

THE CABINET 16/12/25

Present-

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

Also present-

Dafydd Gibbard (Chief Executive), Catrin Thomas (Corporate Director), Dylan Owen (Corporate Director), Iwan Evans (Monitoring Officer), Dewi Morgan (Head of Finance), Gareth Jones (Assistant Head of Environment Department), Rebeca Jones (Planning, Landscape and Nature Policy Manager), Dafydd Wyn Williams (Head of Environment Department), Catrin Love (Assistant Head of Corporate Services), Eurig Williams (Human Resources Service Manager), Gail Warrington (Health, Safety and Well-being Manager), Mari Wynne Jones (Head of Adults, Health and Well-being Department), Meinir Owen (Senior Projects Practitioner), Mari Powell Jones (Corporate Services Support Manager), Meinir Griffiths (Service Improvement Officer), Debbie Jones (Assistant Head of Education Services), Siwan Llwyd Roberts (Head of the Immersion Education System), Huw Ynyr (Assistant Head of Information Technology), Cllr Angela Russell (Local Member for Llanbedrog and Mynytho Ward), Cllr Cai Larsen (Chair of the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee), Cllr Elin Walker Jones (Local Member for Glyder Ward), and Gwen Roberts (Democracy Services Officer).

1. APOLOGIES

All the Council's staff were thanked for their hard work throughout the year.

An apology was received from Cllr Nia Jeffreys.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

There were no declarations of personal interest.

3. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

There were no matters arising from overview and scrutiny.

5. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 NOVEMBER

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 November 2025 were accepted as a true record.

6. ESTABLISHMENT OF A NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT BOARD

The report was presented by Cllr Craig ab Iago.

DECISION

To support the establishment of, and the Council's participation in, a Nutrient Management Board for Afon Gwyrfai in accordance with the terms of reference in Appendix 1.

To appoint the Head of the Environment Department to represent the Council on the new Board and delegate the right to the Head of Department to confirm the representation of Council officers on the Board and to undertake any non-material changes to the Terms of Reference.

DISCUSSION

The Head of Department talked about the statutory duty on public bodies to preserve wildlife and biodiversity within the rivers that had been designated as special areas of conservation in Wales, and the impact that high levels of nutrients could have on the water quality and therefore on this biodiversity.

He noted that a report had been published by Natural Resources Wales in 2021, which assessed whether the rivers reached the targets that had been set regarding the levels of nutrients in the rivers. It was highlighted that at the time of the report, the two rivers in Gwynedd were meeting these targets so there was no need for formal action at the time.

He reported that a more recent assessment, also carried out by Natural Resources Wales, had shown that Afon Gwyrfai was failing to meet these water quality targets due to the levels of nutrients contained in the river. In a situation where a river failed, he stated that it was the responsibility of the relevant authority to establish a Nutrient Management Board in order to put steps in place to reach the targets.

The aim was to create a Board jointly with the National Park authority.

It was emphasised that the formation of this Board was key because the failure of Afon Gwyrfai would have a direct impact on the Council, in terms of housing and agricultural developments within the river's catchment area and beyond. It was added that 10 planning applications were currently being delayed as a result of this.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- Recognised the need to understand the root of the problem and therefore the need for discussions with the relevant people in order to obtain those solutions.
- Concerns were raised about the potential impact of this on housing developments in the area, and the importance of the environment in this regard was highlighted.
- The effects of establishing the Board on resources were mentioned. It was confirmed that this had been raised with Natural Resources Wales, and that it was intended to appoint a Project Officer within Natural Resources Wales who would focus primarily on Afon Gwyrfai.
- It was confirmed that the Board would be established as soon as possible.

7. FUNDING FOR MAKING SAFE WORKS ON THE CORBETT ARMS BUILDING, TYWYN

The report was presented by Cllr Craig ab Iago.

DECISION

To approve the use of £1.5 million from the Council's Financial Strategy Fund to fund works to make safe the Corbett Arms building in Tywyn.

DISCUSSION

The impact of the Council's duty to address problems like these, without resources or money, on the people of Gwynedd was emphasised.

It was stated that a section of the Corbett Arms building had collapsed and the Council's statutory duty to ensure the safety of the building and the residents of Tywyn was highlighted. It was explained that the Council did not want to take any further risks with the building because of the threat of other parts of the building collapsing as well.

The steps that had already been taken to protect the site and the public were highlighted, noting that there was also a duty to protect the building as it was listed. The significant costs associated with this duty were recognised.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- It was acknowledged that there was a chance of being able to recover a portion of these costs, but the need to be realistic was noted. It was emphasised that the Council did not own the building, therefore the Council's role was solely to make the site safe.
- Clarity was requested as to who owned the building. Reference was made to the challenge of attempting to pinpoint ownership when dealing with a building like this.
- It was noted that much of this work was responsive work that was difficult to predict, so the Department was constantly cautious of that risk.

- When discussing the intervention powers that the Council had in relation to a dangerous building, it was explained that the first step was to serve a notice to the owner. It was added that this meant that the Council could only intervene if the owner failed to carry out the necessary work to make the site safe. It was noted that the location of the dangerous building also played a role here.
- A member questioned whether there was an end to this problem, and was concerned about having to pay more maintenance costs on the building for years to come. It was highlighted that there was no certainty about how the building would behave in the future, but it was confirmed that the building would be monitored continually.

8. TWF - THE WELSH LANGUAGE AT WORK CHARTER

The report was presented by Cllr Llio Elenid Owen

DECISION

The Cabinet resolved on behalf of the Council as an employer to adopt Twf – The Welsh Language at Work Charter of the Welsh Trade Union Congress (Wales TUC), in conjunction with local representatives of the Unison, GMB and Unite unions.

DISCUSSION

It was explained that the aim of the Charter was to support employees, their trade unions and employers to work together to create bilingual workplaces and ensure that employees had access to representation by trade unions in Welsh.

The member reported on the four principles upon which the Council would operate in adopting the Charter, namely

- Twf and Welsh Language rights
- Inclusion and linguistic justice
- Leadership and accountability
- Continuous learning and confidence building

The key role of the Welsh language within the Council was emphasised, and it was proud that Gwynedd would be the first local authority to adopt this Charter.

It was explained that the Council's officers had been involved in developing the Charter, and the representatives of the Unions were thanked for their enthusiasm towards it. It was hoped that the adoption of the Charter would pave the way for other authorities to do as well.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- Members expressed pride that the Council was leading the way in the field and reiterated their gratitude to the Unions for their co-operation.
- They were thankful and proud that the Unions saw value in this work as well. It was emphasised that there was a good working relationship

between the Council and the Unions, and that the relationship could lead to great work such as this Charter.

9. ANNUAL REPORT - EMPLOYMENT

The report was presented by Cllr Llio Elenid Owen.

DECISION

To approve the annual report for 2024/25.

DISCUSSION

It was noted that the report provided a breakdown of the main issues relating to the workforce and how that guided some aspects of the Council's staffing strategy.

She went through the main points of the report:

- There had been a slight reduction in the number of Council staff by March this year.
- It was noted that a higher number of women than men worked for the Council and referred to the departmental figures included in the report.
- It was recognised that the majority of the Council's workforce was over 40 years of age and although it was therefore an experienced workforce, it would be a challenge for the Council when those staff left their employment at the same time.
- It was mentioned that staff turnover had increased to 9.9%.
- It was explained that sickness absences had increased – it was confirmed that tackling this was a priority for the Council.
- It was stated that a new human resources and payroll system would be introduced next year.

It was highlighted that this report was consistent with previous reports, and that the issues arising here were the subject of continuous discussions with partners.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- With reference to the gender profile of the workforce, a member queried this split and how the Council could address traditional stereotypes in terms of areas of work. It was confirmed that work and projects were looking into this and on giving opportunities to people in all areas. It was added that the effect of this work on specific figures within the workforce could now be seen.
- The importance of giving every person in Gwynedd fair opportunities to hold any position within the Council was emphasised.
- A member asked if there were sufficient opportunities for staff development within the Council, emphasising the importance of retaining staff as well as attracting new staff. The members were assured that emphasis was placed on holding ongoing development conversations with staff, and that a higher number of courses were now being provided.

10. HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING ANNUAL REPORT

The report was presented by Cllr Llio Elenid Owen.

DECISION

To accept the report and approve the recommendations.

DISCUSSION

The report was presented, recognising the period of change and adjustment that had taken place.

It was stated that the promotion of Safety Models had reached all managers, with the aim of strengthening understanding and joint-working across the organisation. It was also noted that key policies had been reviewed – including the Alcohol and Drugs Policy – to protect everyone associated with the Council's services.

The Cabinet was guided through the main points of the report:

- A total of 4,128 accident reports had been recorded, of which 53 were RIDDOR, which were the most serious type of accidents. She also mentioned the increase in violent incidents.
- There had been two incidents in residential homes which had led to visits by the HSE. Recommendations were received to improve fall prevention documentation and training, with an intervention fee of £1,044.
- It was mentioned that 9 IOSH Managing Safely courses and 5 refresher courses had been undertaken, meaning that 72% of managers were now trained.
- 1,051 referrals had been received from Occupational Health, of which 464 were related to mental health. She added that the counselling provision had increased by over 180%.
- It was reported that the BSI continued to support and maintain the ISO 45001 accreditation. She mentioned that discussions were underway to combine the two existing systems.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- It was confirmed that the report included data from schools as well.
- It was asked whether the high number of accidents came from a particular place within the Council. It was stated that staff were encouraged to report any accidents so that the organisation could get a picture of where these accidents originated, and how to prevent problems in the future.
- It was explained that children's needs were becoming more profound and that we may need to consider how to respond to this.
- The violent incidents that take place outside the area of Education were discussed, noting that there was a range across the Council in terms of the type of incidents and the severity of those incidents. The need to report such incidents was emphasised.

- A member asked for an explanation for the increase in the number of members of the public being transported to hospital. The duty to report such cases was highlighted, and it was noted that the incidents ranged from school children and people in residential homes to people in leisure centres, for example.

11. COMPLAINTS AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENT 6 MONTHLY REPORT 2025/2026

The report was presented by Cllr Llio Elenid Owen.

DECISION

To approve the report and offer any relevant comments or suggestions about the Council's performance in handling complaints in an appropriate and timely manner.

DISCUSSION

It was stated that the report provided an overview of the Council's performance in dealing with complaints and improving services during the period April 2025 to September 2025. The Ombudsman's Annual Letter for the period 2024/25 was highlighted, which was also attached.

It was highlighted that 22 upheld formal complaints and 13 complaints to the Ombudsman had been lodged between April and September 2025, a reduction from the same period last year.

It was also stated that the average number of days taken to respond to complaints had reduced from 17.5 days in 2024/2025 to 15.3 days in 2025/26.

It was reported that 'lack of response/action' was the main basis of the complaints, noting that a number of the complaints related to the Environment and Finance departments.

It was hoped that the new Customer Charter which was now in place would prevent a number of complaints in the 'lack of response/action' category in the future.

The Wall of Successes was referenced, and the large number of thanks and compliments that had reached the Council from the public.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- A member asked about the main lessons learned from the complaints and how this would lead to improvement. It was highlighted that the main cause of the complaints was a lack of response, and it was highlighted that the work pressures on staff was a contributing factor here. It was noted that customer care courses were being offered, and the further work that was required to address this issue was mentioned.

- It was proposed that 'lack of response' was the easiest category to address, and the member suggested the need to revisit this. It was explained that a lack of resources and the pressures on staff had a bearing on what was possible, and that departmental priorities varied.
- It was noted that acknowledgement was given upon receipt of all complaints. It was added that the department was looking at a potential system to address this and to be more proactive.

12. PENRHOS CARE HOME OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE

The report was presented by Cllr Dilwyn Morgan.

DECISION

To approve the Outline Business Case in Appendix 1, subject to,

Authorising the Head of Adults, Health and Well-being Department to submit the Outline Business Case to the Welsh Government to apply for £16.4 million of funding from the Health and Social Care Integration and Rebalancing Capital Fund (IRCF) for the development of a public sector partnership at the Penrhos site, in partnership with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) and to proceed with the development of a Full Business Case.

DISCUSSION

The report was presented, and the Local Member's enthusiasm and support to this matter was praised. The officers were also thanked for their hard work.

It was stated that this project was a partnership between the Council, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, and ClwydAlyn Housing Association to develop a new and pioneering care facility. It was noted that it would consist of 32 residential dementia beds and 24 nursing beds, 8 of which would be nursing dementia beds.

It was explained that care needs were increasing across the country, and Pen Llŷn had been recognised as an area with an increasing need for the provision. Through this development, it was hoped we would be able to support people to stay local to receive care.

The member referred to the further developments on the site and the varying levels of care that would be available, such as a building which would contain 30 apartments, extra care housing, and 12 bungalows.

The success of the Care Academy was highlighted, and he talked about the hope of being able to use the Penrhos site to attract and train staff locally.

The Local Member for Llanbedrog and Mynytho Ward was welcomed to the meeting. She emphasised that it was wonderful to see the site being developed. She suggested that the development was something that the whole of Wales should take note of. She noted the importance of keeping Community Councils

aware of developments and getting local people involved in the project and asked if meetings could be held to do this.

She was proud of the work that was taking place and thanked the officers once again for their tireless work.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- The flooding problems on the road leading to the site were highlighted, and it was asked if there were plans to address this. It was explained that the issue had been discussed at the Project Board meeting, and while this did not fall within the boundaries of the Plan, it was decided to declare support for any proposed schemes relating to the road.
- A member acknowledged how pioneering the project was, but mentioned the need to, and the challenge of, attracting staff to the field.
- They hoped for the Welsh Government's support for this project as well.
- Other projects that were in the pipeline to increase the provision of care in Gwynedd were elaborated upon.

13. SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENTS TO YSGOL TRYFAN - INCREASING THE PROJECT'S CAPITAL BUDGET

The report was presented by Cllr Dewi Jones.

DECISION

The Cabinet granted approval to increasing the project's budget for making significant improvements to the buildings and site of Ysgol Tryfan in Bangor in order to address inflation costs and the general increase in building material costs since the original budget was established in 2018, to be realised by transferring £1.96m from the Council's Asset Management Plan to cover the total projected costs for completing the project at Ysgol Tryfan.

DISCUSSION

It was explained that a significant increase in costs had necessitated a re-examination of plans, and they forecast the need to increase the budget of this project to £23.6 million. It was noted that the Welsh Government was funding 65% of the cost of the scheme, which meant that Cyngor Gwynedd's contribution was an additional £1.96 million.

The scheme was referred to as an investment in the future of the County's children and young people, and in the Welsh language in Bangor.

The Cabinet Member highlighted that he had visited Ysgol Tryfan and had seen the need for investment. He drew attention to the damage done to the School during the recent storms, and the fact that scaffolding on the School buildings made it dangerous.

The Local Member for Glyder Ward was welcomed to the meeting. She

emphasised the importance of this investment to Welsh-medium secondary education in Bangor. She reiterated the words about the condition of the building and that they were old and fragile.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- A member queried how these developments would improve the learning experience for learners in the School. It was explained that the learning environment would improve by developing the quality and size of the classrooms, along with developmental sports provisions and an improvement to extra-curricular spaces in the School.
- The members were assured that this was the most cost-effective way of completing the project.
- It was noted that the aim with increasing the capacity of the School was to ensure a continuum of Welsh-medium education from primary to secondary for the children of the catchment area for years to come.
- It was confirmed that all new buildings on the site would satisfy net zero carbon targets, in line with the requirements of the grant. Reducing the building's carbon emissions would also have to be taken into account with any alterations to the building.

14. GWYNEDD EDUCATION LANGUAGE POLICY

The report was presented by Cllr Dewi Jones.

DECISION

To adopt a draft of Cyngor Gwynedd's Model Education Language Policy for Gwynedd schools in order to present it for the purpose of public engagement. (Appendix 1).

DISCUSSION

The member highlighted that the purpose of the report was to update the existing Education Language Policy. It was recognised that this was a time of change for the Welsh language in education and he referred to the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025, which had recently received Royal Assent.

He revealed that the Council would be required to place schools in different language categories, but noted that this would not be fully operational until 2030. He highlighted that the Council, as an education authority, wanted to be proactive in ensuring that schools had adequate time to respond should any changes need to be introduced as a result of this draft Policy.

The key stakeholders that the department had consulted with in bringing the draft Policy before the Cabinet were listed. In explaining the rationale for bringing this item before the Cabinet, he emphasised the importance of public engagement to get the public's opinion on the draft Policy.

It was noted that this was a draft policy and that the Council had no right to

impose any language policy on schools. It was added that it was a decision for the Governing bodies of the schools to adopt any policy.

The Chair of the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee was welcomed to the meeting. He detailed the three times that this draft Policy had appeared before the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee, and the resulting observations and recommendations.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- Support for the draft Policy was expressed, and a member questioned what support would be available to those schools that would be required to change as a result of the draft Policy. The members were assured that all schools would have time to prepare and submit their delivery plans. Furthermore, it was noted that the purpose of presenting the draft Policy at this point was to ensure that schools had enough time to prepare and plan in advance for adopting the Policy. It was added that school staff were also receiving support to increase their confidence in using Welsh, and that there were plans to expand this provision through sabbatical schemes.
- Members expressed their desire to see these transitioning schools move across the continuum and being able to show that they were making steady linguistic progress.
- The Welsh Government's announcement stating that it planned to undertake a review of Governing bodies and their role, particularly in relation to policies such as this, was welcomed.
- It was recognised that influencing the social language of schools was challenging, but it was hoped that this draft Policy would enable us to work with schools to promote the social opportunities and extra-curricular experiences that use Welsh.

15. CYNGOR GWYNEDD DIGITAL PLAN ANNUAL REPORT (2024/2025 PERIOD)

The report was presented by Cllr Huw Wyn Jones.

DECISION

To note the content and approve the first volume of annual reports on Cyngor Gwynedd's Digital Plan (2023–2028).

DISCUSSION

It was emphasised that information technology now formed an integral part in all things around us.

He referred to the Organisation Management Systems, adding that the successful provider was about to be announced.

He reported on the ongoing work relating to Continuity of Service and emphasised the importance of this work in relation to protecting systems from

cyber-attacks.

He confirmed that the Council's new Phone System was now operating and that the Contact Centre was also operating on the new solution.

He stated that Artificial intelligence was being trialled, and the department was looking at case studies to see how the Council could use artificial intelligence to develop.

He discussed the intention to upgrade the broadcasting provision in the Council's Chambers.

It was highlighted that this was the first annual report on the Digital Plan, and it was noted that by next year we would be able to compare and look back at this year's report to ensure that the Plan was proactive.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- It was stated that there was a report by the Older People's Commissioner which talked about the lack of opportunities for older people to contribute to digital discussions and the potential difficulties they faced in the field. The importance of equality reports within this area was emphasised. Members were pleased about the reference to educating within the report and the importance of this going forward.
- Reference was made to the capacity within the Team to deliver, highlighting the need to continually re-prioritise in order to meet requirements as well as looking for more resource.

The meeting commenced at 1:00pm and concluded at 3:40pm.

CHAIRMAN