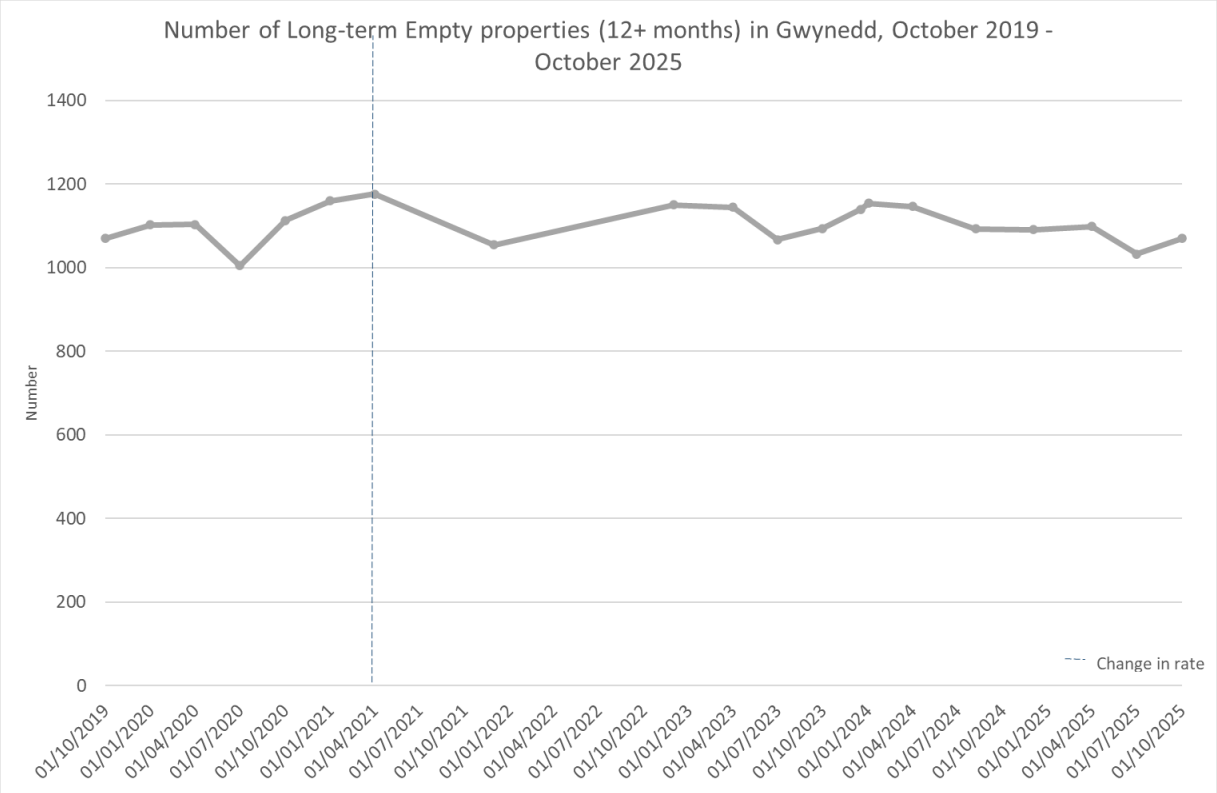
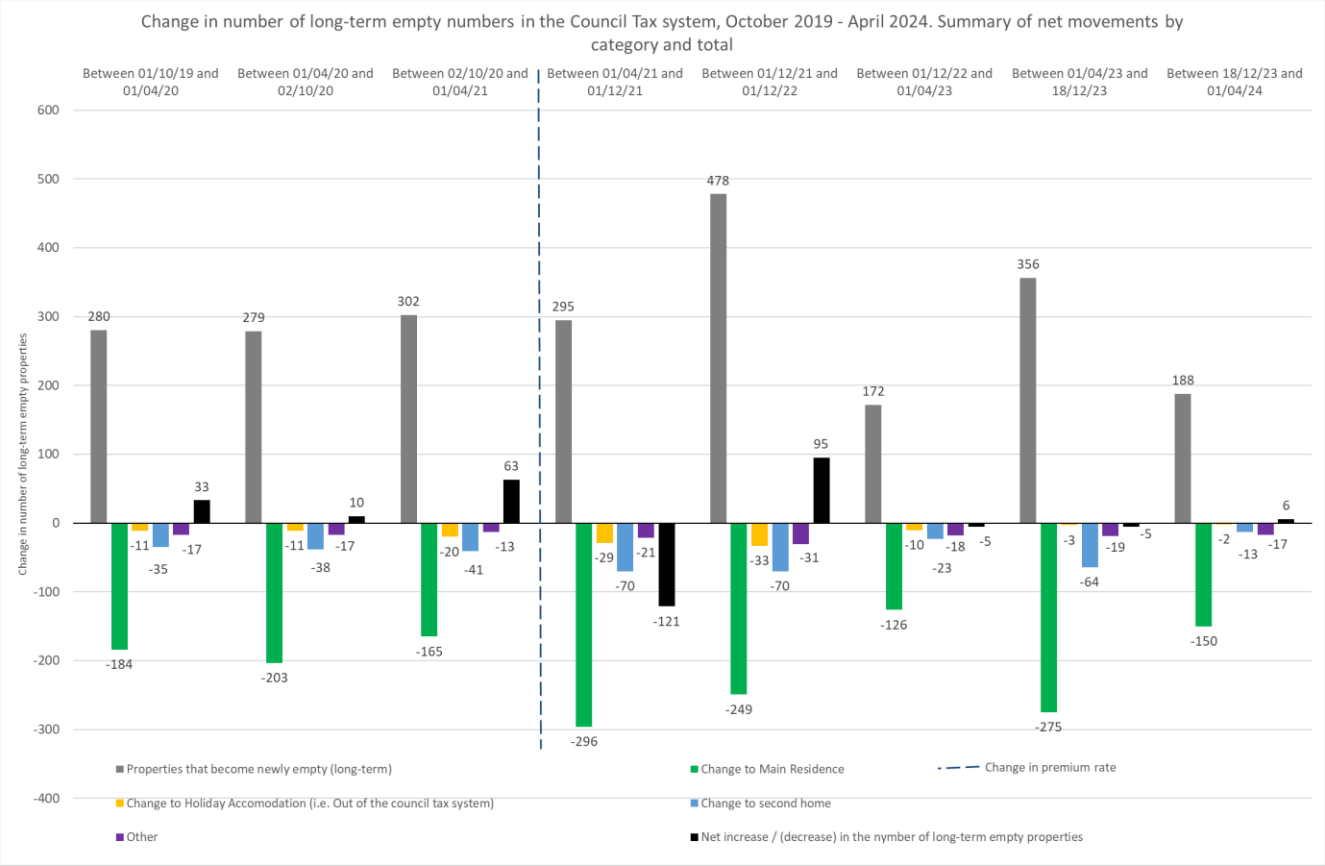


Figure 12: Number of long-term empty properties (12+ months) in Gwynedd between October 2019 – October 2025.

It can therefore be seen that the total has fluctuated somewhat (between about 1,000 and 1,200) over the period but with little apparent pattern to the change, except perhaps for:

- A net decrease of -121 in April – December 2021 (following the last premium increase, and after a period of slowly increasing numbers). But this was then more or less offset by a net increase of +95 in the subsequent period December 2021 – December 2022.
- Some reduction recently (from 1,154 in January 2024 to 1,033 in July 2025) but the number has then increased somewhat (to 1,070) by October 2025.

In the same way as was done with second homes (above), we have tracked and analysed changes to individual property categories to, and from, the long-term empty property category (in order to ascertain to where, and from where, the properties reached that category in the council tax administration system) and the results are summarised in the charts below (full data in **Appendix 3**).


Change in number of long-term empty numbers in the Council Tax system, October 2019 - April 2024. Summary of net movements by category and total
Between 01/10/19 and 01/04/20
Between 01/04/20 and 02/10/20
Between 02/10/20 and 01/04/21
Between 01/04/21 and 01/12/21
Between 01/12/21 and 01/12/22
Between 01/12/22 and 01/04/23
Between 01/04/23 and 18/12/23
Between 18/12/23 and 01/04/24
Change in number of long-term empty properties
Properties that become newly empty (long-term)
Change to Main Residence
Change in premium rate
Change to Holiday Accomodation (i.e. Out of the council tax system)
Change to second home
Other
Net increase / (decrease) in the nymber of long-term empty properties

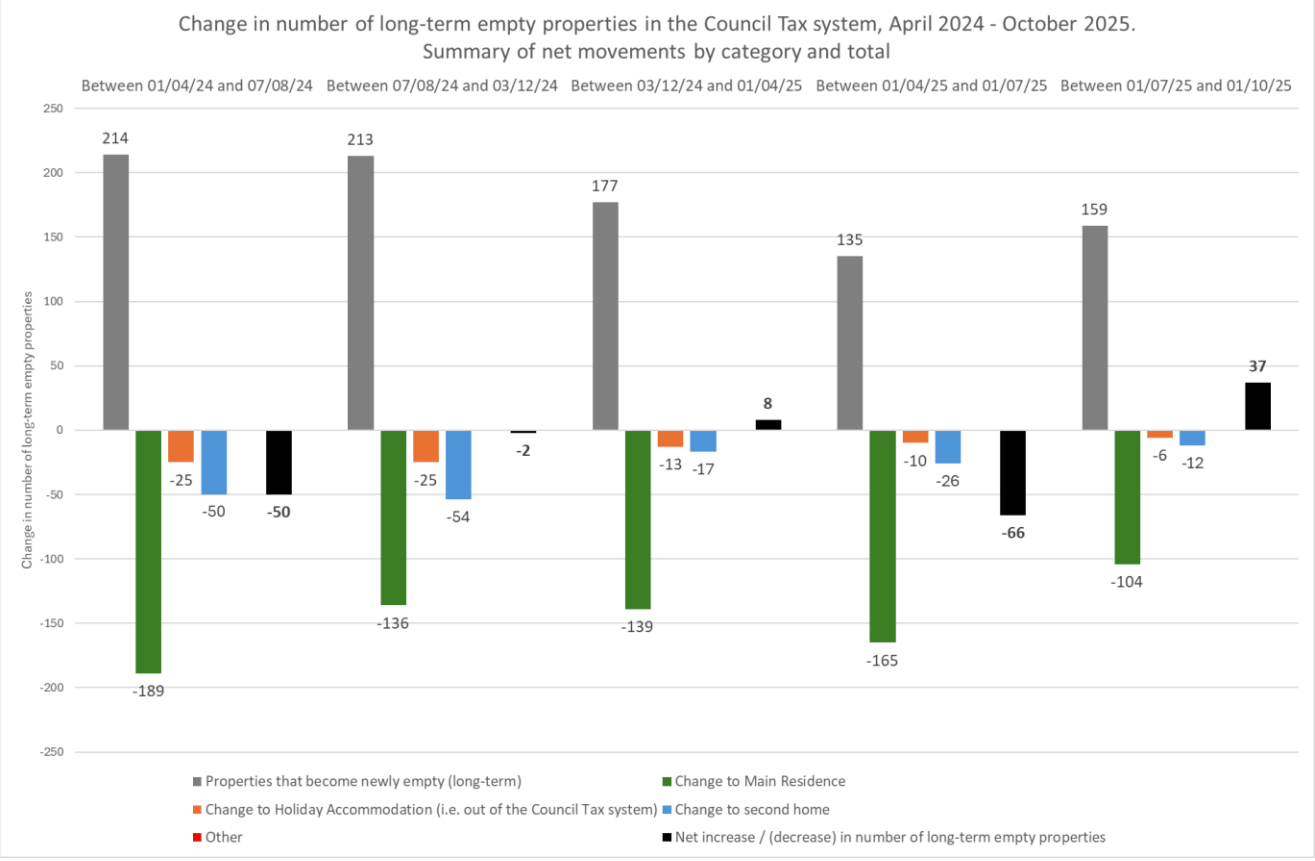

Change in number of long-term empty properties in the Council Tax system, April 2024 - October 2025. Summary of net movements by category and total
Between 01/04/24 and 07/08/24
Between 07/08/24 and 03/12/24
Between 03/12/24 and 01/04/25
Between 01/04/25 and 01/07/25
Between 01/07/25 and 01/10/25
Change in number of long-term empty properties
Properties that become newly empty (long-term)
Change to Main Residence
Change to Holiday Accommodation (i.e. out of the Council Tax system)
Change to second home
Other
Net increase / (decrease) in number of long-term empty properties

Figure 13: Change in long-term empty property numbers in the Council Tax system by period between October 2019 and October 2025 as a summary of net movements per category and in total.

Looking more specifically at property changing from long-term empty properties to main residences, the following pattern can be seen:

Table 2: Change from long-term empty property to main residence

Period	Number of months	Number of properties transferring from long-term empty properties to main residences	Average number of properties transferring per month
1/10/19 – 1/4/20	6	184	31
1/4/20 – 2/10/20	6	203	34
2/10/20 – 1/4/21	6	165	28
1/4/21 – 1/12/21	8	296	37
1/12/21 – 1/12/22	12	249	21
1/12/22 – 1/4/23	4	126	32
1/4/23 – 18/12/23	9	275	31
18/12/23 – 1/4/24	3	150	50
1/4/24 – 7/8/24	4	189	47
7/8/24 – 3/12/24	4	136	34
3/12/24 – 1/4/25	4	139	35
1/4/25 – 1/7/25	3	165	55
1/7/25 – 1/10/25	3	104	35

It's difficult to see a definite pattern in these figures – a slightly higher than usual number transferred in the period immediately following the premium increase in April 2021, but the figures then went back down. There is also a hint of higher numbers transferring at some points (e.g. around early 2024 and between April-June 2025) but otherwise there is no obvious pattern to be seen here.

Overall, therefore, it is difficult to see that the last increase in the council tax premium on long-term empty properties (to 100%, in April 2021) resulted in any long-lasting change in the patterns / numbers of these properties.

In subsequent years, while there have been a number of empty properties that have moved out of that category – mainly reverting to primary residences (much of this is likely to stem from projects to bring empty homes back into use) there have also been a number of properties that have newly become long-term vacant. In terms of numbers, the effect of these two elements have more or less cancelled each other out – so that there has not been much change in the total number of long-term vacant properties across the county in recent years.

8.0 Conclusions

Second homes

There was a net flow of property from second homes to main residences before the premium increase to 100% in April 2021, and (more pronouncedly) before and after the increase to 150% in April 2023. This is contrary to the previous usual pattern where the flow was in the other direction, from main residences to second homes. It appears that the effect of this latest change is more long-lasting, in that a net flow of properties from second homes to main residences continues to exist, two and a half years after the latest change to the premium rate.

It appears therefore (although the limitations of the information, and the other factors which could have impacted upon the situation, need to be borne in mind) that the premium has made a contribution towards returning second homes to use as main residences.

The other important flow, however, is the movement between second homes and holiday units, and it appears that the direction of this flow has completely reversed from April 2023 onwards – which is the date the change in the criteria for taxation of self-catering holiday accommodation came into force. By now this flow consists of a (net) movement from holiday units (in the business rate system) to second homes (in the council tax system).

In the more recent period since August 2024, this flow (from holiday units to second homes) has quickened – to the extent that it is now larger than the other flow (from second homes to main residences) with the result that the total number of properties taxed as second homes is increasing.

Long-term empty properties

It does not appear that the latest increase in the council tax premium on long-term empty property (to 100%, in April 2021) has led to any long-lasting change in the patterns / numbers of these properties in Gwynedd.

In the years since 2021, although numbers of empty properties have transferred out of that category – mainly reverting to being main residences (with a number of these transfers likely to be a result of schemes to bring empty homes back into use) – there have also been numbers of properties becoming long-term empty for the first time. In terms of overall numbers, both these elements have been on a similar scale, and therefore as a consequence there has not been much change in the total number of long-term empty properties across the county in recent years.

Continued monitoring of the situation

The Research team has been cooperating with other teams in the Council to ensure that reports are run, and data kept, regularly to facilitate analysis and reporting on these trends in future. We are also collaborating on a means of matching properties across both systems so that data on properties transferring between the different categories is more easily available without laborious analysis work; this will enable an analysis to be available quarterly, in dashboard form, to the different relevant Council departments.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Percentages of second homes, long-term empty properties, and holiday units of total housing per electoral ward, October 2025

(arranged from highest to lowest by proportion of second homes)

Ward	Second Homes as a percentage of Total Housing	Rank (1=highest, 65=lowest)	Long Term Empty Properties as a percentage of Total Housing	Rank (1=highest, 65=lowest)	Holiday Units as a percentage of Total Housing	Rank (1=highest, 65=lowest)	Composite Percentage (Second Homes + Long Term Empty Properties + Holiday Units as a % of Total Housing)	Rank (1=highest, 65=lowest)
Abersoch gyda Llanengan	46.6	1	2.6	5	8.6	1	57.8	1
Aberdyfi	32.3	2	2.1	18	7.6	3	42.0	2
Llanbedrog gyda Mynytho	23.6	3	5.7	1	3.5	25	32.8	3
Gorllewin Porthmadog	20.9	4	1.4	39	8.4	2	30.7	4
Morfa Nefyn a Thudweiliog	18.3	5	2.4	6	5.2	9	25.9	5
Pen draw Llyn	14.5	6	2.4	7	7.3	6	24.2	6
Harlech a Llanbedr	14.2	7	2.2	14	4.4	18	20.8	7
Nefyn	13.7	8	1.5	37	4.3	19	19.5	12
Arthog a Llangelynnin	13.3	9	2.3	11	4.8	16	20.4	8
Brithdir and Llanfachreth/Ganllwyd/Llanelltyd	12.6	10	1.9	25	5.3	8	19.8	10
Abermaw	11.9	11	1.9	26	5.8	7	19.6	11
Glaslyn	10.7	12	2.1	17	7.4	5	20.2	9
Gorllewin Tywyn	10.7	13	1.6	36	1.1	48	13.3	21
Yr Eifl	10.2	14	2.3	9	2.7	30	15.2	17
Bro Dysynni	10.1	15	1.7	31	3.3	29	15.1	18
Morfa Tywyn	9.8	16	0.7	62	2.4	36	12.8	23
Criccieth	9.5	17	1.2	48	7.5	4	18.2	13
Gogledd Dolgellau	8.6	18	1.9	24	5.1	12	15.6	15
Trawsfynydd	8.5	19	2.1	15	4.9	13	15.5	16
Llandderfel	8.0	20	2.2	12	3.8	23	14.0	20
Dyffryn Ardudwy	7.9	21	2.9	3	5.1	10	16.0	14
Efailnewydd a Buan	7.8	22	1.4	42	2.5	34	11.7	28
Corris a Mawddwy	7.7	23	3.1	2	4.1	21	15.0	19
Llanuwchllyn	7.3	24	1.6	34	3.5	26	12.4	24
Teigl	7.0	25	2.0	20	3.3	28	12.4	25
Dolbenmaen	6.4	26	1.8	30	4.8	14	13.0	22
Clynnog	5.9	27	2.0	22	4.4	17	12.2	26
Llanystumdwy	5.8	28	2.1	16	3.9	22	11.8	27
De Pwllheli	5.3	29	1.4	41	1.2	42	8.0	35
De Dolgellau	5.0	30	1.7	33	2.5	33	9.1	33
Waunfawr	4.9	31	2.4	8	3.4	27	10.6	30
Bowydd a'r Rhiw	4.7	32	2.3	10	3.8	24	10.7	29
Llanberis	4.6	33	1.1	50	4.1	20	9.8	31
Penrhyndeudraeth	4.3	34	1.7	32	0.6	55	3.5	54
Llanllyfni	4.1	35	1.5	38	1.2	45	6.9	41
Bethel a'r Felinheli	3.7	36	1.0	53	2.3	37	7.0	39
Diffwys a Maenofferen	3.6	37	2.8	4	2.6	32	9.0	34
Canol Tref Caernarfon	3.5	38	1.9	28	1.7	41	7.1	38
Y Groeslon	3.4	39	1.8	29	2.4	35	7.6	37
Abererch	3.0	40	1.1	49	2.2	38	6.3	44
Arllechwedd	2.9	41	1.6	35	0.9	52	5.4	46
Y Bala	2.9	42	1.9	27	2.1	39	6.9	42
Tryfan	2.9	43	1.9	23	0.8	53	5.7	45
Gogledd Pwllheli	2.9	44	2.0	21	1.7	40	6.6	43
Y Bontnewydd	2.5	45	2.2	13	4.8	15	9.5	32
Dwyrain Porthmadog	2.5	46	1.2	47	1.2	44	4.9	47
Gerlan	2.4	47	1.0	52	1.0	49	4.5	50
Tre-garth a Mynydd Llandygai	2.3	48	0.5	63	1.2	43	4.0	52
Deiniolen	2.2	49	1.2	46	0.9	50	4.4	51
Y Faenol	2.0	50	0.8	58	0.8	54	3.7	53
Canol Bangor	2.0	51	1.1	51	0.3	60	3.3	55
Cwm-y-glo	1.5	52	1.4	45	5.1	11	7.9	36
Llanwnda	1.4	53	0.8	60	2.7	31	4.8	48
Penisa'r-waun	1.4	54	1.4	40	1.2	46	6.9	40
Canol Bethesda	1.4	55	1.4	43	0.4	59	3.1	56
Dwyrain Bangor	1.3	56	0.9	55	0.2	63	2.4	59
Pen-y-groes	1.2	57	2.0	19	1.1	47	4.5	49
Rachub	1.0	58	0.9	57	0.9	51	2.8	57
Menai	1.0	59	0.9	56	0.4	58	2.3	60
Glyder	1.0	60	0.8	59	0.3	61	2.0	61
Llanrug	0.9	61	1.4	44	0.5	57	2.7	58
Peblig	0.5	62	0.9	54	0.2	64	1.6	63
Cadnant	0.5	63	0.8	61	0.5	56	1.8	62
Dewi	0.4	64	0.4	64	0.2	62	0.9	64
Hendre	0.0	65	0.2	65	0.0	65	0.2	65

Source: Research and Information Service calculations based on data from council tax system, dated 1/10/25

Appendix 2: Movement numbers to and from the Second Homes category from April 2024

Movements in Second Home numbers - Gwynedd					
	Between 01/04/24 and 07/08/24	**Between 07/08/24 and 03/12/24**	**Between 03/12/24 and 01/04/25**	**Between 01/04/25 and 01/07/25**	**Between 01/07/25 and 01/10/25**
Initial number	**4,296**	**4,450**	**4,604**	**4,720**	**4,824**
Change between Main Residence and 2nd home:					
From Main Residence to 2nd home	386	278	153	173	146
From 2nd home to Main Residence	-287	-301	-258	-200	-197
Net increase in 2nd homes due to change from / (to) main residence	**99**	**-23**	**-105**	**-27**	**-51**
Change between Holiday Units and Second Home:					
From Holiday Units to 2nd home (i.e. arriving in CT system, as 2nd home)	33	194	278	150	77
From 2nd home to Holiday Units (i.e. leaving the CT system)	-53	-58	-32	-34	-26
Net increase in 2nd homes due to change from / (to) holiday units	**-20**	**136**	**246**	**116**	**51**
Other changes:					
Arrive in the CT system, as 2nd home (including e.g. new houses)	64	26	5	30	38
Leave the CT system, and don't move to business tax as holiday units	-30	-25	-20	-13	-17
From Long term empty property (12+ months) to 2nd home	50	54	17	26	12
From 2nd home to Long-term empty property (12+ months)	-11	-13	-11	-11	-6
From empty property 6-12 months to 2nd home	17	19	13	4	15
From 2nd home to Empty property 6-12 months	-13	-15	-25	-18	-15
Others Miscellaneous: Arriving as 2nd home category	0	0	1	3	2
Others Miscellaneous: Leaving 2nd home category	-2	-5	-5	-6	-6
Net increase in 2nd homes due to other changes	**75**	**41**	**-25**	**15**	**23**
Total of all above changes	**154**	**154**	**116**	**104**	**23**
Number at end of period	**4,450**	**4,604**	**4,720**	**4,824**	**4,847**

Appendix 3: Movement numbers to and from the Long-term Empty Properties category from April 2024

Movement in long-term empty property numbers - Gwynedd					
	Between 01/04/24 and 07/08/24	Between 07/08/24 and 03/12/24	Between 03/12/24 and 01/04/25	Between 01/04/25 and 01/07/25	Between 01/07/25 and 01/10/25
Number at the start of the period	**1,143**	**1,093**	**1,091**	**1,099**	**1,033**
Properties that become newly empty (long-term)	**214**	**213**	**177**	**135**	**159**
Properties ceasing to be long-term empty:					
Change to Main Residence	-189	-136	-139	-165	-104
Transfer out of council tax system (including change to Holiday Units)	-25	-25	-13	-10	-6
Change to Second Home	-50	-54	-17	-26	-12
Other	0	0	0	0	0
Total	**-264**	**-215**	**-169**	**-201**	**-122**
Net increase / (decrease) in number of long-term empty properties	**-50**	**-2**	**8**	**-66**	**37**
Number at the end of the period	**1,093**	**1,091**	**1,099**	**1,033**	**1,070**
Change between Main Residence and Long-term Empty Property:					
From Main Residence to Long-term Empty Property	90	67	55	50	54
From Long-term Empty Property to Main Residence	-189	-136	-139	-165	-104
Net increase in Long-term empty properties due to change from / (to) main residen	**-99**	**-69**	**-84**	**-115**	**-50**
In /out of Council Tax system:					
Out of Council Tax system:					
Total	-25	-25	-13	-10	-6
	-25	-25	-13	-10	-6
Arriving in Council Tax system:					
Total	3	7	3	2	
	3	7	3	2	0
Net increase in Long-term empty properties due to properties arriving / (leaving) th	**-22**	**-18**	**-10**	**-8**	**-6**
Other changes:					
Properties that were empty (6+ months) now empty for 12+ months	110	126	108	72	99
Change between long-term empty properties and second homes:					
From Empty property to 2nd home	-50	-54	-17	-26	-12
From 2nd home to Empty property	11	13	11	11	6
Net increase in Long-term empty properties due to change from / (to) second homes	-39	-41	-6	-15	-6
Other miscellaneous					
Arriving in Long-term empty property category					
Leaving Long-term empty category					
	0	0	0	0	0
Net increase in Long-term empty properties because of other changes	**71**	**85**	**102**	**57**	**93**
Total of all above changes	**-50**	**-2**	**8**	**-66**	**37**
Number at end of period	**1,093**	**1,091**	**1,099**	**1,033**	**1,070**

CYNGOR GWYNEDD – Report to Cyngor Gwynedd's Cabinet

Item title:	**Council Tax Reduction Policy under Section 13A(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992**
Cabinet Member:	**Councillor Huw Wyn Jones Cabinet Member for Finance**
Relevant Officer:	**Dewi Morgan, Head of Finance Sian Pugh, Assistant Head of Finance**
Meeting date:	**11 November 2025**

1. DECISION SOUGHT

1.1 The adoption of a Council Tax Reduction Policy under Section 13A(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to provide officers with clear guidance and boundaries on the use of reductions and exemptions from the standard Council Tax and the Premium.

2. THE REASON WHY CABINET NEEDS TO MAKE THE DECISION:

2.1 Section 13A(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, gives the Council additional discretionary powers to reduce the amount of Council Tax payable for individuals, or for classes of taxpayers. Section 13A does not impose a restriction on its use so the requirement for careful and consistent use, without setting a prejudicial precedent, is essential.

2.2 This policy sets out the criteria and process for awarding discretionary reductions to Council Tax in accordance with Section 13A(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992

2.3 Currently, Cyngor Gwynedd has used Section 13A of the 1992 Act to introduce local, optional exceptions in very limited cases. For example, on 8 April 2025 the Cabinet decided to use Section 13A to give a local discount to Foster Carers in Gwynedd, and 3e project in the Housing Action Plan uses the power to give a tax rebate to first-time buyers who are repairing a property, beyond the statutory exemption.

2.4 Any action to exercise this power must be consistent with other legislation (e.g. Equality Act, Well-being of Future Generations Act). In accordance with the Constitution of the Council and Section 67 of the 1992 Act, the use of Section 13A is a matter for the Cabinet, it is not a matter which must have a full Council decision. The power under Section 13A (1)(c) is broad, and allows the billing authority to reduce the Council Tax bill of any dwelling for any period as the billing authority considers fit.

2.5 A copy of the Council Tax Reduction Policy under Section 13A(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 can be found at Appendix 1. It is good practice to have such a Policy in order to ensure transparency and consistency, with clear guidance for officers but at the same time explaining the steps that need to be taken to deal with cases that are truly exceptional.

3. INTRODUCTION AND REASONING

3.1 Section 13A(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, gives the Council additional discretionary powers to reduce the amount of Council Tax payable for individuals, or for classes of taxpayers, in exceptional circumstances. This includes the power to reduce the amount payable to nothing.

3.2 This is separate and distinct from the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, which has replaced Council Tax Benefit since 2013. The Council Tax Reduction Scheme is decided annually by the full Council, usually at its meeting in December, and in accordance with statute before 31 January.

3.3 Whilst the Council Tax Reduction Scheme exists to provide support for those liable to pay the tax, some provision is needed for those residents who find themselves in 'exceptional' circumstances and need short-term support to meet their Council Tax obligation.

3.4 It is important to define what could be considered exceptional and in this case it would be a situation that was not typical, completely unusual and only likely to occur very rarely. Exceptional situations for the purposes of this scheme are likely to be things outside the taxpayer's control, such as flooding of properties as an example.

3.5 Cyngor Gwynedd must bear the full cost of awarding any Section 13A reductions. The Council must therefore balance the need of the individual council payers who need support against the interests of council tax payers in general.

3.6 Sections 12A and 12B of the 1992 Act give the Welsh Ministers powers to make regulations to prescribe one or more classes of dwellings to which councils may not decide to apply a premium. The Council Tax (Exceptions to Higher Amounts) (Wales) Regulations 2015 are made under these powers a premium cannot be levied on a dwelling that falls under an exception.

3.7 The regulations prescribe seven classes of exempt dwellings. Classes 1, 2, 3 and 4 apply to long-term vacant properties and second homes. Classes 5, 6 and 7 apply to second homes only.

3.8 Details of these exceptions can be found in the following statutory guidance:

https://www.gov.wales/council-tax-empty-and-second-homes-html

4. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 In formulating the proposed Policy (at Appendix 1) consideration has been given to cases that have been submitted to the Finance Department over a number of years. These could be applications for a reduction in basic Council Tax, the Premium, or both.

4.2 As an exemption from the basic Tax using Section 13A is a direct cost on the Council's coffers, the power must be exercised very carefully, while at the same time avoiding setting a precedent that could harm the Council financially in the long run.

4.3 At the same time, fairness and consistency must be ensured in the use of this force. A copy of the Equality Impact Assessment can be found at Appendix 2.

4.4 The Finance Department is also aware that consultations are underway or have recently closed in order to modify some of the statutory exemptions. We will keep the Policy under ongoing review and adapt it as any legislative changes are introduced. A prominent example of this in Gwynedd is challenges by owners of second homes used for the purposes of self-catering accommodation and failing to meet the 182 day threshold to be on the non-domestic rates list. This is currently the subject of consultation by the Welsh Government which could lead to a change in the regulations.

4.5 Supporting Community Enterprises is a priority for the Council and therefore the Policy supports tax exemptions for these initiatives. Nevertheless, it is assessed that there is a risk that bogus Community Enterprises may be set up in order to avail of any tax relief so it is proposed that a Panel considers any Community Enterprise on its own merits to ensure that it is genuinely established in order to support the community. There is no proposal, therefore, that a Community Enterprise be subject to any exceptions without a detailed assessment of the individual case first.

5. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 The protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act, the Socio-Economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales, the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or review of policies, strategies, services and functions. It is considered that no significant or unacceptable equality effects will result from this report.

5.2 The Equality Impact Assessment is included in Appendix 2.

6. THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS (WALES) ACT 2015

6.1 The original aim of the Council Tax Section 13A Reduction Policy is to reduce inequalities resulting from socio-economic disadvantage.

6.2 There is a duty to act in accordance with the principle of sustainable development, which is to seek to ensure that the needs of the present are met without jeopardising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. In acting in accordance with this general duty the Council needs to take into account the importance of long-term impact, being integrated, inclusive, collaborative and preventive in the development and implementation of the proposal before it.

6.3 The well-being goals set out in the Act have been considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts on the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report.

7. NEXT STEPS

7.1 The Policy is adopted to be effective for the remainder of 2025-26 and until it is reviewed or repealed.

STATUTORY OFFICER OPINION:

Monitoring Officer:

The Government Guidance "**Council Tax on Empty Homes and Homes Guidance for local authorities on council tax premiums for long-term empty properties and second homes"** provides guidance on the use of statutory discretion in relation to the premium. Having a Policy allows the Cabinet to establish a statement about how applications for exemptions from either Council Tac and/or Premium will be considered. It is also noted that a review of the exemption regulations is also underway and the intention to keep the Policy under review is emphasised. The recommendation provides a framework for addressing applications.

Head of Finance:

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

Council Tax Reduction Policy under Section 13A(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992

Cyngor Gwynedd

1. Purpose of the Policy

This policy sets out the criteria and process for awarding a discretionary reduction to Council Tax under Section 13A(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992. Its aim is to offer support to residents who are facing exceptional financial hardship or unusual circumstances.

2. Scope

The policy applies to:

- Individuals experiencing temporary financial hardship.
- Vulnerable groups (e.g. care leavers, victims of domestic abuse).
- Cases where the liability to pay Council Tax arises due to unforeseen or exceptional events.
- Any other groups defined by the Council's Cabinet in order to facilitate the realisation of the authority's objectives.
- Certain cases where there is an exemption from the Council Tax Premium, but not basic Council Tax, in addition to the statutory exemptions that have been outlined in legislation.

3. Background

Section 13A(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, gives the Council additional discretionary powers to reduce the amount of Council Tax payable for individuals, or for classes of taxpayers. This includes the power to reduce the amount payable to nothing.

This is separate and distinct from the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, which has replaced Council Tax Benefit since 2013. The Council Tax Reduction Scheme is decided annually by the full Council, usually at its meeting in December, and in accordance with statute before 31 January.

Whilst the Council Tax Reduction Scheme exists to provide support for those liable to pay the tax, some provision is needed for those residents who find themselves in 'exceptional' circumstances and need short-term support to meet their Council Tax obligation.

It is important to define what could be considered exceptional and in this case it would be a situation that was not typical, completely unusual and only likely to occur very rarely. Exceptional

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situations for the purposes of this scheme are likely to be things outside the taxpayer's control, such as flooding of properties as an example.

Cyngor Gwynedd must bear the full cost of awarding any reductions to basic Council Tax under Section 13A. The Council must therefore balance the need of the individual council payers who need support against the interests of council tax payers in general.

An exemption from the Premium (in part or in full) will result in fewer resources being collected to realise the purpose of the Premium.

4. Eligibility Criteria

Basic Council Tax Reduction

Applicants must:

- Be liable for Council Tax on properties within the Cyngor Gwynedd area.
- Have explored all other forms of support (e.g. Council Tax Reduction Scheme, exemptions, discounts).
- Show evidence of financial hardship or exceptional circumstances.
- Show that the situation is not the result of negligence or deliberate failure to pay.

Reducing or eliminating Council Tax Premium on Second Homes or Long-Term Empty Properties

- In cases where an application is made for an exemption from the Council Tax Premium, an effort must be made to bring a vacant property back into use or evidence to be able to carry out a fair assessment to determine that the circumstances are truly exceptional.

5. General Principles:

It must be recognised that any decision to reduce or eliminate Council Tax for a taxpayer is funded by other taxpayers, so all applications must be considered in terms of benefit to the community and the County taxpayers. Similarly, lowering the level of the Premium results in fewer resources available to meet its intent.

- All applications must be considered in accordance with this procedure, fully and fairly.
- Those considering an application are required to be objective.
- Requests should be dealt with in a timely manner.
- Clear and simple guidelines need to be set and followed.
- This Policy will be reviewed regularly, taking into account any guidance from the Welsh Government and neighbouring council arrangements.
- Although each application is considered individually, consistency between applications should be ensured.

6. The Application Process

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Applications must:

- Be submitted in writing by the responsible person or authorised representative.
- Contain:
    - The amount and period for which a reduction is requested.
    - Reasons for the request.
    - Evidence of income, expenditure, debt, and mitigation measures.
    - Where only a reduction in the Premium is applied, evidence showing that the exemption applies in accordance with this Policy.

7. Decision Making

Each application will be assessed according to its individual merit. The Council will consider:

- Financial circumstances of the applicant.
- The effect of not awarding the discount.
- Cost to the public purse.
- Whether the applicant has taken reasonable steps to resolve the situation.

The decision procedure will be as follows:

- All applications must be in writing and clearly state that an application under Part 13A and this policy is being made.
- An application can relate to a financial year, part of a financial year or a time range (up to 6 years) – the relevant period must be stated in the application.
- Unless the decision to reduce the tax or premium has been made for a specified period, no reduction will extend beyond the end of the current financial year.
- All applicants are required to provide full and clear relevant details to enable those assessing the application to arrive at an accurate, timely and in accordance with the rules.
- A full outline of finances and personal savings associated with the application must be provided.
- A summary of the individual/household's personal finances should be provided detailing any other significant debts, assets of size (financial – savings/pension scheme, housing material/cars).
- Details of any vulnerability – which applies to the taxpayer or someone who is dependent on the taxpayer.

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- It should be ensured that all other reasonable and lawful avenues have been followed to reduce the amount (including some bankruptcy arrangements) and that the last option is the Part 13A application.
- That reasonable action has been put in place to prevent a similar application in the future (application for exemption, relief, statutory discount, affordable arrangements approved by a qualified body – CAB or Money Helper)
- Where there are financial difficulties by an individual/family it will be necessary to demonstrate that an effort has been made to receive advice from one of the bodies named above.
- A statement of relevant circumstances is welcome from the candidate or representatives on her behalf.

If the Council's Cabinet has not identified and defined a specific cohort of taxpayers or property eligible to receive a reduction in Council Tax (or Premium) in accordance with this Policy (see Part 10 below), a Panel consisting of the Cabinet Member for Finance, the Head of Finance / Assistant Head of Finance and the Tax Manager will consider individual applications for reductions under Section 13A.

If further details are required the person considering the application may request further details/evidence by letter/email.

Informing decisions

The Council will aim to consider the application and inform the customer of the outcome within 28 days of receipt of the claim and all supporting documents.

If the claim for relief is successful, the award will be made directly by discount applied to the Council Tax bill. This will be confirmed in writing and the Council's decision will include the following:

- The reason for the ruling
- Amount awarded
- Period of award
- Applicant's duty to report any changes in circumstances
- Any conditions attached to the award
- Details of the right to review

If a claim is unsuccessful, this will be confirmed in writing and the Council's decision will include an explanation of how the decision was reached and details of the right to request a review.

Appeal against a decision

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There is no statutory right of appeal but if a taxpayer believes there is an unfairness or a deficiency where the internal procedure has not been followed a statement of dissatisfaction can be submitted in writing to the attention of the Head of Finance.

The outcome of this further application will be communicated in writing to the applicant within three months.

8. Duration and Review Period

- Discounts can be awarded for a fixed period or until the end of the financial year.
- Re-applications may be made if circumstances persist.
- Decisions are final, but a review can be requested if new evidence is presented.

9. Funding

All awards to reduce basic Council Tax under Section 13A(1)(c) are funded by the Council and, ultimately, by local taxpayers. The Council will monitor the budget set aside for discretionary discounts.

The cost of an exemption from the Premium (in part or in full) is the loss of an opportunity to raise resources towards the purposes of the Premium.

10. Specific Groups

Previous Cabinet decisions, allow the following reductions in accordance with Section 13A:

- Scheme 3e in the Housing Action Plan which extends the exemption period from paying Council tax on empty properties (main or sole dwelling) giving first time buyers an extra year to carry out essential restoration work before the house can be occupied including cases where the exemption period has already been claimed by the former owners.
- Allow a 50% reduction (25% for a short break Foster Carer) in the Council Tax bills of the main residence of foster carers registered with the Council.

11. Council Tax Premium

This part of the policy outlines the circumstances and criteria in which a property owner can apply for an exemption to the Council Tax premium on long-term empty properties and second homes.

Cyngor Gwynedd's main principles for charging and collecting premiums are to encourage property owners to make use of houses as their main or sole home.

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11.1 Definitions

- Long-term vacant property: A dwelling without residents and without furniture for a continuous period of 12 months or more.

- Second home: A dwelling that is substantially furnished but is not the main home for anyone.

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11.2. Statutory and local exemptions

11.2.1 Statutory Exemptions for Empty Properties and Second Homes

The Council Tax (Higher Amounts Exemptions) (Wales) Regulations 2015 set out seven classes of properties that are exempt from the (statutory) premium.

Classes of Dwellings	**Definition**	**The type of property eligible for the premium exemption**
Class 1	Properties that are marketed as for sale – with a time limit of one year	Long Term Empty Homes and Second Homes
Class 2	Properties that are marketed as letting – with a time limit of one year	
Class 3	Annexes forming part of, or being treated as part of, the main dwelling	
Class 4	Property that would be one's sole or main residence if they were not resident in Armed Forces accommodation	
Class 5	Caravan sites and boat moorings.	Second Homes
Class 6	Properties where there is a planning condition: a. suspend occupation for a continuous period of at least 28 days in any period of one year; b. specifies that the dwelling may only be used for short-term holiday accommodation; or c. prevents occupation as a person's sole or primary residence.	
Class 7	Work-related properties	

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Eligibility criteria for the statutory exemptions:

Class 1 – Property on the market for sale

- The property must be for sale at a reasonable price (average price and the length of time similar dwellings are on the market in the local area; whether there are excessive restrictive conditions, such as the price, imposed on the property to prevent its sale).

- Evidence of marketing must be provided, e.g. Advertising on advertising websites (such as Rightmove/Zoopla) or other forms of marketing; An agreement with a real estate agent; Energy Performance Certificate;

Exemption period: up to 12 months

Class 2 – Properties on the market for rent

- The property must be let at a reasonable rent price (average rent and time on the market for a similar property in the local area; whether there are excessive restrictive conditions such as the rent preventing the property from being rented)
- Evidence of marketing must be provided, e.g. Registration Number and landlord's licence (Rent Smart Wales); Agreement with letting agent; Gas safety certificate

Exemption period: up to 12 months

Class 3 – Annexes

- Annexes forming part of the main dwelling – no additional evidence required.

Exclusion period – until a change in circumstances.

Class 4 – Armed Forces

- Dwellings that would be someone's only home if they did not live in armed accommodation.

- Evidence of service must be provided by the Ministry of Defence.

Exemption period – until a change in the individual's circumstances.

Class 5 – occupied caravan sites and boat moorings

Class 6 - dwellings that are vacant because a planning condition prevents people from occupying them permanently or year-round, or states that the property is to be used as holiday accommodation only or prevents the dwelling from being used as a main residence

Class 7 – job-related dwellings

- for an eligible person as set out in Part 1, Class 7 of the guidance.

- the Council may be requesting certain types of evidence (for example an employment agreement, tax returns, pay statement).

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11.2.3 Second Homes Local Exemptions Only

The terminology used in Section 12B is not "second homes" or "holiday homes", but "dwellings occupied *periodically*". The Act states that the conditions for a property to be subject to a "second home" Council Tax premium are, "***there is no resident of the dwelling, and the dwelling is substantially furnished***". That is, this property is not anyone's main home, but it has been furnished. The Act does not contain any provision to be able to discriminate on the basis of where the owner lives, or if it is used for holiday purposes.

In that regard, the Council does not anticipate that it would be in a position to allow discretionary exemptions from the Premium to a wide cohort of properties without undermining the reason for introducing the Premium in the first place. *(This may lead to a need to consider it under the provisions of the Subsidy Management Act 2023).*

However, the Council is aware that changes in legislation are something that needs to be kept under constant scrutiny and as such this Policy, in terms of allowing local exemptions from the Premium on second homes, will also be reviewed regularly.

In accordance with Section 66 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, a property which is intended to be let as self-catering holiday accommodation for at least 252 days in the next year, and has been let for 182 days in the previous year, is a non-domestic property for taxation purposes and therefore appears on the non-domestic rates list rather than in a Council Tax band. The threshold for letting was increased due to pressure from a number of public bodies, with Cyngor Gwynedd leading the way.

Any application for an exemption or reduction from this Premium will need to be able to demonstrate why its position is truly exceptional, and that the imposition of the Premium contravenes Government guidance on the setting of the Premium. A transfer of a property from the non-domestic rates list to a Council Tax band will not in itself be sufficient for a case to be exceptional – it will have to be shown what makes that particular situation unique.

This Policy allows officers to take action to grant an optional exemption from the Premium where the taxpayer is a recognised Community Enterprise with clear objectives of supporting the local community. In order to qualify, the Enterprise will need to share its articles / constitution with the Tax Service in order to satisfy Cyngor Gwynedd that the Menter meets the strict conditions in this paragraph. A ruling on this matter will be made by the Panel which consists of the Cabinet Member for Finance, Head of Finance / Assistant Head of Finance and the Tax Manager.

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11.2.4 Empty Property Local Exemptions Only

Local Class A Exemption – Significant renovation of a property (2 Groups)

Group 1 - For the purposes of scheme 3e in the Housing Action Plan this exemption applies to first time buyers only.

First-time buyers will be exempt from council tax and premium for 12 months; after the end of the period of the Class A Council Tax Exemption.

Group 2 – Owners seeking access to their prospective main or sole home.

These owners get up to a further 12 months of exemption to the premium only; after the end of the period of the Class A Council Tax Exemption.

Eligibility criteria:

- The new owner must submit a detailed schedule of work and evidence of structural work (not minor work such as installing a new kitchen)

The exemption ends when:

- The work has been completed

- The property is occupied

- The deadline is coming

12. Fraud

Any application under Section 13A that is dishonest, or intentionally incomplete will be construed as fraud, with a file being provided and transferred to Cyngor Gwynedd's Legal Department with regard to whether there are grounds for prosecution.

A statement of honesty will be part of all applications under Part 13A.

Should there be a case of fraud and an amount has been deleted/reduced this action will be reversed with the amount becoming back payable.

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Assessing the Impact on Protected Characteristics, the Welsh Language and Socio-Economic Disadvantage

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

The Council's is required (under the Equality Act 2010) to consider the effect any change in policy or procedure (or the creation of a new policy or procedure), has on people with protected equality characteristics. The Council also has a general duty to ensure fairness and foster good relations. A timely Equality Impact Assessment must be undertaken before making any decision on any relevant change (i.e. which has an effect on people with protected characteristics).

The Council is also required, under the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (Section 44 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011) to consider the effect of a change in any policy or procedure (or the creation of a new policy or procedure), in its opportunities for people to use Welsh and to ensure that Welsh is not treated less favourably than English. This document therefore ensures that these decisions protect and promote the use of the Welsh language.

From April 1st 2021 the Council has a duty to have due regard to tackling socio-economic disadvantage in strategic decisions.

1) Details

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

Council Tax Reduction Policy under Section 13A(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992

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

This policy sets out the criteria and process for awarding a discretionary reduction to Council Tax under Section 13A(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992. Its aim is to offer support to residents who are facing exceptional financial hardship or unusual circumstances. The policy allows the Council to reduce or eliminate Council Tax in cases of: • Individuals experiencing temporary financial hardship. • Vulnerable groups (e.g. young people leaving care, victims of domestic abuse). • Cases where the liability to pay Council Tax arises due to unforeseen or exceptional events. • Any other groups defined by the Council's Cabinet to facilitate the realisation of the

authority's objectives.

- Specific cases where there is an exemption from the Council Tax Premium, but not basic Council Tax, in addition to the statutory exemptions outlined in legislation.

1.3 Who is responsible for this assessment?

Dewi Morgan, Head of Finance

1.4 When did you commence the assessment? Which version is this?

This Policy is new to ensure clarity around discretionary reduction to Council Tax in accordance with Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

The Policy will be submitted to Cabinet for approval on 11 November 2025.

2) Action

2.1 Who are the stakeholders or partners you need to work with to undertake this assessment?

The key partners and stakeholders were:

Gwynedd Residents
Taxpayers on empty properties and second homes

There have been collaborations with a number of internal partners, e.g.:
Finance Department
Housing and Property Department
Corporate Services Department
Adult, Health and Well-being Department
Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet Members
Cyngor Gwynedd Members

We have also used the public consultation on the Council Tax Premium in 2022 and the updated research work on the impact of the premium by the Research and Information Service in November 2025.

2.2 What measures have you taken to engage with people with equality characteristics, regarding the Welsh language or with communities (either of place or of need) that live with socio-economic disadvantage?

We have consulted with a number of Cyngor Gwynedd's Elected Members as well as Gwynedd taxpayers over the past few years as we have received, assessed and discussed a number of complaints and requests for exemptions to Council Tax and Premium bills.

In addition, we have used the public consultation on Council Tax Premium. That was a public consultation and the questionnaire was available for anyone to complete online. Two press releases were issued raising awareness of it, and social media was used to raise awareness.

The Council wrote to all households subject to the Premium with a letter drawing their attention to the consultation. Where the different correspondence address was recorded in the Council Tax system, this was used. The letter referred to the Council's website and the opportunity to complete the questionnaire there, but the Council's website stated that anyone could contact the Council if they wished to receive a paper copy of the consultation.

The public consultation on Council Tax Premium asked respondents to inform us of any protected features and these have been taken into account in the development of the Council Tax Reduction Policy under Section 13A.

2.3 What was the result of the engagement?

A public consultation was held between 30 September and 28 October 2022. 7,330 responses were received on the formal questionnaire, as well as around 100 separate letters and messages expressing dissatisfaction with the proposal. There were 7,277 online questionnaire responses and 53 paper responses. This is the largest number of responses the Council has seen to any consultation in recent years.

Just over half of respondents (50.3%, N=3,684) owned either a second home or a long-term empty dwelling in Gwynedd (or both).

In total, three-quarters of respondents (75.0%, N=5,497) considered it not appropriate to increase the level of Council Tax Premium on second homes. 24.1% (N=1,764) thought it was appropriate to increase it, with 0.9% (N=69) not having an opinion. However, by separating the answers between respondents who own a second home and those who do not, there is some difference of opinion with the overwhelming majority of respondents who own a second home opposing increasing the premium level. Among respondents who do not own a second home the view was more divided, but with this majority also of the opinion that it would not be appropriate to increase the premium.

Respondents' comments were sought on the impact of the Premium on a number of aspects of social issues. A number of those who opposed the increase indicated that they had owned their property in Gwynedd for several years and were very fond of the area. On the other hand, some of those responding claimed that there was a racist motive behind the intention to increase the Premium as the Council is against people from outside Gwynedd and that it is racist. No evidence was submitted to support this view.

There are two different categories of properties subject to the Premium, namely second homes and long-term empty properties.

Very few people want to pay more tax, and there was vehement opposition from second home owners in particular. It stands to reason that increasing the level of premium would have a financial impact on these individuals, but there was no evidence that any protected group would be affected. However, a number of those who have responded to the enquiry claim that the policy of raising the Premium is racist, anti-English, although no discrimination exists when setting the premium.

The consultation included an equality questionnaire. This suggested that a higher proportion of second home owners than the general population are older people.

2.4 On the basis of what other evidence are you operating?

Section 13A(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, gives the Council additional discretionary powers to reduce the amount of Council Tax payable for individuals, or for classes of taxpayers. A policy is needed in place to give officers clear guidance and boundaries on the use of these powers.

The evidence we have received shows that a year allowed under Class A Local Exception to renew a property is no longer sufficient, with many taxpayers in situations where the Council Tax Premium is payable before they can move into the property. This in turn puts additional financial pressure on the taxpayers on top of the significant costs they have in renovating the property. As a result, the Policy allows an additional 12 months exemption to the premium for owners seeking access to their primary or sole home.

A second home is defined by the Act as a property that is not a primary home for anyone, but has been furnished, and does not contain any provision to be able to discriminate on the basis of where the owner lives, or if it is used for holiday purposes. Although we have received a number of complaints from second home taxpayers, the Council is not in a position to allow discretionary exemptions from the Premium to a wide cohort of properties without undermining the reason for introducing the Premium in the first place. So on this basis, the policy does not offer a specific exemption for second homes, but it does allow anyone to apply for an exemption or reduction from the Premium if they can demonstrate why their situation is truly exceptional, and that the setting of the Premium contravenes Government guidance on setting the Premium. The evidence we have shows that the number of taxpayers objecting to the premium, are taxpayers who have not met the criteria in Section 66 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 of 252/182 days and have therefore transferred from the non-domestic rates list where taxes were not payable, to the Council Tax band where they are required to pay the basic council tax and 150% of the council tax premium. This in itself is not sufficient for a case to be exceptional.

The evidence we have also states the need to assess the unique situations of Community Enterprises and the impact that Council Tax Premium has on them to operate successfully. The policy recognises this and gives them the opportunity to bring their individual cases to the panel for consideration.

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

No, there are no gaps in the evidence.

3) Identifying the Impact

3.1 The Council must give due regard to the effect any changes will have on people with the equality characteristics noted below. What impact will the new policy/service or the proposed changes in the policy or service have on people with these characteristics?

Characteristics	What type of impact?*	In what way? What is the evidence?
Race (including nationality)	Positive	The policy is intended to provide support to residents facing exceptional financial hardship or unusual circumstances and the impact is positive on this cohort.
	Negative	The policy does not allow optional exemptions from the Premium for second homes, but recognises that it needs to be reviewed regularly to coincide with a change in legislation. The policy may affect people from outside Gwynedd and some respondents to the public consultation on the Council Tax Premium claimed that the Premium would be racist as it targeted people from outside Wales. However, there is no consideration of the race of the property owners when a premium is charged on second homes and long-term vacant properties. The Premium is charged on all second homes and long-term vacant properties without discrimination in any way on where the owners live or what their race or nationality is. However, we recognise that the public consultation shows that a significant proportion of second home owners identify themselves as English and therefore it is likely that the policy will have a negative financial impact on this cohort. However, the policy allows anyone to apply for an exemption or reduction from the Premium if they are able to demonstrate why their situation is truly exceptional.
Disability	Positive	There is a small possibility of differentiation indirectly on the grounds of disability if a disabled person keeps an adapted property in Gwynedd as they cannot have a holiday elsewhere. However, the policy allows anyone to apply for an exemption or reduction from the Premium if they are able to demonstrate why their situation is truly exceptional.

Sex	None	No impact has been identified
Age	Positive	The policy applies to residents who are facing exceptional financial hardship or unusual circumstances and residents who are in this type of circumstances may fall into all of the age categories. Therefore, the policy can have a positive impact on people of all ages in our communities. The policy offers a year's extra exemption from Council tax and the Premium for first-time buyers to carry out vital restoration work – this is likely to have a positive impact most often on the young people of our society. Also, by giving owners seeking access to their main or only home an additional year of exemption from the Premium it extends the support to people of all ages in our communities.
Sexual orientation	None	No impact has been identified
Religion or belief (or non-belief)	None	No impact has been identified
Gender reassignment	None	No impact has been identified
Pregnancy and maternity	None	No impact has been identified
Marriage and civil partnership	None	No impact has been identified
The Welsh language	Positive	The "Empty Property Local Exemptions" section of the policy provides an additional 12 month exemption from Council Tax and Premium (first time buyers) and a 12 month exemption from the Premium only (owners seeking access to their prospective main or sole home) where a significant renovation is carried out to the property. The policy therefore gives families living in Gwynedd the right to receive these exemptions and assists local families to stay in the area and renovate housing.
Socio-Economic Disadvantage	Positive	In establishing the Council Tax Premium in Gwynedd, the principle that the Council was eager for residents to have homes in their own communities was emphasised, in order to ensure thriving communities. It was added that housing was a priority and that it was a requirement to ensure

		additional resources in order to implement the Housing Strategy. The Council Tax Reduction Policy offers support to those facing financial hardship as well as other groups of the community including vulnerable ones.

3.2 The Council has a duty under the 2010 Equality Act to contribute positively to a fairer society by promoting equality and good relations in its activities regarding the following characteristics – age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, race, gender reassignment, 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	No	
Promoting equal opportunities	Yes	Promote equal opportunities by identifying and defining a specific cohort of taxpayers or properties eligible for a reduction in Council Tax (or Premium). It can provide support to vulnerable groups within our communities including groups suffering from financial hardship or exceptional circumstances.
Encouraging good relationships	Yes	The policy can promote good relationships with Gwynedd taxpayers by reducing Council Tax for individuals experiencing financial hardship or those in unexpected or exceptional circumstances. It can also allow exemptions from the Council Tax Premium in addition to statutory exemptions set out in legislation.

3.3 How does your proposal ensure that you work in accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011), to ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than English and that you seize every opportunity to promote the Welsh language (beyond providing services bilingually) and increase opportunities to use and learn the language in the community?

As set out in 3.1 above, it will have a positive impact on our communities as it entitles families living in Gwynedd to receive Council Tax and Premium exemptions and therefore assists local families to stay in the area and renovate housing.

3.4 What other measures or changes could you include to strengthen or change the policy / practice in order to have a positive impact on people's opportunities to use the Welsh language, and to reduce or prevent any adverse effects that the policy / practice may have on the Welsh language?

This is a taxation policy, and we believe that the current policy goes to the best of our legal and statutory ability in that regard in terms of having a positive impact on the language.

3.5 How does the proposal show that you have had due regard to the need to address inequality caused by socio-economic disadvantage? (Note that this is about closing inequality gaps rather than just improving outcomes for everyone)?

The policy covers a number of different cases that will affect a range of residents in our society:-

- Individuals experiencing temporary financial hardship.
- Vulnerable groups.
- Cases where the liability to pay Council Tax and Premium arises due to unforeseen or exceptional events.

It also specifically refers to first-time buyers, owners seeking access to their prospective primary or sole home, foster carers and community enterprises.

3.6 What other measures or changes might you include to strengthen or change the policy / practice to show that you have had due regard to the need to reduce disproportionate outcomes as a result of socio-economic disadvantage, in accordance with the Socio-Economic Act?

We believe that the policy already shows a total commitment to giving due regard to the need to reduce unequal outcomes as a result of socio-economic disadvantage and that other measures or changes are not needed.

4) Analysing the Results

4.1 Is the policy therefore likely to have a significant, positive impact on any of the above and what is the reason for this?

Residents facing exceptional financial hardship or unusual circumstances will fall into all of the age categories, so the policy is having a positive impact on people of all ages in our communities. The "Local Empty Property Exemptions" part of the policy applies to first time buyers and to property owners seeking access to their prospective main or sole home and therefore gives families living in Gwynedd the right to receive exemptions assisting local families to stay in the area and renovate housing.

4.2 Is the policy therefore likely to have a significant, negative impact on any of the above and what is the reason for this?

No, while the policy does not allow optional exemptions from the Premium for second homes, it recognises that it needs to be reviewed regularly to coincide with a change in legislation. It also allows anyone to apply for an exemption or reduction from the Premium if they can demonstrate why their situation is truly exceptional.

4.3 What should be done?

Choose one of the following:

Continue with the policy / service as it is robust	
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	✓
No further action at this time because it is too soon to decide, or there is insufficient evidence	

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

• Accessible forms (Braille, large print, simple language). • Phone line support. • Reference to Citizens Advice. • Train staff on the policy including awareness of protected needs.

- A Panel consisting of the Cabinet Member for Finance, Head of Finance / Assistant Head of Finance and the Tax Manager will consider individual applications for reductions under Section 13A.

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

5) Monitoring

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

- Collect data on applications by protected characteristics where possible.
- Monitor the impact and complaints.
- Review the policy annually.

CYNGOR GWYNEDD –Report to Cyngor Gwynedd's Cabinet

Subject:	**Savings Overview:** **Progress Report on Realising Savings Schemes**
Cabinet Member:	**Councillor Huw Wyn Jones, Cabinet Member for Finance**
Contact officer:	**Ffion Madog Evans, Assistant Head of Finance - Accounting and Pensions**
Date:	**11 November 2025**

1. The decision sought

1.1 To accept the information in the report and to note the progress towards realising the savings schemes for 2025/26 and previous years.

1.2 Approve the deletion of one savings scheme worth £25k relevant to 2025/26 in the Customer Contact area of the Corporate Services Department, using the savings provision set aside in the corporate budget.

1.3 Approve bridging funds of £80k per year for a period of two years for 2025/26 and 2026/27 to the Neuadd Dwyfor savings scheme in the Economy and Community Department.

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

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

3. Introduction and Rationale

Background / Introduction

3.1 This report provides an overview of the Council's savings' situation for 2025/26 and previous years following a review of the situation at the end of August 2025.

3.2 In the 2025/26 Budget report to the Full Council on 6 March 2025, it was reported that savings of £3.5 million had been profiled for the 2025/26 budget. Savings to the value of £100k was approved in Cabinet on 11 February 2025, whilst the £3.4 million are savings schemes that have been approved in previous years but are related to 2025/26.

4. Rationale and justification for recommending the decision

The Council has financial planning arrangements in place which have already identified significant efficiency savings over recent years to minimise service cuts to the residents of Gwynedd.

5. Historical Departmental Savings Schemes 2015/16 – 2025/26

5.1 **Appendix 1** summarises each department's achievement against their savings target of £34.4m based on the August 2025 review. **It can be reported that £33.8m worth, or 98% of these schemes have been realised**, but the risk of realising some of the savings' schemes remains.

5.2 Three schemes from the Adults, Health and Wellbeing Department, worth £399k and one scheme worth £20k from the Economy and Community Department face risks to deliver, see part 8 of the report for further details.

5.3 Five remaining schemes worth a total of £209k have slipped but the departments do not foresee a problem realising them.

6. Departmental Savings Schemes 2023/24 – 2025/26

6.1 **Appendix 2** summarises each department's achievement against the savings target set for them, **totalling over £15m** based on the August 2025 review. **It can be reported that over £12m, or 77% of these schemes have already been realised, with a further £659k or 4% on track to deliver fully and in a timely manner.**

6.2 There are significant risks to the realisation of one scheme worth £50k in the Older People's Homes area in the Adults, Health and Well-being Department and the department is looking at how they can deliver it.

6.3 It is currently anticipated that there are some risks of realising £2.3m of savings schemes which include three schemes from the Education Department (£66k), five schemes from the Environment Department (£1,018k), five from the Adults, Health and Wellbeing Department (£835k), two from the Highways and Engineering Department (£321k) and one scheme from the Housing and Property Department (£95k).

6.4 There is a slippage on some schemes totalling £90k which were profiled to be realised in 2023/24 and some delay in realising schemes worth £469k related to 2024/25, but the departments do not anticipate problems to realise them, of this amount almost half or £243k is relevant to the Environment Department. There is a delay on one scheme related to 2025/26 worth £20k.

7. Departmental Savings Schemes 2026/27 onwards

7.1 Current savings from 2026/27 onwards, worth £681k per Department, are listed in **Appendix 3**, it is premature to report on the status of these schemes at this time.

7.2 A Medium-Term Financial Plan has already been submitted to Cabinet on 16 September 2025 which considers the financial gap for 2026/27 and the intention to respond to the financial situation facing us as a Council to set a balanced budget in 2026/27.

8. Savings realisation review

8.1 As a result of the risk of not being able to realise the savings of the Neuadd Dwyfor scheme of the Economy and Community Department, a request was made to reduce the income target from £100k to £20k on a temporary basis for 2025/26 and 2026/27, to allow time to identify opportunities to implement. £80k a year for a period of two years will be bridged from the Council's Savings Provision.

8.2 A request has been received from the Corporate Services Department to delete one savings scheme in the Customer Contact area for reviewing the opening hours of Siop Gwynedd in the three main offices, which is worth £25k and applies to 2025/26. It is suggested that the saving is removed using the savings provision set aside in the corporate budget.

9. Conclusion

9.1 It can be reported that a total of £46 million of savings have been realised since 2015/16, which is 92% of the required £50 million over the period. It is inevitable that realising the savings has been challenging and I am grateful to all the departments and Cabinet Members for ensuring this success.

9.2 The table below summarises the latest position of the savings schemes since April 2015 with 92% of all schemes realised.

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

Status of Savings	**Portal**	**£m**	**%**
Have realised	1	45.8	91.5
On track to achieve savings in full and on time	2	0.6	1.3
Delay, but moving forward	3	0.8	1.6
Some risks to achieve - slip or fail	4	2.4	4.7
Significant risks to realise in full or partially	5	0.4	0.9
Total savings		**50.0**	**100**

9.3 I therefore ask the Cabinet to note the achievement outlined in this report towards realising the savings schemes. In addition, delete one savings scheme worth £25k related to 2025/26 and bridge £80k from the Council's Savings Provision for a period of two years.

10. Next steps and timetable

10.1 Act on the recommendations stated in this report and submit a follow-up report to the Cabinet following a review of the situation at the end of November 2025.

11. View of the Statutory Officers

11.1 Head of Finance

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

11.2 Monitoring Officer

No observations to add in relation to propriety.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Overview of Historical Savings Schemes 2015/16 - 2025/26 per Department
Appendix 2 - Overview of Savings Schemes 2023/24 - 2025/26 per Department
Appendix 3 - Overview of Historical Savings Schemes 2026/27 onwards per Department

APPENDIX 1

OVERVIEW OF HISTORICAL SAVINGS SCHEMES FOR 2015/16 TO 2025/26 PER DEPARTMENT

TABLE 1
SCHEMES THAT HAVE REALISED

Department	Total Savings 2015/16 to 2025/26 £	Schemes that have realised £	Percentage of schemes that have realised
Education	1,659,740	1,659,740	100%
Schools	4,331,620	4,331,620	100%
Environment	2,972,463	2,922,463	98%
Corporate Services	2,569,218	2,569,218	100%
Finance	1,881,636	1,881,636	100%
Economy and Community	2,916,422	2,851,422	98%
Adults, Health and Well-being	6,794,981	6,317,451	93%
Children and Supporting Families	2,318,908	2,318,908	100%
Highways, Engineering and Gwynedd Consultancy	6,531,580	6,496,580	99%
Corporate Management Team and Legal	403,240	403,240	100%
Housing and Property	843,230	843,230	100%
Sub-total	**33,223,038**	**32,595,508**	98%
Managerial Savings	1,200,360	1,200,360	100%
TOTAL	**34,423,398**	**33,795,868**	98%

TABLE 2

SCHEMES YET TO BE REALISED

Adran	2019/20 £	2020/21 £	2021/22 £	2022/23 £	2023/24 £	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	Total £
Environment			37,500	12,500				50,000
Economy and Community		45,000					20,000	65,000
Adults, Health and Well-being	215,600	49,360			12,570		200,000	477,530
Highways, Engineering and Gwynedd Consultancy		8,750	26,250					35,000
TOTAL	**215,600**	**103,110**	**63,750**	**12,500**	**12,570**	**0**	**220,000**	**627,530**

Department	Head of Finance's comments
Environment *(1 scheme)*	There has been a slippage on one scheme which is To provide electric car charging points in car parks (£50k).
Economy and Community *(2 schemes)*	There has been a delay on the scheme *To establish parking fees on Dinas Dinlle beach and to increase launch fees across Gwynedd beaches from £10 to £15* (£45k), it is intended that permanent arrangements to raise parking fees will become operational during 2026/27. Due to the risk of not being able to implement the savings of the Neuadd Dwyfor scheme, it was decided to reduce the income target from £100k to £20k for 2025/26 and 2026/27, in order to give time to identify opportunities to implement. The latest monitoring suggests that things are looking more promising with an increase in related income.
Adults, Health and Well-being *(5 schemes)*	There are significant risks of achieving savings of £200k on the *Development plan for 3 other Extra Care Housing projects in Gwynedd (Pwllheli Area, Ffestiniog, De Meirionnydd)* scheme. In addition there are some risks in achieving the savings of the *Review the operating arrangements within the Adults Department* scheme (£13k). There has been a slippage on 2 schemes namely R*estructuring the Business Service reducing support for teams within the Department and the Children's Department* (£49k) and *Increasing income and reducing other costs* which have a balance of £30k but the Department does not anticipate problems realising them.
Highways, Engineering and Gwynedd Consultancy *(1 scheme)*	The Barmouth Bridge scheme - not paying Network Rail for the right of way over the bridge (£35k) has slipped but the department is still in discussions with Network Rail.

APPENDIX 2

OVERVIEW OF NEW SAVINGS SCHEMES FROM 2023/24 TO 2025/26 PER DEPARTMENT

Department	Total of new savings from 2023/24 to 2025/26		Realised Schemes		Schemes on track to be completed on time		Schemes slipping and schemes with some risks of achieving the savings		Head of Finance's comments
	£	*number*	£	*number*	£	*number*	£	*number*	
Education	1,456,510	*34*	1,390,770	*31*	-		65,740	*3*	The department anticipates some risks of realising the savings of 3 schemes (2 profiled in 2024/25) namely *Transfer of Maesgeirchen Youth Center to Maes NI Community Hub* (£25k), *Cut 25% of the Key Stage 4 Behaviour hubs' budget* (£18k) and *Delete one level 3 assistant post in the Inclusion Team* (£23k).
Schools	1,966,100	*1*	1,966,100	*1*	-		-		The one scheme of the period has been achieved.
Environment	2,147,380	*36*	617,880	*23*	250,000	*3*	1,279,500	*10*	The department anticipates some risks of realising the savings of 5 schemes worth a total of £1,018k including *Rationalisation of departmental support arrangements* (£150k), *savings in Waste services* (£200k) and *Commercial Waste services* (£430k), *Parking and Streetworks - Extending Parking Enforcement Hours at Council Short Stay Car Parks* (£78k) and *Parking and Streetworks - Adjustment to Band 2 Long Stay Fee Structure* (£160k). There is a slippage/delay on 5 schemes worth a total of £262k but they are moving forward and scheme on track to deliver in a timely manner.
Corporate Services	711,410	*25*	558,410	*21*	153,000	*4*	-		There are 4 schemes on track to realise in a timely manner.
Finance	977,640	*22*	757,030	*17*	90,000	*2*	130,610	*3*	There has been a slippage on 3 schemes but the department does not anticipate risks of realising them.
Economy and Community	648,780	*41*	623,780	*40*	25,000	*1*	-		Cwmni Byw'n Iach has 1 scheme on track to deliver in a timely manner.
Adults, Health and Well-being	2,498,770	*27*	1,482,850	*18*	50,680	*2* *	965,240	*7* *	The Department anticipates risks to realise savings of 6 schemes worth a total of £884k which includes the *Residential and Nursing Homes plans: Helping 20 individuals to continue living in the community (rather than a residential care home) over time* (£100k), 4 schemes in the area of *Learning Disabilities* (£734k in total) and *Older People's Homes: Looking at arrangements for preparing second choice meals in care homes* (£50k). There was a slippage from 2024/25 on 1 scheme and partly on 2, worth a total of £81k.
Children and Supporting Families	308,140	*8*	238,140	*6*	70,000	*2*	-		£70k on track to realise in a timely manner.

Highways, Engineering and Consultancy	1,558,940	*22*	1,131,940	*18*	-		427,000	*4*	The department anticipates risks of realising 2 scheme namely *Restructuring the Highways Service (£250k)* and *Reducing resources by combining the Ground Maintenance Service with the Street Scene service scheme* (£71k). There was a slippage from 2024/25 relating to 2 schemes namely *Improving the efficiency/rationalisation of highway depot sites* (£60k) and *Changing the upland/frequency/vertical cutting order and the time between the growing season* (£46k).
Corporate Management Team and Legal	161,190	*8*	161,190	*8*	-		-		The one scheme of the period has been achieved.
Housing and Property	780,350	*14*	664,850	*12*	20,000	*1*	95,500	*1*	There are some risks of delivering £95.5k of savings on the *Reducing our office space due to new ways of working* scheme, and 1 scheme on track to realise in a timely manner.
Managerial Savings	2,400,000	*1*	2,400,000	*1*	-		-		The one scheme of the period has been achieved.
TOTAL	**15,615,210**	***239***	**11,992,940**	***196***	**658,680**	***15***	**2,963,590**	***28***	**In financial terms (£), 77% of the new 2023/24 to 2025/26 savings schemes have already been realised and a further 4% are on track to be delivered on time by the end of the financial year.**

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

APPENDIX 3

OVERVIEW OF SAVINGS SCHEMES 2026/27 ONWARDS PER DEPARTMENT

Department	**2026/27**	**2027/28**	**Total 2026/27 and 2027/28 Savings**	
	£	**£**	**£ - *number***	
Education	98,500	98,500	197,000	*1*
Environment	200,000	-	200,000	*1*
Corporate Services	50,000	-	50,000	*1*
Adults, Health and Well-being	143,090	-	143,090	*2*
Highways, Engineering and Consultancy	91,000	-	91,000	*1*
TOTAL	**582,590**	**98,500**	**681,090**	***6***

CYNGOR GWYNEDD - Report to Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet

Title of item:	Revenue Budget 2025/26 – End of August 2025 Review
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Huw Wyn Jones, Cabinet Member - Finance
Relevant officer:	Ffion Madog Evans, Assistant Head of Finance Department - Accountancy and Pensions
Date of meeting:	11 November 2025

1. Decision sought

That the Cabinet:

1.1 Approve additional financial support above the contractual payment projected to be £219k to Cwmni Byw'n Iach to be funded from the transformation fund, delegating the right to the Cabinet Member for Economy in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, the Chief Executive and the Head of Finance to agree on the amount of the final financial support above the contractual payment to Byw'n Iach at the end of the financial year.

1.2 Ask the Head of Finance and Head of Environment to submit a further report on the possible options for funding the costs of making safe/demolishing the Corbett Arms building in Tywyn.

1.3 Approve the transfer of £3.757 million of underspend on corporate budgets to the Council's Financial Strategy Reserve, with its use to be considered before the end of the current financial year.

1.4 Approve the financial virements as outlined in **Appendix 3** following a review of the funds, removing £576k worth of negative balances from the funds of the Adults, Health and Well-being Department (£300k) and the Children and Supporting Families Department (£276k), following the departments' overspending for three consecutive years.

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

2.1 The purpose of this report seeks to provide a trajectory of the revenue position by the end of the financial year. Therefore, the amounts noted below is an estimate of what we are projecting by March 2026, and they are not amounts that represent the current overspend position.

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

3. Introduction and Rationale

Background / Introduction

3.1 The end of August report is submitted on the latest review of the Council's revenue budget for 2025/26, and a summary of the situation per Department is outlined in **Appendix 1**. The current projections suggest that five of the departments will have budget deficits by the end of the year. The main deficit is anticipated in:

- Adults, Health and Well-being - Domiciliary Care and Residential Homes
- Environment Department - Waste
- Children and Families Department - out-of-county placements, Derwen and Post-16
- Housing and Property Department - Homelessness
- Highways, Engineering and YGC Department - less income than expected on the highways side

3.2 Below, and in **Appendix 2,** further details are provided relating to the main issues and headings where a budget deficit is projected, as well as specific recommendations, where appropriate.

4. The reasoning and justification for recommending the decision

The Savings Situation

4.1 In the 2025/26 Budget report to the Full Council on 6 March 2025, it was reported that £3.5 million worth of savings were profiled for the 2025/26 budget. The budgets have been reduced by this amount; therefore, the situation is reported upon after consideration of the savings.

4.2 In recent years, we have reported on risks in achieving savings. In terms of the remaining schemes, there are risks to the delivery of some of the schemes.

4.3 The latest situation in terms of savings is that almost £46 million, namely 92% of the amended savings schemes since 2015, have now been realised.

5. Council Departments

5.1 Adults, Health and Well-being Department

There is a mixed situation for the 2025/26 budget, with over £3 million in additional permanent funding allocated to the Department, whilst the budget at the same time was reduced by cuts of over £1m this year, as well as £500k of historical savings removed from the budget but not realised to date (total savings of £1.5m). Nevertheless, the latest projections suggest that if no operational changes are made during this year, then the budget deficit will be £3.1m by the end of the financial year.

The demand for residential services increased, with 29 additional residents in private homes, partly due to staffing challenges at internal residential homes, which has led to a reduction in the beds available, leading to substantial cost increases. There has been an unexpected and unusual increase in the number (12 since November 2024), of individuals requiring residential care due to mental health issues, and this adds to the demand.

In addition, there was a significant increase in the costs of residential homes due to the increase in national insurance costs to the care providers. Likewise, the domiciliary care provision is seen to be costing more than the budget, and this shows the additional cost of the effort made to provide care in areas where a service is not readily available. The internal domiciliary care service saw additional costs of around three-quarters of a million because of the recent increase in sickness rates. The Department is committed to reduce these costs, and the subsequent overspend, during this year.

5.2 Children and Families Department

An increase was seen in the Department's budget for 2025/26 of £2.175 million. There are many additional cases where individuals require specialist care outside the county, and this care is expensive; an increase is also seen in the care provision for children with disabilities in the county by means of Derwen and Hafan y Sêr services, and consequently, it is anticipated that there will be a budget deficit of approximately £1.5 million by the end of the financial year unless there will be a change in what is provided during the year.

5.3 Education Department

An underspend of (£20k) is anticipated by the Education Department. Following substantial overspend on school transport over the last few years, the field received an additional budget allocation of £896k on a permanent basis and a further £939k for the year only, to address the pressures in the field of school buses and taxis. There has been an improvement in the field of transport and, therefore, it is possible to reduce the one-off contribution to £639k based on the latest projections.

5.4 Byw'n Iach

Over the past few years, Cwmni Byw'n Iach has received financial support from the Council which was £550k in 2022/23, £308k in 2023/24 and £281k in 2024/25, which was above the contractual payment in the delivery contract, to enable them to maintain their services. It is projected that the demand for financial support continues in 2025/26 with the required amount being £219k by the end of the year. We will be holding further discussions with the company before establishing whether it is appropriate for the Council to provide financial support again this year.

5.5 Highways, Engineering and YGC Department

A budget deficit of £522k is anticipated by the Department by the end of the year. A reduction was seen in the work being commissioned by external agencies which is having a negative impact on the income of the highway services. The department is prudent when attempting to project the spending arising when responding to storms and inclement weather. Spending on the inclement weather response is a part of the Department's annual operations now, and efforts are made to cope with the spending by means of programmed work initially, but over the last 3 years, the response has been above the programmed and has led to an overspend. In the Municipal service, a combination of factors, including additional pressure on the staff budgets of street cleaning and cleaning public toilets. While income losses are issues for land maintenance and public toilets.

5.6 The Environment Department

A budget deficit of £740k is anticipated by the Department by the end of the year. The annual trend of overspending in the waste field continues and is responsible for £662k of the overspend. The Department has many plans in progress to address this overspending. At one time, the overspend was £1.4m, therefore, a lot has been achieved over the past two years. To achieve the last step, there will be a need to complete a restructure of the waste Service, followed by further operational changes.

Furthermore, after Cyngor Gwynedd achieved a 65.3% rate for recycling in 2024/25 which is below the Welsh Government's 70% recycling target, this means that the Council is facing a £612k fine subject to an assessment against various criteria from the Government. However, as we have a formal plan in place to seek to address and meet the national target, and that we are working closely with the Welsh Government on that, we believe that the risk of forcing the fine on us is low and therefore we have not included this amount in the trajectory for the end of the year.

£3.7m of new income was received which derives from a levy on packaging for producers and retailers, to promote recycling by the companies who create this waste. The purpose of the income is the ability to invest in our recycling infrastructure, although technically it

is not restricted to this only. For this year, we will need to use the first proportion of this income to meet any deficit in the waste service's revenue budget before transferring the rest to a reserve for the time being.

We will also need to consider how to fund the costs of making safe and/or demolishing the Corbett Arms Hotel building in Tywyn over the coming weeks. It is a Grade II listed building, which has been causing concern to Cyngor Gwynedd and the local community for years as it is in a structurally dangerous condition, which has meant that the Council has had to act to protect and safeguard the public. The final cost could be somewhere between £1m and £1.5m. The Department cannot cope with such one-off expenditure without notice within their usual revenue budget and therefore a separate report will be needed in due course to consider what other options we have to address this cost.

5.7 Housing and Property

The trend of significant pressure on the emergency accommodation service continues, with expenditure on the field forecast to be £6.7 million this year, compared to £6 million last year. The reported financial situation considers an additional budget of £3m allocated from the council tax premium and a one-off additional budget allocated as part of the bids procedure to assist with the increasing pressures. It is anticipated that the department will overspend £167k, which is a combination of higher costs to move and store the personal property who receive emergency accommodation; an increase in the number of individuals who present themselves as homeless and in need of accommodation; and an increase in the price per night for emergency accommodation by some providers.

5.8 Corporate

An underspend of £3.8 million on corporate headings because of added tax yield and prudent projections when setting the 2025/26 budget. Following recent confirmation for the 2025/26 national pay settlement, the settlement was lower than what we provided in our budget for 25/26 and in addition, we received a grant towards teacher pay. After the Welsh Government's delay in confirming its contribution towards the additional costs of councils' national insurance until the summer, the Council received a grant that was higher than what was originally expected.

5.9 Funds

Funds were reviewed as outlined in **Appendix 3**, following the Adults, Health and Well-being Department and the Children and Families Department's overspend for three consecutive years, which means that their departmental funds have negative balances worth £576k. It is suggested that the balance is removed to allow the departments to focus on the 2025/26 challenges.

6. Conclusion

6.1 A spending position of £2.5 million more than the budget is projected by the end of the financial year to continue to meet the increasing demand for services for the rest of the year, based on the information that we currently have. This figure is based on a budget deficit of £6.3 million at the end of the year by the departments, with the impact being mitigated by the fact that there will be a likely underspend of £3.8 million on corporate budgets.

7. Next steps and timetable

7.1 Act on the recommendations submitted and submit a follow-up report to the Cabinet on 20 January 2026 following a review of the situation at the end of November.

8. Observations of the Statutory Officers

8.1 Chief Finance Officer

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

8.2 Monitoring Officer

No comments to add in terms of propriety.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Summary of departmental budgets' net positions

Appendix 2 - Details of budgets and the significant variances

Appendix 3 - Review of Reserves

Revenue Budget 2025/26 - Summary of the position per Department

	End of August Review			
	2025/26 Proposed Budget	Gross Estimated Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26	Recommended Adjustments	Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Adults, Health and Well-being	84,181	3,133	0	3,133
Children and Families	26,548	1,561	0	1,561
Business Service and Care Commissioning	3,163	(93)	0	(93)
Education	125,492	(20)	0	(20)
Economy and Community	6,307	296	(219)	77
Highways, Engineering and YGC	19,037	522	0	522
Environment	18,952	740	0	740
Housing and Property	12,389	167	0	167
Corporate Management Team and Legal	2,937	(21)	0	(21)
Corporate Support	8,473	(6)	0	(6)
Finance (and Information Technology)	9,361	(8)	0	(8)
Corporate Budgets (Differences only)	*	(3,757)	3,757	0
Totals (net)	326,201	2,514	3,538	6,052

REVENUE BUDGET 2025/26- END OF AUGUST REVIEW

Adults, Health and Well-being Department	2025/26 Proposed Budget	2025/26 Estimated Position	**Estimated Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26**	Use of Other Sources or Other Adjustments Recommended	**Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26**	Net Over / (Under) Spend Final Position 2024/25
Area:-	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Adults Services						
Management	598	536	(62)		(62)	(114)
Learning Disabilities Services	31,213	31,402	189		189	(92)
Mental Health Services	6,076	6,636	560		560	(218)
Older People's Services						
Residential and Nursing - Homes	24,516	25,428	912		912	(750)
Domiciliary Care	11,700	13,258	1,558		1,558	2,125
Physical Disabilities Services	3,653	2,581	(1,072)		(1,072)	(1,214)
Direct Payments	2,194	2,011	(183)		(183)	(433)
Others	3,057	3,147	90		90	408
	45,120	46,425	1,305	0	1,305	136
Adults Services Total	**83,007**	**84,999**	**1,992**	**0**	**1,992**	**(288)**
Provider Services (shows net budget)						
Residential Care	26	1,073	1,047		1,047	504
Community Care	1,147	1,251	104		104	614
Others	1	(9)	(10)		(10)	27
Provider Services Total	**1,174**	**2,315**	**1,141**	**0**	**1,141**	**1,145**
Closure of 2024/25 Accounts Adaption					**0**	**(757)**
Adults, Health and Well-being Total	**84,181**	**87,314**	**3,133**	**0**	**3,133**	**100**

Adults, Health and Well-being

Over £3.1 million in additional permanent funding was allocated to the Department for the 2025/26 budget onwards. Nevertheless, it is projected that there will be a departmental budget deficit of £3.1 million by the end of the financial year.

Department Management - underspend on the legal and staff turnover budgets.

Learning Disability - although the service received an additional budget allocation of £400k in 2025/26, the new savings schemes to the value of £735k are not being realised and therefore lead to an overspend. Pressure on supported accommodation and on the residential services in Council homes. The work of reviewing care packages continues and is bearing fruit.

Mental Health - although £177k of additional funding has been allocated to this field for 2025/26, a budgetary deficit of £693k is projected for the residential and nursing element following an unexpected and unusual increase with seven new cases during this financial year (12 since November 2024). The support plans and supported accommodation are underspending and so reduce the overspend reported.

Older People - £1.5 million in additional permanent funding was allocated to the Department for 2025/26, with £1.2 million of it allocated to Domiciliary Care. Nevertheless, an overspend of £1.3 million is projected by the end of the year. In residential and nursing, the demand on residential care increased with 29 additional residents in external residential homes, partly due to staffing challenges in internal residential homes resulting in fewer beds being available, thus increasing the cost. In domiciliary care, the costs are forecasted to exceed the budget by £1.6 million due to the additional costs relating to the provision of services in areas where services are not readily available. In the physical disabilities field, the reduced demand for domiciliary care continues. In 'Others', savings schemes are yet to be realised.

Provider Services - staff overspend in residential care including £755k of an overspend on the use of agency staff. An additional budget of £1 million has been permanently invested in domiciliary care in 2025/26 and therefore there is a reduction in the overspend reported this year; nevertheless, staff costs are above the budget, with high levels of sickness and rates of non-contact hours.

Savings - in terms of the situation of realising savings for the department, although progress has been seen in realising savings, savings to the value of £1.5 million are yet to be realised.

REVENUE BUDGET 2025/26- END OF AUGUST REVIEW

Children and Families Department	2025/26 Proposed Budget	2025/26 Estimated Position	**Estimated Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26**	Use of Other Sources or Other Adjustments Recommended	**Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26**	Net Over / (Under) Spend Final Position 2024/25
Area:-	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Management	708	825	117		117	(3)
Operational	3,075	3,450	375		375	433
Placements						
Out-of-County Placements	6,930	7,339	409		409	2,107
Small Group Homes	196	208	12		12	28
Fostering through an Agency	1,755	1,523	(232)		(232)	(427)
Fostering - Internal	3,120	3,138	18		18	(201)
Support Services and Others	2,211	2,429	218		218	427
	14,212	14,637	425	0	425	1,934
Post-16	1,779	2,008	229		229	273
Derwen Service	3,662	4,177	515		515	1,235
Youth Justice	274	269	(5)		(5)	(41)
Early Years	156	(15)	(171)		(171)	(119)
Workforce Development Unit	311	311	0		0	0
Others	2,371	2,447	76		76	93
Closure of 2024/25 Accounts Adaption			0		0	(3,705)
Children and Families Total	**26,548**	**28,109**	**1,561**	**0**	**1,561**	**100**

Children and Families

£2.175 million of additional permanent funding was allocated to the Department for the 2025/26 budget. Nevertheless, a budgetary deficit of £1.5 million is forecasted by the department by the end of the financial year.

Management - one-off additional staffing costs.

Operational - although a permanent additional resource to the value of £365k has been allocated to the field for 2025/26 onwards, the overspend trend continues as a result of substantial pressure on support plan support as well as field worker staffing above the budget.

Placements - although an increase has been seen in the average number of out-of-county placements again this year to 37 (34.3 in 2024/25, 25.7 in 2022/23), as three exceptional cases in non-registered placements have already ended this year, with a further three to end by the end of October, this means that the costs have reduced substantially as they cost £675k each on average. The average cost of other placements reduced to £205k compared with 2024/25.

The average numbers of Agency Fostering and In-house Fostering are consistent with the numbers for 2024/25. It was seen that the income from the Home Office has reduced for unaccompanied asylum seekers (without parents/guardians) who are receiving a service. In the support service and others, there is increasing pressure on the budget of the support workers and on the North Wales Adoption Service.

Small Group Homes - the homes are currently being established in Gwynedd with one home now operational, and the second in the autumn and the third in February. This in-house provision means that children can be placed in-house instead of with out-of-county external providers. The Council received grants to establish the homes as well as a contribution towards the costs of running the homes this year.

Post 16 - additional pressures on the service including the over 18s asylum seeker element as the Home Office's contribution is not sufficient to cover the costs. Staffing above the social worker budget also contributes to the overspending.

Derwen - to respond to the overspending trend, Derwen received an additional permanent resource allocation of £1 million for the 2025/26 budget. Nevertheless, the projected overspend is £515k, with pressures on support plan workers and specialist support.

Early Years - staff turnover and increasing grants available to fund the core spending led to an underspend.

Others - many factors including overspending on staffing, specialist service fees and on the out-of-hours service.

REVENUE BUDGET 2025/26- END OF AUGUST REVIEW

Business and Care Commissioning Service	2025/26 Proposed Budget	2025/26 Estimated Position	**Estimated Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26**	Use of Other Sources or Other Adjustments Recommended	**Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26**	Net Over / (Under) Spend Final Position 2024/25
Area:-	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Support and Commissioning	1,328	1,328	0		0	(77)
Income and Finance	1,556	1,492	(64)		(64)	83
Preventative Services	279	250	(29)		(29)	(21)
Closure of 2024/25 Accounts Adaption - underspend not carried forward			0		0	15
Business and Care Commissioning Service Total	**3,163**	**3,070**	**(93)**	**0**	**(93)**	**0**

Business and Care Commissioning Service

Support and Commissioning - staffing above the budget on the Carers Plan being counterbalanced by reducing spending on the professional service budget and grant receipts in the Development Unit.

Income and Finance - grant receipt towards staff time associated with the work to implement care cases software across North Wales is the main reason for the projected underspend.

Preventative Service - receipt of an additional grant for preventive services which means there is an underspend at the end of the financial year.

REVENUE BUDGET 2025/26- END OF AUGUST REVIEW

Education Department	2025/26 Proposed Budget	2025/26 Estimated Position	**Estimated Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26**	Use of Other Sources or Other Adjustments Recommended	**Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26**	Net Over / (Under) Spend Final Position 2024/25
Area:-	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Leadership and Management	2,516	2,564	48		48	33
Devolved Schools	105,017	105,017	0		0	0
Gwasanaethau Ansawdd Ysgolion	(2,205)	(2,226)	(21)		(21)	(43)
Infrastructure and Support Services						
Transportation	8,380	8,380	0		0	0
Ancillary Services	1,087	1,000	(87)		(87)	(182)
Others	4,208	4,268	60		60	(18)
	13,675	13,648	(27)	0	(27)	(200)
Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion	5,477	5,449	(28)		(28)	24
Youth Service	1,012	1,020	8		8	(5)
Closure of 2024/25 Accounts Adaption - underspend not carried forward			0		0	191
Education Total	**125,492**	**125,472**	**(20)**	**0**	**(20)**	**0**

Education

Leadership and Management - one-off spend on a new information management system for schools.

Schools Quality Service - transition period for the new service with vacant posts, but there is pressure on the immersion system budget.

Transport - following substantial overspending in the field over the past years, a budget of £896k was allocated on a permanent basis and a further £939k for the year only to address the pressures in the field of school buses and taxis. Based on the latest projections, the one-off contribution can be reduced to £639k, therefore we report on a balanced financial position.

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

Infrastructure and Support Services - Ancillary Service - projection of a higher income and lower costs for catering after receiving a grant receipt for primary school free school meals. Overspend on staff costs due to sickness are issues in school cleaning and caretaking. The care element of the breakfast clubs also continues to overspend by £89k as a result of higher staff costs and a lack of income.

Infrastructure and Support Services - Others - one-off costs being reduced by underspending on other budgets.

Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion - a mixed picture which is a combination of staff turnover and grant receipts but there is pressure on other various headings. The circumstances relating to one specific centre has ended and is responsible for an overspend of £66k.

Youth Service - higher spending in many areas, including Youth Support and Youth Clubs.

REVENUE BUDGET 2025/26- END OF AUGUST REVIEW

Economy and Community Department	2025/26 Proposed Budget	2025/26 Estimated Position	**Estimated Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26**	Use of Other Sources or Other Adjustments Recommended	**Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26**	Net Over / (Under) Spend Final Position 2024/25
Area:-	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Management	407	403	(4)		(4)	(269)
Community Regeneration and Support Programmes	644	644	0		0	113
Maritime and Country Parks	(138)	(112)	26		26	195
Byw'n Iach and Other Leisure Contracts	2,194	2,527	333	(219)	114	151
Economic Development Programmes	(67)	(67)	0		0	(200)
Marketing and Events	269	269	0		0	(27)
Gwynedd Libraries	1,854	1,829	(25)		(25)	(105)
Gwynedd Museums, Arts and Archives	1,095	1,110	15		15	147
Use of the Department's Underspend Fund	49	0	(49)		(49)	(5)
Economy and Community Total	**6,307**	**6,603**	**296**	**(219)**	**77**	**0**

Economy and Community

Management - grant receipt leading to an underspend on the core budget.

Maritime and Country Parks - a mixed picture which includes spending above the budget of £66k in Doc Fictoria, Caernarfon, whilst Country Parks underspend (£45k) as a result of staff underspend and surpassing income in Parc Padarn, whilst there was less spending on several headings in Parc Glynllifon.

Byw'n Iach and Other Leisure Contracts - transfer of the leisure provision to Byw'n Iach in April 2019, but the responsibility for the property running costs remain with the Council. Over the past few years, the company has received annual financial support from the Council which was £550k in 2022/23 and £308k in 2023/24, and £281k in 2024/25, which was above the contractual payment in the delivery contract, to enable them to maintain their services. It is projected that the demand for financial support continues this year, and the required amount is £219k by the end of the year.

Furthermore, an overspend of £150k on the Economy and Community Department budget to run leisure facilities.

Gwynedd Libraries - transitional year following the work of restructuring the service which means that some posts have been vacant for part of the year. Higher rent income receipt along with less spending on several budget headings.

Gwynedd Museums, Arts and Archives - overspending mainly because staffing costs exceed the budget and lack of income is an issue in Storiel £27k and Lloyd George Museum £24k. The budget projections for Neuadd Dwyfor improved.

To reduce the reported overspend, the department is using £49k from a departmental underspend fund.

It is recommended that the Cabinet approves additional financial support for Byw'n Iach if the overspend continues at the end of the financial year, with the current projections estimating support to the value of £219k.

REVENUE BUDGET 2025/26- END OF AUGUST REVIEW

Highways, Engineering and YGC Department (including Trunk roads	2025/26 Proposed Budget	2025/26 Estimated Position	**Estimated Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26**	Use of Other Sources or Other Adjustments Recommended	**Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26**	Net Over / (Under) Spend Final Position 2024/25
Area:-	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Gwasanaethau:						
Highways (including Trunk roads)	12,249	12,437	188		188	241
Engineering	486	455	(31)		(31)	(25)
Municipal	6,098	6,543	445		445	674
Gwynedd Consultancy	204	124	(80)		(80)	(234)
Closure of 2024/25 Accounts Adaption			0		0	(556)
Highways, Engineering and YGC Total	**19,037**	**19,559**	**522**	**0**	**522**	**100**

Highways, Engineering and YGC (including Trunk roads)

Highways Services - although an increase was seen in realising savings in this area, some new savings still need to be delivered. Furthermore, there was a reduction in the income from external agencies.

Engineering Services - underspend on various headings as well as a higher income receipts.

Municipal Services - a mixed picture which is a combination of factors, including the need to realise savings. Pressures also on the budgets of street cleaning and public toilet cleaning staff. Income losses are issues for land maintenance and public toilets. Following recent work in the Crematorium, a resulting reduction was seen in the associated income projections.

Gwynedd Consultancy - projected performance over the income from external organisations such as other councils and the Welsh Government in roads and engineering as well as vacancies and staff turnover.

REVENUE BUDGET 2025/26- END OF AUGUST REVIEW

Environment Department	2025/26 Proposed Budget	2025/26 Estimated Position	**Estimated Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26**	Use of Other Sources or Other Adjustments Recommended	**Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26**	Net Over / (Under) Spend Final Position 2024/25
Area:-	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Management	783	944	161		161	212
Planning and Building Control Service	777	844	67		67	189
Street Care and Transport Services						
Network Management (Transportation)	356	(18)	(374)		(374)	(547)
Parking and Parking Enforcement	(2,623)	(2,417)	206		206	753
Integrated Transport	2,313	2,383	70		70	(68)
	46	(52)	(98)	0	(98)	138
Markets	11	10	(1)		(1)	0
Countryside and Access	738	745	7		7	(7)
Public Protection	1,938	1,880	(58)		(58)	(283)
Waste	14,659	15,321	662		662	1,100
Use of Parc Adfer Refinance Gain Share Reserve			0		0	(1,100)
Closure of 2024/25 Accounts Adaption			0		0	(149)
Environment Total	**18,952**	**19,692**	**740**	**0**	**740**	**100**
Income / Grant received in 2025/26 to be put into Funds						
Parc Adfer Refinance Gain Share		*(187)*	*(187)*	***187***	***0***	
Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging		*(3,713)*	*(3,713)*	***3,713***	***0***	
Total	***0***	***(3,900)***	***(3,900)***	***3,900***	***0***	

Environment

Department Management - a delay in realising savings schemes to the value of £150k as well as an overspend on vehicle costs.

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

There are projected costs to the value of £1.5 million relating to a dangerous building, i.e., Corbett Arms Hotel, Tywyn, which is a Grade II listed building. This has been a concern to Cyngor Gwynedd and the local community for years as it is in a structurally dangerous condition and this meant that the Council had to act to protect and safeguard the public. The Department are unable to cope with such unexpected expenditure within their revenue budget, and therefore a separate report will be needed in due course to consider what other options we have to meet this cost.

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

Parking and Parking Enforcement - after parking fees were increased in April 2025, the parking income projections are better than the deficit of £826k reported in 2024/25 but continues to be £319k lower than the target. An underspend on staff and other budgets improves the situation.

Integrated Transport - the grants received for this area does not meet the whole costs. Projected underspend on staff costs and other budgets reduces the reported overspend.

Public Protection - vacant posts and less expenditure on several budget headings, including services and supplies. Projected to exceed income in trading standards but income down in the field of taxi licensing, licences and environmental protection.

Waste - although an additional budget of £400k has been allocated for 2025/26 onwards, several factors are responsible for the overspend of £662k projected. The work of introducing changes to the field continues, but overspending on waste collection and recycling, running the recycling centres and on the waste treatment and transfer sites. Many savings schemes are slipping because of restructuring challenges. A reduction is expected in the waste disposal costs of Parc Adfer, which assists the situation.

Recycling Target 2024/25 - after Cyngor Gwynedd achieved a 65.3% rate for recycling in 2024/25 which is below the Welsh Government's 70% recycling target, this means that the Council is facing a £612k fine subject to an assessment against various criteria from the Government. We believe that the risk of being forced to pay the fine is low and therefore we have not included this amount in the calculation for the end of the year.

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

Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging material - new income receipt for councils which derives from a levy on packaging materials for producers and retailers, to promote recycling. The money will fund the recycling fine, and the rest will be put in a reserve to be prioritised.

REVENUE BUDGET 2025/26- END OF AUGUST REVIEW

Housing and Property Department	2025/26 Proposed Budget	2025/26 Estimated Position	**Estimated Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26**	Use of Other Sources or Other Adjustments Recommended	**Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26**	Net Over / (Under) Spend Final Position 2024/25
Area:-	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Management	795	659	(136)		(136)	(35)
Housing Services						
Homelessness	6,795	7,258	463		463	(34)
Private Sector Housing	478	412	(66)		(66)	15
Others	426	327	(99)		(99)	(9)
	7,699	7,997	298	0	298	(28)
Property Services						
Property	3,882	3,876	(6)		(6)	41
Caretaking, Catering and Cleaning	13	24	11		11	19
	3,895	3,900	5	0	5	60
Closure of 2024/25 Accounts Adaption			0		0	3
Housing and Property Total	**12,389**	**12,556**	**167**	**0**	**167**	**0**

Housing and Property

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

Homelessness - the trend of significant pressure on the emergency accommodation service continues, with expenditure on the field forecast to be £6.4 million this year, compared to £6 million last year. An additional budget of £3m was allocated from council tax premium to emergency accommodation as well as an additional one-off budget allocated as part of the bids system and further to this to assist with the additional pressure. A combination of higher costs is seen for moving and storing the personal belongings of households receiving emergency accommodation, an increase in the number of individuals presenting as homeless and needing accommodation, and an increase in the nightly rate for emergency accommodation by some providers.

Private Sector Housing - staff turnover and underspend on supplies and services.

Housing Services, Others - underspend on staff costs and on property budgets as well as a grant receipt.

Property Services - underspend on staffing costs and travelling costs but pressure on the services and supplies budget in Property whilst lack of income is a problem in Pest Control.

Caretaking, Catering and Cleaning - overspend on the costs of services and supplies and lack of income.

REVENUE BUDGET 2025/26- END OF AUGUST REVIEW

Central Departments	2025/26 Proposed Budget	2025/26 Estimated Position	**Estimated Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26**	Use of Other Sources or Other Adjustments Recommended	**Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26**	Net Over / (Under) Spend Final Position 2024/25
Area:-	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Corporate Management Team and Legal	2,937	2,916	(21)		(21)	0
Finance (and Information Technology)	9,361	9,353	(8)		(8)	0
Corporate Services	8,473	8,467	(6)		(6)	0
Central Departments Total	**20,771**	**20,736**	**(35)**	**0**	**(35)**	**0**

Central Departments

Corporate Management Team and Legal - exceeding income and staff turnover in various fields responsible for the projected underspend. Various one-off costs will also be funded within the underspend.

Finance (and Information Technology) - staff turnover and attracting additional income assisting the department to cope with the substantial increase in the costs of processing income from the customers and residents of Gwynedd.

Corporate Services – combination of reasons responsible for the situation, but mainly an underspend on staff costs and exceeding income. The latest projections suggest that the Print room will be overspending by the end of the year.

REVENUE BUDGET 2025/26- END OF AUGUST REVIEW

Corporate (Reflects variances only)	2025/26 Proposed Budget	2025/26 Estimated Position	**Estimated Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26**	Use of Other Sources or Other Adjustments Recommended	**Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26**	Net Over / (Under) Spend Final Position 2024/25
Area:-	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Council Tax	*	*	(1,986)	1,986	0	0
Council Tax Reductions	*	*	258	(258)	0	0
Interest	*	*	(104)	104	0	0
Savings Provision	*	*	0	0	0	0
Pay Inflation			(601)	601	0	0
National Insurance	*	*	(289)	289	0	0
Elimination of Negative Balances in Care Area Funds	*	*	576	(576)	0	0
Others	*	*	(1,611)	1,611	0	0
Corporate Total	*	*	**(3,757)**	**3,757**	**0**	**0**

Corporate

Council Tax - additional council tax returns because of prudent projections when setting the 2025/26 budget. Following the trend seen in 2024/25 with an increase of 387 in the number of premium second homes, there was a further increase of 79 up to the end of August this year. Furthermore, up to the end of August, we saw 347 properties transferring from non-domestic rates to council tax (692 in 2024/25, 381 in 2023/24). However, contrary to this picture, the Valuer's Office allowed 81 properties to transfer from council tax to non-domestic rates (189 in 2024/25, 193 in 2023/24, 452 in 2022/23). In 2025/26, £6 million in council tax premium has been earmarked for the Housing Strategy, and a further £3 million for the Homelessness field.

Council Tax Reductions - following a campaign to target different groups to increase the number of applications, an increase was seen in the number who claim the reduction in Gwynedd over the past 12 months compared with the trend in previous years.

Interest - projections that the interest received will exceed the expected target.

Savings Provision - following the inability of some departments to realise savings in certain areas, corporate provision has been made so that it is available to eliminate problematic savings and bridge the realisation of savings.

Pay Inflation - following recent confirmation about the 2025/26 national pay settlement, the settlement was lower than what was provided along with a grant receipt for teachers' salaries.

National Insurance - the Welsh Government's delay in confirming its contribution towards the additional costs of councils' national insurance until the summer, the Council received a grant that was higher than what was originally expected.

Abolishing the Negative Balances of Reserves in the Care Field - overspend reserves to the value of £576k have accumulated by the Adults, Health and Well-being Department and the Children and Families Department over the past three years, it is suggested that they are written-off for departments to address the current challenges.

It is recommended that £3.757 million is transferred to the Council's Financial Strategy Reserve, with its use to be considered before the end of the current financial year.

Following a reserve review exercise detailed in **Appendix 3**, that the overspend reserves of the:
- Adults, Health and Well-being Department worth £300k
- Children and Families Service to the value of £276k,

Therefore, a total of £576k, is written off to allow the departments to focus on the challenges for 2025/26.

Review of Reserves

Following a review of the reserves, it is recommended to remove negative balances from the following reserves after overspend for three consecutive years in the care departments:

Fund	**Amount to be deleted £'000**
Adults, Health and Well-being Department Overspend Fund	300
Children and Families Department Overspend Fund	276
Total	**576**

CYNGOR GWYNEDD – Report to Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet

Item Title:	Capital Programme 2025/26 – End of August Review (31 August 2025 position)
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Huw Wyn Jones, Finance Cabinet Member
Relevant Officer:	Ffion Madog Evans, Assistant Head of Finance – Accountancy and Pensions
Meeting Date:	11 November 2025

1. **Decision Sought:**
   - To accept the report on the end of August review (31 August 2025 position) of the capital programme.
   - Approve the revision to the Capital Budget approved on 6 March 2025 from the programme's financing perspective (as shown in part 3.2.3 of the report), that is:
     - an increase of £290,000 in the use of borrowing
     - an increase of £13,390,000 in the use of grants and contributions
     - an increase of £36,000 in the use of revenue contributions
     - a decrease of £2,743,000 in the use of the capital reserve
     - an increase of £29,000 in the use of renewal and other reserves.

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

   These are recommended steps to ensure definite sources of funding for the 2025/26 – 2027/28 capital schemes.

3. **Introduction and Rationale**

   3.1 Background/ Introduction
   This technical report is presented as part of the 2025/26 budget review. The main purpose of the report is to present the revised capital programme and to approve the relevant financing sources. There is a summary in parts 3.2.2 and 3.2.3 of the report (the rationale and justification for recommending the decision) as follows:

- Part 3.2.1: Main Findings
- Part 3.2.2: Analysis by Department of the £152.94m capital programme for the 3 years 2025/26 – 2027/28.
- Part 3.2.3: The sources of finance for the net increase of approximately £11.002m since the last review.
- Part 3.2.4: Detail of additional grants since the last review.
- Part 3.2.5: Analysis of the capital prudential indicators.

Incorporating funding via grant is a point of order for the Cabinet, but it is also necessary to deal with situations where there has been a change in expenditure profiles between years and the value of capital receipts and contributions.

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

3.2 Rationale of, and introduction to, the recommended decision

3.2.1 Main Findings

The main findings that arise from the revised position are:

• Clear plans are in place to invest approximately £100.7m in 2025/26 on capital projects, with £47.4m (47%) of it being financed by attracting specific grants.

• An additional £12.4m of proposed expenditure has been re-profiled from 2025/26 to 2026/27 and 2027/28, but no loss of funding was caused to the Council where schemes have slipped.

3.2.2 Capital Programme 2025/26 to 2027/28

See below the revised capital programme as at the end of August 2025, with the proposed revised position for the subsequent years:

DEPARTMENT	END OF AUGUST REVIEW				Increase/(Decrease) since the Budget	Reprofiling adjustment	Increase/(Decrease) since the Budget less Slippages
	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	Total £000	£000	£000	£000
Education	16,301	8,218	3,451	27,970	**9,547**	8,125	**1,422**
Environment	10,106	1,917	479	12,502	**4,587**	(73)	**4,660**
Corporate Support	-	-	-	-	**-**	-	**-**
Finance	1,130	722	1,249	3,101	**925**	915	**10**
Economy and Community	26,964	6,826	2,383	36,173	**5,036**	1,746	**3,290**
Housing and Property	28,314	8,052	4,102	40,468	**18,335**	17,249	**1,086**
Adults, Health and Wellbeing	2,701	2,700	-	5,401	**648**	2,098	**(1,450)**
Children and Supporting Families	2,731	764	700	4,195	**2,475**	163	**2,312**
Highways, Engineering and Consultancy	12,161	3,793	5,881	21,835	**6,057**	6,385	**(328)**
Corporate	295	500	500	1,295	**295**	295	**-**
TOTAL	**100,703**	**33,492**	**18,745**	**152,940**	**47,905**	**36,903**	**11,002**

3.2.3 Changes to the Sources of Finance

The budget for the three-year programme shows an increase of £47.905m since the opening budget position where £36.903m originates from the reprofiling at the end of the previous year and £11.002m from new financing. The proposed sources of financing for this are noted below:

DEPARTMENT	END OF AUGUST REVIEW				Increase/(Decrease) since the Budget	Reprofiling adjustment	Increase/(Decrease) since the Budget less Slippages
	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	Total £000	£000	£000	£000
Supported Borrowing	4,070	4,070	4,070	12,210	**-**	-	**-**
Other Borrowing	18,115	4,119	-	22,234	**13,737**	13,447	**290**
Grants and Contributions	52,467	9,803	4,903	67,173	**20,416**	7,026	**13,390**
Capital Receipts	160	-	-	160	**160**	160	**-**
Departmental & Corporate Revenue	1,185	-	-	1,185	**56**	20	**36**
Capital Fund	6,821	11,111	4,477	22,409	**5,623**	8,366	**(2,743)**
Renewals & Other Funds	17,885	4,389	5,295	27,569	**7,913**	7,884	**29**
TOTAL	**100,703**	**33,492**	**18,745**	**152,940**	**47,905**	**36,903**	**11,002**

3.2.4 Additional Grants

Since setting the original budget, the Council succeeded in attracting additional grants totalling £13.390m, the largest of which are listed below (see Appendix 1 for more information):

- £2.940m Local Transport Fund (LTF) and Active Travel Fund (ATF) grants from Welsh Government towards several different schemes
- £1.972m Welsh Energy Grant from Welsh Government towards Electrical batteries and works at Plas Ogwen

- £1.839m Grant from the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund – a sum is paid to Gwynedd Council to be distributed across the counties of north Wales
- £1.443m Childcare Capital Grant from the Welsh Government
- £0.823m Sustainable Communities for Learning Grant
- £0.509m Part of the Sustainable Schools' Challenge Grant towards Ysgol Bontnewydd
- £0.500m Eryri National Park contribution towards the house purchasing scheme

3.2.5 Capital Prudential Indicators

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

3.3 Next Steps

To implement the recommendations to finance the programme.

4. Comments by Statutory Officers

4.1 Principal Finance Officer

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

4.2 Monitoring Officer

No observations in relation to propriety.

Appendices List:

Appendix 1 – Details of Main Changes

Appendix 2 – Details of Budget Reprofiling

Appendix 3 – Capital Expenditure First 5 months 2025/26

Appendix 4 – Capital Prudential Indicators 2025/26

Background Documents List:

2025/2026 Budgets: Annual budgets

Capital Strategy 2025/26 : Full Council 06/03/25 : Item 10 - Capital Strategy 2025-26 including Investment and Borrowing Strategies.pdf

Details of Main Changes

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

	2025/26 £'000	2026/27-2027/28 £'000
Other Borrowing		
• Foster Care House and adjustment to the financing of an item from the previous year *(Children and Supporting Families Department)*	250	
• Vehicles for use in the areas of waste and recycling (Environment Department).	40	
Grants and Contributions		
• Sustainable Communities for Learning Grant – adjustments and additions of various schemes *(Education Department.*	823	
• Part of the Sustainable Schools' Challenge Grant towards Ysgol Bontnewydd (Education Department).	509	
• Circular Economy Grant from Welsh Government *(Economy and Community Department).*	102	
• Adjustment to the Grant from the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund – a sum is paid to Gwynedd Council to be distributed across the counties of north Wales *(Economy and Community Department).*	1,839	
• Grant from the Brilliant Basics Fund from Welsh Government towards Padarn Country Park *(Economy and Community Department).*	250	50
• Grant from Welsh Government to Reduce the Carbon Footprint *(Economy and Community Department).*	200	
• Grant from Welsh Government to Improve Archive Accessibility *(Economy and Community Department).*	142	
• Grant from Welsh Government to develop a system for managing libraries *(Economy and Community Department).*	29	

• Sport Wales Grant towards the Arfon Tennis Centre *(Economy and Community Department).*	15
• Circular Economy Grant via Menter Môn towards the Arfon Swimming Pool *(Economy and Community Department).*	26
• Childcare Capital Grant from the Welsh Government *(Children and Supporting Families Department).*	1,443
• Housing with Care Fund Grant towards homes for children from Welsh Government *(Children and Supporting Families Department).*	413
• Health and Social Care Integration and Rebalancing Capital Fund Grant (IRCF) from Welsh Government *(Children and Supporting Families Department).*	205
• 20 miles per hour Capital Grant and Road Safety grant from Welsh Government towards several different schemes *(Environment Department).*	80
• Local Transport Fund (LTF) and Active Travel Fund (ATF) grants from Welsh Government towards several different schemes *(Environment Department).*	2,940
• Resilient Road Fund Grant (RRF) from Welsh Government towards several different schemes *(Environment Department).*	275
• Safe Routes in Communities Grant (SRiC) from Welsh Government towards several different schemes *(Environment Department).*	160
• Grants and contributions from Natural Resources Wales, Wales Council for Voluntary Action (CGGC/WCVA) and Local Nature Partnerships towards countryside schemes *Environment Department).*	395
• Access Improvement Grant from Welsh Government towards countryside schemes (*Environment Department).*	146
• Sustainable Landscapes Grant from Welsh Government towards schemes in the Llŷn Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty *(Environment Department).*	195

• Welsh Government Grant from the Ultra Low Emission Vehicle Transformation Fund (ULEVTF) towards electric Vehicle charging points and solar points *(Environment Department).*	105
• Transitional Accommodation Capital Programme Grant (TACP) from Welsh Government *(Housing and Property Department).*	225
• Eryri National Park contribution towards the house purchasing scheme *(Housing and Property Department).*	500
• "Enable" scheme grant from Welsh Government *(Housing and Property Department).*	350
• Welsh Energy Grant from Welsh Government towards Electrical batteries and works at Plas Ogwen *(Housing and Property Department).*	1,972
Departmental and Corporate Revenue	
• Revenue contributions towards various schemes *(Education; Economy and Community; Environment Departments).*	36
Capital Fund	
• Adjustments to several schemes to ensure the Asset Management Plan matches regarding schemes and revised profiling following the slippages from 24/25. Several of the schemes' profiles have been adjusted past the Capital Programme's three years *(Education; Adults, Health and Wellbeing; Housing and Property Departments).*	(2,743)
Renewals and Other Funds	
• Adjustments to several schemes to ensure the Asset Management Plan matches regarding schemes and revised profiling following the slippages from 24/25. Several of the schemes' profiles have been adjusted past the Capital Programme's three years *(Adults, Health and Wellbeing; Housing and Property Departments).*	(1,555)
• Match funding contributions/additional contributions towards various schemes *(Economy and Community Department).*	542

• Vehicle and Equipment renewals from departmental funds *(Highways, Engineering and Consultancy; Environment Departments).*	283
• Contribution from the Climate Fund towards the Charging Gwynedd Scheme and upgrading lighting within establishments *(Highways, Engineering and Consultancy; Housing and Property Departments).*	496
• Contribution towards countryside and waste projects *(Environment Department).*	124
• Contribution towards the Offices' Project *(Housing and Property Department).*	126

APPENDIX 2

Details of Budget Reprofiling

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

	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 - 2027/28 £'000
Schools' Schemes (Sustainable Communities for Learning and Others) *(Education Department)*	(4,507)	4,507
Economic Stimulus Schemes and Industrial Units (*Economy and Community Department)*	(1,048)	1,048
Levelling Up Fund (*Economy and Community Department)*	(3,450)	3,450
Maritime, Country Parks and Leisure schemes (*Economy and Community Department)*	(136)	136
Children's Establishments *(Children and Supporting Families Department)*	(764)	764
Provision to Joint-fund Care Projects *(Adults, Health and Wellbeing Department)*	(1,200)	1,200
Transport schemes and Urban Improvements *(Environment Department)*	(188)	188
Specialist Environment Department IT Systems *(Environment Department)*	(48)	48
Housing Grants and Other Schemes *(Housing and Property Department)*	(1,048)	1,048
Smallholdings' Schemes *(Housing and Property Department)*	(50)	50

Note:

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

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

APPENDIX 3

Capital Expenditure First 5 Months 2025/26

SUMMARY	CAPITAL PROGRAMME FULL YEAR (reviewed August) 2025/26 £'000	ACTUAL EXPENDITURE FOR THE 5 MONTHS TO 31/08/2025 £'000
Education	16,301	3,224
Environment	10,106	805
Corporate Support	-	-
Finance (and Information Technology)	1,130	230
Economy and Community	26,964	2,592
Housing and Property	28,314	3,986
Adults, Health and Wellbeing	2,701	645
Children and Supporting Families	2,731	1,202
Highways, Engineering and Consultancy	12,161	2,834
Corporate	295	-
TOTAL	**100,703**	**15,518**

Note:
The percentage spent this year (15%) is similar to the position this time last year (amount spent in 5 months in 2024/25 was 15%), and higher than two years ago (11% in 2023/24).

APPENDIX 4

Capital Prudential Indicators 2025/26

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

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

The latest position and information are reflected here.

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

	2024/25 Actual £m	2025/26 Forecast £m	2026/27 Budget £m	2027/28 Budget £m
General Fund Services	85.0	101.1	33.9	19.1
Leasing General Fund	5.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
TOTAL	**90.3**	**101.1**	**33.9**	**19.1**

The main General Fund capital projects in 2025/26 y include (see the review reports for reprofiling details as applicable) :

- Sustainable Communities for Learning Schemes - £12.4m
- Levelling Up Fund Schemes - £11.0m
- Housing Schemes/Strategy - £7.5m
- Departmental Vehicles - £6.9m
- Adults' Homes/ Centres - £4.5m
- Property Schemes - £3.9m

Capital Financing Requirement

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

	31.3.2025 Actual £m	31.3.2026 Forecast £m	31.3.2027 Budget £m	31.3.2028 Budget £m
General Fund Services	179.9	196.2	198.0	195.5

Gross Debt and the Capital Financing Requirement

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

	31.3.2025 Actual £m	31.3.2026 Forecast £m	31.3.2027 Budget £m	31.3.2028 Budget £m	Debt at 31.08.2025 £m
Debt (including Private Finance Initiative (PFI) and leases)	100.1	79.2	73.8	71.8	100.1
Capital Financing Requirement	179.9	196.2	198.0	195.5	

Debt and the Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary

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

	Maximum Debt 2025/26 £m	Debt at 31.08.2025 £m	2025/26 Authorised Limit £m	2025/26 Operational Boundary £m	Complied?
Borrowing	94.1	94.1			
Private Finance Initiative (PFI) and Finance Leases	6.0	6.0			
Total Debt	**100.1**	**100.1**	200	190	Yes

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

Proportion of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream

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

	2024/25 Actual	2025/26 Forecast	2026/27 Budget	2027/28 Budget
Financing Costs (£m)	8.5	10.2	10.6	10.7
Proportion of Net Revenue Stream (%)	2.5%	2.9%	2.9%	2.9%

Treasury Management Indicators

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