



Complete Agenda

Democracy Service
Swyddfa'r Cyngor
CAERNARFON
Gwynedd
LL55 1SH

Meeting

EDUCATION AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date and Time

10.30 am, THURSDAY, 16TH OCTOBER, 2025

**(NOTE: A BRIEFING SESSION WILL BE HELD FOR MEMBERS AT 10.00AM AND
A LUNCH BREAK IS PLANNED FOR 12.30PM – 1.30PM)**

Location

Siambr Hywel Dda, Council Offices, Caernarfon and virtually on Zoom

*** NOTE***

This meeting will be webcast

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

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(DISTRIBUTED 08/10/25)

EDUCATION AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEMBERSHIP (18)

Plaid Cymru (12)

Councillors

Beca Brown
Dawn Lynne Jones
Olaf Cai Larsen
John Pughe
Dyfrig Siencyn
Sian Williams

Jina Gwyrfai
Gareth Tudor Jones
Gwynfor Owen
Huw Rowlands
Rhys Tudur
[vacant seat]

Independent (6)

Councillors

Elwyn Jones
Beth Lawton
John Pughe Roberts

Gwilym Jones
Dewi Owen
Richard Glyn Roberts

Ex-officio Members

Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council

Other Invited Members

CO-OPTED MEMBERS:

With a vote on education matters only

[vacant seat]	Church in Wales
Colette Owen	The Catholic Church
[vacant seat]	Meirionnydd Parent/Governors Representative
Gweno Glyn Williams	Dwyfor Parent/Governors' Representative
Sharon Roberts	Arfon Parent/Governors' Representative

Without a Vote

Elise Poulter	NEU
Gwilym Jones	NASUWT

A G E N D A

1. APOLOGIES

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

To receive any declarations of personal interest.

3. URGENT BUSINESS

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

4. MINUTES

6 - 18

The Chair shall propose that the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 19 June 2025 be signed as a true record.

5. GWYNEDD ECONOMY STRATEGY

19 - 83

To scrutinize the draft strategy for the development of Gwynedd's economy between 2025 and 2035.

6. IMMERSION EDUCATION SYSTEM

84 - 204

To scrutinize the action plan in response to recommendations arising from the evaluation and the Estyn review.

A lunch break is planned for 12.30pm – 1.30pm

7. PROCUREMENT STRATEGY

205 - 255

To give the Scrutiny Committee the opportunity to consider the Procurement Strategy's content and provide comments.

8. PERFORMANCE REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CORPORATE AND LEGAL SERVICES AND THE WELSH LANGUAGE

256 - 296

To report to the Scrutiny Committee on the performance of the Corporate, Legal and Welsh Language Departments.

9. EDUCATION AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD PROGRAMME 2025/26

297 - 300

To present the Committee's draft work programme for 2025/26 for adoption.

EDUCATION AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 19/06/25

Attendance:

Councillors: Councillor Cai Larsen (Chair)
Councillor Rhys Tudur (Vice-chair)

Councillors:- Beca Brown, Jina Gwyrfai, Dawn Lynne Jones, Elwyn Jones, Gareth Tudor Jones, Gwilym Jones, Beth Lawton, Gwynfor Owen, John Pughe Roberts, Richard Glyn Roberts, Huw Llwyd Rowlands, Dyfrig Siencyn and Sian Williams.

Co-opted Members: Sharon Roberts (Arfon Parent / Governor Representative), Elise Poulter (NEU) and Gweno Glyn Williams (Dwyfor Parent / Governor Representative).

Officers present: Bethan Adams (Scrutiny Advisor), Annes Sion (Democracy Team Leader), Dafydd Gibbard (Chief Executive, for items 5 and 6) and Geraint Owen (Corporate Director, for items 7-9).

Present for item 7 - Councillor Dewi Jones (Cabinet Member for Education), Gwern ap Rhisiart (Head of Education), Debbie Anne Jones (Assistant Head: Corporate Services), Siwan Llwyd Roberts (Head of Gwynedd Immersion Education System), Iwan Gwilym Evans (Head of Legal Service) and Meirion Prys Jones (Consultant).

Present for item 8 - Councillor Dewi Jones (Cabinet Member for Education), Gwern ap Rhisiart (Head of Education), Debbie Anne Jones (Assistant Head: Corporate Services) and Ffion Edwards Ellis (Assistant Head: Special Education Needs and Inclusion).

Present for item 9 - Councillor R Medwyn Hughes (Cabinet Member for Economy), Sioned Williams (Head of Economy and Community Department), Roland Wyn Evans (Assistant Head Culture) and Llyr B Jones (Assistant Head of Economy and Community).

Present for item 10 – Councillor Huw Wyn Jones (Cabinet Member for Finance), Dewi A Morgan (Head of Finance Department), Huw Ynyr (Assistant Head of Finance: Digital) and Sian Pugh (Assistant Head of Finance: Sustainability and Developments).

Present for item 11 - Councillor Llio Elenid Owen (Cabinet Member for Corporate and Legal Services), Ian Jones (Head of Corporate Services Department), Iwan Gwilym Evans (Head of Legal Service) and Catrin Love (Assistant Head of Corporate Services).

1. ELECT CHAIR

Councillor Cai Larsen was elected Chair for 2025/26.

2. VICE-CHAIR

Councillor Rhys Tudur was elected vice-chair for 2025/26.

3. APOLOGIES

An apology was received from Councillor Dewi Owen and Colette Owen (Co-opted Member – Catholic Church).

4. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

Councillor Dawn Lynne Jones declared an interest in item 8 as she worked with children, but as it was a performance report, it was not a prejudicial interest and she did not need to withdraw from the meeting.

The Chief Executive declared an interest in item 8 - as his wife worked in the Education Department, therefore he withdrew from the discussion.

Councillors Beth Lawton, Gareth Tudor Jones, Richard Glyn Roberts and Sian Williams declared an interest in item 9, as they were members of the Byw'n Iach Board, but it was not a prejudicial interest and therefore they did not leave the meeting for the discussion.

Sharon Williams withdrew from the meeting by virtue of her post for item 9.

5. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no urgent items to note.

6. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 10 April 2025, as a true record.

7. DRAFT EDUCATION LANGUAGE POLICY TASK AND FINISH GROUP

Following a discussion on the Draft Education Language Policy at the Committee meeting on 10 April 2025, it was resolved to form a task and finish group to discuss the wording of the draft policy.

Councillor Rhys Tudur, Chair of the Task and Finish Group, presented the changes suggested by the Task and Finish Group. It was noted that many of the recommendations were amendments to refine the policy, but some were more significant.

The main points were as follows:

1. The need to note that it is the school's decision to determine which cross-curricular subjects are taught in English was expressed. It was noted that this would make it clearer.
2. It should be noted in the policy that extra-curricular activities are held through the medium of Welsh if resources were available.
3. It was recommended to use the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Bill 2025's definition of a Welsh School instead of what was noted in the current statutory guidelines, and in doing so, be proactive to comply with the new legislation.
4. It was noted that the policy should express the percentage of Welsh provision for all pupils.
5. The need for schools to provide details on their progress plans was highlighted.
6. It was also asked what the expectation of the policy with Ysgol Uwchradd

Tywyn and Ysgol Friars would be, as they acted as English schools to an extent - it was asked whether there would be a different policy or different treatment as the objectives would be for the whole county.

It was expressed that observations had been received by the Education Department in response to the recommended changes, but they had highlighted challenges and not responses to the recommendations.

Further observations were received from the Task and Finish Group members, expressing their disappointment in the department's responses, specifically with changing the wording in a definition in the Education Bill instead of the guidelines as it would be an Act following receiving Royal Assent, and the need to move forward to comply with the act was expressed.

It was also expressed that the Task and Finish Group believed that the policy had to be robust and with an element of aspiration, especially when looking at the language shift within the county. It was noted that the group had attempted to tighten the draft policy.

The department had an opportunity to respond, and the Monitoring Officer expressed, in terms of the act, that it was in the process of obtaining Royal Assent but it was not currently in force. He added that there would be a timetable from the Government for elements of it to come into power and it would be approximately 4-5 years before this happened. It was explained that there would be a transitional period whilst the statutory procedure of the act was put in place.

The Head of Education added that the department believed that the draft policy showed a commitment to the Welsh language and the need to increase the number of Welsh-speakers. The need to bring people with them when putting policies and procedures in place was expressed. It was highlighted that the department showed a direction for the school but, at the end of the day, it was the Governing Bodies' decision to adopt the Policy. It was noted that there had been consultations when creating the draft policy and that Meirion Prys Jones had been integral in wording the policy. The Task Group was thanked for its work, noting that there were some changes that could be incorporated, whilst others would make the policy difficult to implement across the County. The need to be careful with the bilingual element was noted, as there was a need for balance between a successful policy and children being happy and confident in English also.

Meirion Prys Jones, who helped the Department as an external consultant to create the wording in the draft policy, was given an opportunity to contribute to the discussion. He expressed, when drawing up a policy, there was a need to deal with psychology as there was a need to think about how to manage matters relating to linguistic emotion. It was emphasised that the success of changing people depended on carrying people with you, as it was not possible to legislate a language into existence. It was explained, when discussing language shift, careful planning was required over a long period of time. It was added that the wording of the draft policy was encouraging, it provided guidance and was clear that there was also an element of choice, as there was an element of choice in bringing people with you. It was noted that there was room to tighten some elements, but it was important to remember the tone of the policy and therefore there was a need to use words carefully.

During the discussion, it was decided to discuss the changes recommended by the Task and Finish Group per heading. Observations from the Committee Members were noted as follows:-

It was highlighted that the reference to the English had been removed from the wording in the objectives under the second heading. It was explained that removing the reference

could be problematic as there was a need to ensure that young people were confident and had a good level of Welsh and English. It was emphasised that having confidence to speak English did not mean that young people would not have confidence to speak Welsh. The need to address young people's wish to reach their potential in both languages was emphasised.

Discussing the objectives further, it was noted, when discussing latecomers attending immersion centres, that the recommendation to change the wording suggested an enforcement. It was expressed that there was a need to emphasise encouragement, but there was uncertainty on how to enforce. The Department responded, noting that perhaps there was a need to provide more details when highlighting how the department could encourage families to send their children to immersion centres.

It was noted, although the objectives referred to speaking Welsh, that there was also a need to include writing as this was how the majority of assessments were conducted.

Meirion Prys Jones' observations emphasised that tone was essential, as well as psychology. The need for the education language policy to bring parents with them was noted, highlighting the views of schools and appealing to schools to adopt the policy.

Group members noted that there was a recommendation to remove bilingualism as the department had noted that education was through the medium of Welsh in Gwynedd. It was highlighted that the department had not responded to how they would deal with more bilingual schools, and therefore there was a need to highlight the department's wishes.

In the discussion about the Secondary Schools heading, the Group Members noted that technically it was not possible to force children to attend immersion centres but there was a need for more than encouragement. It was expressed that there was a need to go against the officers' observations and submit a policy that was between encouragement and enforcement.

It was expressed that, possibly, there was a need for an exempt policy for two secondary schools in the county as they worked more as English schools. It was emphasised that the education language policy was for the whole county, and therefore it was inappropriate to refer to schools specifically and only adapt for them.

Looking at the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) heading in the amended policy, it was noted that not including references to the ALN and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 caused concerns. It was expressed that there was a need to consider the ALN act and that it was integral to the policy.

It was added that there may be a need for further research into language with ALN, as experts often encouraged families to speak English with children with learning needs. It was expressed that there was a need to see whether there was evidence to contradict this. The department noted that it was a potential plan to do with the University in the future.

The Group members explained that the act had not been included as there was no detail of what the act entailed, and therefore more details were required. The Monitoring Officer noted that the paragraph acknowledged the duty to comply with the act and was therefore necessary to the policy.

There was a discussion about the wording of the Committee's decision.

RESOLVED

- **To note the output of the work of the Task and Finish Group but there**

was no consensus on all the recommended modifications;

- **To ask the Cabinet Member for Education to consider the range of comments submitted by the Scrutiny Members when drawing up the final policy.**

8. CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION PERFORMANCE REPORT

The report was submitted by the Cabinet Member for Education, noting that the data spoke for itself. It was noted that there were successes to celebrate, plans to be developed and that he was looking forward to putting context on some improvement schemes in some fields.

During the discussion, the following observations were made:

In terms of modernising buildings and learning settings, as physical disabilities were prioritised, it was asked how much planning was made for children's sensory needs, not only the rooms but in terms of colours on the walls, the lightbulbs used etc. An answer was given, noting that there were guidelines to follow when constructing new schools, it was explained that there was a need to ensure that Additional Learning Needs (ALN) provision was part of the guidelines. It was explained when constructing schools, the department learned from one project to the other, and adaptations had been made in terms of retaining doors of a natural colour and looking at lights. The need to get more of the department's input when schools were designed was noted to consider these types of needs, and it was explained that the department used part of the ALN capital grant funding to look at this matter further and that they worked with Occupational Therapists.

Attention was drawn to the fact that, in addition to the modernising buildings and learning settings field, there were plans in Arfon and Dwyfor but there was no mention of plans in Meirionnydd. In response, it was noted that modernising education capital funding came in phases and that many schools in Meirionnydd had been developed during the last phase, highlighting plans to restructure schools in Bala, Tywyn and Dolgellau. By now, it was explained that they specifically focused on the Bangor area, and it would move to another area in Gwynedd during the next phase.

It was expressed, when looking at a plan to reduce the cost of sending children to school, the measures were red, and it was asked if children were permanently excluded, whether there was an acknowledgement of the additional cost for parents to move their children to another school - such as school uniform etc. It was noted that families could be supported with this, by diverting funding as there was a need to ensure that children were able to attend school.

It was also asked whether the department was confident that all costs, including the hidden ones, received attention. It was noted that the department was confident that they had given a lot of attention to the main matters and worked to address the problems. It was noted that the department would draw up a charter that would be a suggestion for schools when considering the costs of school trips and school uniform for example.

Many observations were made about attendance as it was a matter of national concern, and it was highlighted that there had been progress as the number of children missing school started to reduce. It was asked what was working and whether there were any strategies in place to improve the situation. In response, it was noted that attendance had been a difficult challenge and that strategies were in place. It was expressed that giving relentless attention to the matter was what made a real difference. It was elaborated that the schools had proven success in increasing attendance with tight and robust processes in place. It was explained that the department prioritised secondary

schools as it was more of a problem in secondary schools. It was explained that the patterns cut during the covid period were now being reconstructed, and the hope was that the figures would reach the pre-covid percentages over the coming years.

In the discussion about attendance, it was noted that some families were legally prosecuted due to non-attendance, it was asked whether there was evidence that this tactic worked, and what were the effects of the experience on families. It was responded, highlighting that there were different types of prosecution and fines. It was noted that the £120 fine when a pupil had an unauthorised absence was not one implemented in Gwynedd. It was noted that another prosecution was implemented by the Education Welfare Team. It was explained that there was a specific process for working with families to encourage attendance. It was highlighted that many children being referred to the Welfare Team were making definitive progress, and that almost half had reasons for the absence which would not lead to prosecution - reasons such as mental health and social problems. It was noted that nobody wanted prosecution but there was a need to use powers to enforce children to attend schools. In terms of long-term impact, it was noted that half returned to school and some de-registered. It was also explained that a fine was not the final step but the court often placed requirements and a direction for how parties worked together to improve the situation and put tasks to achieve within a timeframe.

It was highlighted that the number who chose optional education at home was increasing and it was asked what caused concern, and whether they raised concerns in terms of safeguarding and well-being. The response noted that this field was extremely complex with different cohorts within the 269 being taught at home - such as families choosing to teach their children at home, others feeling that their children were unable to go to school for various reasons and some feeling that their children's needs were not being met. It was expressed that a questionnaire was shared when de-registering from school to know the reason for this to get a better understanding. It was expressed that working with families to keep in contact was underway, and that two teachers were available to facilitate with the curriculum. It was noted that there were no safeguarding and well-being problems as many sacrificed their careers to home-teach, and it was emphasised that many had excellent experiences of home-teaching.

Attention was drawn to the number of measures, asking for their validity as a result of a low number of responses, such as the measure for improving autistic children's communication, as only 2 had responded. In response, it was noted that the department agreed with the observations and it had been highlighted by managers. It was noted that it was difficult to get a fair reflection but there were measures for individual services, and there was a need to refine and ensure that they measured the right things.

When looking at the immersion centre service, it was highlighted that there was no data in terms of how much schools encourage, and how many children refused. It was noted that this data would be useful. The department responded, noting that spaces were very rare in the centres, and the schools encouraged them. It was explained that it was not possible to force children to attend and therefore schools were expected to encourage it. The department expressed that they were happy to provide the number of attendees, it was noted that there was room for improvement, but the department was doing everything in its ability to facilitate the process through support such as transport.

It was asked when the Education Strategy would be presented to the Committee. It was noted that it would be presented during the Autumn Term, it was explained that engagement work had been done but they hoped that it would be presented to the Cabinet before Christmas to be in place during the Spring term.

There was an enquiry about an English as an Additional Language measure, and it was

asked why English was emphasised over Welsh. It was explained that this service was for children from foreign countries and the need to ensure that they had access to education. It was emphasised that it was a small team who had supported many children from Ukraine over the last few years, that were immersed in Welsh before learning English. It was highlighted that the title of the measure was an education term.

Concern was noted about the toileting policy, because asking children to be able to use the toilet before starting at school could be seen as a barrier to some families, especially children with additional learning needs. It was emphasised that guidelines were clear in terms of expectations and this did not include children with health conditions and additional learning needs. It was explained that by creating this policy, there was consistent guidance across the county.

Attention was drawn to exclusions in secondary schools, it was noted that 3 schools had excluded children for 100 days or longer. It was asked whether there was support for the children during these periods. In response, it was noted that the schools where exclusions were higher needed to look at them further and ensure that they made the best use of the inclusion budget available.

It was noted that inclusion funding was received by schools, and it was highlighted that the problems were increasing, it was asked whether this was a concern. It was noted that it was a concern as it was inconsistent across the county and some schools did excellent work to support children. It was acknowledged that needs had changed. It was explained that a new unit would be opened to respond to behaviour challenges. It was noted that the unit was in Arfon as the demand was high in the area, and although there was not a specific location in Meirionnydd currently, the intention was to respond dynamically when the need arose.

RESOLVED

To accept the report and note the comments and to request further action on some of the comments in relation to the following areas:

- **Welsh Language and Language Centres**
- **Learning environment for children with specific conditions**
- **Type of buildings in terms of geographical locations plus transport costs**
- **Child absences and inclusion along with children excluded from education and who are homeschooled**
- **Data reliability where the database is small**
- **Costs relating to access to education specifically for low-income families and children excluded from school**
- **Appointment of Headteachers**
- **Timeliness in the delivery of the Education Strategy.**

9. CABINET MEMBER FOR ECONOMY PERFORMANCE REPORT

The report was submitted by the Cabinet Member, noting that it had been a very busy period for the department, with one grant cycle coming to an end whilst another was starting. It was highlighted that the department had 4 priority schemes in the Council Plan, three in the A Prosperous Gwynedd section and one as part of the A Caring Gwynedd programme. It was noted that good progress had been made against the milestones, but the risk common for the four was uncertainty about the future of the

budgets as they were funded by grant funding.

Members were guided through the plans, giving them a taste of the ongoing work, drawing attention to fields such as the significant work made to complete expenditure of the ARFOR programme and the Shared Prosperity Fund projects. It was highlighted that there was 49% less funding available for Gwynedd and the counties of north Wales whilst looking at the Shared Prosperity Fund, but work to identify the 2025/26 priorities had already started.

In terms of the department's day-to-day work, it was highlighted that there was concern that the number of pupils receiving swimming lessons in leisure centres continued to reduce as well as the dredging challenges in Pwllheli Hafan and Harbour. It was noted that the customer satisfaction level was high in many fields in the department, namely the archives service, museums, the arts and the libraries service.

During the discussion, the following observations and questions were presented:-

Attention was drawn to the reduction in the number of pupils receiving swimming lessons, highlighting that this was likely as a result of high transport costs to the centres. It was noted, although this was a problem seen in many rural areas, that the same picture was also seen in urban schools, specifically in deprived areas. It was asked for an analysis of swimming statistics to see the extent of the problem. In the discussion about swimming, it was also asked for an analysis of the users of Byw'n Iach leisure centres to see what the patterns were in terms of which areas used the facilities and in what areas. It was agreed to share the information with the members.

It was asked about the Growth Deal developments in north Wales, as it appeared that there was no progress. The department explained that many things were happening but there had been changes to various projects for many reasons. In terms of Gwynedd projects, it was noted that the Trawsfynydd project submitted by the Eginco company back in 2019 had now been withdrawn as the site was not favoured by the Welsh Government for further nuclear developments. Although the Leader attempted to divert the funding to an alternative project, it was resolved that it would not be possible to do this with any withdrawn project and a principle was set that a new application would have to be submitted. Consequently, it was noted that a new application to develop a Science Park on the site was in the process of being submitted.

Another application seen in Gwynedd as part of the Growth Deal was the Glynllifon application to develop a Rural Innovation Hub. As it was such a large project, there was a need to submit a planning application for a new entrance. As a result of opposition to the application by statutory organisations, it was noted that Coleg Llandrillo Menai was also looking at submitting another project.

Although the two projects above were not progressing, it was emphasised that two projects were progressing at Parc Glan Cegin, Bangor, as well as a Bangor University Project. It was expressed that projects were developing and the department was confident that Gwynedd would benefit from being part of the project. It was

acknowledged that the projects were moving slower than anticipated when the agreement was signed.

Disappointment was noted that projects were progressing so slowly, and it was expressed that there was a desire for the Committee to look at the matter in more detail, looking specifically at costs and the benefit for Gwynedd.

One member expressed that they were unaware of the plans in Trawsfynydd and the department agreed to send the original project to them, noting they were now dated and it was emphasised that Gwynedd was not part of the original project.

One member highlighted that Growth Deal projects were not seen in the south of the county where there was a true need for jobs and developments.

Attention was drawn to the good work being done by the Creating the Best Possible Circumstances in Gwynedd for Community Enterprises and Business to Thrive Scheme, and Support the People of Gwynedd into Work, with 184 supported to return to work this year and 232 received help to increase their ability to earn a good salary. It was asked whether there were figures for the previous years to see the figures in their context. The department explained that the team was doing excellent work, but it was entirely dependent on grant and the financial situation was fragile. It was expressed that figures were available and they would be shared with the committee.

The Committee asked about collaboration between departments, and how much discussion there was with departments such as Education in terms of swimming lessons, funding with the impact of the letting threshold of 184 days on small businesses and holiday accommodation, as well as the environment department with minor improvements to Gwynedd infrastructure in terms of making it attractive, e.g., car parks and pavements. The department explained that there was collaboration, highlighting the work associated with the Shared Prosperity Fund. It was detailed that there was very close collaboration with the Highways and Environment department to identify plans to improve city centres, and that workshops had been held with representation from Council departments to prioritise plans.

It was noted that there was a sense that there had not been much collaboration between the Planning department and the department in terms of developing tourism plans, highlighting the Glynllifon Growth Deal project for example. It was highlighted that there was close collaboration with the planning officers being members of project boards, such as the Slate Plan, but a planning application on the Glynllifon site had been refused following objections by statutory organisations beyond the Council, therefore it was not lack of collaboration that was the problem in this case.

Attention was drawn to the Caernarfon Food Festival committee's announcement that they would be taking a break for a year, partly due to the pressures on the small committee, and the department was asked for their support to help in the future. Support was expressed to hold discussions and to see whether the department could do more.

It was highlighted that Libraries were now more than a place to borrow books and they were community hubs. It was asked, with Neuadd Dwyfor thriving, what had caused such a positive change. The department responded, noting that libraries such as Tywyn was an example of what libraries could offer, and the department was developing a new strategy for the future which would incorporate the agenda of supporting people. In terms of Neuadd Dwyfor, it was noted that the substantial investment programme, as well as being accountable to the needs of the area and a good team had led to a positive change. It was highlighted, although the building was used much more, that it had not led to an increase in income as a result of increase in costs. It was noted that there were many lessons to be learned but it highlighted that co-locating services was vital.

RESOLVED

- **To accept the report, noting the observations;**
- **That consideration needs to be given to scrutiny of the benefit of the Growth Deal for Gwynedd including the alternative project in Trawsfynydd**
- **To ask the Economy and Community Department to provide three-year rolling data on numbers who have received return to work support**
- **To ask the Department to make a request to Byw'n Iach Company for user data;**
- **To request that the department seeks funding and wider support for the Caernarfon Food Festival and to demonstrate more clearly in the report that there was funding for social enterprises.**

10. CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE PERFORMANCE REPORT

The report was submitted by the Cabinet Member, noting that the purpose of the report was to provide an update on the field. It was expressed that the department was leading on 2 priorities in the Council Plan - Managing the Impact of National Budgetary Cuts and the Digital Plan. It was reported that progress was seen on both plans.

It was noted, in terms of measuring the whole department's performance, that 12% reported amber, which had received further attention as part of the measuring performance discussions, and 12% reported red, which was a cause for concern being updated regularly, reviewing whether there was a need to present a new measure.

Attention was drawn to those measuring as red. In terms of the Income Service, it was highlighted that the balance of the value of various debts over 6 months was almost £2m. It was expressed that a comprehensive review of the situation of old debts, as well as the implementation processes continued.

In the Taxation Service where the other two measures reported red, it was noted that the Ffordd Gwynedd review was being held to strengthen recovery arrangements, as the collection rates for Council Tax and Non-domestic Rates were lower than what they had been historically. It was explained that the reduction in the collection rates was also

partly due to the high number of self-catering holiday units that did not reach the criteria of 182 days for Business Rates transferred back to Council Tax during the second half of the year and they had been backdated and therefore a high percentage remained unpaid by the end of March 2025.

During the discussion, the following observations were made:

Many observations were received about the reduction in Council tax collection as a result of many houses changing to become holiday units paying non-domestic taxes and the impact of not reaching the threshold of the number of days to let a holiday accommodation under the new rules. The Head of Department noted that this was as a result of decisions by the District Valuer's Office which had been backdated and presented late in the financial year. It was noted that there had been a lack of communication which meant huge bills for individuals as a result of the premium and the department was aware of the mental anguish that this had created.

Committee Members noted the need for an Exempt Policy as this had an impact on many residents and enterprises within the county which highlighted an unfair situation. It was expressed that it had to be created to refine the exemption to provide a level of fairness and to have a level of flexibility in the tax bills sent out. The department responded, noting that it was a very complex situation, but the department was working to submit a policy and guidance in the autumn, but tax collection was essential to fund services. It was explained that the department needed to be careful as individuals could use it as a way to avoid paying taxes. It was noted that the arrangement was rigid without an exemption policy. It was asked for any policy to be presented to the Committee for discussion.

When discussing the same field, it was noted that there was a need for better discussions between the departments as the planning department would give planning permission to all types of camping sites, the finance department sent bills out to individuals and the economy department was trying to develop sustainable tourism. The need for the departments to discuss with each other further was noted.

It was asked for further information about how many individuals were in the lowest tax bands who had problems paying, and how many were being taken to court for not being able to pay. In response, it was noted that the information would be shared with the Committee. It was noted that specific arrangements were in place and support was available, but individuals had to ask for this support.

It was asked, in terms of the Digital Plan, how confident was the department that the Council's new payroll system would be in place when the old system came to an end at the end of 2026. The department responded, noting that there was no choice, and it had to be in place and that steps had been made to ensure that the plan was progressing, such as starting the procurement element, as well as receiving the Cabinet's approval to get one-off funds to be funded.

RESOLVED

- **To accept the report and to note the observations.**
- **To accept that a Council Tax Premium Exemption Policy needs to be drawn up**
- **That consideration needs to be given to whether there is a role for the Scrutiny Committee in the creation of the policy**
- **To ask the Finance Department to share data in relation to Council Tax prosecutions with members.**

11. CORPORATE AND LEGAL SERVICES AND THE WELSH LANGUAGE CABINET MEMBER PERFORMANCE REPORT

The report was submitted by the Cabinet Member, noting that she was going to start with the Corporate Services. It was expressed that it was good to report that there had been significant progress in the Council's strategic priorities, and that many successes were seen in the quantitative performances. It was noted that some challenges continued in fields such as occupational health, staff sickness and contracting promptly.

It was highlighted that there had been an increase in the procurement field, with an increase of 1% in the Council's use of local companies bringing the percentage to 59%. It was noted that work had been done in the employment field, but it was highlighted that the jobs matrix was now to be completed in 2025/26, but it was highlighted that a general staff training framework was now underway.

In the equality field, it was noted that a staff equality forum had been established, and work was being done to the Council's website to ensure that it was accessible. It was further highlighted that autism and neurodiversity training was available to staff.

Progress in the Women in Leadership plan was highlighted, with 45% of the individuals now having moved to senior positions, and it was noted that the development programmes and teatime chats for staff were continuing, as well as launching a new brand for the project.

The Legal Service was then discussed, highlighting that there were 4 teams - Legal, propriety of elections and registration and support for the coroner's service. It was highlighted that the officers receiving the service were satisfied or very satisfied with the service and an annual report from the heads of department reported positive results. It was explained that the department's staffing situation was now healthy, and locums were no longer used.

Attention was drawn to the fact that the propriety team had held training on the code of conduct for members, and that many members had still not completed it which was a

matter that arose often in the Standards Committee.

Staff from both departments were thanked for their work.

During the discussion, the following observations were made:

It was highlighted that many projects had slipped from this year to the following year, and it was asked whether this was as a result of a shortage of staff to complete the work. It was noted that the shortage of staff was not the problem but workloads could be heavy and, as a result, it was difficult to complete them without the impact on day-to-day work. The key job matrix was highlighted as an example, noting that many complications had come up, but work on the plan had restarted with a higher staff capacity in place to finish the work.

It was expressed that many measures had been highlighted red, it was asked whether this caused concern. In response, it was noted that many were red as a result of the high challenge that the department gave in terms of measures. However, it was noted that there were some concerns, such as the occupational health service where an increase in the number of referrals, as well as a shortage of nurses meant that the measure was red.

Attention was drawn to the 'An Efficient Gwynedd' priority field which incorporated a lot of Ffordd Gwynedd, and a lot of frustration was noted with Ffordd Gwynedd. It was highlighted that there were many examples of departments continuing to fail to respond to enquiries from members of the public which was very frustrating. It was asked whether Ffordd Gwynedd was working, as a lot of funding was provided for it, and if some Heads of Department did not operate in accordance with 'Ffordd Gwynedd', how were staff expected to do so. It was noted that the Ffordd Gwynedd contribution was completely dependent on the departments' collaboration. It was noted, in terms of the lack of response to correspondence, that the New Customer Care plan had been developed which would set standards to respond to enquiries. An understanding of the frustration and the need to track further was expressed.

Reference was made to the 'A Welsh Gwynedd' priority field and the promoting the use of the Welsh language project. It was noted that a two-year work programme was in place. It was asked what was being done and whether there were any measures. It was noted that a specific report on the matter would be presented to the Language Committee the following week, and it was explained, with a very small team, that demands were heavy, but they were trying to work in different ways.

Attention was drawn to the freedom of information requests, highlighting that the performance was slightly lower and it was asked whether there were specific fields or a pattern. The Head of Department explained that the Council received approximately 1000 requests per year, varying in their nature. It was highlighted that this field had been the subject of an investigation by external regulators and a report would be presented to the Governance and Audit Committee which would highlight the 10 recommendations to address and the work programme in response. It was noted that there was progress, but

staff needed training to better deal with them, as well as publishing more information so the information was available to the public.

It was highlighted that very good work was being done in the Democracy Team with documents being sent in a timely manner.

It was noted, in terms of questionnaires by the departments in the Legal Service, that only one in three of the heads of departments had responded. It was asked about the other parties such as individuals waiting for 106 contracts deriving from planning permission conditions. It was noted that departments' satisfaction showed the support that they received to fulfil their work, and therefore that it highlighted an important resource. In terms of the one in three responses, the need to ask heads of departments to respond to the annual questionnaire was noted. It was noted, in terms of the other parties, that it was difficult to get their views and how appropriate it would be.

It was asked how much work was being outsourced and how much was kept local. It was noted that the department tried not to outsource, but it was dependent on the nature and risk of the work. It was highlighted that they used a barrister, as well as solicitors in expert fields, but they tried to keep the benefit local.

Attention was drawn to prosecutions, specifically about non-attendance of children at school, it was asked whether there was more information, an increase in the number and whether costs were transferred to parents. It was explained that the Education department would be better-placed to respond and there was a need to look at the data and work with the department to give a full picture of the process. In terms of transferring costs - it was a matter for the Court to determine costs, this was not in the hands of the Council.

More information about the pilot to automatically register electors which was currently being conducted was requested. It was noted that the plan was for the whole of Gwynedd, and the Council was one of 5 counties part of the pilot. It was expressed that Gwynedd looked specifically at groups that were difficult to reach and worked with enterprises such as GISDA to support the Council to move the plan forward.

RESOLVED

- **To accept the report and to note the observations.**
- **To welcome that a detailed work programme is being drawn up to address the recommendations of the Information Commissioner's Office following an audit of the Council's arrangements in relation to freedom of information requests**
- **That the Committee receive an update on the Customer Care Plan as it develops**
- **That Heads of Department need to be encouraged to respond to the annual questionnaire from the Legal Service**
- **To request that the Scrutiny Committee receive information about**

prosecutions relating to pupil absences.

The meeting commenced at 10.30 am and concluded at 4.50 pm

CHAIRMAN

MEETING	Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee
DATE	16 October 2025
TITLE	Strategy for the economy of Gwynedd (2025 to 2035): presentation of draft document
REASON FOR SCRUTINY	At the request of the Committee and a desire to secure the input of Members to develop a strategy for the economy of Gwynedd.
THE AUTHORS OF THE REPORT	Sioned Williams Head of Economy and Community Dylan Griffiths Manager, Economic Development Service Nia Bowden Business Support Programme Manager
CABINET MEMBER	Cllr. R. Medwyn Hughes Cabinet Member for Economy and Community

1. WHY DOES IT NEED TO BE SCRUTINIZED?

- 1.1. In accordance with the request of the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee, to submit a draft strategy for the development of Gwynedd's economy between 2025 and 2035.
- 1.2. To give the Scrutiny Committee an opportunity to comment and provide feedback on the draft strategy before it is further developed.

2. WHAT EXACTLY NEEDS TO BE SCRUTINIZED?

- 2.1. There is no formal strategy for the development of Gwynedd's economy as a whole.
- 2.2. A Prosperous Gwynedd is one of the priorities of the [Cyngor Gwynedd Plan](#). It has highlighted that there is an increasing emphasis on regional collaboration, and that there is uncertainty about funding projects to strengthen Gwynedd's economy into the future. Within this context it was agreed that there was a need for a clear statement of intent from Gwynedd's partners of how we want the local economy to develop.
- 2.3. Following significant research and extensive consultation – including with the Scrutiny Committee – the Department for Economy and Community has produced an initial draft strategy for Gwynedd's economy that reflects the input received.
- 2.4. It is now desirable to receive further input and feedback from stakeholders and Council partners before confirming the content of the strategy.

3. SUMMARY AND KEY ISSUES

3.1. Comments and feedback are sought from the Scrutiny Committee on:

- Vision of the Strategy and description of the change needed (pp. 7, 19).
- The three themes that have been identified; Enterprise, Place and People (pp. 7, 20 - 23).
- The six priorities and associated areas of action (pp. 7, 20 - 23).
- The intention to work in partnership to realise the strategy (p. 24).
- Form and structure of the proposed action plan (p. 27 onwards).

4. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee

- 4.1. The [January 2024 committee](#) scrutinised the project 'Creating the best possible conditions in Gwynedd for businesses and community enterprises to thrive, and support the people of Gwynedd into work' within the Council Plan's Prosperous Gwynedd priority. It was noted that the need to ensure a clear statement of needs and priorities for Gwynedd's economy was emerging.
- 4.2. At the [February 2025 committee](#) the intention to develop a strategy for the economy of Gwynedd was confirmed; information on the state of the economy and initial stakeholder feedback was provided. There was a commitment to return to the Scrutiny Committee with a draft of the strategy to receive further input from Members.

Context of implementation

- 4.3. There is no strategic plan in place for the development of Gwynedd's economy as a whole. Other schemes have been adopted that either deal in part with the economy in the corporate context, or that address specific economic aspects.
- 4.4. The [Council's Plan](#) identifies A Prosperous Gwynedd as one of seven priorities and establishes four projects within the priority. The [Gwynedd and Snowdonia Sustainable Visiting Economy Plan](#) focuses on one part of the economy and [Area Ni Local Regeneration Plans](#) refer to the economic needs of communities but there is no formal strategic plan for the development of the economy as a whole over the longer term.
- 4.5. The field's funding structure for the future is also less certain due to:
- The Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) is coming to an end next year, uncertainty about the future of ARFOR and no successor to the Levelling Up Fund (LUF) which funds the Llewyrch o'r Llechi programme.
 - An increasing emphasis by the Welsh Government on regional collaboration, particularly in the context of Ambition North Wales and the economic wellbeing responsibility of the Joint Corporate Committee.
 - Significant investment by the Welsh and UK Governments in the Isle of Anglesey Free Port and the Flint and Wrexham Investment Zone, but no equivalent plans for Gwynedd.

The basis of the strategy

- 4.6. The strategy is derived from a quantitative analysis of the performance of Gwynedd's economy and the qualitative input of a wide range of stakeholders.
- 4.7. The performance and composition of the economy in comparison to the region, Wales and the UK was investigated and the context – local, regional, national and international – in which Gwynedd's economy operates, was considered. A review of other district strategies/plans was also undertaken to try to identify good practice
- 4.8. In autumn 2024, businesses in Gwynedd were invited to respond to a Business Survey. It was an opportunity for them to express the opportunities and challenges they faced, their intentions for the future and what support would be beneficial to them.
- 4.9. A cycle of interviews has also been conducted with stakeholders in order to understand the strategic and policy context implemented in it. It was an opportunity to share expertise and understand the opportunities, challenges and possibilities of working together. Externally, it includes the following organizations:
 - The Welsh Government
 - Ambition North Wales
 - North Wales Skills Partnership
 - Business Wales
 - Bangor University.
 - Snowdonia National Park Authority
 - ADRA
 - Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) Cymru
 - Gwynedd and Snowdonia Sustainable Tourism Partnership 2035
 - National Farmers' Union (NFW) and Farmers' Union of Wales (FUW)
 - Gwynedd Community Initiatives Network
 - Mantell Gwynedd
 - GISDA
- 4.10. On 9 July 2025, an item was presented to the Gwynedd SPF Advisory Group as a means of engaging with a further range of stakeholders across the private, third and public sectors.
- 4.11. Within the Council, conversations have taken place with officers in the following teams:
 - Welsh Language Officers (Corporate Services)
 - Procurement Unit Officers (Corporate Services)
 - Sustainable Visitor Economy Scheme Officers (Economy and Community)
 - "Llechan Lan" Strategy Officers (Corporate Leadership Team).

Form of strategy

4.12. An initial draft strategy for Gwynedd's economy is enclosed in [Appendix 1](#) for the receipt of feedback and comments from the Scrutiny Committee, the Council's partners developing the local economy and key stakeholders.

4.13. The document consists of two parts:

Part one:

OUR STRATEGY TO DEVELOP GWYNEDD'S ECONOMY FOR 2025 TO 2035

It is this part that recognises the need and sets out the long-term direction for developing an economy that works for the benefit of local residents and our communities.

This includes:

- A summary of Gwynedd's qualities and characteristics
- The case for action and the change that is needed
- The proposed vision
- Themes for action identified
- Priorities for each theme with action areas
- A method of measuring progress against the vision and priorities of the strategy

This part of the document also includes a section on the implementation of the strategy (section 8). You will find that securing a strategy for the Gwynedd area (not just for the Council) and working in partnership are core qualities which are reflected in the desire to establish a 'Gwynedd Economy Forum'.

Part Two

OUR DELIVERY PLAN TO DEVELOP GWYNEDD'S ECONOMY IN 2025/26

By its nature a strategy emphasizes a long-term effort to be realized through a range of activities over time.

The objectives of the strategy need to be translated into action and to this end an annual action plan for the strategy has been developed by the Gwynedd Economy Forum, and will be continuously updated.

The Action Plan will list a) plans to develop the economy that are already in place and b) those plans that are in the process of being developed, with the intention of targeting funding when available.

Operational and proposed plans will be measured against the priorities of the strategy and the areas that will benefit.

The strategy's first action plan for 2026/27 will be prepared by the Gwynedd Economy Forum once it has been established. In the meantime, an illustrated example of the proposed form of the Action Plan is included in the attached draft

document (appendix 1).

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1. The consultation that has underpinned the draft strategy is outlined in 4.6 to 4.11 above

6. THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS (WALES) ACT 2015

- 6.1. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 places a responsibility on public bodies in Wales to act in a sustainable manner and contribute to the well-being of today's generations, as well as future generations. It considers well-being in a holistic manner, including economic and social, environmental and cultural aspects.
- 6.2. Appendix 2 contains our Well-being Act assessment for the Strategy. It outlines Gwynedd's Economic Strategy, and how it has been developed, and meets the requirements and purpose of the Act, including the Principles of Sustainable Development (i.e., the Five Ways of Working) and the Seven Well-being Goals.

7. IMPACT ON THE CHARACTERISTICS OF EQUALITY AND THE WELSH LANGUAGE

- 7.1. Appendix 3 outlines the consideration given to the Welsh language in the Gwynedd Economic Strategy. It identifies the main features of the relationship between the Welsh language and the economy in Gwynedd, and shows how the Strategy responds to these features in order to strengthen the Welsh language.
- 7.2. The Equality Assessment will be prepared at the completion of the Strategy in its final form.

8. NEXT STEPS

- 8.1. The draft document is now being shared with local partners and key stakeholders.
- 8.2. Based on any feedback, the strategy will be modified and then designed ready for adoption.
- 8.3. The revised Strategy will be presented to Gwynedd Council's Cabinet early in the new year and will be adopted by the full Council in the spring.
- 8.4. Meanwhile, the Gwynedd Economy Forum will be informally established to draw up an action plan for 2026/27.

DRAFT FOR COMMENTS

(Final document to be designed / typeset)

FRONT PAGE

GWYNEDD 2035:

An innovative, productive, and low carbon economy that strengthens the Welsh language, creates new opportunities, and contributes to the well-being of all.

1. FOREWORD

Here in Gwynedd, we have a strong economic history that we can be proud of. From our world-renowned quarrying communities to our university and power stations – throughout Gwynedd there is evidence of considerable ingenuity and progressiveness.

But we don't want to settle for our past successes. Today, there is an abundance of potential in Gwynedd – in our residents, communities, and entrepreneurs. But that potential isn't necessarily always realised - there is still a significant gap between the performance of the economy in Gwynedd and the rest of Wales and the UK.

It is therefore a privilege to present this economic strategy which clearly sets out our long-term vision and priorities for Gwynedd's economy:

"An innovative, productive, and low carbon economy that strengthens the Welsh language, creates new opportunities, and contributes to the well-being of all."

Growth for its own sake is not our intention. We need to create an economy that brings prosperity to all – that creates new employment, reduces poverty and raises the quality of life across the county; which gives our people the opportunities they need to thrive and be able to stay in or return to their communities, with the Welsh language and the environment strengthened and protected. And at the heart of this, that Gwynedd's enterprises reach their full potential, are resilient and grow, and that the wealth created stays in the local area.

It is a vision that responds to the call for prosperity expressed by Gwynedd residents in the Ardal Ni consultation: calls for full-time higher paid jobs; for a more stable and diverse economy; for lively town centres; and for opportunities for our young people to thrive in Gwynedd.

We want an economy that gives everyone the opportunity to live fulfilling lives and reach their full potential, and that the natural and cultural resources that make our county so unique —the environment and the Welsh language— are strengthened by the economy.

Prosperity that is not only *sustainable* therefore, but that is *inclusive* and *fair* and restores the community, natural, and cultural wealth of our county.

With significant economic changes facing us, an exciting opportunity lies ahead to make Gwynedd a destination of excellence in new industries – in the creative and digital industries; in professional services; in clean energy and low-carbon activity; the life sciences; advanced manufacturing and aerospace. Similarly, we must back those industries that are already in Gwynedd and vital

to our communities, enterprises and residents – with the second largest area in Wales in terms of agricultural land, for example, we must nurture and add value to our traditional sectors as a solid foundation and as a full part of a modern and innovative economy.

As a result, we need a clear and strong voice to steer development that affects us and to retain benefits locally. It is for this purpose that this Economic Strategy has been compiled. It recognises that it will be necessary to collaborate with partners at all levels and influence them if we are to maximise opportunities and overcome challenges, and as the financial and economic policy landscape changes, the value and importance of this collaboration will increase.

I look forward to seeing this economic strategy deliver on its vision.

Cllr. R. Medwyn Hughes,
Cabinet Member for Economy and Community, Cyngor Gwynedd

Part One

**OUR STRATEGY TO DEVELOP GWYNEDD'S ECONOMY
FOR 2025 TO 2035**

2. SUMMARY

Gwynedd is an unique county. In its close-knit communities, natural beauty and vibrancy of the Welsh language, it has an identity and unique appeal that places it among the best places to live and work in Wales and beyond.

There is also a modern and innovative economy with significant potential; potential in the initiatives already found throughout the county, and opportunities in new industries and activity for a prosperous future for the people of Gwynedd.

But, much of this potential is yet to be released. According to several indicators, there is a significant gap between the economy of Gwynedd and the rest of Wales and the UK. In part because of this, it is too often felt that there are not the opportunities, the appropriate types of work and the wages needed to live fulfilling lives.

This Strategy responds to this gap. It is an honest assessment of today's economy but remains ambitious for the future. It will be operational until 2035. By identifying our strengths and weaknesses, the opportunities that exist in the county, and those areas that need improvement, the purpose of the Strategy is to unlock the full potential of our people and enterprises and create new benefits and opportunities. This Strategy is not just the Council's Strategy. It will take collaboration with partners at all levels—local, county, regional, and national—to make the biggest difference. Our vision is therefore to create:

"An innovative, productive, and low carbon economy that strengthens the Welsh language, creates new opportunities, and contributes to the well-being of all."

Growth for its own sake is not the intention. The purpose of the Strategy is to strengthen the economy in an inclusive and sustainable way; that everyone in Gwynedd—individuals, businesses, and community enterprises — genuinely benefit from the economy. It is a vision that focuses efforts on those values that mean the most to the people of Gwynedd:

- **To live with dignity:** Everyone should have enough to support themselves and their families, and to live a full and happy life **without going without.**
- **Opportunities:** Everyone should be able to access the opportunities they need for achieving their full potential, regardless of their socioeconomic background.
- **Fairness:** No area, person, or community should be excluded.
- **Local roots:** Gwynedd's enterprises are at the heart of Gwynedd's economy, and through them the wealth created in Gwynedd can be kept locally.
- **Sustainability:** The Welsh language and the environment, which together make Gwynedd such a special place to live, work and venture should be fostered and protected.

To achieve the vision, a monitoring and progress framework has been developed to measure the impact across the Strategy in all parts of the county.

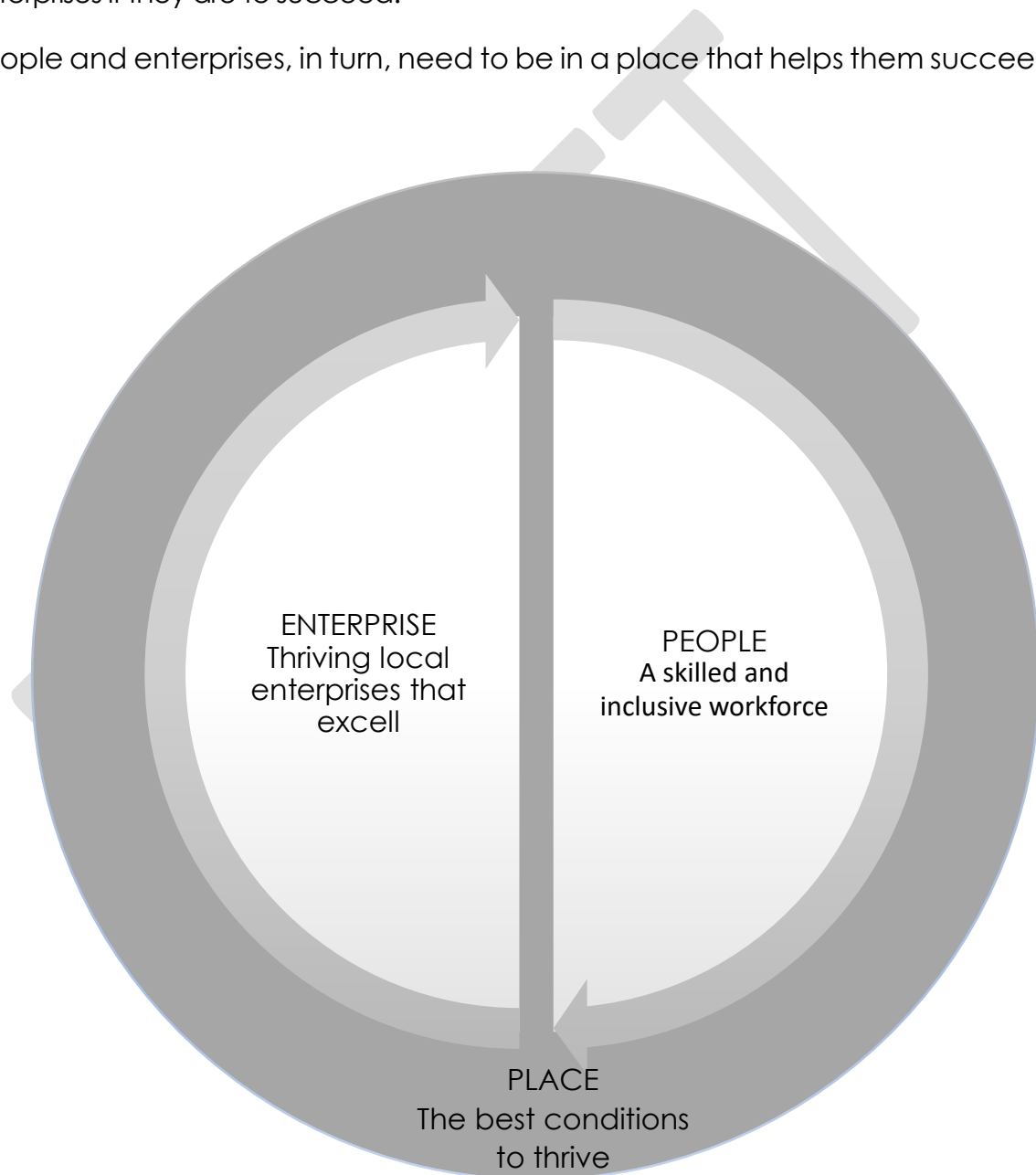
It is a vision that puts the people, communities, and enterprises of Gwynedd at its centre. There are three themes for implementation - *Enterprise, Place* and *People*.

People and enterprises need each other if they are to thrive and contribute positively to their communities.

Local commercial and community enterprises are key to generating a range of opportunities for local people to meet their needs and fulfil their potential.

Likewise, it is necessary to ensure that there are enough skilled people available to enterprises if they are to succeed.

People and enterprises, in turn, need to be in a place that helps them succeed.



For each of the three themes, two strategic priorities have been identified:

OUR VISION:

An innovative, productive, and low carbon economy that strengthens the Welsh language, creates new opportunities and contributes to the well-being of all.

- ENTERPRISE

Thriving Local Enterprises That Excel

- **PRIORITY ONE**

Maximising the value of our present economy

Release potential, increase value and strengthen the resilience of enterprises and sectors already found in Gwynedd, and support them to reduce emissions.

- **PRIORITY TWO**

Seizing new opportunities

Capitalise on, and support new industries and activities with significant potential, and ensure that the prosperity created stays local

- PLACE

The best conditions to thrive.

- **PRIORITY THREE**

Optimal connectivity and infrastructure

Working for better connectivity and business infrastructure to boost the economy.

- **PRIORITY FOUR**

A good place to live, work and venture.

Promoting Gwynedd as a great place to live, work and venture, celebrating our special identity

- PEOPLE

A skilled and inclusive workforce

- **PRIORITY FIVE**

Securing a skilled workforce

Nurturing, attracting, and retaining talent, and responding to the county's long-term skills needs.

- **PRIORITY SIX**

Supporting our people

Supporting the people of Gwynedd to reach their full potential, to have quality work, fair wages, and local opportunities.

3. GWYNEDD

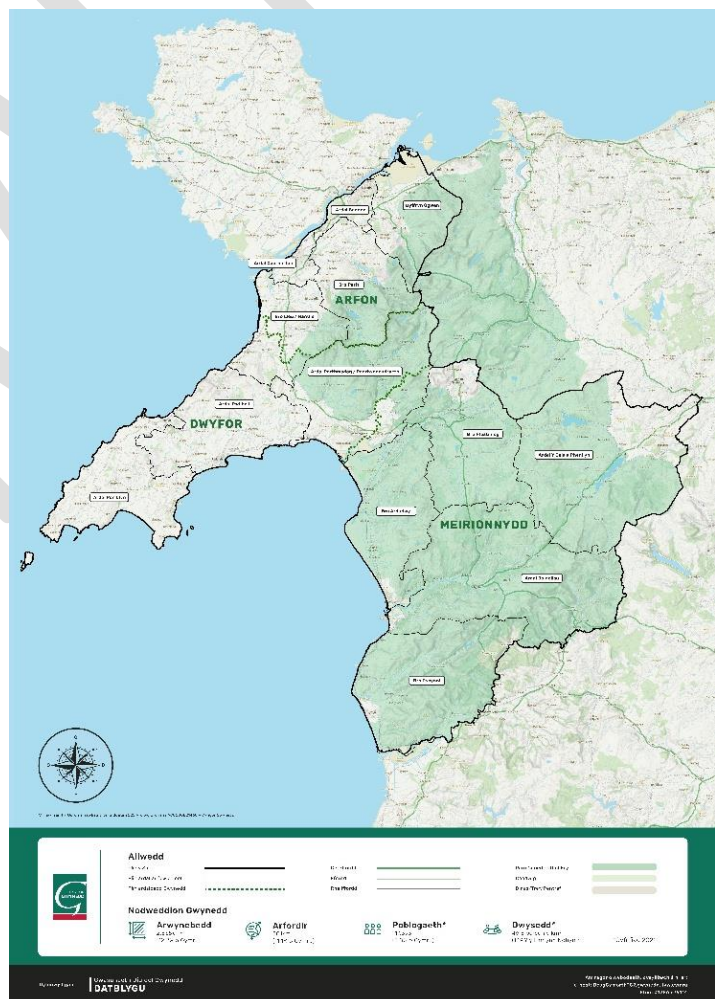
Gwynedd is the second largest county in Wales in terms of size. Situated in north-west Wales, Gwynedd stretches from Cardigan Bay in the west to the Menai Strait, with the Snowdonia National Park covering a significant part of the county. The spatial distribution of the population is shaped by this geography, with the majority living along the coast and lowland, particularly in the north of the county, and the remainder in villages, smaller towns or single settlements.

Gwynedd is an unique county with exceptional cultural and environmental richness. Gwynedd as a county has the highest percentage of Welsh speakers – and 92% of the county's local areas (LSOAs) are above the Commission for Welsh Speaking Communities' threshold for a higher concentration of Welsh speakers . The county is also environmentally rich and includes the mountains of Snowdonia, the Llŷn Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and the Bro Dyfi Biosphere Zone. There is also a world famous and unique heritage site, which is reflected in the two UNESCO World Heritage Sites—the Castles of Edward I and the Gwynedd Slate Landscape.

Population
117,000

Area
2,535km²

Population density
46 person per km²



***Below to be presented in graphic form.**

LABOUR MARKET

- 72.1% of the population of Gwynedd is employed, which is similar to the rate for the whole of Wales (73.4%) but significantly higher than the rate for across the United Kingdom.
- The proportion of the workforce that is self-employed is over 50% higher in Gwynedd than in Wales, 26% higher than across the UK.
- Gwynedd workers earn some of the lowest wages in the UK - £610.60 compared to £684.40 for Wales, and £728.30 for the UK.

PRODUCTIVITY

- In terms of productivity, GVA per person is fairly similar to the figure across North Wales, and Wales as a whole, but 33% less than the UK level.
- Considering GVA on a per-job basis, Gwynedd performs at a level 27% less than the United Kingdom, and 11.4% less than North Wales
- GVA figures per hour worked show not only that Gwynedd has the lowest figure in Wales and the Northwest of England, but that it also experienced the lowest growth between 2004 and 2022.

SKILLS

- There are fewer people of working age with no qualifications in Gwynedd (6.4%) than in North Wales (7.6%), or the UK (8.2%).
- The population of Gwynedd is more highly qualified than that of North Wales and the UK, with 44.2% of the population having a qualification above A Level.

ENTERPRISES IN THE COUNTY

- There are almost 13,000 indigenous businesses in Gwynedd
- 93.4% of these employ fewer than 10 people – this percentage is very similar to Wales and the UK
- Although there are only 225 "large" businesses in the County, this percentage (1.7%) is significantly higher than in North Wales and Wales as a whole.
- In turn, therefore, Gwynedd and Anglesey have the lowest percentage of medium-sized companies (1% compared to 1.6% for the UK).
- Gwynedd businesses are more likely to survive 5 years, with over half of those established in 2018 continuing to trade by 2023. This percentage is 39% higher than the across Wales, and 29% higher than the UK.

SECTOR

- Gwynedd has the highest percentage in North Wales of hospitality (14%) and agriculture (23% with Anglesey) businesses – sectors associated with low wages and seasonal contracts.
- At the other end of the spectrum, it has the lowest percentage of manufacturing businesses (4% with Conwy) across the region, that can bring stable, high-value employment.

DRAFT

4. THE CASE FOR ACTION

According to several indicators, there is a significant gap between the economy in Gwynedd and the rest of Wales and the UK. It represents a deep structural inequality and puts the people of Gwynedd at a relative disadvantage – limiting people's ability to get suitable jobs that offer security and fair wages, and limiting the potential of the local economy to improve living standards and life opportunities.

According to the [Competitiveness Index \(2025\)](#), Gwynedd is among the 10% of counties that are underperforming most economically across England and Wales – ranked 308th across 330 local areas, and the 8th lowest among Welsh counties.

It is a core challenge that has a direct impact on the well-being of the population in Gwynedd. Indeed, as can be seen below, the largest gaps show Gwynedd's underperformance in more than one [National Well-being Indicator](#) covering the Welsh economy:

GAPS IN GWYNEDD'S ECONOMY

1. WORKFORCE GAP

Unemployment rate is low, but the county's inactivity rate (i.e. proportion of the population aged 16-64 who are not in work) is higher than the North Wales and UK averages.

(Well-being Indicator 21: Proportion of population in work)

2. POPULATION GAP

The population is ageing faster than Wales and the UK, with a higher proportion of older people of retirement age and high levels of emigration among young people.

3. PAY GAP

The average weekly salary of a full-time worker and the gross disposable income of households has been consistently lower in Gwynedd since 2010 than the Welsh and UK averages.

(Well-being Indicators 10: Gross Household Disposing Income Per Head)

4. WORKING CONDITIONS GAP

Significantly higher rates of employees in Gwynedd are part-time and seasonal workers compared to Wales and the UK.

(Well-being Indicator 16: The percentage of the population who are in employment, on permanent contracts and earning the Real Living Wage).

5. WELL-BEING GAP

Low wages and part-time jobs cause high levels of poverty in rural and urban areas alike, with in-work poverty particularly high in Gwynedd compared to Wales and the UK.

(Well-being Indicators 18: Percentage of households in poverty compared to the UK)

(Well-being Indicator 19: Percentage of households in material deprivation)

6. PRODUCTIVITY GAP

The value of what is produced in Gwynedd (per hour worked; per job filled) is significantly lower than the Welsh and UK averages in 2023, and the productivity growth rate in Gwynedd is significantly lower than the Wales and UK averages since 2004.

(Well-being Indicator 09: Gross value added [GVA] per hour worked compared to the UK average)

7. INDUSTRIAL GAP

A relatively narrow range of industries, with employees and enterprises more numerous in a smaller range of industries.

8. NEW ENTERPRISE GAP

The business birth rate in Gwynedd is among the lowest across Welsh counties in 2023 - below the Welsh national average and significantly below the UK average.

9. HIGH PERFORMANCE GAP

The percentage of enterprises that saw a 20% increase in the number of employees over a three-year period was consistently lower in Gwynedd than in Wales and the UK between 2018 and 2023.

10. DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY GAP

The percentage of properties with access to gigabyte connectivity (>1,000 Mbps) is below the Welsh and UK averages, with a higher

proportion of properties also with the weak connectivity (<30 Mbps).
Reach of 4G – and 5G is also lower in Gwynedd.
(Well-being Indicator 50: Digital inclusion)

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1. THE CHANGE NEEDED

The gaps facing Gwynedd demonstrate a clear need for fundamental change in the economy: a change that, on the one hand, reduces the relative underperformance of the economy and creates the best possible conditions for our enterprises, and on the other hand, a change that has a direct positive impact on the well-being of our people and life opportunities in Gwynedd. The Strategy has been designed to develop and support these types of change.

At the level of the whole economy it includes:

- **Raising the productivity levels of our enterprises and employees**, to stimulate higher wages and better working conditions.
- **Increasing the competitiveness of our local enterprises**, so that they are more effective and efficient, achieve their long-term business objectives and create quality jobs.
- **Strengthening the county's business infrastructure and digital connectivity** to create the best possible conditions for enterprise.
- **Creating a more diverse industrial base** with local enterprises in a range of industries creating new opportunities and a more resilient economy.
- **Supporting our people to gain the skills they need** so that they, along with the enterprises that employ them, can take full advantage of any opportunities.
- **Retaining more of the wealth created locally in Gwynedd** to maximise benefits for Gwynedd's people, enterprises and communities.
- **Building a net zero and naturally Welsh economy that** is environmentally and culturally sustainable.

These changes are primarily being implemented to make a positive difference to the lives of the people of Gwynedd. The most important outcomes affecting the people of Gwynedd are:

- Higher Wages and gross household income;
- More people employed in stable jobs;
- Lower levels of poverty and socio-economic disadvantage;
- A wider range of local employment opportunities;
- More people able to stay, live and work in their local communities;
- More people enjoying their work and reaching their full potential;
- A green economy that protects the county's exceptional natural environment, and
- A Welsh language economy that increases the use and visibility of the Welsh language with customers and in the workplace throughout Gwynedd.

6. DEVELOPING THE STRATEGY FOR THE GWYNEDD ECONOMY

The Strategy was developed through desktop research and extensive stakeholder engagement between 2024 and 2025. It is an honest assessment of the economy but also ambitious, and has been designed in light of the opportunities, challenges and needs found in Gwynedd, and an understanding of what can be achieved by Cyngor Gwynedd and its partners.

Research and Engagement

Gwynedd's economic profile was considered firstly - its characteristics and performance, how it relates to other areas of Wales and the UK, and the issues that need to be addressed most. Through the SWOT and PESTLE exercises, the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats facing Gwynedd were highlighted, as well as the wider influences that affect Gwynedd today or are likely to in the future. Alongside this research, the strategic and policy context at county, regional and national level (Wales and UK) was mapped, to build upon, complement and maximise the benefit for Gwynedd from the broadest range of economic development activities.

We also engaged extensively with stakeholders, the Council's strategic partners, and the county's businesses and residents. A series of one-on-one meetings were organised with the Council's main economic development partners at county, regional and national level and, in order to attract input from Gwynedd's business community, the Council's Business Surveys were used in 2024 and 2025 to gauge businesses' future intentions, the opportunities and challenges they face, and the types of support desired.

The public consultations that the Council already has have also been used. It includes the significant consultation undertaken about the economy and communities of Gwynedd – Ardal Ni Consultation; messages from the people of Gwynedd about what they feel is good about their local areas, things that are not as good, and what they feel needs to change. It is a useful measure of what is important to the people of Gwynedd and the type of economy they wish to see.

Forces and collaboration

Businesses, community enterprises and employers in Gwynedd have a key role to play throughout this Strategy. It is through them that many of the changes sought will bear fruit, and it requires that we support them – whether with the direct powers of the Council, or our partners. Areas of local influence may include:

- Business development grants;
- Development loans;
- Beautification and regeneration schemes;

- Business and non-domestic tax administration – discounts and relief;
- Business licences and trading standards;
- Land, property and business units;
- Planning and building control;
- Public procurement, tendering and expenditure;
- Career support and advice;
- Education and skills.

Of course, many of these areas are shaped by national policy – and many of the largest forces are in those layers of government, both in the UK Government and the Welsh Government. It requires collaboration and efforts to influence to ensure maximum benefit for Gwynedd.

The strategic and policy context

This collaboration requires a full understanding of the policy and strategic context implemented in it, particularly in the areas of economic development. The Strategy responds to this context and builds on what is already in place, in order to add value and maximise benefits for Gwynedd. This context will be monitored over the full duration of the Strategy, 2025-35, to ensure that the action taken as a result is alive to wider policy changes.

Local Areas

- [Our Area: Local Regeneration Plans:](#) In 2022, Cyngor Gwynedd undertook a consultation exercise with communities across the county; The work resulted in 13 local regeneration plans. The plans are living documents that are updated annually with input from the communities and collectively form a regeneration framework for the county. Issues related to the economy are a common theme across the plans and their inclusion has informed this strategy. In turn, the strategy is a means of meeting some of the common needs.
- [Regeneration:](#) Eight plans to improve Gwynedd's main commercial centres have been drawn up which will guide future investment.
- [Local and community schemes:](#) Throughout Gwynedd, there are networks that operate locally - town and community councils and wider local forums. Many of these bodies have documents that set out local priorities and needs.

Gwynedd

- [The Cyngor Gwynedd Plan 2023-28](#): The Council's corporate plan identifies a Prosperous Gwynedd among its strategic priorities. The aim is to *"strengthen the economy and support the residents of Gwynedd to earn decent wages"*. The Plan outlines Cyngor Gwynedd's priorities within the area for the period in question.
- [Gwynedd and Eryri Sustainable Visitor Economy 2035](#): The Strategic Plan has been adopted by Cyngor Gwynedd and the Eryri National Park Authority to realise their principles for the visiting economy to *celebrate, respect and protect our communities, language, culture and heritage; maintain and respect our environment and ensure that the benefits to the communities of Gwynedd and Eryri outweigh any disadvantages*.
- [Cynllun Eryri - Home](#): Cynllun Eryri is the Eryri National Park Authority's Statutory Management Plan to protect the unique qualities of Eryri. It is a joint plan with a broad partnership to ensure that *Eryri is a great place to live, develop and work in* is among the desired outcomes.
- [Planning Policy](#): in terms of town and country planning the territory of Gwynedd is divided between the planning authorities [Cyngor Gwynedd](#) and [Eryri National Park Authority](#), and as a result two Local Development Plans control land use including land for employment.

Regional

- [Ambition North Wales | Growth Deal](#): Through Ambition North Wales, the Growth Plan has secured funding of £120 million from the Welsh Government and £120 million from the UK Government to invest in a selection of projects across five programmes. The Plan aims to produce 4,000 jobs by 2036 - it is now led by the North Wales Joint Corporate Committee which brings together six Local Authorities and the Eryri National Park Authority to address regional priorities.
- [North Wales Skills and Employment Plan 2023-2025](#): The North Wales Skills Partnership identifies the needs of employers and employees within the economy and offers guidance to organisations on how to meet the needs of employers.
- [North Wales regional economic framework](#): In 2021 North Wales Ambition and the Welsh Government (along with the other regions of Wales) published a framework outlining how the region is working towards common priorities.
- [ARFOR Programme](#): ARFOR is a partnership of Anglesey, Gwynedd, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire councils funded by the Welsh Government. ARFOR looks at the socio-economic challenges that have an impact on the viability of the Welsh language in those areas with a high density of Welsh speakers and focuses on economic planning that will benefit indigenous Welsh communities and, in turn, benefit the language.

Wales

- [Regional investment in Wales: framework](#): This is the Welsh Government's announcement outlining their proposed approach for regional investment, combining national, regional and local action.
- [Economic mission: priorities for a stronger economy](#): The Welsh Government's priorities for building a more prosperous, equitable and greener economy are based on four priority areas; *green prosperity and just transition, supporting young people, stronger regional collaboration and investing in growth*. The document also emphasizes growth that is inclusive.
- [Foundational economy: mission statement](#): The mission is the statement of the Welsh Government's priorities for the sectors they consider fundamental to the economy including health and care services, social housing management, home and commercial building construction, energy and utilities, food, high street shops and services, tourism and public transport
- [Innovation strategy for Wales](#): The Welsh Government's strategy on how to use innovation to improve the lives of people in Wales and boost the economy.
- [Home - Future Generations Wales](#): Responsibility is placed on public bodies in Wales to consider the well-being of the population and future generations, and to act in accordance with the Five Ways of Working and the Seven Well-being Goals. This Strategy is built on the principles and purpose of this Act, and this is fully explained in Annex A.

United Kingdom

- [Kickstarting Economic Growth](#) (Economy Mission) : Economic growth is the top priority of the current government in London. The goal is to increase productivity and create a competitive, diverse, and innovative economy.
- 1. [Industrial Strategy 2035](#): The UK Government's industrial strategy, *Invest 2035*, is central to the UK Government's Economy Mission. It identifies eight strategically important growth sectors based on their growth potential and identifies a combination of interventions to support them. The Government's Artificial Intelligence Action Plan is also central to the growth agenda and seeks to increase the use of the technology, which will also be key among Gwynedd's enterprises and the wider economy.

7. PRIORITIES OF THE STRATEGY

OUR VISION:

An innovative, productive and low carbon economy that strengthens the Welsh language, creates new opportunities and contributes to the well-being of all.

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Enterprise Theme

Thriving Local Enterprises That Excel

PRIORITY ONE: Maximizing the value of our current economy

Aim (what?):

Releasing potential, increasing value and strengthening the resilience of the enterprises and sectors already found in Gwynedd, to support them to reduce emissions

Areas of activity (how?):

- 1.1. Supporting enterprises to become more productive and competitive, and create more value.
- 1.2. Supporting enterprises to become more efficient, and reduce costs and waste.
- 1.3. Supporting enterprises to adopt and/or respond to new technologies.
- 1.4. Supporting local enterprises to reach new markets
- 1.5. Support succession plans that retain local ownership.
- 1.6. Keep more public spending local.
- 1.7. Regular engagement with Gwynedd initiatives to highlight business opportunities and knowledge.
- 1.8. Supporting the transition to a net zero economy and seizing opportunities.
- 1.9. Encouraging micro and small enterprises to work together in order to build on each other's strengths.

PRIORITY TWO: Seizing new opportunities

Aim (what?):

To capitalise on and support new industries and activities with significant potential, and to ensure that the prosperity created remains local

Areas of activity (how?):

- 2.1. Capitalising on significant investment in the North Wales region to maximise the benefits for Gwynedd.
- 2.2. Direct resources to local enterprises with potential in new industries and activities, in order to maintain local prosperity.

- 2.3. Support local enterprises to take advantage of alternative and private investment opportunities.
- 2.4. Maximise our strategic assets with the potential to attract significant developments.
- 2.5. Attract and ensure that new developments in Gwynedd contribute to the communities in which they are located.
- 2.6 Ensure that Gwynedd takes advantage of opportunities arising from major changes in the global economy.

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Place Theme

The best conditions to thrive

PRIORITY THREE: Optimal connectivity and infrastructure

Aim (what?):

Action for better connectivity, spaces and business infrastructure

Areas of activity (how?):

- 3.1. Expand access to optimal digital connectivity in areas where it is weak.
- 3.2. Push for improvements in transport to facilitate the mobility of people locally.
- 3.3. Push for improvements to Gwynedd's road network to facilitate business development.
- 3.4. Push for improvements in grid capacity and utility infrastructure locally.
- 3.5. Support town centre regeneration schemes.

PRIORITY FOUR: A good place to live, work and venture

Aim (what?):

Promoting Gwynedd as a great place to live, work and venture, celebrating our unique identity

Areas of activity (how?):

- 4.1. Strengthening self-confidence and the belief that success can be achieved in Gwynedd.
- 4.2. To energise and support Gwynedd's unique cultural and social scene.
- 4.3. Strengthening the use and visibility of the Welsh language as an unique aspect of Gwynedd's economy.
- 4.4. Engaging with Gwynedd's "diaspora" to bring different experience, expertise and capital back to Gwynedd.
- 4.5. Encouraging more people and enterprises to buy locally.

People Theme

A skilled and inclusive workforce

PRIORITY FIVE: Ensure a skilled workforce

Aim (what?):

Nurturing, attracting and retaining talent, and responding to the county's long-term skills needs

Areas of activity (how?):

- 5.1. Supporting Gwynedd enterprises to overcome recruitment challenges and skills needs.
- 5.2. Working with education sector partners to plan for long-term skills needs.
- 5.3. Keeping in touch with young people who are leaving Gwynedd, or who are considering doing so, to show the job opportunities available in Gwynedd.
- 5.4. Promoting talent attraction and development schemes
- 5.5. Supporting young people who are not in employment, training or education to seize opportunities and reach their full potential.
- 5.6. Supporting volunteering opportunities.

PRIORITY SIX: Supporting our people

Aim (what?):

To support the people of Gwynedd to reach their full potential, to access quality work, fair wages and opportunities locally

Areas of activity (how?):

- 6.1. Supporting people into work who are unemployed, inactive or facing additional challenges.
- 6.2. Supporting people in work to get to a better job with higher wages or more secure working conditions.
- 6.3. Promoting the Real Living Wage among the county's employers
- 6.4. Promoting inclusive forms of employment to make it easier for people to be able to work.
- 6.5. Promoting secure job opportunities to the people of Gwynedd.

- 6.6 Supporting older people of retirement age to continue working and volunteering, where they want to do so.

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8. THE STRATEGY IN ACTION

Working through partnership

The Strategy is not a document for an individual organisation, its realisation will require an effort across organisations and sectors.

We will build on the positive experience of implementing the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the appreciation organisations have expressed of the opportunity to come together to collaborate, coordinate their efforts and voice the needs of their stakeholders and establish a '**Gwynedd Economy Forum**' to implement the Strategy.

The Forum's membership will include the major organisations that contribute to local prosperity and the bodies that work to develop an economy that benefits our communities. The Forum will bring together local partners from the public, private and third sectors; relevant regional and national organisations will also be involved in the Forum.

We will ensure that different parts of Gwynedd have a voice to ensure that there is awareness of the diversity which exists across the county.

The Forum will formally meet three times a year, in order to:

1. Draw up and co-ordinate an annual Delivery Plan for the Strategy
2. Monitor individual activities and their individual and composite outputs/outcomes
3. Maintain an overview of progress towards achieving the Strategy
4. Review and update the Strategy as necessary
5. Maintain an overview of the area and wider developments relevant to the economy of Gwynedd and to lobby in favour of our needs.
6. Promote and facilitate collaboration among organisations with a role in the development of the county's economy and other partnerships/forums.

Action Plan for the Strategy

The Strategy establishes the aim and identifies an approach to address the long-term economic challenges that have been identified for Gwynedd.

A Delivery Plan will be developed annually under the guidance of the Gwynedd Economy Forum to turn the Strategy into action. The Plan will include activity already underway and projects in progress, setting out their alignment with the Strategy and the areas that will benefit.

The scheme will also enable the Forum to identify gaps in provision and to influence regional and national plans.

Monitoring, evaluation and review

Being able to measure what plans and activities individually achieve, and their composite impact is key.

To this end we have set out a series of indicators to measure:

- OUTPUTS

The direct product of a project or activity

- OUTCOMES

Mid-term gains derived from plans/activities reflecting a change in behaviour

- IMPACT

Indicators of long-term, strategic change over a period of years

By having a consistent selection of indicators, it will be possible to evaluate the impact of activities and review our progress against the priorities of the Strategy.

The indicators identified reflect the change needed and the priorities within the Strategy:

A framework for monitoring and evaluating what is being achieved

Change needed (SECTION V)

Change in the economy

1. Raising the productivity levels of our enterprises and employees;
2. Increasing the competitiveness of our indigenous enterprises;
3. Strengthening digital connectivity and the county's business infrastructure;
4. Creating a more diverse industrial base;
5. Supporting our people to gain the skills they need;
6. To keep more of the wealth created in Gwynedd local;
7. Building a net zero and natural economy.

A positive difference to lives

1. Higher wages and gross household income;
2. More people employed in stable jobs;
3. Lower levels of poverty and socio-economic disadvantage;
4. A wider range of employment opportunities locally;
5. More people able to stay, live and work in their local communities;
6. More people find enjoyment in their work and feel that they are reaching their full potential;
7. A green economy that protects the county's exceptional natural environment, and
8. A Welsh language economy that increases the use and visibility of the Welsh language throughout Gwynedd, both with customers and in the workplace.

Priorities of the strategy (Section VII)

ENTERPRISE: Thriving Local Enterprises That Excel

1. Maximising the value of our current economy
2. Seizing new opportunities

PLACE: The best conditions to thrive

3. Optimal connectivity and infrastructure
4. A good place to live, work and venture

PEOPLE: a skilled and inclusive workforce

5. Securing a skilled workforce
6. Supporting our people

The outputs that plans will produce (short term)

- A1. Enterprises receiving support to adopt technology
- A2. Enterprises receiving succession support
- A3. Enterprises supported to switch to employee ownership
- A4. Enterprises supported to work together
- A5. Enterprises adopting green technology
- A6. Manufacturing enterprises receiving support to set up/grow
- A7. Enterprises in higher value sectors receiving support to set up/grow
- A8. Number of local enterprises engaging with business support
- A9. Enterprises receiving procurement support
- A10. Digital infrastructure improvements supported
- A11. Major developments engaged
- A12. Number supported to secure a job
- A13. Number supported to upskill
- A14. Number of businesses/enterprises committing to the actual living wage
- A15. Number of businesses / enterprises committing to using more Welsh
- A16. Towns receiving investment
- A17. Empty buildings returned to use
- A18. Work units built
- A19. Welsh speakers helped to secure a job and return to the area
- A20. Enterprises receiving recruitment help

Outcomes derived from activities (medium term)

- C1. Businesses remaining locally owned following founder's retirement
- C2. Enterprises are more productive as a result of support
- C3. Enterprises paying the actual living wage following receiving support
- C4. Enterprises using more Welsh following receiving support
- C5. Enterprises reducing their carbon footprint following support
- C6. Enterprises gaining access to private investment
- C7. Public spending with local enterprises
- C8. Major development spending with local businesses
- C9. Number securing a job after receiving support
- C10. Number remaining in employment after receiving support
- C11. Number increasing earnings (more hours/wages) after receiving support
- C12. Number gaining qualification after receiving support
- C13. Individuals/businesses have access to digital infrastructure
- C14. Residents living / visiting towns have received investment
- C15. Businesses located within built-up work units
- C16. People 50+ stay in work following support

Indicators that the strategy is having a positive impact:(long-term)

- E1. Gwynedd economy's productivity gap narrowing compared to Wales, UK and similar areas
- E2. Proportion of businesses hiring new employees closer to average Wales/UK
- E3. Share of medium-sized businesses has grown
- E4. Average pay gap with Wales and UK narrowing
- E5. Household income closer to average in Wales and the UK
- E6. Economic inactivity rate closer to average in Wales and UK
- E7. Part-time working rate closer to average in Wales and UK
- E8. Decrease in youth emigration rate
- E9. Digital infrastructure availability rate closer to average in Wales and the UK and better than in similar areas
- E10. Perceptions of Gwynedd as a good place to live/venture among young people improved
- E11. Commuting rate from the county has decreased
- E12. Rate of children in jobless households has decreased

Part Two

**OUR DELIVERY PLAN TO DEVELOP GWYNEDD'S
ECONOMY IN 2025/26**

Plans / activities in operation

Outline of plan / activity	Alignment with Strategy (✓✓✓high; ✓✓ medium; ✓low)						Implementation area / will benefit (✓+ location; ✓ benefits)												
	Enterprise		Place		People														
	1. Maximising the value of our current economy	2. Seizing New Opportunities	3. Optimal Connectivity and Infrastructure	4. A Good Place to Live, Work and Venture	5. Ensuring a Skilled Workforce	6. Supporting Our People	Bangor	Bro Ardudwy	Bro Dysynni	Bro Ffestiniog	Bro Lleu / Nantlle	Bro Peris	Caernarfon	Dolgellau	Dyffryn Ogwen	Pen Llŷn	Porthmadog / Penrhynau deudraeth	Pwllheli	Y Bala a Phenllyn
Construction of 10 new work units at Snowdonia Business Park in Minffordd Investment: £2.95M Lead by Cyngor Gwynedd – construction work to be completed <u>September 2026</u> Main outputs / outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 work units built 10 businesses located within built-up work units 	✓✓		✓✓✓					✓		✓							✓+		
'Supportive Action' scheme – providing support to prevent vulnerable students in Further Education from leaving Investment: £368k Grŵp Llandrillo-Menai leads – funded until March 2026 Main outputs / results: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 200 students engage with key worker support services 200 students in education or training 						✓✓✓	✓+	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓+	✓	✓	✓	✓+	✓
'EGNI' scheme to train construction workers and others to acquire green technology and business skills Investment: £330k Grŵp Llandrillo-Menai leads – funded until March 2026 Main outputs / results:	✓				✓✓	✓✓✓	✓+	✓	✓	✓	✓+	✓	✓	✓+	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Outline of plan / activity	Alignment with Strategy (✓✓✓high; ✓✓ medium; ✓low)						Implementation area / will benefit (✓+ location; ✓ benefits)												
	Enterprise		Place		People		Bangor	Bro Ardudwy	Bro Dysynni	Bro Ffestiniog	Bro Lleu / Nantlle	Bro Peris	Caernarfon	Dolgellau	Dyffryn Ogwen	Pen Llŷn	Porthmadog / Penthyndeudraeth	Pwllheli	Y Bala a Phenllyn
	1. Maximising the value of our current economy	2. Seizing New Opportunities	3. Optimal Connectivity and Infrastructure	4. A Good Place to Live, Work and Venture	5. Ensuring a Skilled Workforce	6. Supporting Our People													
<ul style="list-style-type: none">80 employees gain a qualification or complete a training course																			
<p>Provide a Resilience Fund to help businesses reduce costs and/or increase income</p> <p>Investment: £1.07M</p> <p>Gwynedd Council leads – funded until March 2026</p> <p>Main outputs / results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">70 enterprises receive grants170 enterprises receive non-financial support15 jobs created30 jobs protected	✓✓✓	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>Providing vouchers for businesses to receive expertise / training from Bangor University</p> <p>Investment: £90k</p> <p>Bangor University leads – funded until March 2026</p> <p>Main outputs / results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">10 enterprises receiving non-financial support	✓✓✓	✓✓					✓+	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>'Môr Ni Gwynedd' scheme to help local fishing industry</p> <p>Investment: £175k</p> <p>Bangor University leads – funded until March 2026</p> <p>Main outputs / results:</p>	✓✓✓						✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		

Outline of plan / activity	Alignment with Strategy (✓✓✓high; ✓✓ medium; ✓low)						Implementation area / will benefit (✓+ location; ✓ benefits)													
	Enterprise		Place		People															
	1. Maximising the value of our current economy	2. Seizing New Opportunities	3. Optimal Connectivity and Infrastructure	4. A Good Place to Live, Work and Venture	5. Ensuring a Skilled Workforce	6. Supporting Our People	Bangor	Bro Ardudwy	Bro Dysynni	Bro Ffestiniog	Bro Lleu / Nantlle	Bro Peris	Caernarfon	Dolgellau	Dyffryn Ogwen	Pen Llŷn	Porthmadog / Penthyndeudraeth	Pwllheli	Y Bala a Phenllyn	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Promoting the seafood businesses to 500 people																				
<p>'Capitalising on the North Wales Growth Vision' scheme to encourage and support local enterprises and communities to take advantage of the growth plan's energy and digital programmes</p> <p>Investment: £68k</p> <p>Ambition North Wales leads – funded to March 2026</p> <p>Main outputs / results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">13 agricultural businesses supported to increase their use of technology	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>Providing specialist support to social enterprises in terms of legal and financial requirements, and for mature businesses to transition to workforce ownership</p> <p>Investment: £135k</p> <p>Scope leads – funded to March 2026</p> <p>Main outputs / results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">12 enterprises have received non-financial support4 new initiatives created24 jobs protected	✓✓✓	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>To maintain the provision of an Enterprise Hub in Gwynedd to provide additional support to support the start of new enterprises and help under-represented groups.</p> <p>Investment: £210k</p>	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓		✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Outline of plan / activity	Alignment with Strategy (✓✓✓high; ✓✓ medium; ✓low)						Implementation area / will benefit (✓+ location; ✓ benefits)													
	Enterprise		Place		People		Bangor	Bro Ardudwy	Bro Dysynni	Bro Ffestiniog	Bro Lleu / Nantlle	Bro Peris	Caernarfon	Dolgellau	Dyffryn Ogwen	Pen Llŷn	Porthmadog / Penrhynedeudraeth	Pwllheli	Y Bala a Phenllyn	
	1. Maximising the value of our current economy	2. Seizing New Opportunities	3. Optimal Connectivity and Infrastructure	4. A Good Place to Live, Work and Venture	5. Ensuring a Skilled Workforce	6. Supporting Our People														
Menter Môn leads – funded until March 2026 Main outputs / results: <ul style="list-style-type: none">63 enterprises have received non-financial support18 new initiatives created																				
A programme of visual improvements for the towns and villages of Gwynedd Investment: £1.35M Gwynedd Council leads with town and community councils - work to be completed March 2026 Main outputs / results: <ul style="list-style-type: none">55 town and community councils awarded a grant22 amenities or facilities have been created or improved	✓		✓	✓✓✓			✓+	✓+	✓+	✓+	✓+	✓+	✓+	✓+	✓+	✓+	✓+	✓+	✓+	✓+
The 'Skills and Work Potential of the People of Gwynedd' scheme to provide further support to prevent young people from becoming unemployed, and to support people to return to work or secure a better job. Investment: £1.14M Gwynedd Council with Gwynedd housing associations and Gisda - funded until March 2026 Main outputs / results: <ul style="list-style-type: none">66 people in employment36 people in education or training383 people supported with basic skills	✓				✓✓	✓✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Outline of plan / activity	Alignment with Strategy (✓✓✓high; ✓✓ medium; ✓low)						Implementation area / will benefit (✓+ location; ✓ benefits)												
	Enterprise		Place		People		Bangor	Bro Ardudwy	Bro Dysynni	Bro Ffestiniog	Bro Lleu / Nantlle	Bro Peris	Caernarfon	Dolgellau	Dyffryn Ogwen	Pen Llŷn	Porthmadog / Penthyndeudraeth	Pwllheli	Y Bala a Phenllyn
	1. Maximising the value of our current economy	2. Seizing New Opportunities	3. Optimal Connectivity and Infrastructure	4. A Good Place to Live, Work and Venture	5. Ensuring a Skilled Workforce	6. Supporting Our People													
<ul style="list-style-type: none">300 households received numeracy skills support																			
'Diwylliesiant' Scheme – an investment/support package and support for the arts, culture, leisure and tourism sectors. Investment: £1.37M Gwynedd Council leads - funded until March 2026 Main outputs / results: <ul style="list-style-type: none">30 organisations receiving grants£150k increase in visitor spending20 community-led arts, cultural, heritage and creative programmes	✓✓			✓✓✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Community Regeneration Support Fund – a fund to support organisations to lead and develop projects that respond to local needs and priorities Investment: £973K Gwynedd Council leads - funded until March 2026 Main outputs / results: <ul style="list-style-type: none">14 amenities or facilities have been created or improved36 enterprises received non-financial support	✓✓		✓	✓✓✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Voluntary Sector Fund – an investment within communities that creates opportunities for people of all ages to come together.	✓✓			✓✓✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Outline of plan / activity	Alignment with Strategy (✓✓✓high; ✓✓ medium; ✓low)						Implementation area / will benefit (✓+ location; ✓ benefits)													
	Enterprise		Place		People		Bangor	Bro Arudwy	Bro Dysynni	Bro Ffestiniog	Bro Lleu / Nantlle	Bro Peris	Caernarfon	Dolgellau	Dyffryn Ogwen	Pen Llyn	Porthmadog / Penthyndeudraeth	Pwllheli	Y Bala a Phenllyn	
	1. Maximising the value of our current economy	2. Seizing New Opportunities	3. Optimal Connectivity and Infrastructure	4. A Good Place to Live, Work and Venture	5. Ensuring a Skilled Workforce	6. Supporting Our People														
Investment: £650K Mantell Gwynedd leads - funded until March 2026 Main outputs / results: <ul style="list-style-type: none">75 local events supported50 volunteering opportunities created15 organisations receiving grants																				
A 'Healthy and Active' scheme that promotes physical activity and wellbeing in communities facing the greatest barriers to healthy living. Investment: £70K Actif North Wales leads – funded to March 2026 Main outputs / results: <ul style="list-style-type: none">15 local events supported8 organisations receiving grants						✓✓✓			✓	✓			✓							
'Gwynedd Community Resilience' Scheme – a package of support for people to access local services that will enable them to live longer, healthier and happier lives in their communities. Investment: £850K Gwynedd Council leads – funded until March 2026 Main outputs / results: <ul style="list-style-type: none">295 people with basic skills following support157 volunteering opportunities created					✓✓	✓✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Outline of plan / activity	Alignment with Strategy (✓✓✓high; ✓✓ medium; ✓low)						Implementation area / will benefit (✓+ location; ✓ benefits)												
	Enterprise		Place		People		Bangor	Bro Arludwy	Bro Dysynni	Bro Ffestiniog	Bro Lleu / Nantlle	Bro Peris	Caernarfon	Dolgellau	Dyffryn Ogwen	Pen Llŷn	Porthmadog / Penrhynudeudraeth	Pwllheli	Y Bala a Phenllyn
	1. Maximising the value of our current economy	2. Seizing New Opportunities	3. Optimal Connectivity and Infrastructure	4. A Good Place to Live, Work and Venture	5. Ensuring a Skilled Workforce	6. Supporting Our People													
'Recharge' scheme to help sustainability of local enterprises through advice on how to work more efficiently or diversify Investment: £50K Gwynedd Council leads – funded until September 2028 Main outputs / results: <ul style="list-style-type: none">25 businesses receive expert advice25 enterprises more productive as a result of support	✓✓✓	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
A support scheme for disadvantaged young people to look for a job, and help adults who are working but in poverty increase their income Investment: £240k Gwynedd Council leads – funded until September 2028 Main outputs / results: <ul style="list-style-type: none">60 receive support to upskill45 secure a job as a result of support30 secures qualification	✓				✓✓	✓✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
'Communities for Work and More' scheme providing support for individuals who have never worked or have not worked for a long time due to complex needs. Investment: £397k Gwynedd Council leads - funded until March 2026 Main outputs / results:	✓				✓✓	✓✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Outline of plan / activity	Alignment with Strategy (✓✓✓high; ✓✓ medium; ✓low)						Implementation area / will benefit (✓+ location; ✓ benefits)													
	Enterprise		Place		People		Bangor	Bro Arudwy	Bro Dysynni	Bro Ffestiniog	Bro Lleu / Nantlle	Bro Peris	Caernarfon	Dolgellau	Dyffryn Ogwen	Pen Llŷn	Porthmadog / Penthyndeudraeth	Pwllheli	Y Bala a Phenllyn	
	1. Maximising the value of our current economy	2. Seizing New Opportunities	3. Optimal Connectivity and Infrastructure	4. A Good Place to Live, Work and Venture	5. Ensuring a Skilled Workforce	6. Supporting Our People														
<ul style="list-style-type: none">270 receiving support to secure a job138 secure a job after receiving support																				
<p>North Wales Clean Energy Fund – support for clean energy and decarbonisation projects to reduce costs, improve efficiency and unlock new opportunities.</p> <p>Investment: £4.1M (on an equal split basis across the region)</p> <p>Ambition North Wales leading – funded to 2030?</p> <p>Main outputs/results (based on equal split):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">25 New jobs£16.6M of additional GVA	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
<p>Establishment of an Environmental Biotechnology Centre at the Henfaes site, Bangor</p> <p>Investment: £3.5M</p> <p>Bangor University leads – project within the North Wales Growth Plan – funded up to XXX</p> <p>Main outputs / results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">16 New posts (based on 25% of the regional total)Additional £3.75M GVA (based on 25% of regional total)	✓✓	✓✓✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓+	✓	✓	✓	✓	
<p>Development of Digital Signal Processing Centre, Bangor by increasing equipment range</p> <p>Investment: £3.5M</p>	✓✓	✓✓✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓+	✓	✓	✓	✓	

Outline of plan / activity	Alignment with Strategy (✓✓✓high; ✓✓ medium; ✓low)						Implementation area / will benefit (✓+ location; ✓ benefits)													
	Enterprise		Place		People		Bangor	Bro Arludwy	Bro Dysynni	Bro Ffestiniog	Bro Lleu / Nantlle	Bro Peris	Caernarfon	Dolgellau	Dyffryn Ogwen	Pen Llŷn	Porthmadog / Penrhyndeudraeth	Pwllheli	Y Bala a Phenllyn	
	1. Maximising the value of our current economy	2. Seizing New Opportunities	3. Optimal Connectivity and Infrastructure	4. A Good Place to Live, Work and Venture	5. Ensuring a Skilled Workforce	6. Supporting Our People														
<p>Bangor University leads – project within the North Wales Growth Plan – funded up to XXX</p> <p>Main outputs/results (based on equal split):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">16 New posts (on an equal split basis):Additional £3.75M GVA (on an equal split basis):																				
<p>An 'Advanced Wireless' scheme to provide subsidies to help investment in new technology by private and public organisations.</p> <p>Investment: £3.1M (on an equal split basis across the region)</p> <p>Ambition North Wales leads – funded to 2029</p> <p>Main outputs/results (based on equal split):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">52 New jobsAdditional £21.6M GVA	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>A '4G plus' scheme to facilitate investment in North Wales' mobile broadband infrastructure.</p> <p>Investment: £31.03M (on an equal split basis across the region)</p> <p>North Wales ambition leads – funded to 2029</p> <p>Main outputs/results (based on equal split):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Extending access to a quality digital service	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>Construction of four works units at Parc Bryn Cegin, Bangor.</p>	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Outline of plan / activity	Alignment with Strategy (✓✓✓high; ✓✓ medium; ✓low)						Implementation area / will benefit (✓+ location; ✓ benefits)												
	Enterprise		Place		People		Bangor	Bro Arduwy	Bro Dysynni	Bro Ffestiniog	Bro Lleu / Nantlle	Bro Peris	Caernarfon	Dolgellau	Dyffryn Ogwen	Pen Llŷn	Porthmadog / Penthyndeudraeth	Pwllheli	Y Bala a Phenllyn
	1. Maximising the value of our current economy	2. Seizing New Opportunities	3. Optimal Connectivity and Infrastructure	4. A Good Place to Live, Work and Venture	5. Ensuring a Skilled Workforce	6. Supporting Our People													
<p>Investment: £6M</p> <p>Ambition North Wales leads – target to complete construction by 2026</p> <p>Main outputs / results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50 New jobs £20M of additional GVA 																			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First Phase of Glynllifon's Rural Economy Hub: Sheep's Milk Parlour <p>Investment: £16.8M</p> <p>Grŵp Llandrillo-Menai leads – project within North Wales Growth Plan – target to complete construction by 2027</p> <p>Main outputs / results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 95 New job indirectly £30M of additional GVA 	✓✓	✓				✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓+	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tourism Talent Network – a plan to develop tourism and hospitality skills for the future <p>Investment: £19M (on an equal split basis)</p> <p>Grŵp Llandrillo-Menai leads – project within North Wales Growth Plan – funded until 2029</p> <p>Main outputs/results (based on equal split):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> £10M of additional GVA Positioning the North as a centre of excellence for the tourism and hospitality sector 	✓				✓✓✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Outline of plan / activity	Alignment with Strategy (✓✓✓high; ✓✓ medium; ✓low)						Implementation area / will benefit (✓+ location; ✓ benefits)													
	Enterprise		Place		People		Bangor	Bro Arduwy	Bro Dysynni	Bro Ffestiniog	Bro Lleu / Nantlle	Bro Peris	Caernarfon	Dolgellau	Dyffryn Ogwen	Pen Llyn	Porthmadog / Penthyndeudraeth	Pwllheli	Y Bala a Phenllyn	
	1. Maximising the value of our current economy	2. Seizing New Opportunities	3. Optimal Connectivity and Infrastructure	4. A Good Place to Live, Work and Venture	5. Ensuring a Skilled Workforce	6. Supporting Our People														
Bangor Empty Shops Initiative – A pilot scheme to make improvements to empty shops in the centre of Bangor in order to restore them into commercial space. Investment: £2.27M White Advice Main outputs / results: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Restoration of 4 commercial properties	✓		✓✓	✓			✓+													
Redevelopment of the National Slate Museum – Transforming the museum in Llanberis to secure its future and contribution to the local visiting economy Investment: £22.1M Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales leads – part of the Llewyrch o'r Llechi programme – funded until March 2028 Main outputs / results: <ul style="list-style-type: none">14 jobs protected1900 volunteering opportunities createdOver 70 thousand visitors to a cultural attraction	✓✓			✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓+			✓	✓	✓			
Parc Padarn Upgrade – Part of a package of investments in strategic infrastructure in the Llewyrch o'r Llechi programme areas Investment: £2.78M Gwynedd Council leads - funded until March 2028	✓		✓	✓		✓						✓+								

Outline of plan / activity	Alignment with Strategy (✓✓✓high; ✓✓ medium; ✓low)						Implementation area / will benefit (✓+ location; ✓ benefits)													
	Enterprise		Place		People		Bangor	Bro Ardudwy	Bro Dysynni	Bro Ffestiniog	Bro Lleu / Nantlle	Bro Peris	Caernarfon	Dolgellau	Dyffryn Ogwen	Pen Llŷn	Porthmadog / Penthyndeudraeth	Pwllheli	Y Bala a Phenllyn	
	1. Maximising the value of our current economy	2. Seizing New Opportunities	3. Optimal Connectivity and Infrastructure	4. A Good Place to Live, Work and Venture	5. Ensuring a Skilled Workforce	6. Supporting Our People														
Main outputs / results: <ul style="list-style-type: none">2 jobs protected3km of upgraded footpaths7 heritage buildings restored																				
Upgrading Neuadd Ogwen, Bethesda – Part of a package of investments in strategic infrastructure in the Llewych o'r Llechi programme areas Investment: £701K Cwmni Tabernacl leads - funded to March 2028 Main outputs / results: <ul style="list-style-type: none">4 jobs secured	✓			✓											✓+					
Development of Yr Hen Bost, Bethesda – Part of a package of investments in strategic infrastructure in the Llewych o'r Llechi programme areas Investment: £2.8M Partneriaeth Ogwen leads - funded to March 2028 Main outputs / results: <ul style="list-style-type: none">7 commercial units created	✓		✓	✓											✓+					
Trail developments and connectivity to the slate landscape – Part of a package of investments in the Llewych o'r Llechi programme areas	✓✓			✓					✓+						✓+					

Outline of plan / activity	Alignment with Strategy (✓✓✓high; ✓✓ medium; ✓low)						Implementation area / will benefit (✓+ location; ✓ benefits)												
	Enterprise		Place		People		Bangor	Bro Arudwy	Bro Dysynni	Bro Ffestiniog	Bro Lleu / Nantlle	Bro Peris	Caernarfon	Dolgellau	Dyffryn Ogwen	Pen Llŷn	Porthmadog / Penthyndeudraeth	Pwllheli	Y Bala a Phenllyn
	1. Maximising the value of our current economy	2. Seizing New Opportunities	3. Optimal Connectivity and Infrastructure	4. A Good Place to Live, Work and Venture	5. Ensuring a Skilled Workforce	6. Supporting Our People													
<p>Investment: £4.3M</p> <p>Gwynedd Council leads - funded until March 2028</p> <p>Main outputs / results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5.7km of upgraded footpaths or cycle paths 1.5km of new footpath created 																			
<p>Blaenau Ffestiniog town centre investment – purchase, development and upgrade of 3 properties as part of the Llewyrch o'r Llechi programme</p> <p>Investment: £1.58M</p> <p>Antur Stiniog leads - funded until March 2028</p> <p>Main outputs / results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 jobs safeguarded 3 commercial units created 	✓		✓	✓					✓+										
<p>Town Centre Improvements and Conservation – part of a package of investments in the Llewyrch o'r Llechi programme areas</p> <p>Investment: £1M</p> <p>Gwynedd Council leads - funded until March 2028</p> <p>Main outputs / results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1,500m2 of green/blue space improved 	✓			✓✓					✓+		✓+								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LleCHI LleNI – a programme of activities to empower Gwynedd's slate communities to benefit from World Heritage Site status 				✓✓✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓		

Outline of plan / activity	Alignment with Strategy (✓✓✓high; ✓✓ medium; ✓low)						Implementation area / will benefit (✓+ location; ✓ benefits)													
	Enterprise		Place		People															
	1. Maximising the value of our current economy	2. Seizing New Opportunities	3. Optimal Connectivity and Infrastructure	4. A Good Place to Live, Work and Venture	5. Ensuring a Skilled Workforce	6. Supporting Our People	Bangor	Bro Arludwy	Bro Dysynni	Bro Ffestiniog	Bro Lleu / Nantlle	Bro Peris	Caernarfon	Dolgellau	Dyffryn Ogwen	Pen Llŷn	Porthmadog / Pentrhvndudraeth	Pwllheli	Y Bala a Phenllyn	
Investment: £2M Gwynedd Council leads - funded until March 2028 Main outputs/results achieved: <ul style="list-style-type: none">48 events held2,000 people took part in events																				

Plans / activities in preparation

(developing the plan / targeting funding)

Amlinelliad o'r cynllun / gweithgaredd	Aliniad i'r Strategaeth (✓✓✓ uchel; ✓✓canolig; ✓cymedrol)						Ardal gweithredu / yn buddio (✓+ lleoli o fewn; ✓ yn elwa)												
	Mentergarwch		Lle		Pobl														
	1. Uchafu Gwerth Ein Economi Bresennol	2. Manteisio ar Gyfleon Newydd	3. Y Cysylltedd a'r Is-adeiledd Gorau Posibl	4. Lle Dai i Fyw, Gweithio a Mentro	5. Sicrhau Gweithlu Medrus	6. Cefnogi Ein Pobl	Bangor	Bro Ardudwy	Bro Dysynni	Bro Ffestiniog	Bro Lleu / Nantlle	Bro Peris	Caernarfon	Dolgellau	Dyffryn Ogwen	Pen Llŷn	Porthmadog / Penrhynudeudraeth	Pwllheli	Y Bala a Phenllyn
Preparation of plans for Bangor (Roman Camp, Storiel surroundings / Pontio and leisure resources) Gwynedd Council leads with town and community councils - preparing for completion March 2026 Potential investment: tbc Main outputs / proposed results: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Perceptions of the commercial centreIncrease in the number of users of the commercial centre	✓			✓✓✓			✓+												
Signage strategies for Bala and Pwllheli Gwynedd Council leads with town and community councils - work to be completed March 2026 Potential investment: tbc Main outputs / proposed results: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Better perception of the commercial centreIncrease in the number of users of the commercial centre	✓			✓✓✓														✓+	✓+
Establish a Science Centre on the site of the former Trawsfynydd power station to try and maintain the supply of higher level jobs in the area. Cwmni Egino in partnership with Gwynedd Council and the NDA – preparation for completion summer 2026.	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓		✓✓			✓		✓+				✓			✓		✓

Amlinelliad o'r cynllun / gweithgaredd	Aliniad i'r Strategaeth (✓✓✓ uchel; ✓✓canolig; ✓cymedrol)						Ardal gweithredu / yn buddio (✓+ lleoli o fewn; ✓ yn elwa)												
	Mentergarwch		Lle		Pobl														
	1. Uchafu Gwerth Ein Economi Bresennol	2. Manteisio ar Gyfleon Newydd	3. Y Cysylltedd a'r Is-adeiledd Gorau Posibl	4. Lle Dai i Fyw, Gweithio a Mentro	5. Sicrhau Gweithlu Medrus	6. Cefnogi Ein Pobl	Bangor	Bro Ardudwy	Bro Dysynni	Bro Ffestiniog	Bro Lleu / Nantlle	Bro Peris	Caernarfon	Dolgellau	Dyffryn Ogwen	Pen Llŷn	Porthmadog / Penthyndeudraeth	Pwllheli	Y Bala a Phenllyn
Potential investment: £15M Main outputs / proposed results: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work units built• Enterprises in higher value areas have received support to set up/grow• Major developments engaged																			
UK Government's 'Connect and Work' programme in Gwynedd to help individuals with health-related challenges, mainly to secure work. Gwynedd Council (and other North Wales counties) – preparing for completion October 2025. Potential investment: £2.3M Main outputs / proposed results: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 625 people supported to secure a job• 500 secure a job after receiving support	✓				✓✓	✓✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bangor Health Hub developed to attract visitors and employees to the city centre Gwynedd Council (and other North Wales counties) – preparation for completion March 2028. Potential investment: £30M Main outputs / proposed results: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jobs relocated to the centre of Bangor• Increase in the number of users of the commercial centre	✓			✓✓✓			✓+												

Amlinelliad o'r cynllun / gweithgaredd	Aliniad i'r Strategaeth (✓✓✓ uchel; ✓✓canolig; ✓cymedrol)						Ardal gweithredu / yn buddio (✓+ lleoli o fewn; ✓ yn elwa)												
	Mentergarwch		Lle		Pobl														
	1. Uchafu Gwerth Ein Economi Bresennol	2. Manteisio ar Gyfleon Newydd	3. Y Cysylltedd a'r Is-adeiledd Gorau Posibl	4. Lle Dai i Fyw, Gweithio a Mentro	5. Sicrhau Gweithlu Medrus	6. Cefnogi Ein Pobl	Bangor	Bro Arludwy	Bro Dysynni	Bro Ffestiniog	Bro Lleu / Nantlle	Bro Peris	Caernarfon	Dolgellau	Dyffryn Ogwen	Pen Llŷn	Porthmadog / Penthyndeudraeth	Pwllheli	Y Bala a Phenllyn
<p>Second Phase Glynllifon Rural Economy Hub: Rural and food technology / enterprise centre</p> <p>Investment: tbc</p> <p>Grŵp Llandrillo-Menai leads – project within the North Wales Growth Plan – preparations to be completed by the end of 2026</p> <p>Main outputs / results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Indirect new jobsAdditional GVA	✓✓	✓		✓		✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓+	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓



APPENDIX 2

TITLE **Assessment of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**

AUTHOR Sioned Williams, Head of Economy and Community

1. PURPOSE OF THE ASSESSMENT

- 1.1. This assessment introduces the Gwynedd Economic Strategy, and explains how the Strategy has been developed, and how it meets the requirements and purpose of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

2. REQUIREMENTS OF THE ACT

- 2.1. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 places a responsibility on public bodies in Wales to act in a sustainable manner and contribute to the well-being of today's generations, as well as future generations. It considers well-being in a holistic manner, including economic and social, environmental and cultural aspects.
- 2.2. Decisions made by public bodies are required to meet two requirements – the Five Ways of Working and the Seven National Well-being Goals. The Five Ways of Working identify a series of actions that should be acted upon when making decisions, and the Seven Well-being Goals outline the long-term outcomes towards which to contribute.

Five Ways of Working (Principles of Sustainable Development for Wales):

- Involvement
- Long-term action
- Prevention
- Integration
- Collaborate

National Well-being Goals:

- A Prosperous Wales
- A Resilient Wales
- A Healthier Wales
- A more Equal Wales
- A Wales of Cohesive Communities
- A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language
- A Globally Responsible Wales

3. THRIVING WALES

- 3.1. While the well-being goals are holistic and interdependent, *it is a prosperous Wales* that looks most at economic issues. It is defined in the following way:

"An innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change); and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing [...] fair work."

It recognises the value and importance of productivity, but stresses that "prosperity" is not growth for its own sake. Rather, the emphasis is on socio-economic well-being – on life outcomes, not traditional economic indicators, without overusing the planet's resources.

- 3.2. In his [2025 Annual Report](#), the Future Generations Commissioner said that economic policy in Wales has not moved sufficiently towards a wellbeing economy model (p. 86.), and that this should be done at all levels, including local government. In its definition, it includes decent work, fair and local procurement, local economies, skills for the future and a low-carbon society.
- 3.3. In light of these definitions, it is argued that the vision of the Strategy aligns very closely with the meaning of the well-being aim emphasised by the Commissioner:

"An innovative, productive and low carbon economy that strengthens the Welsh language, creates opportunities and contributes to everyone's well-being."

The vision is defined against five principles that focus on the well-being needs of the people of Gwynedd:

- **To live with dignity:** That everyone should have enough to support themselves and their families, to live a full and happy life without going without
- **Opportunities:** That all individuals should be able to access the opportunities they need for achieving their full potential, regardless of their socioeconomic background.
- **Fairness:** That no area, person or community should be left behind.
- **Local roots:** That Gwynedd's enterprises are the essence of Gwynedd's economy, and that it is through them that the wealth created in Gwynedd could be preserved locally.
- **Sustainability:** That the Welsh language and the environment which, as a whole, make Gwynedd such a special place to live, work and venture., should be protected.

4. PRINCIPLES OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

METHOD	HOW WAS IT IMPLEMENTED?
<p>CONTENT</p> <p>To elicit input from individuals and groups with an interest and/or expertise in relevant issues, and to reflect the diversity of the area served.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The messages conveyed by the people of Gwynedd in the <i>Ardal Ni</i> Consultation (2022) were used to identify what the people of Gwynedd feel is good about their local areas, and the things that need to be improved. These messages have been incorporated into the vision of the Strategy to ensure that we reflect what is important to the people of Gwynedd. It is a useful resource for understanding the views of Gwynedd residents, and the diversity of views in different parts of the county. ▪ Enterprises in Gwynedd were invited to respond to two <i>Business Surveys</i>, the first in 2024 and the second in 2025. While hospitality businesses have been somewhat over-represented, there have been responses from businesses in a diverse range of industries. Messages were conveyed about businesses' intentions for the future, the challenges they face and the types of support they value. The Strategy responds to this input, particularly in its treatment of Gwynedd's enterprises – responding, e.g., to the challenges they have identified, including recruitment. ▪ The economic terrain is complex and involves policy actors at many levels. In order to elicit input from the greatest possible variety of actors and bring their expertise, a series of meetings were organised, including with the following bodies: Welsh Government, Business Wales; Federation of Small Businesses Wales; the agricultural unions (FUW, NFU Cymru); North Wales Ambition Board; North Wales Skills Partnership; Snowdonia National Park; Bangor University; Grŵp Llandrillo-Menai; Gwynedd Community Enterprise Network, and; Mantell Gwynedd for the volunteer field in Gwynedd.
<p>LONG-TERM ACTION</p> <p>Identify long-term trends and plan for them in a way that is balanced with short-term needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The policy and economic planning context is uncertain and rapidly changing in Wales. There is uncertainty as to the future of funding schemes from the Welsh and UK governments, and there is an increasing emphasis on regional collaboration. This Strategy responds to these uncertainties, setting a long-term strategic direction, regardless of the funding plans provided to the Council and its partners. ▪ The Strategy responds to a series of "gaps" that reflect the structural underperformance of the economy in Gwynedd over the longer term, when compared to Wales and the UK. Over half of them are National Well-being Indicators and show Gwynedd's relative disadvantage in terms of economic well-being: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Productivity Gap (Well-being Indicator 09): The value of what is generated in Gwynedd (per hour worked; per job filled) is significantly lower than the Welsh and UK averages in 2023, and the productivity growth rate in Gwynedd is significantly lower than the Wales and UK averages since 2004. ○ Industrial Gap: A relatively narrow range of industries, with employees and enterprises more numerous in a smaller range

	<p>of industries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ New Enterprise Gap: The business birth rate in Gwynedd is among the lowest across Welsh counties in 2023, below the Welsh national average and significantly below the UK average. ○ High Performance Gap: The percentage of enterprises that saw a 20% increase in the number of employees over a three-year period was consistently lower in Gwynedd than in Wales and the UK between 2018 and 2023. ○ Digital Connectivity Gap (Well-being Indicator 50): The percentage of properties with access to gigabyte connectivity (>1,000 Mbps) below the Welsh and UK averages, with a higher proportion of properties also having the weakest connectivity (<30 Mbps) only. The reach of 4G – and 5G in particular – is also lower in Gwynedd. ○ Workforce Gap (Well-being Indicator 21): The unemployment rate is low, but the county's inactivity rate (i.e., proportion of population aged 16-64 who are not in work) is higher than the North Wales and UK averages. ○ Population Gap: The population is ageing faster than Wales and the UK, with a higher proportion of older people of retirement age and high levels of emigration among young people. ○ Pay Gap (Well-being Indicator 10): The average weekly salary of a full-time worker and household gross disposable income has been consistently lower in Gwynedd since 2010 than the Welsh and UK averages. ○ Employment Conditions Gap (Well-being Indicator 16): Significantly higher rates of employees in Gwynedd being part-time and seasonal employees compared to Wales and the UK. ○ Well-being Gap (Well-being Indicators 18 & 19): Low wages and part-time jobs cause high levels of poverty in rural and urban areas alike, with in-work poverty particularly high in Gwynedd compared to Wales and the UK. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Along with these long-term "gaps", other long-term trends that are likely to have an impact on the Strategy and its effectiveness have also been identified: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Moving to a net-zero and low-carbon economy is an economic opportunity; but, if the new wealth created is to be preserved locally, it is necessary to ensure that the people of Gwynedd have the skills to take advantage of work and business opportunities. ○ New technologies, e.g., artificial intelligence is an opportunity; but poses risks, especially if the people and businesses of Gwynedd are not attuned to the latest developments and able to respond to them effectively. ○ The language shift in Gwynedd is partly influenced by the economy (Welsh Communities Commission, 2024); e.g., lower language transmission in socio-economically disadvantaged households.
<p>PREVENTIVE ACTION</p> <p>Prevent problems from happening in the first place or getting worse.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Strategy deliberately responds to a series of "gaps" where Gwynedd performs below national averages or peers, and which create socio-economic wellbeing problems. The following changes are therefore implemented which, in essence, seek to alleviate the "gaps" or prevent them from getting worse. On the one hand, structural change in the economy, including:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Raising the productivity levels of our enterprises and employees, in order to stimulate higher wages and better working conditions; ○ Increasing the competitiveness of our indigenous enterprises, so that they are more effective and efficient, realise their long-term business objectives and create quality jobs locally; ○ Strengthening digital connectivity and the county's business infrastructure, in order to create the best possible conditions for enterprise; ○ Creating a more diverse industrial base, with local enterprises in a range of industries creating new opportunities and a more resilient economy; ○ Supporting our people to gain the skills they need, so that they, along with the enterprises that employ them, can take full advantage of opportunities; ○ To retain more of the wealth created in Gwynedd locally, in order to maximise benefits for Gwynedd's people, enterprises and communities, and; ○ Building a net zero and naturally Welsh economy, that is environmentally and culturally sustainable. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This is primarily done in order to prevent or reduce the socio-economic wellbeing challenges faced in Gwynedd. To this end, the change implemented will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ More people employed in jobs that are not precarious; ○ Higher wages and gross household income; ○ Lower levels of poverty and socio-economic disadvantage; ○ A wider range of employment opportunities locally; ○ More people able to stay, live and work in their local communities; ○ More people finding enjoyment in their work and that feel that they are reaching their full potential; ○ A green economy that protects the county's exceptional natural environment, and; ○ A Welsh language economy that increases the use and visibility of the Welsh language throughout Gwynedd, both with customers and in the workplace.
<p>INTEGRATE</p> <p>To act in a way that is compatible with, and adds value to, rather than undermines other plans and priorities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Strategy builds upon the strategic direction already set out in the Council's Plan: <i>"Strengthening the economy and supporting the residents of Gwynedd to earn decent wages"</i>. The Strategy takes this direction, but because it is one of several corporate priorities, the purpose of this Strategy is to define the economic vision in further depth and to pay particular attention to the economy; that is to ensure priorities and meaningful action. ▪ The new Economic Strategy lies alongside the Gwynedd and Snowdonia Sustainable Visiting Economy Plan, following the direction set out in that Plan for tourism, and complements its vision for a sustainable wellbeing economy.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Gwynedd Ni</i> is Gwynedd Council's local regeneration framework. It focuses on 13 local areas across the county. To ensure meaningful action in each of these local areas, individual action plans will be prepared for them and added to the framework. The content of these schemes will be co-developed with the Council's local partners – local representatives, community enterprises and private and charitable bodies. ▪ The Strategy has been developed in conjunction with the Council's new Procurement Plan, meaning that they blend very closely together, particularly when trying to keep the benefits of public spending local.
<p>COLLABORATE</p> <p>To act in collaboration with partners (both internal and external) and with enterprises and the people of Gwynedd.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Strategy has been developed in light of the input provided by a series of partners, as listed above in the Content Section. It recognises that it will be necessary to work with them to maximise the value of the Strategy and that the Council as a single body cannot act independently. Therefore, this Strategy lives up to the forces that are in the hands of the Council, as well as the forces that lie in other bodies. ▪ The Strategy recognises that the people and enterprises of Gwynedd are the essence of the local economy. Therefore, the Council will continue to elicit their input over the full duration of the Strategy, including the annual Business Surveys. There will also be a need to continue to work together in the implementation of the Strategy's projects. ▪ The local action plans developed in light of the Strategy will be co-created with the Council's local partners – local representatives, community enterprises and private and charitable organisations. This will ensure co-production and co-operation over the full lifetime of the Strategy, 2025-35.

5. HOW WILL THE NATIONAL WELL-BEING GOALS BE MET?

Thriving Wales

"An innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change); and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing fair work."

See Part 3. The vision of the Strategy is explained very closely with the Future Generations Commissioner's definition of the Prosperous Wales goal, i.e., an economy that places emphasis on the socio-economic well-being of the population, not traditional macro indicators.

A Resilient Wales

"A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change."

Gwynedd has an exceptional natural wealth which makes it one of the best places to live and work. Therefore, protecting and nurturing the environment is central to the Strategy,

Action is planned to reduce waste (1.2.), encourage circular and green ways of doing business (1.8.), promote and take advantage of new opportunities in the green economy (2.7.), and push for improvements in grid capacity locally (3.4.) to make renewable and low carbon energy developments more feasible in Gwynedd.

A Healthier Wales

"A society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood."

It is known that people who are socio-economically disadvantaged, facing low wages, job insecurity or poverty, are more likely to face poorer physical and mental health. Improvements in pay and working conditions will be implemented in the Strategy – and this, in due course, will have a positive structural impact on health outcomes.

It is also recognized in the Strategy that mental health is partly shaped by the enjoyment gained from work, or not. Therefore, ensuring that people in Gwynedd have access to work that they enjoy is also important.

A more Equal Wales

"A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances."

Unleashing the potential of the people of Gwynedd is a central objective in the Strategy, and it is emphasized on several occasions in the document itself. At the moment, the "gaps" which mean that Gwynedd is underperforming economically when compared to Wales and the UK, mean that the people of Gwynedd face a relative disadvantage - and, as such, face structural challenges reaching their full potential. Therefore, action will be taken to mitigate the "gaps" and prevent them from worsening across the Strategy's six priorities.

In particular, the sixth priority – *Supporting Our People* – deals specifically with supporting people to reach their full potential: *"Supporting the people of Gwynedd to reach their full potential, to access quality work, fair wages and opportunities locally."* It consists of the following operations:

- Supporting people into work who are unemployed, inactive or facing additional challenges;
- Supporting people in work to get better jobs with higher wages, or more secure working conditions.
- Promoting the Real Living Wage among the county's employers.
- Promoting inclusive forms of employment to make it easier for people to be able to work.
- To promote employment opportunities that provide security to the people of Gwynedd.
- Supporting older people of retirement age to continue working and/or volunteering, where they want to do so.

It is also known that many of the young people who leave Gwynedd do so not because they necessarily want to leave, but because they feel it is necessary to do so to find work. Because of this, the migration challenge is specifically addressed (5.3.) to support young people to be able to succeed locally, regardless of their background and aspirations.

Wales of Cohesive Communities

"Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities."

Connectivity is an essential part of the Strategy, particularly in light of the digital "gap" which means that broadband connectivity is weaker in Gwynedd. Improvements in broadband connectivity (3.1.) are therefore being implemented, especially in rural areas facing the weakest digital connectivity.

A Wales with a Vibrant Culture where the Welsh Language Thrives

"A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation."

The Welsh language is central to the Strategy. Structural economic influences are known to have an impact on the viability of the Welsh language in those communities with a high density of Welsh speakers (Welsh Communities Commission, 2024), including Gwynedd – and the Strategy fully accepts that. The Strategy will act to mitigate or reverse the language shifts faced in Gwynedd and are partly driven by the economy, as well as increasing the use and visibility of the Welsh language more generally in Gwynedd, both among customers and in the workforce.

The largest language shifts include:

- Emigration of young people – More likely to be speaking Welsh.
- Local people are under-represented in the highest

managerial positions in Gwynedd, and;

- Households with one or more Welsh speaking parents but who are at socio-economic disadvantage, are less likely to pass on Welsh to children.

Any body, enterprise or business in receipt of support from the Council, whether financial or non-financial, will have to demonstrate an increase in their use of the Welsh language; and a new monitoring document has been developed for this purpose.

The Strategy also recognises the importance of Gwynedd's cultural scene, particularly in creating vibrance and a rich social life locally – and as an important aspect of the economy. Because of this, culture is specifically addressed (3.2.) in the third priority of the Strategy.

A Globally Responsible Wales

"A nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global well-being."

There is an international orientation to the Strategy. It recognises that Gwynedd and Wales have an international "diaspora" which often looks back to Wales and wants to make a difference to the communities it originally came from. It is an opportunity to bring resource, expertise and talented people back to Gwynedd, and they are targeted in the Strategy (3.4.) to do so.

Beyond this opportunity, the Strategy supports the move towards a net zero economy due to the climate change crisis internationally.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1. Following this assessment, it is concluded that Gwynedd's Economic Strategy very closely meets the requirements and purpose of the Well-being Act. The Five Ways of Working have been fully incorporated into the development of the Strategy, and there is a clear well-being orientation in it – an orientation that veers from a traditional focus on economic growth for its own sake, towards a new model of economic development that prioritises the socio-economic well-being of the population.



Appendix 3

TITLE **Gwynedd and the Welsh Language Economic Strategy**

AUTHOR Sioned Williams, Head of Economy and Community

1. THE PURPOSE OF THE REPORT?

- 1.1. In this report, the consideration given to the Welsh language in Gwynedd's new Economic Strategy is outlined. It identifies the main features of the relationship between the Welsh language and the economy in Gwynedd, and at the end of the report in Figure 1, shows how the Strategy responds to these characteristics in order to strengthen the Welsh language.

2. THE WELSH LANGUAGE AND THE ECONOMY IN GWYNEDD

- 2.1. On Census day 2021, 73,560 people (aged 3 and over) were able to speak Welsh in Gwynedd, or 64.4% of the total population. It represents a decrease of one percentage point compared to the 2011 Census, when 65.4% of the population were able to speak Welsh.¹
- 2.2. The National Language Use Survey, 2012-22, covers the frequency with which Welsh is spoken among people who are able to do so in Gwynedd. It should be noted that the Occupancy Survey is only a survey, with a specific and limited sample of people, and that the Census, in contrast, includes the entire population. Nevertheless, it appears that a significant percentage of the population who can speak Welsh in Gwynedd do not use it on a daily basis. The proportion of Welsh speakers in Gwynedd who reported speaking more than a few words of Welsh on a daily basis was 61% in 2019-20 and 60% for 2021-22.² The workplace is an important space for increasing the use of the Welsh language – and particularly important for those who do not use Welsh at home or in everyday social networks.
- 2.3. The Welsh Communities Commission looked at socio-economic influences that have an impact on the viability and vitality of the Welsh language in those areas with a high density of Welsh speakers, including Gwynedd. The Commission's report highlights the following links between the economy and the Welsh language in Gwynedd:
- 2.3.1. The structural importance of those industries in Gwynedd in which high percentages of Welsh speakers are active, namely agriculture, public administration, education and health, and the construction industry, is emphasised.
- **Agriculture:** 84% are Welsh speakers.

¹ Gwynedd Council, *Gwynedd Language Strategy* (2023), p. 4. [Online]:
<https://www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/en/Council/Documents---Council/Strategies-and-policies/Language-Standards-and-Policy/Appendix-2-Welsh-Language-Strategy-2023-2033-Word.pdf>

² *Ibid.*

- **Public administration, education and health:** 74% are Welsh speakers.
- **The construction industry:** 74% are Welsh speakers.³

2.3.2. It also shows that Welsh speakers in Gwynedd are under-represented in the most privileged NS-SEC (S. National Statistics Socio-economic Classification) categories of L1, L2 and L3 – higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations. Welsh speakers represent 55% of all people in these privileged categories in Gwynedd – around 10 percentage points lower than the proportion of Welsh speakers across the entire population in the county. According to the Commission, it reflects some "structural disadvantage in certain circumstances".⁴

2.3.3. At the least privileged pole, L14.1 and L14.2, individuals who have never worked and have been long-term unemployed, Welsh speakers appear to be under-represented by around 10 percentage points. In the Commission's report, "the lower density of Welsh speakers in these socio-economic categories is a product of, *and also produces*, less favourable circumstances for the use of Welsh".⁵ It underlines how important it is to expand this cohort's access to quality work - not only when tackling poverty, but to build confidence and increase the cohort's use of the language in workplaces that already use Welsh, or have the potential to use it more widely with support.

2.3.4. This is supported by data on language transmission in the family. In households in the least privileged socio-economic categories with one or more adults who can speak Welsh, there are twice as many children who do not speak Welsh in Gwynedd compared to households in the most privileged categories⁶. In the Commission's view, it "testifies to the socio-economic impact on the ability of the language group to reproduce itself effectively over time"⁷, and to this end, how important it is to reduce relative disadvantage in Gwynedd in order to increase the likelihood of language transfer.

2.3.5. The Commission recognises emigration in the young population as "a structural economic and linguistic challenge for Welsh-speaking communities".⁸ The size of the workforce will shrink, especially among the highest skilled, and economic performance and productivity will suffer as a result. Furthermore, recruitment challenges will intensify, and communities will lose individuals who can speak Welsh. The reasons that motivate emigration and return migration are complex, highly personal decisions, and involve economic, social, and ideological factors that intersect with each other. As a result, in a report on the mobility of young people by the Centre for Welsh Politics and Society, Aberystwyth University, the topic

³ Welsh Communities Commission, *Final Report: Empowering Communities, Strengthening the Welsh Language* (2024), Part 2.5., pp. 22-3 [Online]: <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2024-08/empowering-communities-strengthening-the-welsh-language.pdf>

⁴ *Ibid.*, Part 2.7., pp. 23-4.

⁵ *Ibid.*, Part 2.8., pp. 23-5.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 24

⁸ *Ibid.*, Part 4.3., 4.16., pp. 57-8, 69-70.

should be approached holistically and avoid "focusing on one or two key factors".⁹ In particular, the following points are made:

- As important as economic incentives such as jobs, careers and salary are, migration is influenced by wider considerations of social life and ideological pressure – i.e., the belief that one must leave "in order to succeed".¹⁰
- That return migration is a consideration that becomes increasingly prominent at certain times in life, and that the early 30s should be treated as a particularly significant period as people think about family and "settling down".¹¹
- "Examiners" should not be taken for granted or forgotten when dealing with mobility.¹²

3. LANGUAGE PLANNING POLICY IN GWYNEDD AND WALES

3.1. The main aim of the *Gwynedd Language Strategy 2023-33* is to "increas[e] opportunities for everyone of Gwynedd's residents to see and use the Welsh language in different contexts. ". It acts on this change through five areas of action:

- **1. Early years language:** To give families and children the best start in language use, and strengthen language transmission in the family.
- **2. Language of Learning:** To ensure opportunities for people of all ages to take courses through the medium of Welsh and to learn Welsh.
- **3. Work and Service Language:** Increase the use and visibility of the language with employers, in the workplace, and with customers.
- **4. Community Language:** To encourage the use of language in different social contexts.
- **5. Research and technology:** Increase the use and visibility of the Welsh language on digital forums.

3.2. *Cymraeg 2050* is the Welsh Government's strategy to increase the number of Welsh speakers to one million by 2050. The strategy is based on three themes:

- **Theme 1: Increasing the number of speakers** – Through Welsh education, language transfer in the family and opportunities to learn the language.
- **Theme 2: Increasing the use of the Welsh language** – By creating and maintaining opportunities for its use, including economically and in the workplace.
- **Theme 3: Creating favourable conditions** – Ensuring policies that support the language.

The strategy emphasizes collaboration between communities, organizations and individuals, including employers.

⁹ Lewis, H., & Cunnington Wynn, L. (2024). *ARFOR, emigration and the Welsh language: Lessons from contemporary research in the field of emigration to support the work of the ARFOR II programme*. p. 3. [Online]: <https://pure.aber.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/86522827/Adroddiad.pdf>

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 3., 10-11, 14-15.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp 4., 12-13.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 4., 14-15.

FIGURE 1. GWYNEDD AND WELSH LANGUAGE ECONOMIC STRATEGY

THE WELSH LANGUAGE AND THE ECONOMY	THE STRATEGY'S RESPONSE	RELATED PRIORITIES
<p>2.2. A significant percentage of the population who can speak Welsh in Gwynedd do not use it on a daily basis.</p>	<p>This challenge requires that we take action to increase spaces that use Welsh in the economic context, among employers, in the workplace and in customer engagement. Strengthening the use of the Welsh language in this context is important for several reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The status of the Welsh language: Increasing the status of Welsh as a business language gives it added value as a skill in the workplace, encourages more people to practise and use it, and strengthens parents' motivation to pass on the language to their children in due course. ▪ Language progression: The continuation of the use and development of language skills as you move from one stage of life to the next, especially from school, college or university to the world of work. ▪ Everyday use of Welsh: Creating Welsh spaces in the workplace is particularly important for those who do not use Welsh at home or in everyday social networks, but are able to do so in the world of work. <p>Therefore, action is taken to increase the use and visibility of the Welsh language in the economy through the following interventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Influencing language use through business funding programmes administered by the Council: The Council will ask enterprises to identify a series of language commitments that they are expected to implement when receiving grant funding. The scope, high application and likely impact of these commitments will be scored as one aspect of the original application – and, if funding is earmarked, progress against the identified commitments over the grant period will be monitored. Evidence of already strong language use and visibility will ▪ Cynnig Cymraeg ▪ : We would also encourage enterprises to apply for the Cynnig Cymraeg which is the Welsh Language Commissioner's language accreditation. It attests to the 	<p>Priority 1, 2, 4, 5 & 6.</p>

	<p>comprehensive use of the language by employers, both in the workplace and in customer engagement, and represents a more formal and consistent language framework. It is particularly useful for those initiatives that already demonstrate strong use and visibility of the language and want to formally attest to this.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Procurement: The Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023 puts a new emphasis on social benefits, including the Welsh language. The Council will work to ensure that using and promoting the Welsh Language is given due consideration in awarding commercial contracts. <p>In addition to the Council's direct funding forces, we will also encourage and support the use, visibility and confidence of the Welsh language by sharing useful language resources, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bilingual recruitment toolkit: Good practice that offers practical guidance to employers when trying to attract and recruit individuals with different levels of proficiency in Welsh. ▪ ARFer App: An easy and fun framework for groups of staff to use more Welsh in the workplace. ▪ Helo BLOD: A free Welsh language translation and support service offered by the Welsh Government to businesses, charities and not-for-profit organisations. 	
2.3.1. The structural importance of those industries in Gwynedd in which high percentages of Welsh speakers are active	<p>The significantly low productivity levels found in Gwynedd are a long-term challenge to the competitiveness and sustainability of the industries already found in Gwynedd, including those industries listed above that have high levels of Welsh speakers. Because of this, the first priority of the Strategy is to maximise the value of our current economy, i.e., unleash potential, raise value and strengthen the resilience of the businesses and enterprises already found in Gwynedd.</p> <p>We want to see the competitiveness and resilience of those industries that are structurally important to the Welsh language increase. E.g., in the agri-food industry, which is the industry with the highest proportion of Welsh speakers in Gwynedd (84%), it includes:</p>	Priorities 1, 2 & 3.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ North Wales Growth Pact: Maximising local benefits from the North Wales Ambition agri-food programme, e.g., the Glynllifon Rural Economy Hub. ▪ Sustainable Farming Plan for Wales: Supporting farmers to maximise the benefits of the Welsh Government's new subsidies programme. ▪ Procurement: Increase the amount of food purchased locally by public bodies. ▪ Working together: Highlight wider support in the agricultural industry, e.g., Farming Connect services. 	
2.3.2. Welsh speakers in Gwynedd are under-represented in the most privileged socio-economic categories – i.e., senior managerial, administrative and professional occupations.	<p>The reasons for the under-representation of Welsh speakers in senior positions are unclear in the Welsh Communities Commission's report (2024, p. 24). However, with the UK Government's increasing emphasis on high value industries, particularly in the new Industrial Strategy, <i>Invest 2035</i>, it must be ensured that Welsh speakers in Gwynedd are not at a comparative disadvantage when applying for higher level jobs, whether in Gwynedd or in neighbouring counties.</p> <p>To this end, the Council will press for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Local talent development schemes: Ensure that the largest employers and significant developers adopt talent attraction and development schemes—leadership, graduates and apprenticeships—that recognise local residents as core stakeholders, support them to reach the top jobs, and give the Welsh language a specific status as a skill. ▪ Return migration: Among those leaving Gwynedd, individuals with higher or specialist skills and qualifications are over-represented, with a significant percentage of them, of course being Welsh speakers. We will support and encourage them to return, so that recruitment at a higher level will include more individuals with specialist skills who can speak Welsh. 	Priority 2, 5 & 6.
2.3.3. Less favourable circumstances to use the Welsh language among individuals in the least privileged socio-economic categories – i.e., individuals who have never worked and who have been	Individuals who are economically inactive are less likely to have access to spaces that use Welsh. It is particularly important for those who do not use Welsh at home or in the community, but would be able to do so in the world of work. The sixth priority of the Strategy addresses this cohort – supporting them to achieve quality work. In doing this, hand in hand with increasing business use of the Welsh language more	Priority 6.

long-term unemployed.	generally in the world of business, the cohort's access to Welsh spaces will increase.	
2.3.4. On households in the least privileged socio-economic categories with one or more adults proficient in Welsh, there are twice as many children as non-Welsh speakers in Gwynedd compared to households in the most privileged categories	In supporting the people of Gwynedd to reach their full potential, to access quality work, fair wages and opportunities locally, action is taken to reduce poverty and socio-economic disadvantage in the cohort. Individuals in less privileged conditions are known to be less likely to pass on the language to their children. Therefore, by increasing the socio-economic well-being of the cohort, the cohort's access to Welsh spaces and an understanding of its value, language transmission in the family is strengthened.	Priority 6.
2.3.5. The High level of emigration among young people is a structural economic and linguistic challenge for Gwynedd.	<p>The Strategy recognises that the motivations of individuals who leave Gwynedd or who are contemplating doing, or who are also contemplating returning, are complex. It requires holistic interventions that cross economic, social and ideological factors.</p> <p>To this end, the fourth priority of the Strategy – A good place to live, work and do business – addresses all three things; that it is possible to live a fulfilling life and succeed in the world of work and business in Gwynedd. Across the Strategy, we are taking action for better jobs, careers and wages, but this priority looks specifically at the social incentives for staying or returning, including the strength of the Welsh language in the county.</p> <p>We are also paying attention to the "remainers" in this effort, ensuring that they have quality jobs so that they do not have to contemplate leaving. We will take action to convince them that Gwynedd is a good place to live and work, and celebrate them for "succeeding locally".</p>	Priority 1, 2, 4, 5 & 6.

MEETING	Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee
DATE	October 16th, 2025
TITLE	Immersion Education System
REASON FOR SCRUTINY	<p>The Immersion Regime is one of the priorities of the Council's Plan 2023- 2028 – Gwynedd Gymraeg,</p> <p>In March 2025, Estyn inspected the Immersion Regime provision, and the report was published in May 2025. It is therefore timely for the Scrutiny Committee to study the content of the Estyn report.</p> <p>Since the establishment of the revised Immersion Regime, Gwynedd's Education Department has committed to carrying out a timely evaluation. An update was given to the Scrutiny Committee on 13 February 2025, and an invitation was extended to return to the committee to present the findings of the evaluation.</p>
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CABINET MEMBER	Cllr Dewi Jones

1. Why does it need to be scrutinised?

1.1 At the Committee meeting on February 13th, 2025, an update on the evaluation process was scrutinised in the context of the evaluation of the Immersion Regime.

1.2 It was decided that the Committee would scrutinise the implementation plan of the Immersion Education Regime's improvement recommendations arising from the evaluation.

1.3 Estyn carried out an inspection of the Immersion Education Regime during March 2025. Estyn made one recommendation to help the local authority continue to improve.

1.4 By scrutinising the action plan in response to recommendations arising from the evaluation and the Estyn review, the Committee will be able to receive assurances that action will be taken to further develop the provision.

2. What exactly needs to be scrutinised?

2.1 Estyn's report and the actions responding to Estyn's recommendation.

2.2 Bangor University's report: Exploring the effectiveness of the Welsh Language Immersion model in Schools in Gwynedd: Detailed Case Study and actions responding to the conclusions and recommendations.

2.3 Opportunities identified to further develop the provision

3.Summary of the Key Matters

3.1 In March 2025 the Immersion Regime was inspected by Estyn. This is the first time the Regime has been inspected in accordance with the new guidelines introduced in 2024. **(appendix 4)**

The report states that Gwynedd Immersion Regime is an innovative and valuable provision for pupils who are new to the Welsh language. It describes how the provision effectively immerses new speakers, and it is noted that they are making significant progress in Welsh by mastering vocabulary and language patterns. Estyn made one recommendation to help the authority continue to improve, namely: -

"Develop a leadership structure and self-evaluation processes to provide ample opportunities for staff to monitor and evaluate provision increasingly effectively."

3.2 In 2024 Bangor University was commissioned to examine the effectiveness of the language immersion model in schools in Gwynedd and to produce a detailed case study. The report was shared in late July 2025. The research identifies clear strengths and offers four recommendations to further develop the provision.

3.3 The opinion of members of the Scrutiny Committee on the actions responding to the recommendations in both reports will be sought. We want to ensure that any modifications to the immersion model are evidence-based, coherent and sustainable.

4. Background / Context

4.1 Estyn Inspection

In 2024 Estyn introduced a new and specific review framework for immersion provisions setting out how immersion arrangements would be inspected and evaluated. The guidance states that immersion provisions are now inspected in accordance with the following three areas of inspection:-

1. Teaching and learning	2. Well-being, care, support and guidance	3. Leading and improving
Focus How effectively does the curriculum, teaching and assessment support all pupils, including those at risk of adverse outcomes, for example those pupils affected by poverty, with ALN or other identified barriers to progress to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• learn and make progress in their Welsh language skills?• develop their knowledge, skills and understanding of the Welsh language in a variety of contexts?• develop positive attitudes to learning?	Focus How effective are the care and support arrangements in ensuring that all pupils, including those at risk of adverse outcomes, for example those pupils affected by poverty, with ALN or other identified barriers to progress: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• are safe and secure?• attend regularly?• are respected and fairly treated?• develop leadership skills and take on responsibility?• receive the guidance and support they require for the next steps in their development, including support whilst in their registered schools?	Focus How effectively do leaders: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• manage the organisation of the providers across the local authority including admission arrangements?• manage the resources for Welsh language immersion across the local authority?• ensure that all pupils learn and make progress in their acquisition of the Welsh language? (This includes those at risk of adverse outcomes, for example those pupils affected by poverty, with ALN or other identified barriers to learning.)• develop a culture, inclusive ethos and strategic direction that support the progress and well-being of all pupils?• identify and address areas for improvement and management?• ensure that professional learning supports improvement and equips all staff to carry out their roles?

The Gwynedd Immersion Education Regime was inspected by Estyn in March 2025 and received an extremely positive report stating that the Gwynedd Immersion Education Regime is an innovative and valuable provision for pupils who are new to the Welsh language. (***Estyn report – Appendix 1***)

The report explains that teachers work together effectively to plan creative experiences, using rich resources, including virtual resources, which maintain pupils' interest and develop their confidence to speak Welsh in an inclusive and Welsh environment.

It is noted that staff build positive relationships, set high expectations, and support pupils' wellbeing. By providing diverse and stimulating learning opportunities, pupils make significant and rapid progress in acquiring Welsh, mastering vocabulary and language patterns.

The report clearly states that the collaboration between the staff in the immersion units and the leaders and staff in schools is valuable and that this supports the pupils appropriately as they return to the schools each Friday, and at the end of the course.

It is explained that resources shared with the schools are a useful medium for staff to use to continuously support pupils to reinforce vocabulary and sentence patterns. Through this, pupils continue to use and apply their Welsh skills in different situations.

In addition, staff are reported to be researching and sharing effective immersion practices with schools and working skilfully with the authority's teachers and Bangor University students. It is noted that the teachers at the mainstream schools appreciate the support as they further refine their language teaching practices for all pupils.

In addition, immersion teachers spend time beneficially researching the pedagogy and methodology of effective immersion, for example ideas about methods to support continuity of learning as pupils transition from primary to secondary, and how to involve parents in the language acquisition process.

The only recommendation in the report refers to the Regime's self-evaluation processes.

4.2 Bangor University Report

A study was commissioned by Bangor University's School of Education in October 2024 to evaluate whether the current immersion model delivers on the promise and provides pupils in Gwynedd with the necessary foundation to acquire Welsh when embarking on their linguistic journey to become new speakers. It was considered whether the model is suitable and effective for increasing pupils' use of Welsh in their schools, supports well-being during the immersion period, is effective in enabling learners to acquire Welsh to their full potential, and provides any opportunities to further strengthen the Welsh language in the centres and schools.

The study highlights numerous strengths within immersion provision in supporting pupils' linguistic development in Welsh and in supporting pupils' wellbeing.

It is noted that the robust teaching methods and the effective use of teaching strategies in terms of the integration of language, culture and literacy are evident. The study highlights that pupils are happy in the learning environment and create staunch support networks among other peers learning the language.

The observation period saw examples of effective language learning through identification games to learn new vocabulary, before proceeding to form more complex sentences. There was robust evidence of teachers intentionally setting language learning objectives, ensuring that learners were able to understand and reinforce specific elements before using them in a wider context.

The report highlights that the consistent use of music across the immersion provision reinforces positive values and attitudes towards the language and culture and develops cultural expression as pupils develop their language skills. In questionnaires and interviews it was made clear by pupils and parents that the experience of learning Welsh was a positive one.

The report explains that the team did not observe constant collaboration between the centres and all schools involved in the study. The demands of the end of term activities and schools' preparations for concerts and Christmas services were certainly contributing factors. Another consideration was the ratio of staff to learners in some schools. It is therefore concluded that the Welsh language is not used naturally by all immersion pupils in all schools on return days.

It is worth noting that Yr. 2-4 learners now attend the primary immersion centres compared to Yr. 3-6 learners in the previous model. It is also worth noting that the current provision, like the original provision, offers the same number of days of 40 days in immersion centres for secondary age pupils.

The research team notes that a solid foundation exists for developing a model that could lead the sector nationally if the appropriate investment and vision is secured.

4.3 Recommendations

Estyn

Develop a leadership structure and self-evaluation processes to provide many opportunities for staff to monitor and evaluate provision increasingly effectively.

Bangor University

- i. Adapt the current immersion model to ensure that pupils have access to sufficient contact hours in an immersion space. Change the current model of returning to schools on Fridays to one of being at mainstream on Mondays. Adopt the use of digital technology to support ongoing contact with the mainstream schools. Consider changing the current model by ensuring that learners gradually return to school during the second half of the ten-week immersion period.
- ii. At a national and local level, explore how to strengthen professional learning pathways for mainstream teachers, supply teachers, and teaching assistants to develop effective immersive teaching strategies to support the acquisition of Welsh, embedding them in the pedagogy of all teachers.
- iii. Develop more effective collaboration structures between the language centres and mainstream schools during the immersion period and beyond. Look at how the mainstream immersion staff is used to support and maintain the pupils more effectively within the school, rather than taking the pupils out of the classroom to work in isolation with the immersion teacher.
- iv. Explore whole-school approaches to promote children's confidence in using the Welsh language in mainstream schools. Special attention should be paid to the linguistic culture of the yard, as this informal environment is at the core of the linguistic development of immersed pupils, but also to the ethos of a school.

4.4 Response to the recommendations

Estyn

Within the Immersion Regime 2025 – 2026 Improvement Plan, responding to Estyn's recommendation has been identified as a priority.

Priority 2: Develop a leadership structure and self-evaluation processes to provide sufficient opportunities for staff to monitor and evaluate provision.

Term 1 Timetable

21-10-25	Meithrin dealltwriaeth a hyder o ran prosesau hunanwerthuso Defnydd o hunanwerthuso effeithiol wedi'i gefnogi gan brosesau monitro, adolygu a gwerthuso (MAG) trylwyr i ddatblygu arweinyddiaeth ac arwain gwelliant ysgol. - Estyn Monitro Safonau Llafaredd.docx - Google Drive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pennu meysydd penodol i fonitro a gwerthuso Adnabod cyfleoedd i gyd arsylwi a dod i farn.
Gwyliau Diolchgarwch 27- 10-25 – 31-10-25	
4-11-25	Meithrin dealltwriaeth a hyder o ran prosesau hunanwerthuso Defnydd o hunanwerthuso effeithiol wedi'i gefnogi gan brosesau monitro, adolygu a gwerthuso (MAG) trylwyr i ddatblygu arweinyddiaeth ac arwain gwelliant ysgol. - Estyn Monitro Safonau Llafaredd.docx - Google Drive
11-11-25	Cyd arsylwadau yn y canolfannau – amserlen i'w rhannu.
18-11-25	Adborth yn dilyn arsylwadau – meysydd i'w datblygu ymhellach.

Bangor University

The opinion of the members of the Scrutiny Committee on the suitability of one of the following models are sought in response to the following recommendation: -

i. Adapt the current immersion model to ensure that pupils have access to sufficient contact hours in an immersion space. Change the current model of returning to schools on Fridays to one of being at mainstream on Mondays. Adopt the use of digital technology to support ongoing contact with the mainstream schools. Consider changing the current model by ensuring that learners gradually return to school during the second half of the ten-week immersion period.

Model	Provision (days)	Immersion Centre (days)	School (days)	Day at school	Additional Funding	Response to Bangor's recommendation	Risk
1	50	40	10	Every Friday for 10 weeks	£0	Continue the current arrangement and strengthen the	Some pupils at some schools return to less

						collaboration with the schools. <i>See below</i>	structured learning periods
2	50	40	10	Every Monday for 10 weeks	£0	Responding to the recommendation of changing a day at school.	Pupils less willing to go to the centres as the week's work is introduced at school. Negative impact on pupils' wellbeing.
3	50	40	10	2 days each week during weeks 5 to 10	£0	Basic patterns are taught before the new speakers return to schools during the second half of the course	No contact with peers for 5 weeks. Negative impact on well-being. Risk that new speakers are not happy and willing to learn at the schools nor at centres during weeks 5 – 10. Less intense immersion in the period when the language is assimilated
4	50	45	5	A day each week during the second half of the course (Weeks 5 to 10)	An increase of 12.5 % in travel costs. This equates to an <i>increase</i> of £8k each term.	An opportunity to review and embed language patterns within the centres during the first half of the course. Increase in pupils' confidence speaking Welsh at school.	No contact with peers for 5 weeks and contact for only one day a week during weeks 5 to 10. A risk of a negative impact on well-being. Significant additional travel costs. The reluctance of parents to take advantage of the provision particularly in relation to older pupils.

The use of digital technology to support ongoing contact between the centres and schools is neither appropriate nor feasible given that pupils from up to 10 different schools attend each centre each term. Developing more resources, sharing them in a more effective way with the schools and putting together a comprehensive training programme have been identified as steps to be taken regardless of any future changes to the model. See **4.5** below.

4.5 Wider response regardless of remodelling considerations.

The following have already been included in the Immersion Regime's Improvement Plan 2025 – 2026: -

- more resources provided for schools.
- a change in practise the in terms of working in schools on Fridays prioritising support in the classrooms rather than taking pupils out of class.
- preparing and sharing long-term aftercare / language resources including working with the Welsh departments of Gwynedd secondary schools to prepare new resources for pupils in Years 10 and 11.
- a new website developed to share information about the provision and to share resources in a more accessible way than Google Classroom.
- a comprehensive training programme developed to embed teachers' use of immersion principles at schools.
- the Language Charter programme relaunched to accompany the National Quality Awards. The successes and ambitions of the Language Charter celebrated.

4.6 Costs

Historically, the Welsh Language Grant was the main source of funding for the Language Centres, but as is common with many grants from the Welsh Government, the grant received does not address inflation or cost increases, and this has led to a consistent budget deficit. With the establishment of the revised Immersion Regime in 2021, a more sustainable funding model was established to fill the gap, securing a

commitment from all schools to contribute to the funding of the Immersion Regime, together with the Department for Education.

The commitment to receive a contribution from the schools has not yet been implemented, however, given that the Welsh Language Grant now only covers 40% (£400k) of the costs of the Immersion Regime, it is likely that a contribution from the schools will have to be considered in due course as costs continue to increase significantly due to inflation and rising wages.

This financial context is therefore a key consideration when evaluating the above options e.g. from the adoption of model 4, there would be an increase of around £24,000 per annum in the transport costs of learners to the Language Centres.

In addition, there will be a significant one-time cost in terms of freeing up staff to present training programmes and develop new resources. It is anticipated that there will be a need for an investment of £80,000 in staffing costs and up to £15,000 to develop a digital site/website. It is anticipated that this can be funded this year through the Late Immersion Grant.

5.Consultation

5.1 Consultation that has taken place

17/9/25. **Headteachers' Group** – headteachers of pupils attending the centres during the Autumn term of 2025

The desire of this group is to stick to the current pattern. In their view the system is working successfully, and school staff have developed an effective working relationship with the staff of the immersion centres. The weekly contact with the centres is important to obtain information on pupils' progress. However, schools would like to have more easily sourced resources.

Autumn Term 2025 – Immersion Regime Staff:

It was noted that an intensive immersion course (Model 4) would give the best opportunity for learning the language but that there was a risk that the youngest pupils and older pupils would not be prepared to spend as much time at the centres.

Several practical challenges of going to the schools for two days (Model 3) were identified. Responding to diverse school timetables and arrangements would be difficult and it was predicted that schools would not favour this model. Spending only 3 days at the centres during the second half of the course would mean a period of less intense immersion when the patterns are fully learnt, and confidence increases. During the second half of the course the emphasis is on using, and building on, all the vocabulary and language patterns that have been introduced during the first half.

While blended learning and the use of technology to connect with schools offers several possibilities, it would also bring with it a disproportionate number of challenges e.g. dedicated and suitable space and supervision, setting a timetable and responding to each individual school's curriculum. It was noted that digital learning is not equivalent to the experience of face-to-face learning, especially when practicing spoken language and when nonverbal communication, including body language is used as a valuable tool in language acquisition.

It was noted that the staff of the immersion centres would prefer to adhere to the current model (Model 1) if increasing the days in the immersion unit (Model 4) is not possible.

1/10/25 - Heads of Welsh Departments in Secondary Schools.

It was noted that increasing the time spent in the immersion centres during the first half of the course would give the Welsh language the opportunity to be effectively learnt but that implementing model 3 and supporting pupils in a wide range of subjects at Secondary school would be challenging. It was noted that it is not feasible for staff to hold a weekly discussion with immersion centre staff. The

opportunity to work with the Immersion Regime to create ready resources for older learners was welcomed.

5.2 Further consultation in the coming weeks: -

Headteachers of Primary Schools (GYDCA) - October 14th

Secondary Headteachers (GCSU) – October 15th

It will be possible to report views back to members of the Scrutiny Committee on October 16th.

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

6.1 In terms of collaboration and other involvement, we have already held focus groups with parents, learners, staff and headteachers of Gwynedd schools and received comments from individuals. We intend to work with schools in providing resources and organising comprehensive training programmes.

Carrying out an evaluation of the Immersion Regime recognises the need to identify strengths and issues to improve to ensure the best possible service for the residents of Gwynedd.

Ensuring that Gwynedd's children and young people develop into confident bilingual citizens improves their educational, economic, cultural, and social opportunities in the long term and enriches their experience of living and working through the Welsh language in Gwynedd.

The empowerment of the County's Immersion Education Regime lays a solid foundation for the development of bilingual citizens and conforms to the status of the Welsh language in the context of Public Bodies.

7. Impact on Characteristics of Equality, Welsh Language and Socio-Economic Duty

A timely and proportionate impact assessment is underway.

The following considerations clearly demonstrate that the Immersion Regime has **given due regard to reducing inequality** and is in line with the duties of the **Well-being of Future Generations Act** and the **Equality Act**:

- Ensuring transport for pupils and consider expanding immersion opportunities within the centres
- Adapting teaching methods and offering additional support to pupils experiencing disadvantage
- Ensuring that the voices of families from all backgrounds are involved in the development and evaluation of provision.
- Carrying out equality impact assessments before introducing new policies or plans.
- Measuring the impact of immersion not only on language skills but also on social participation, confidence, and fairness of opportunity.

The Welsh Language: - Any changes in the provision of the Immersion Regime are due to a commitment to ensure linguistic and social equity for all children, regardless of their background. The language is part of our identity and bilingual skills increase job opportunities and strengthen the economy. It aims to build strong linguistic foundations to maintain the Welsh language for future generations, ensure that children do not miss the opportunity to become fluent in Welsh through early action, link to education, culture, health and equality and maintain partnerships between schools, local authorities and parents to provide immersion pathways. We give families and learners a voice in the formulation and development of immersion arrangements.

8. Next Steps

- Consultation with key stakeholders see **5.2**
- Engagement with members of the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee, October 16th
- Motion to Cabinet
- Implementing the decision.

9. Appendices

Appendix 1: Estyn Report – Welsh Language Immersion Arrangements in Cyngor Gwynedd. Date of Inspection: March 2025

Appendix 2: Bangor University - Exploring the effectiveness of the Welsh Language Immersion model in Schools in Gwynedd: Detailed Case Study

Appendix 3: How we inspect (the inspection process) Welsh immersion arrangements in local authorities. For inspections from 2024.

Appendix 4: What we inspect: Welsh Immersion arrangements in local authorities. For inspections from 2024.

Appendix 5: Impact Assessment on the People of Gwynedd

A report on
Welsh Language Immersion Arrangements in

Cyngor Gwynedd

**Council Offices
Shirehall Street
Caernarfon
Gwynedd
LL55 1SH**

Date of inspection: March 2025

by

**Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education
and Training in Wales**

This report is also available in Welsh

About Cyngor Gwynedd

Name of provider	Gwynedd Immersion Education System – Cyngor Gwynedd
Local authority	Cyngor Gwynedd
Start date of inspection	10/03/2025

Context

The Gwynedd Immersion Education System was restructured in January 2023. Through this, six Welsh language immersion units were established in three areas across Gwynedd, namely in the areas of Arfon, Dwyfor and Meirionnydd. The aim of the immersion units is to provide an intensive 10-week Welsh course for newcomers to enable them to integrate into the bilingual society and participate fully in bilingual education experiences.

Pupils from Year 2 – Year 4 are welcome at the three primary units and Year 5 – Year 9 pupils are welcome at the three transition units. Free transport is provided for pupils from home to the units, four days a week, with pupils attending the mainstream schools on Fridays. As a key part of provision, staff at the six immersion units support pupils at the mainstream schools on Fridays and when they return to these schools permanently. As an important part of provision, teachers have access to resources that are accessible on a digital platform to support pupils to continue to acquire the Welsh language over time. This is beneficial to pupils as they develop their skills further across the areas of learning through the medium of Welsh.

Summary

The Gwynedd Immersion Education System is extremely valuable provision for pupils who are newcomers to the Welsh language. The system is led by a skilled head who has ensured that provision innovates successfully to its next phase. Teachers work together effectively when planning stimulating activities for pupils based on the village of 'Aberwla'. Alongside the scheme, beneficial resources are provided, which include virtual resources, for pupils to use to engage and hold their interest while developing their ability to speak Welsh with increasing confidence.

An excellent feature of provision is that teachers and assistants uphold the principles of language immersion effectively, which helps pupils to gain confidence while developing their Welsh speaking skills in an inclusive and Welsh learning environment. They have an extremely positive working relationship with pupils, which encourages respect and courtesy consistently. Staff have high expectations of pupils and nurture their well-being valuably as they support them to learn from their mistakes and be willing to try. On the whole, staff do not participate fully in monitoring activities to self-evaluate provision increasingly effectively.

Staff provide a rich range of interesting and creative experiences that support pupils to make constructive progress in acquiring the Welsh language. Through this, from their starting points, nearly all pupils make extremely robust progress in their Welsh language skills within the duration of the course.

Pupils enjoy interacting enthusiastically in a rich range of learning experiences which, in turn, helps them to acquire vocabulary and sentence patterns increasingly skilfully. Valuable information is shared with staff in the mainstream schools as pupils transfer to them each week and at the end of their time at the immersion units.

One of the notable features of provision is the way in which teachers research effective language immersion practices and share them with staff from other units and schools. This develops the immersion provision as a whole in an extremely valuable manner, both locally and nationally. Staff also work skilfully with a range of partners to provide authentic opportunities for pupils to acquire the Welsh language and deepen their understanding of the history and traditions of Wales and the wider world.

Recommendations

We have made one recommendation to help the local authority continue to improve:

- R1. Develop a leadership structure and self-evaluation processes to provide enough opportunities for staff to monitor and evaluate provision increasingly effectively

What happens next

Following the publication of the inspection report, the local authority should update its plans to address the recommendations and to take account of shortcomings identified through the inspection process. The local authority should update its plans within three months of publication of the inspection report.

Main evaluation

The head of the Gwynedd Immersion Education System is a firm and passionate leader for developing language immersion provision based on effective pedagogy. He has an ambitious vision while ensuring that the system innovates constantly. Within the current arrangement, the immersion units continue to be a key part of the local authority's vision. Developing the provision to its next phase is a core part of the authority's policies, such as the Welsh Language Policy and the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. The system's structure encourages regular co-operation and relevant accountability between the headteacher and staff, the authority's officers and councillors.

The passion and enthusiasm of staff at the immersion units promotes a homely and vibrant learning community. They provide stimulating and purposeful learning experiences for pupils and build skilfully on language acquisition methods. Planning is carried out systematically, with teachers providing opportunities to revisit and build on previous learning effectively. Staff do this by using a range of stimulating prompts to engage and hold pupils' interest. For example, pupils interact in virtual and practical games and participate enthusiastically in various singing and drama sessions. This provides an opportunity for pupils to reinforce vocabulary and sentence patterns regularly as they work together successfully in small groups and larger cohorts.

Purposeful planning to ensure continuity and progression in supporting pupils to acquire Welsh language skills in a modern context

Teachers' co-operation on the 'Aberwla' scheme to modernise the previous provision supports them to build systematically on the key principles as pupils acquire the Welsh language.

Teachers implement the scheme to provide a range of regular and engaging activities that enable pupils to acquire vocabulary and sentence patterns purposefully and coherently. Through innovative resources that support learning valuably, learning experiences are provided that allow pupils to use virtual resources by developing their Welsh language skills in a purposeful and inclusive context, for example when visiting a range of buildings in the village of 'Aberwla'.

This has a positive effect on building pupils' confidence and enjoyment in using the Welsh language in their community.

The Welsh communication skills of the staff at the immersion units are extremely robust. They are passionate about developing pupils' listening and speaking skills and talk in a lively manner constantly by using gestures and purposeful repetition so that they can emulate correct vocabulary and sentence patterns. Most staff use effective questioning methods to check pupils' understanding and deepen their learning. Teachers track pupils' progress effectively by evaluating learning regularly. This ensures that nearly all pupils, including those with additional learning needs and those who are affected by poverty, make extremely secure progress from their starting points in the Welsh language skills within the duration of the course.

Staff have a comprehensive understanding of the pupils' varied backgrounds and respond positively to their well-being and learning needs. For example, staff's understanding of the impact of trauma on child development plays a prominent part in planning meaningfully and meeting pupils' needs. Teachers provide purposeful opportunities for pupils to nurture their well-being and apply their Welsh language skills in a good range of areas of learning. For example, pupils take part in folk dancing sessions, emotional well-being and learn how to grow plants with a famous gardener.

One of the notable features of provision is the extremely positive working relationships between staff and pupils. Teachers establish order and high expectations in terms of behaviour and attitudes to learning. This means that pupils behave well and the respect with which they treat adults and visitors is commendable.

Teachers and assistants have high expectations of all pupils and aspire to the best well-being, progress and standards for them within the immersion units and as they provide aftercare for them in the mainstream schools. They promote a Welsh ethos and celebrate Welsh history and culture effectively, for example by providing opportunities for pupils to take part in a 'Race for the Language' celebration. Teachers ensure that learning sessions have a good pace and use a range of visual resources successfully. This engages and holds the interest of nearly all pupils and enables them to develop their listening and speaking skills securely.

Assistants are used extremely effectively to provide purposeful support for pupils and, in the best practice, they know when to intervene and when to promote persistence. Staff celebrate pupils' successes valuably, which contribute to pupils' innate pride and increasing confidence as they make swift progress in acquiring the Welsh language and become bilingual or multilingual.

Most pupils develop their reading skills successfully when reading a range of texts jointly in line with their stage of development. This contributes effectively to enriching pupils' vocabulary as they participate in general conversations in the learning environment. Pupils confirm their understanding of various stories through engaging activities such as improvisational drama and playing various board games. Older pupils develop their higher-order reading skills purposefully by gathering information about the histories of Wales, such as the flooding of the Tryweryn valley and the story of Gelert, as part of the transition activities as they return to the mainstream school. Teachers also organise a visit to Beddgelert which reinforces pupils' understanding of vocabulary and various sentence patterns successfully. These valuable experiences enable pupils to apply their oral, reading and writing skills in holistic activities across the areas of learning.

Teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to reflect on their learning and evaluate their progress effectively against the learning objectives. The strong relationships and inclusive learning environment enable pupils to engage effectively with constructive feedback from staff and peers. This helps nearly all pupils to learn from their mistakes and be willing to try. As a result, they take increasing responsibility for their learning to identify their strengths and their next steps accurately in developing their Welsh language skills.

The peripatetic Welsh teacher, who teaches the youngest pupils in three schools in a particular area of the county, support pupils beneficially when introducing the language. A range of purposeful activities are provided to encourage pupils to use vocabulary and simple sentence patterns with increasing confidence. This contributes firmly to their confidence as they learn and play through the medium of Welsh.

Leaders implement relevant self-evaluation processes that support them to track the effect of provision over time. In general, the leadership structure and self-evaluation processes do not provide enough opportunities for staff to monitor and evaluate provision increasingly effectively. Leaders act purposefully on priorities to ensure that provision meets the well-being and linguistic needs of pupils. For example, officers use funding prudently to develop the 'Aberwla' scheme further to ensure that the content represents contemporary society in Wales. This contributes firmly to developing pupils' understanding and appreciation of the Welsh language, Wales and the wider world.

Staff's job descriptions and performance management arrangements support them to develop professionally continuously in a supportive environment. Regular opportunities are provided for staff to network in a variety of professional learning sessions, for example by attending sessions on further understanding of the 'Aberwla' scheme and to develop their digital skills. As a result, by promoting a culture of co-operation and sharing effective pedagogy among staff, these arrangements provide consistency across the units which, in turn, support pupils to make extremely robust progress in their Welsh language skills.

Co-operation between staff at the immersion centres and school leaders and staff is valuable, for example as they share relevant information about pupils' progress in their Welsh language skills on a weekly basis. As part of the aftercare support, the transition process supports pupils appropriately as they return from the units to the mainstream schools each week and at the end of the course. The resources that are placed on a digital platform are a useful means for staff to use them to support pupils continuously to reinforce their vocabulary and sentence patterns. Through this, pupils continue to use and apply their Welsh language skills in a variety of contexts.

Staff at the units share effective immersion principles and approaches successfully with a range of partners, for example with the authority's teachers and students at Bangor University. Through this partnership, teachers in the mainstream schools value the support as they refine their language teaching practices further for all pupils. Teachers also spend time beneficially researching effective immersion pedagogy and methodology further; for example, ideas about methods to support learning continuity as pupils transfer from primary to secondary, and how to include parents in the language acquisition process. They present the findings purposefully by producing a series of digital webinars which are an extremely valuable national resource for staff in immersion units and Welsh-medium and English-medium schools.

One of the strengths of the system is the way in which staff take advantage of regular opportunities to enrich pupils' experiences by working with a variety of partners.

Effective co-operation between staff at the immersion units and creative performers to support pupils to develop their language acquisition skills through the 'Tirwedd' project

The head of the immersion system has applied for a revenue grant to support pupils to develop their proficiency and confidence in their Welsh language skills. Through this, staff have worked regularly with primary schools in two different areas of the authority, together with creative performers from a theatre company, to organise a creative celebration in pupils' local communities.

The units' staff have trained creative performers to upskill them with effective immersion practices as they work with pupils to create artistic projects. By doing so, when holding the creative workshops, the performers used effective immersion methods consistently with pupils to support them in using and applying the Welsh language within the expressive arts.

An opportunity was provided for pupils to present their artistic projects as part of a St David's Day parade in pupils' local communities. Through effective co-operation with other partners, for example the Welsh Language Charter and the '*mentrau iaith*' Welsh language initiatives, pupils' pride and proficiency in the Welsh language were raised successfully. This contributes successfully to developing the appreciation of parents and members of the wider community of the value and benefit of the Welsh language.

The headteacher uses effective communication methods in promoting provision among parents, for example when holding open days in the immersion units about what their children will achieve when acquiring the Welsh language. Staff ensure that parents are given valuable opportunities to support their children at home, together with sharing information with them about opportunities to learn Welsh themselves.

Additional information

The provider's arrangements for safeguarding pupils do not give any cause for concern.

The provider's arrangements for the management of the site do not give any cause for concern.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent/carers and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teachers, staff, leaders and headteachers of pupils' registered schools through their questionnaire responses

During an inspection, inspectors:

- observe teaching and other activities, including evidence gathered through learning walks
- meet pupils (past and present) to discuss their work and to gain their views on various aspects of the provider's work
- meet with staff, leaders, managers, headteachers of pupils' registered schools and others to evaluate the impact of the provider's work
- look closely at self-evaluation processes
- consider the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) / improvement plan and look at evidence to show how well the local authority has taken forward planned improvements
- scrutinise a range of documents, including information on pupil assessment and progress, records of meetings of staff and the management committee, information on pupils' well-being, including the safeguarding of pupils, and records of staff training and professional development

After the on-site inspection and before the publication of the report, Estyn:

- review the findings of the inspection alongside the supporting evidence from the inspection team in order to validate, moderate and ensure the quality of the inspection

Appendix 1: Numbers – quantities and proportions

The report makes references to different quantities and proportions e.g. ‘most pupils...’ or ‘very few pupils...’. We use these terms to describe quantities and proportions as outlined in the table below:

nearly all =	with very few exceptions
most =	90% or more
many =	70% or more
a majority =	over 60%
half =	50%
around half =	close to 50%
a minority =	below 40%
few =	below 20%
very few =	less than 10%

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the local authority and from the Estyn website (<http://www.estyn.gov.wales>)

The report was produced in accordance with Section 38 of the Education Act 1997.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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This document has been translated by Trosol (Welsh to English).



**Exploring the effectiveness of the Welsh Language Immersion model in Schools in
Gwynedd: Detailed Case Study**

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July 2025

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Key Terms

Term	Definition
Language Centre / Immersion Centre	The Language Centres provide an intensive Welsh language course for newcomers to enable them to assimilate with the bilingual society and fully participate in bilingual educational experiences. (Gwynedd, 2022)
Early Immersion	Early immersion means introducing and using the Welsh language as the only language of teaching in the foundation phase in Welsh-medium and bilingual non-maintained settings and schools. In best practice this means that the Welsh language is introduced purposefully to learners in specific language sessions, in addition to providing frequent opportunities for them to acquire and apply their Welsh language skills through rich experiences both inside and outside the classroom. (ESTYN, 2022)
Late Immersion	Late immersion means a provision for learners who join Welsh-medium schools or Welsh streams in bilingual schools who have not experienced a full period of early immersion in the Welsh language. These learners can be complete newcomers to the Welsh language or be re-engaging with Welsh-medium provision. (ESTYN, 2022)
Planning, Preparation and Assessment (PPA)	Teachers' specific time to plan and prepare, and therefore they are not on the teaching timetable for this period.
Content and Language Integrated Learning CLIL	CLIL is the method of going about it to learn a subject and the content of that subject, via the target language medium.

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Introduction

The aim of this comprehensive case study is to evaluate the impact and to scrutinise the provision of the current Immersion Education System in Gwynedd to see if it delivers on its promise and provides pupils in Gwynedd with the necessary foundation to acquire Welsh when embarking on their linguistic journey to becoming new speakers. This is a model based on the concept that is long established in the literature around linguistic planning, language policy and education of minority languages (Robert 2009; Hodges 2012, 2024),

"The aim of the Language Centres is to provide an intensive Welsh language course for newcomers to enable them to assimilate with the bilingual society and fully participate in bilingual educational experiences." (Cyngor Gwynedd, 2025)

The Context of the Immersion Provision in Gwynedd

In January 2023, the Immersion Education System in Gwynedd was significantly restructured. The provision used to have four immersion units for the primary sector and one for the secondary sector. The aim of the original immersion model was to offer an intensive Welsh language course for newcomers to enable them to fully assimilate with the bilingual society and be an active part of the county's educational life.

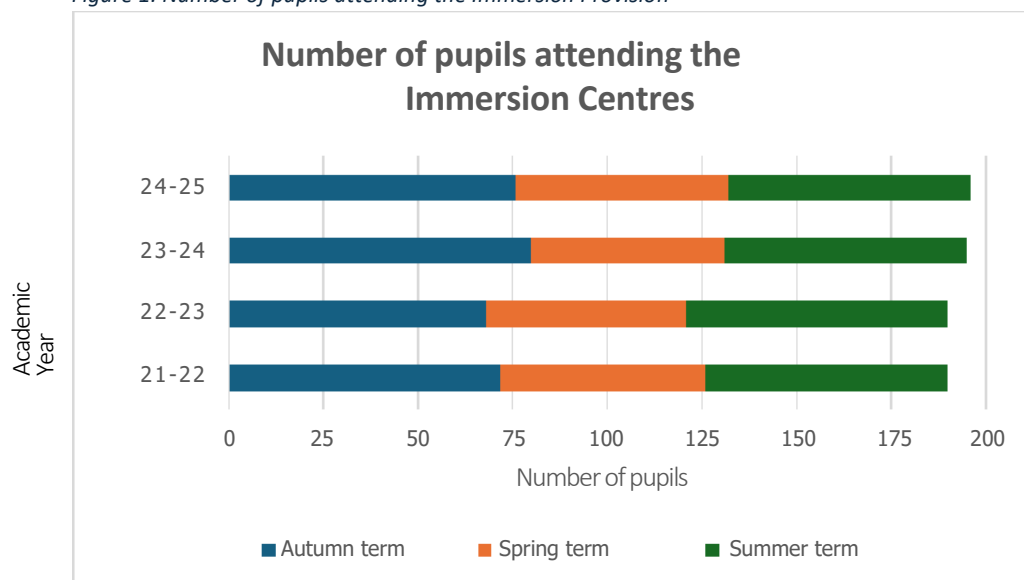
The previous immersion model provided a ten-week course for primary pupils and eight-weeks for secondary pupils, with children attending the centres for five days a week, without any contact with the mainstream school during the immersion course.

As a result of the decision made by Cyngor Gwynedd in July 2021, it was agreed to support the long-term vision for the new Immersion Education System until 2032 and beyond. Consequently, six new immersion centres were established and strategically located across the county's three areas of Arfon, Dwyfor and Meirionnydd.

Under the new arrangement, an intensive course of four days a week is offered to the immersion pupils over a period of ten weeks. The intention of this structure is to allow pupils to have regular contact with mainstream schools, and continue to interact with friends, staff and the wider social aspects of school life while also attending the immersion centre.

Pupils from Year 2 to Year 4 attend the Primary sector immersion centres and pupils from Year 5 to Year 9 attend the Secondary immersion centres. In addition, staff in the immersion centres provide support for pupils as they return to the mainstream schools on Fridays and following a period at the centre when they return to mainstream full-time.

Figure 1: Number of pupils attending the Immersion Provision



The number of pupils attending the immersion provision indicate a consistent pattern over the last four academic years, with a little growth seen over the last two years as shown in Figure 1.

Research Aims

Therefore, the principal aims of this research is to evaluate the effectiveness of the new Gwynedd Welsh language education immersion model. The research has been designed to answer the following four research questions:

- I. How suitable and effective is the model in ensuring pupils' use of the target language when they return to the mainstream school during the course?
- II. How effective is the model in terms of enabling learners to acquire Welsh sufficiently?
- III. Are there opportunities to further strengthen the Welsh language in the Immersion System and in the mainstream Schools?
- IV. How suitable and effective is the model when considering pupils' well-being during the immersion period?

Methodology

A mix of methods were used for this evaluation, with four different elements to provide qualitative and quantitative data: observations of the learning and teaching settings, on-line survey, focus groups and semi-structured interviews. The combination of mixed methods allowed the research team to gather rich data to evaluate the efficiency of the immersion model, and to answer the research questions.

Participants

The intention of the research was to recruit a variety of participants (pupils who attend the immersion centres, parents of pupils in the immersion centres and immersion centre and mainstream teachers) for the different elements of the study. The research was carried out in four language centres in Gwynedd, two for primary age children (Years 2-4) and two for older children (Years 5-9). Once the four centres were identified, pupils within the centres were recruited following receipt of consent from the parent / carer (see the Ethical Considerations section).

Following this, pupils in the mainstream schools were identified and we contacted them to facilitate the recruitment of pupils from the language immersion classes for the observations (see the Observations section). For the purposes of parent or carer recruitment, the language centres were asked to contact the relevant persons directly to invite them to participate in the research.

To recruit teachers, an invitation was circulated to every school and language centre across Gwynedd, giving them an opportunity to contribute to a focus group to discuss the language immersion provision or submit feedback via an anonymous on-line questionnaire.

Table 1: Overview of the Sample of Final Participants

Element of the project.	Final sample
Observations	15 Pupils
Pupils' Focus Group	21 Language Centre Pupils in 5 Focus Groups
Teachers/Centre Staff Focus Group	21 Language Centre Staff in 4 Focus Groups
Teachers/Mainstream Staff Focus Group	9 Mainstream Teachers in 3 Focus Groups
Parents/Carers Questionnaire	23 Parents/Carers
Number of Mainstream Schools observed	8 Schools
Number Language Centres observed	4 Centres

Observations

The study included observing pupils and teachers in two different educational contexts, namely the language immersion centre and the mainstream school. Observations were carried out on three pupils from each of the four language immersion centres together with their teachers, comprising four separate observation occasions: **two at the language centre**, and **two in the mainstream school**. Each observation session was structured as three specific steps:

1. formal observation in the teacher's classroom with the target pupil;
2. observation of group activity under the teacher's guidance, with the activity being chosen by the teacher as part of the lesson;¹ and
3. informal observation of the target pupils interacting on the school yard in a natural social context.

Figure 2 demonstrates the research observation timetable over the period of ten weeks.

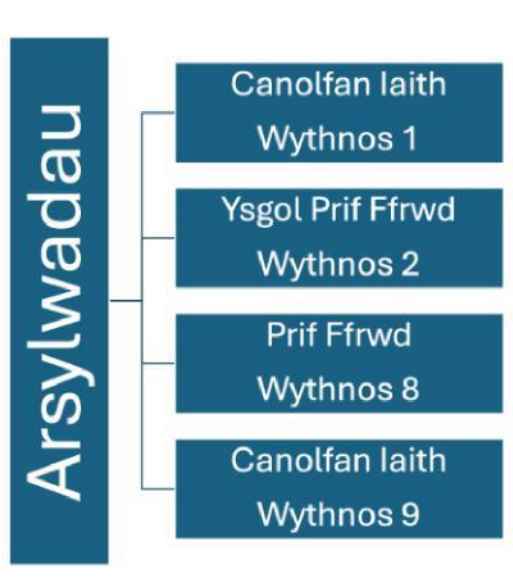


Figure 2: Design of the Observation Process

The Immersion Education Strategies Checklist (Fortune, 2014) was used as a framework for the observations, ensuring a structured and consistent approach to assess the immersion education methods of teaching across the provision. The observations have been framed around seven specific focuses deriving from the framework which scrutinises the key aspects of pedagogy to support the effective acquisition of language. In this case, the focus of the observations was the Welsh language. The seven elements of the observation were:

- Integration of Content, Culture, Language and Literacy

¹ Group activities were not seen in every observation

- Addressing language development and improving accuracy
- Creating comprehensible input
- Creating a rich learning environment in the target language
- Effective use of oral language by the teacher
- Promoting extended output by the pupil
- Responding to a range of needs

Parents/Carers Questionnaires

An anonymous questionnaire was circulated to every parent with a child attending one of the four language immersion centres. The questionnaire investigated the attitudes of parents regarding the immersion programme, including their views about the impact of the programme on their children's language development and well-being.

Pupils' Focus Groups

Face-to-face focus groups were held with pupils in the four language immersion centres, after receiving the consent of parents/carers as well as the consent of the pupils themselves. The sessions were recorded as audio only and were subsequently transcribed for analysis.

To ensure that this method was inclusive and accessible to pupils across the age ranges and language ability levels, visual images were used (coloured faces representing emotions - happy, neutral and unhappy) as props for the discussions.

The questions of the focus groups investigated a variety of aspects about the pupils' experiences during the language immersion period. This included their experiences of learning Welsh (positive or challenging elements, language use contexts), their views on the teaching methods and approaches (feelings about attending the language centre, specific learning strategies, and how they feel about returning to the mainstream school on the Friday), as well as the impact of learning Welsh on their lives, academically, in the home and in the wider community.

Teacher Focus Groups

Focus groups were held with staff from the language immersion centres as well as from the mainstream schools. One specific focus group was organised for teachers in the language centres, one for assistant staff at the centres and three focus groups for mainstream schoolteachers, with a separate group for each of the three areas in Gwynedd; Arfon, Dwyfor and Meirionnydd.

The focus groups were held virtually, via the Microsoft TEAMS platform, and they were recorded (as audio only) before they were transcribed in detail for further analysis. The questions used in the focus groups were adapted from a framework of interviews used in a previous study on Gallic immersion programmes (Duibhir, 2018).

Several aspects of key attitudes within the immersion provision were investigated, including the pupil's language proficiency and their attitudes to learning Welsh, consistency and communication between the centres and the mainstream schools, the efficiency of the current immersion model, together with professional learning opportunities for staff.

Ethical Considerations

This research was undertaken in accordance with the ethical guidance of the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2024). Ethical approval was secured prior to commencing the research from the Ethical Committee of the School of Education, Bangor University (ethical application number 21082024-1202). Every child attending the four language immersion centres was invited to be part of the research, and as the research included children under 16 years old, the consent of their parents or carers was obtained first. The consent of parents/carers was also requested for mainstream school pupils who were present in the classes where the observation process took place.

Every participant (pupils, parents and staff) received a comprehensive information leaflet that explained the purpose of the study, the reasons for being invited to take part, any possible risks, how the data would be managed and stored safely, together with contact details for the researchers should they have any questions or concerns.

It was made clear that contributors had the right to withdraw from the research at any time prior to the commencement of the process to analyse data, without having to give a reason. The confidentiality and anonymity of each participant were retained throughout the research process, by replacing any identifiable information (e.g. names, locations) with pseudonyms during transcription. Signed consent forms were stored in a locked cabinet at Bangor University with limited access for the researchers only, or on the University's secure drive.

Limitations

Although the research methodology gave an intensive insight to the immersion provision over a full term in the 24-25 academic year, it must be acknowledged that the background, abilities and the engagement of the immersion pupils previously with the Welsh language could vary from term to term. This study gave a strong insight to the viewpoints of teachers in the immersion context and the mainstream by offering an overview of the viewpoints that are consistent within the provision. The data collected from parents / guardians, pupils' data sets and observations in 11 offered an empiric view of the observation period and the specific pupils who engaged with the immersion provision **over the study period**.

Data from Observations

As was highlighted in the methodology, the observations in the Immersion Centres and the mainstream schools were a central part of this research's design to give an organic and comprehensive insight into the immersion system, the support and the experiences pupils experience.

The evidence collected from the observations by scrutinising the centres is presented, and then the mainstream provision, as can be seen in Figure 3, by proposing key implications of what was observed when considering the research questions.

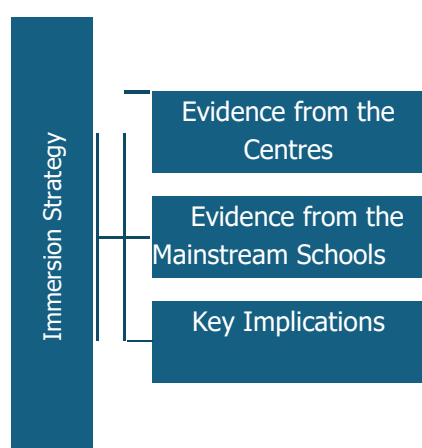


Figure 3: Overview of the Observation Model

No bespoke observation tool has been developed to observe the activities of immersion systems (Dublin College University, 2023), but an adaptation of the headings in the Fortune checklist (2014) was used to frame the observations and to report on what was observed. The observations have therefore been framed around seven specific areas that highlight key strategies when teaching in the immersion context.

The report will present the information collected during the observations at the centres, prior to the submission of what was observed in the mainstream schools. **It is essential to emphasise that the next part of the study presents data collected during the observation period only.** This included two observations in every immersion centre and mainstream schools that were part of the methodology for this study, as outlined in Figure 3.

Integration of Content, Culture, Language and Literacy

This section focuses on what was observed in terms of integration of content, culture and literacy within the immersion provision. We looked at the language aims that are specific to the development of learners that are also appropriate to the development and understanding of the culture, also any extended opportunities to acquire language outside the specific aims of the lesson were investigated. In addition, the use of purposeful

resources such as songs, poems, literature, and artefacts to support the learning of language and learn about culture.

Table 2: Immersion Education Strategies for the Integration of Language Content, Culture and Literacy

Elements that were investigated as part of the immersion model.
Specifying specific and suitable language aims in every lesson
Identifying cultural learning aims associated with the learning aims to develop language use.
Use of songs, poems, literature, rhymes, valid artefacts to teach language and culture
Evaluation of language and culture in every lesson

The Language Centres.

Several examples were seen of effective use of teaching strategies in terms of language integration, culture and literacy. The effective and consistent use of popular Welsh songs to support the learning were observed across the centres, together with the use of Welsh language television programmes. Some of the centres extended this use to be very effective use, by using the songs to recall prior learning (ref), be that through effective use of Welsh songs and rhymes, songs to learn the alphabet or the colours of the rainbow. Overall, pupils responded positively to this activity, and it appeared that they were familiar with the learning content (songs), which suggests a consistency in their use.

There are examples of learning extended language effectively, via identity games (labelling photos and pair matching games) to learn new vocabulary, before proceeding to form more orally complex sentences within the lesson context.

There was strong evidence of teachers intentionally setting language learning objectives, ensuring that the learners could understand and reinforce specific elements prior to their use in a wider context. A notable example was learning numbers before proceeding to a more extended task namely clock work or telling the time.

Regular use of popular Welsh music via the Welsh Language Charter fosters a cultural awareness amongst the pupils, but also enjoyment and an understanding of popular Welsh language culture. This regular use across the immersion provision reinforces positive values and attitudes towards the language and culture as these practices become a natural part of their school day. This reinforces educational practices that are embedded in the Welsh language culture and develops cultural expression as the pupils develop their language skills.

Implication

There is room to consider how media such as tv or video clips are used to further develop oral skills. The learning content can be planned in smaller blocks around the digital medium by considering the planning of oral tasks and activities during the watching process (see e.g. William and Thomas, 2017) to develop pupils' literacy skills further rather than watching whole programmes without a linguistic input.

Mainstream Schools

Mainstream schools used popular songs in informal contexts to promote language and culture effectively, e.g. during fruit time, or when pupils completed independent tasks. However, there was room to be able to better plan the use made of popular songs to specifically develop language skills. Interesting examples were seen of schools using Welsh language songs to frame the educational content with the final task leading to recording a performance of the song. However, in this example, the immersion pupils were not familiar with the song as they missed the preparatory period, therefore purposefully contributing was challenging for them.

Another example of mainstream schools identifying cultural learning aims linked to a specific theme was observed, e.g. Local Eisteddfodau. Although the educational content was relevant to the learners who were fluent in Welsh, the educational content was adapted to support the needs of the immersion pupils. Complex idioms were discussed, without language scaffolding for the immersion pupils. All in all, the use made of the target language was at an inappropriate level and much too complex for the immersion pupils. An opportunity was lost to explain the contexts of eisteddfodau effectively to a pupil who had no prior understanding. This led to the pupil disengaging from the lesson content and switched to use English.

Recommendation?

Addressing Continuous Language Growth and Accuracy Improvement

Table 3: Immersion Education Strategies to Address Continuous Language Growth and Accuracy Improvement

Elements that were investigated as part of the immersion model.
Encouraging and holding every student accountable to correct themselves/their peers
Addressing errors in oral and written language ²
Using a variety of effective feedback techniques including elaborating, metalinguistic cues, requests for an explanation, repeating, re-phrasing, clear correction and non-verbal cues.
Differentiating between feedback on form against meaning
Creating opportunities and activities to assist pupils to notice and produce correct language that is used less frequently orally and in writing.
Focusing on correcting language on the grounds of the linguistic aims of the lesson and the learners' developmental level
Balancing the use of feedback and the flow of the lesson

The Language Centres

² The focus during the immersion period is to develop oral skills.

Effective examples were seen at the centres of teachers addressing continuous language growth and improvement of accuracy. A range of teaching strategies were seen to be used to support pupils to correct and develop their language use to produce the appropriate forms. It must be emphasised that as the first lesson observation was during Week 1, the pupils' use of the target language was very scarce.

However, examples were seen of a teacher asking a pupil to repeat a pattern or word after it was pronounced correctly, giving praise for correct answers. Extensive use was also seen of other feedback techniques such as

- metalinguistic cues that draw the pupils' attention to specific language forms
- repetition and rephrasing responses to strengthen understanding
- clear correction and use of non-verbal cues such as making faces and facial expressions to support the message.

Overall, the centre teachers targeted corrections specifically for the pupil, to ensure consistent and relevant feedback for the child's developmental level.

Mainstream Schools

The strategies observed in the mainstream schools were not as extensive, relevant or effective as those in the centres. The use made was much more sporadic, with only a few schools striving to use strategies to develop language growth and accuracy.

Ensuring Comprehensive Input

Table 4: Immersion Education Strategies to Ensure that the Input is Comprehensive

Elements that were investigated as part of the immersion model.
Using body language, visual aids, objects or manual methods to convey meaning
Trying and using prior knowledge and experience with new themes
Using a variety of joint reading and joint writing activities and prior writing to make the language and content more accessible.
Breaking down information and complex processes into smaller chunks
Making consistent use of tasks that require learners to show their understanding
Choosing and adapting instructional material for the learners' developmental level
Establishing linguistic habits that give opportunities to repeat and extend language use

Language Centres

Robust evidence was seen in the centres of teachers ensuring comprehensive input by effective use of body language, *Total Physical Response* (TPR), images etc. These teaching methods facilitated communication and reinforced pupils' understanding.

Teachers were observed using body language regularly through movement, pointing, naming objects and expressing feelings through facial expressions (happy, sad) or gestures e.g. mimicking sleeping. Teachers and assistants modelled this use to reinforce the language, with the children also imitating them. Props and movement were also used regularly to reinforce the learning by reciting poems together or using props when submitting a lunch order.

Teachers in the immersion centres enriched the input with 'hidden' revision tasks e.g. by using beats during break time to keep the beat on the 'drum'. Repeating key words to a beat reinforced the vocabulary and concepts such as 'i fyny' (up), "i lawr" (down), "ymyl", (edge) "canol" (middle) and "ochr" (side).

The centres linked prior learning activities effectively with new themes to extend and reinforce pupils' understanding of the language, be that through songs, or visual props. Effective use was seen of strategies to break tasks down into smaller chunks to support the learning. An example of this was revising the vocabulary for 'dillad' (clothes) through labelled images, before proceeding to remind the pupils of linked vocabulary such as colour and size 'bach' or 'mawr' - (big or small). This was followed with specific questions from the teacher such as "*Pa liw trowsus sydd gan ...?*" (What colour trousers does ... have?) before the pupils constructed full oral sentences.

There was clear emphasis on regularly checking the pupils' understanding at the centre. Specific techniques were used such as setting class tasks before using digital resources, such as the interactive whiteboard, to revise and reinforce the learning. During these activities each individual learner had an opportunity to use the target language, ensuring that the teacher could also assess the individual progress of every learner.

There was a specific routine in the language centres, that was integral when establishing practices that reinforced language familiarity together with repetition opportunities. Of the morning sessions observed, the same routine was seen e.g. everyone greeting each other, ordering lunch, asking about the previous night's activities - '*Be wnest ti neithiwr?*' (What did you do last night?), with everyone responding in turn.

Some differentiated tasks were prepared in the language centres, and one example was seen by differentiating via colours '*Coch, Oren, Gwyrdd*' (Red, Orange, Green) which was an effective practice and offered flexibility to pupils when choosing a task. In a minority of cases the differentiation of tasks seen was not always sufficient to support the range of pupils. This was more apparent when trying to support older pupils in the Secondary immersion, where themes can be irrelevant or childish, or learners with different cultural backgrounds who did not always understand the Welsh contexts or 'popular' context of the learning every time. This made engagement with the educational input at times more challenging for some learners.

Implication

There is room to investigate the development of immersion resources to support older pupils.

Mainstream Schools

There were some visual resources to be seen on the walls of the mainstream schools to support pupils with the target language. One example was seen in the mainstream schools of a teacher using images to effectively reinforce the target language.

There are regular opportunities in the mainstream schools for pupils to engage with fluent speakers in the classroom, and this is good practice. Nevertheless, planning had not been done every time to support the individual language development level of the immersion pupils. This meant that the pupils could not effectively engage, and because of this it appeared that this had a negative impact on their confidence in the language.

Training is offered to mainstream staff by the immersion system to ensure that the input is comprehensive e.g. support to adapt work sheets, sharing the principles of immersion. No evidence was seen during the observations of work sheets that had been adapted linguistically for immersion pupils in the mainstream school.

Creating a Rich Learning Environment in the Welsh Language

Table 5: Immersion Education Strategies to Create a Rich Learning Environment in the Welsh Language

Elements that were investigated as part of the immersion model.
Extending pupils' language repertoires by teaching synonyms and contrary meanings
Exhibiting a variety of words, sayings, written text throughout the classroom and the foyers
Inviting native speakers to participate in the classroom
Providing a variety of reading material in the target language and resources such as dictionaries, thesaurus, encyclopaedia, etc.
Surrounding the learner with extensive oral and written language input ³

Centres

Evidence was seen amongst older pupils of teachers developing language use by teaching synonyms. These strategies came up naturally within the unit, e.g. when discussing playing football, the teacher highlighted the differences between 'ennill' (winning) and 'curo' (beating). 'Wnaethoch chi ennill'? (Did you win?) 'Chi wnaeth guro tîm Llanfairgogogoch'? (Was it you who beat the Llanfairgogogoch team?)

Consistent opportunities were seen in the immersion centres for pupils to engage with fluent speakers e.g. by interacting with kitchen staff when ordering lunch, or visitors to the centre.

³ The immersion provision does not focus on developing written skills; therefore, the written input of the language centres was not observed.

Implication

It is possible to consider developing engagement with fluent speakers by extending the language use and usual patterns as the pupils' fluency develops.

The centres make effective use by exhibiting words and sayings in the classroom. Every classroom has been designed effectively to support the immersion scheme with the imaginary village and the village characters exhibited, together with key words, labels for parts of the body, colours, verbs, a map of Wales and food charts shown. Objects in the classroom had also been labelled, to support pupils to be able to operate in the classroom and use the Welsh language.

Mainstream Schools

Visual use of language was observed in the mainstream schools. The language was introduced in a more curricular way in the mainstream e.g. maps, literacy coaches, poems and idioms etc. The type of content varied across year groups in the mainstream, according to age or progress steps, and therefore very often beyond the language level of immersion pupils. Therefore, it can be considered that the learning environment designed around the educational context had not considered simple language stimuli that impact the engagement of immersion pupils with the learning environment in the mainstream context.

Some examples were seen of mainstream schools surrounding the learners with extensive oral language input. One example was the morning assembly. Such a space is a valuable opportunity to immerse pupils in the school's oral language and culture when they return.

The resources shared by the language centres to support the Welsh language were not used effectively. Even though there are resources on Google Classroom, more often than not, the immersion pupils completed simple tasks that did not support language development, if they could not contribute to the class task when they returned to the mainstream school.

Implication

Planning language content and specific strategies to repeat and develop the target language of immersion pupils using the ready resources at the immersion centres, would strengthen the experiences for immersion pupils when returning to the mainstream.

Using Teacher Language Effectively (Target Language)

Table 6: Immersion Education Strategies to Use the Teacher's Language Effectively (Target Language)

Elements that were investigated as part of the immersion
Clear expression and pronunciation
Rephrasing and repeating messages in a variety of ways
Varying the tone of voice to reflect the messages
Intentionally recycling vocabulary and language structures of the past, present and future
Modelling the correct use of language
Limiting how much of the teacher's language is used

Immersion Centres

There are several examples of the teacher in the language centres using the target language effectively to support the pupils' learning. Strong and consistent examples of clear expression and pronunciation were observed to convey and support the sounds of the target language. Teachers in the immersion centres are confident with varying the language e.g. slowing down, changing the tone, to reinforce the learning.

Several examples of immersion teachers paraphrasing or repeating the language content if the pupil was unable to respond appropriately.

Although teachers and support staff at the centres make effective and very consistent use of the target language, it was considered that there was room to reduce the teacher's input at times, especially during group or pair tasks, for the pupils to have more opportunities to use new vocabulary or new patterns. This may possibly prepare them better to cope with using the target language in the mainstream environment. In addition, it was considered that there is room to develop the concept of 'time to respond', before the teacher or assistant gives the pupil the answer.

Mainstream Schools

In most of the observations it was seen that the teachers were clear in their expression and appropriate pronunciation to support the pupils' learning, but it was only in a minority of mainstream schools that teachers were seen to slow down and simplify the language to support the pupils with the Welsh language. Overall, there was a tendency for the teachers to switch to English when it appeared that the pupils were unable to respond rather than try to encourage the use of the Welsh language via possible various educational strategies

Overall, the mainstream schools (except for one; see Case Study A), did not plan and prepare by giving sufficient consideration to the immersion pupils. Opportunities were being lost to be able to support pupils' language development by preparing key vocabulary, simple and within the subject area, e.g. in a Physical Education lesson - '*mainc*' (bench), '*pêl*' (ball), '*pwytnt*' (point), etc.

Implication

There is an opportunity to consider developing professional learning pathways to support teachers with suitable strategies to develop the use of the target language effectively for immersion pupils.

Promoting Pupils' Extended Output

Table 7: Immersion Education Strategies to Promote Pupils' Extended Output

Elements that were investigated as part of the immersion model.
Planning and using enquiry techniques that encourage extended discourse and nurtures a higher level of thinking
Structuring and facilitating pupil-centred activities that promotes interest
Using activities that focus on outputs, such as role play, simulations, drama, debates, presentations etc.
Using a variety of proactive activities such as dyads, pair- thinking-sharing, small groups etc.
Promoting the Learning by and with peers, e.g. meaning peers, tutoring peers
Consistently communicating clear expectations and reinforcing those expectations
Fostering a non-threatening learning environment
Making effective use of waiting time during interactions

Language Centres

Positive practices were seen in the language centres of teachers using a range of strategies to try and promote extended output. It must be recognised that the timing of the first observation, namely Week 1, meant that it was very difficult for the teachers to use these strategies as many of the pupils had acquired so little of the target language.

Despite this, activities were planned in a fun way e.g. board games, role play etc, to try and gain the pupils' interest. However, some activities had not been structured and did not facilitate the interest of some Secondary pupils in the target language. Some unsuitable activities were observed for the interests and age of older pupils, e.g. watching television programmes that were suitable for younger children, the way pupils were allocated in groups, or board games that introduced childish characters.

The centres made very effective use of the *Class Dojo* award system when reinforcing clear expectations in terms of language use. The points system was woven as a natural part of the daily running of the centre's activities, and it was a powerful tool to reinforce learning amongst the pupils and develop extended use of the language.

Implication

There is room to consider the activities and interests of a range of pupils in greater detail when planning activities to promote extended language output, specifically in the Secondary immersion provision.

Mainstream Schools

Although there was evidence of activities in the mainstream schools that could promote extended language output, in most of the observations, these tasks had not been intentionally planned around the language requirements of the immersion pupils. Although there were examples of group work, often pupils were immersed without sufficient language to be able to contribute without additional language scaffolding, or support from the teacher.

Pupils' use of language in informal contexts, e.g. playtime, was mainly through the medium of English, except for one school that was observed.

Addressing Learners' Various Needs

Table 8: Immersion Education Strategies to Give attention to Learners' Various Needs

Elements that were investigated as part of the immersion model.
Including a range of language abilities, previous knowledge and social skills in flexible groups of pupils
Planning for the children's various needs, based on language and cultural backgrounds
Providing a range of uses, learning activities and a range of assessment tasks for the abilities and interests of pupils
Conducting a survey of the pupils' interests

The Immersion Centres

The range of language needs, ages and Additional Learning Needs (ALN) poses a challenge to the immersion centres in meeting the various needs of pupils. When pupils arrive at the mainstream school and the immersion centres, often there is no specific information available about them. This causes a challenging situation for the teachers as they support them and plan for differentiation.

There is a wide range of activities provided to support the needs of pupils in the immersion centres, but there is room to consider external factors further when planning and designing these bearing in mind the linguistic variety that are part of the immersion provision by now (see Figure 4 in the parents' questionnaires section).

Mainstream Schools

No specific strategies were observed in operation at the mainstream schools to support the specific needs of immersion pupils who were returning to the class. However, it was observed that there was huge pressure on 22 mainstream schools to support a range of language needs within the usual class, quite often with staffing challenges on Fridays.

It was observed in several cases that supply teachers led parts of the teaching on Fridays in the mainstream as it was preparation and assessment (PPA) time for the class teacher. There are a wide range of language needs in the classroom in addition to those that attend the language centres, which pose further challenges to the mainstream on Fridays.

Implication

There is room to look at good practice nationally when supporting multilingual learners in Welsh language and Welsh learning settings.

Conclusion

In the observations it was seen that there were numerous strengths in the Immersion Centres when supporting the language development of pupils in the Welsh language and in supporting the well-being of pupils. The pupils were happy in the learning environment, and they had created strong support frameworks amongst other peers who were learning the language. Evidence shows that mainstream schools found it difficult to support pupils to reintegrate successfully on Fridays. There were limited opportunities for the pupils to use and develop the Welsh language, reducing the efficiency of the immersion model under the current system.

Analysis of Parents/Carers' Questionnaires

This section analyses the results of the online questionnaire circulated to the parents of children attending one of the four language immersion centres. Parents were asked for their opinion on the immersion programme.

Of the 23 responses to the questionnaire sent to parents and guardians, English was noted as the main language of the home in 19 of the households. However, the presence of a wider linguistic diversity was recorded, with a total of seven languages being named by respondents. In five of these households, it was reported that the parents also spoke that language with their children at home.

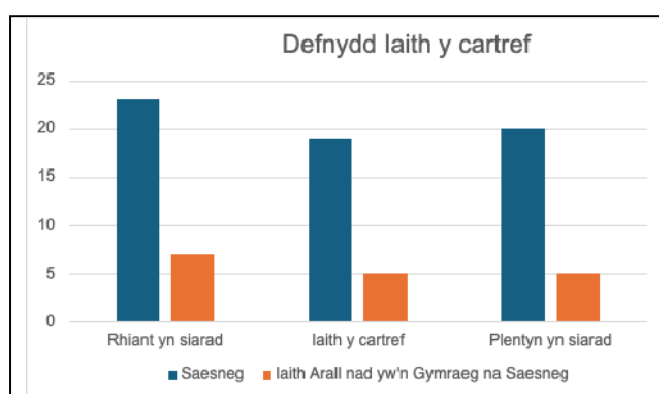


Figure 4: Overview of the Household Language

Parents' Attitudes to the Immersion System

All felt that there was value in learning Welsh, with the majority of parents expressing strong enthusiasm for the immersion system, describing it in words such as:

"Fantastic" (Parent 6 and 17)

"Very good" (Parent 8, 9 and 11);

"...that it's been very helpful" (Parent 10).

Several parents noted that their children enjoyed the experience and learned fast. Others mentioned that their children sang Welsh songs at home and enjoyed sharing what they had learned.

"My daughter really enjoys the learning, she seems to be picking it up very quickly after attending the language unit" (Parent 2)

"She's really enjoying it, sings the Welsh songs at home with her older brother and loves telling what she has learned and what it means when translated to English" (Parent 4)

The main benefits identified were having the opportunity for a new learning experience (n=6), in a safe and supportive environment.

"Fantastic opportunity for them to learn another language" (Parent 16)

"Excellent opportunity for them to develop Welsh in a 'safe' environment, as in it's [sic] directed for learners" (Parent 18)

"Wonderful learning opportunity, the teaching of Welsh will support him through school" (Parent 3)

Some elaborated on this by saying that the opportunity given not only supported their learning but also helped as the children gained confidence and integrated into the school and the wider community with eight parents mentioning this as an advantage.

"It's a great idea, it will help him integrate more in his school, and in his village" (Parent 5)

"It is helpful in integration and socialising" (Parent 18)

Parents were asked about any potential concerns they had surrounding sending their children to the immersion centre. Less than half the parents expressed initial concerns about the current model (n=11), with some feeling that taking pupils out of mainstream school could be challenging for the children, citing concerns about the social impact, e.g. missing their friends and social circles. However, it wasn't a persistent worry among parents, as they noted that pupils made new friends quickly at the immersion centres.

"They had only been at their 'new' school a few weeks before moving to the unit, so would miss new friends. This hasn't happened, they've just made new friends" (Parent 14)

"Missing friends, social circle from school but Fridays have maintained this" (Parent 17)

"No concerns regarding the unit itself. Mainly not being able to settle in their new school but that will come" (Parent 22)

Some parents were worried about the negative impact on their children's academic and educational progress under the current model, due to the time away from the main curriculum, especially perhaps for children who

had just moved to the United Kingdom (UK) or their Mainstream school, with some children taking longer to settle into their primary school after attending the unit.

“For these few weeks it might affect his studies in the village school. My child only came to the UK in May this year so immersion in the Welsh unit is one more stress for him to cope with, even though I wholeheartedly support the work of the unit” (Parent 4)

“10 weeks away from the main curriculum focus, although we are fully aware the language barrier was a concern before attending the unit” (Parent 11)

However, less than half of parents raised any concerns, with the majority seeing the benefits of attending the immersion provision or seeing an opportunity to extend the immersion period so that pupils were at the centre for a longer period.

“Maybe not long enough.” (Parent 8)

“No adverse issues of missing mainstream school, mainstream school states he uses Welsh at school...” (Parent 11)

Very few parents raised concerns about the age range in Secondary centres, particularly in terms of social interaction between year nine pupils and Primary children.

“I'm not sure primary children should be mixed with Secondary especially before Christmas. My child cried when she was told there was no Santa. She was also told she was an attention seeker by older pupils” (Parent 5)

Almost half of the parents indicated that they supported their children with learning Welsh at home. Examples were shared of pupils completing tasks at home on *Google Classroom*, with most of the support they needed coming from parents who were also learning Welsh, other family members (older siblings, grandparents), and *Google Translate* as a useful resource.

The majority of parents reported an increase in their children's knowledge of Welsh, at home and in the community, since attending the immersion centre.

Pupils' Well-being in the Immersion System

Parents were asked about the impact of attending the immersion provision on their children's well-being. A minority of parents (n=7) reported seeing a difference in their children's well-being. Those changes were positive ones, with four declaring that their children appeared happier and more confident.

“Happier and more confident when in the community, attending events where Welsh is the primary language, though he still may need clarification as his learning continues” (Parent 12)

“He was very shy now he is more relaxed and happy there is no stress anymore” (Parent 13)

The parents reported that their children were excited that they were meeting new friends at the centre and building positive social relationships that contributed to their sense of belonging.

“They are excited learning a new language and meeting new friends at the centre” (Parent 21)

While the above quotes do not specifically refer to the efficiency of the current immersion model in supporting pupils' well-being, it does demonstrate the positive impact of the immersion provision on pupils' confidence and development within the local community.

Conclusion

It can therefore be seen that the attitudes of the majority of parents towards the immersion provision are very positive. Enthusiasm and a strong appreciation of the opportunity for their children to learn Welsh in a supportive and safe environment were expressed.

Although initial concerns were expressed, key advantages such as support for their children to integrate into the local community and develop confidence in using the language in an educational and social context were seen as broader strengths.

Thematic Analysis of the Focus Groups

In developing the research methodology, it was decided that the research questions called for an inductive analysis approach to examine in detail how the immersion model influenced pupils' use of Welsh and their linguistic journey on their return to mainstream schools. Given the complexity of the individual responses to the immersion model, it was essential to consider an approach that would capture a range of perspectives, experiences and challenges in their entirety, rather than forcing and framing them within a pre-prepared theoretical structure, e.g. through a deductive coding method.

The inductive analysis method offers a structured but flexible approach to collating and analysing themes emerging directly from the data, in order to understand how effective the model is in ensuring pupils' use of the target language in the mainstream. This method can highlight patterns of linguistic behaviour, the challenges faced, and the most effective support strategies.

Similarly, in assessing the effectiveness of the model in enabling learners to acquire the Welsh language adequately, the inductive method outlines which factors facilitate or hinder the successful acquisition of Welsh.

By exploring the themes without a theoretical restraint, it provides an opportunity to delve deeply into the patterns, which include the opportunities and challenges in the attempt to strengthen the Welsh language in the Immersion System and in mainstream schools. In addition, in terms of understanding the influence of the model on pupils' well-being during the immersion phase, inductive thematic analysis allows pupils' voices to emerge naturally, highlighting any emotional or social impact within the model in line with the research questions.

As there is no fully established theoretical framework for measuring the impact of the immersion model across all these areas, it is essential to use an approach that enables the data to shape our understanding of the situation. The insights generated through the inductive method can, in due course, set the foundations for further research or the development of future theoretical models.

The Immersion Model and Pupils' Well-being

During the inductive analysis process, several emerging themes jointly appeared highlighting a number of further considerations in the future implementation of the current immersion model, particularly when considering pupils' well-being in the immersion provision. One significant concern is the time constraints and the reduction in teaching and learning time, as the model has been reduced by 20% in the language centres (with the exception of year 7, 8 and 9).

Exposure to the Target Language and Contact Hours

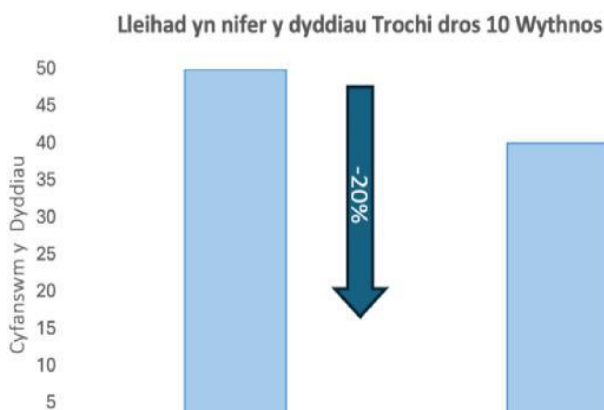


Figure7: A Reduction in the Number of Immersion Days in the Primary Provision

This reduction in learning hours and educational contact can make it more challenging for pupils to acquire the Welsh language effectively, reducing their exposure language-rich interactions, while also reducing the opportunities to consolidate their use of Welsh (see further discussion in the Mainstream section).

Research suggests that effective language immersion methods depend on consistent and sustainable exposure (Baker and Wright, 2017), and a reduction in contact hours could reduce the impact and long-term success of the model, particularly considering that there are fewer contact hours for pupils in language centres, but that linguistic progress is expected to remain as it was under the previous system.

However, the standard of pedagogy and curricular work is equally important when considering exposure to the target language (Genesee, 2013), and it is vitally important that all exposure to the language, whether in the language centres, or in the mainstream school, is an opportunity to expose pupils to the target language in a purposeful manner. Not being in the immersion centres should therefore not mean that the pupils do not continue to develop their language skills.

A Sense of Belonging and Peer Relationships

Another theme that arises from the analysis is the importance of learning from peers and social integration in language learning. Pupils in immersion centres benefit significantly from interaction with their peers, as social engagement fosters language development and a sense of belonging (García & Lin, 2017).

Pupil 13

"I feel really settled in here. And I have all my friends. And it's really fun learning Welsh because we get to do activities and acting and lots of things that make me feel happy when I learn Welsh."

Friday can be problematic for pupils returning from immersion centres to mainstream schools, mainly due to the nature of the day's activities. In primary schools in particular, Friday *can be* a day for completing the week's work, along with rewarding the week's positive behaviour through 'Golden Time'. Research shows that flexible education methods such as this can cause challenges for teachers, particularly in terms of lesson planning, assessing pupils' progress and ensuring learning progression (Maxwell et al., 2020). Effective communication between the mainstream school, the centre and parents is essential to ensure the success of such models (Parsons & Lewis, 2010). Flexible education arrangements rely on strong systems that ensure consistency in educational experiences and minimise potential disruptions to pupils' learning progression (Ofsted, 2019).

Some teachers emphasise that it makes no difference which day is chosen for returning to mainstream school, as the nature of the model itself poses significant challenges.

Nevertheless, it is worth considering what the impact of continued contact with the mainstream school is when a pupil returns to the mainstream school full-time.

Implication

The efficiency of the model needs to be strengthened in terms of reconciling structures around the 'flexible' model and the return to the mainstream. There is room for centre staff and mainstream schools to collaborate more closely to ensure that the structure of the current model improves consistency around nurturing relationships and pupils' well-being.

Consistency of Provision in Mainstream Schools

There is a sense of comfort and security within the immersion centres, which are typically small in size, in contrast to the challenge of reintegrating into mainstream classes, especially in larger schools. Some pupils displayed uncertainty about integrating back into this context, and the challenge of being able to use the

Welsh language, especially in the face of other challenges such as a lack of resources, confusion in communication processes where the exposure and linguistic support therefore do not persist.

Pupil 3

"I don't understand most of this stuff. So I'm just there, trying to figure out what it is."

Pupil 13

"Because [unclear] substitute people... It's quite hard. The substitute teacher doesn't know you come here."

In a minority of cases, mainstream teachers were seen to engage with the materials shared by the immersion centres through the digital medium. However, there are practical challenges in trying to implement educational strategies to support the use of the target language in the mainstream class on Fridays.

It was highlighted that these challenges were more present for larger mainstream schools.

Nurturing Relationships and Informal Interaction

The inductive analysis shows that there are concerns around emotional well-being and the potential mental pressures that pupils may experience during the ten-week block, especially when they return to the mainstream school on Friday.

Pupil 12

"I've got a little bit of friends to play with. But it's quite annoying because they always like talk, and I don't know what they're talking about 'cause normally they're talking about what they did yesterday or something."

The movement from small, familiar groups in the immersion centre to a larger context, with peers that they do not know so well, can have negative influences on pupils' well-being where the relationships with peers are not as well established in the mainstream. Evidence from the study suggests that changing the learning venue on Friday increases anxiety rates, while reducing confidence, undermining pupils' willingness to interact with the language (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014). Several examples were seen in the observational data of immersion pupils being isolated when they returned to the mainstream school.

Language Support and Curricular Engagement

Some immersion teachers highlighted that visiting the mainstream schools on Fridays is very often difficult, noting that the visiting period can coincide with the times when pupils engage with tasks or activities they enjoy.

Immersion Teacher 9

"I feel that Friday morning is better and that the afternoon is slightly harder. Because in the afternoon they have golden time. And I feel, oh, I'm taking these young children out of golden time. And that's the time they've enjoyed and they look forward to most, and they're not able to take part."

This can therefore disrupt the pupils' engagement with these enjoyable activities. There are many examples where pupils are taken out of creative and recreational tasks such as 'Golden Time'. Socio-psychological elements are key when considering pupils' feelings about learning the Welsh language, in particular integrative motivation (Baker, 1997) (Baker, 2011). 'Golden Time' is usually associated with relaxation and leisure time, which reinforces the concept of integrative motivation and disrupting these experiences can contribute to further frustration and negative feelings (Deci & Ryan, 2000), and consequently to a negative impact on pupils' well-being, and their overall progress.

This aligns with research showing that language learning is linked to emotional experiences, and negative associations can restrict the pupil's motivation and long-term engagement to continue acquiring the Welsh language (MacIntyre et al., 2019).

Pupil 3

"Last week, I had to send a poster to ALDI, and I could win £20. But I didn't get to finish it."

It is therefore fair to note that the qualitative data displays a complex correlation between the structural design of immersion models and pupils' well-being. The effectiveness of the model depends on careful considerations around transition processes, social integration, and emotional support. The patterns observed show that there is definitely room to revisit the model, examining well-being and emotional assurance alongside language development, to ascertain how appropriate and effective any model is in supporting pupils' well-being on their return to the mainstream school on Friday.

Implication

There is room to look at more hybrid models that use digital technology to support immersion pupils' engagement with the mainstream school for a while, before returning more gradually towards the second half of the immersion block. There is an opportunity for the immersion provision to work with experts to develop a hybrid provision.

Immersion for a range of ages

The term Early Immersion usually refers to the start of education through the medium of Welsh from the Foundation Phase up to the age of seven. Welsh is used as the sole or main language of teaching across all activities for young children (Estyn, 2022). Immersion teachers usually introduce the Welsh language through rich experiences based on play, songs, stories and daily routines.

Concerns were raised among some mainstream teachers when it comes to early immersion, and the inclusion of Year 2 children in immersion provision. Some teachers felt that the inclusion of Year 2 children in the immersion provision was challenging.

Age remains a contentious issue in the literature when considering the appropriateness of early immersion (Genesee, 2013). Genesee (2004) argues again that early immersion provides space to exploit young children's natural ability to learn a language, arguing that language teaching methods such as Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) are easier to implement as the educational space is more experimental and learner-centred, perhaps compared to the Secondary sector, where greater proficiency in language skills is required to correspond to the more complex curricular content. Again, there is room to consider developing and supporting mainstream staff to develop appropriate and effective educational strategies.

Overall, research does not demonstrate any disadvantages from early immersion, but instead highlights advantages (Steele et al., 2017; Trebits et al., 2021; Genesee, 1983; Genesee & Jared, 2008). A key consideration is that offering all children the opportunity to be immersed in the local language ensures a fair and inclusive offer, an offer that can ensure that the pupils are able to fully engage with the language and the local area, while also becoming new speakers, increase the number of Welsh speakers, and in turn, contribute to the realisation of some of the aims of Theme 1, Cymraeg 2050, A Million Welsh Speakers (Welsh Government, 2017, p. 32), including the academic skills in the long term.

Socio-economic background can influence children's educational success, but immersion programmes can help mitigate these inequalities for children from less privileged backgrounds (Trebetis et al., 2021). It is essential to ensure that the immersion provision is adapted appropriately where necessary to fully meet pupils' needs.

Effective implementation depends on teachers who are specifically trained in immersion methods and on the availability of appropriate educational resources.

Progression in Learning

The new immersion model very often leads to challenges in supporting academic development within the 10-week model. This is true in terms of pupils' development in their acquisition of the Welsh language, but also in academic work in mainstream schools. As already highlighted, losing 20% of exposure at the centres elicited negative responses across the qualitative data, but also means challenges when returning to mainstream school in terms of progression and engagement over the ten weeks. Some pupils returning to school in mid learning cycle (on Fridays) found it challenging to engage with the work at the mainstream school (e.g. modelling, drafting, re-drafting) leading to challenges in supporting learning experiences and applying work appropriately on Fridays.

Teacher 1

"The children have been working on something all week. It's the same with mathematics. If we have been teaching a mathematical skill all week, they arrive on Friday when we are solving a problem or reasoning, they haven't been here for those steps either...they are put in a difficult position when they come in."

Strong practices were seen in some mainstream schools, where focused planning through scaffolding or personalisation of the curriculum supported learning on Fridays. There is room to consider sharing these robust practices across the mainstream schools, to ensure a fair opportunity for every immersion pupil to be able to apply the language in challenging academic contexts outside of the immersion centre effectively.

However, challenges with lack of staff (teaching and support) meant that, more often than not, mainstream schools were not in a position to provide tailored support for the pupils returning on the Friday.

Staffing challenges on Fridays in mainstream schools are a major barrier in trying to support immersion pupils with the usual curriculum but also with their progress in the acquisition of the Welsh language. Evidence was seen in this study that it can be challenging for mainstream school teachers to be able to provide appropriate language support for the pupils.

Although mainstream schools acknowledge that valuable materials are available to support pupils' language development, they do not have the staffing resources to use the resources and support effectively.

Teacher 1

"Well, we don't have the staff to be able to give time to sit down... to go through that work either. Year 3, one teacher, 28 children. As I say, we just don't have the staff here to be able to release people to be taking the children."

Staff at the language centres and staff at the mainstream schools expressed concern that pupils were missing out on structured sessions on Fridays at the language centres (e.g. script work, role play etc) which is so crucial in language acquisition. The impact this has on pupils' confidence on their journey towards becoming fluent must be taken into account.

Immersion Teacher 10

"Normally, the Friday morning would be spent revising the language patterns throughout the entire week, and on Friday they would do the script, and act the script. But by now, we feel, or I feel that this time isn't available, that something has to go every week, if that makes sense, that there isn't as much opportunity for them to be revising as we used to on Friday morning."

Although some schools drew on resources distributed by the centres to support the pupils' language development and support their return and integration back to the mainstream schools, there was inconsistency in the level of support pupils received on Fridays at the mainstream schools from the class teacher.

Resources

The immersion centres shared the content of learning and support resources with the pupils and the mainstream schools via *Google Classroom*. The mainstream schools engaged with the digital materials on *Google Classroom* and found it to be a useful medium for sharing information and key language patterns. These resources are found to be useful to support pupils' immersion upon returning to the mainstream school, and evidence of these being used on the Friday was seen in very few observations.

Teacher 2

"We get material through from the (immersion) teacher. Then at the end of the week she sends the language patterns that have been covered the previous week. They are useful with everybody, to be completely honest."

However, not every mainstream school could engage with the materials on *Google Classroom* at all, with some schools finding it difficult to include the language learning content in the educational focus on the Friday.

Teacher 3

"Although I try and share it with everybody and that the materials are extremely useful, it's difficult to try and fit it in just for one, in a way."

Most immersion teachers found there to be limited support resources, especially so to support secondary-age pupils with the language, or learners who have passed the beginner's level of learning the language.

Immersion Teacher 5

"There's certainly a huge gap in the market in terms of books for Welsh learners. There are simple beginner ones, ones we use to teach them to read, such as Sali Mali, for example. But there's a jump after then. And I feel that there's a void there."

When discussing the availability of general resources to support teaching and learning in immersion, mixed feedback was received. It was noted that there were useful resources on Hwb, but that they were difficult to access. It was noted that digital developments to support immersion pupils with their reading skills would be welcomed, and that it could be argued that there was space to develop further resources in this respect.

Immersion Teacher 1 and 3

"Teacher 1: There's a lot in English, Reading Eggs to help with reading, Darllen Co. in Welsh. It would be nice if someone created something for immersion pupils. With something like Darllen Co., which they use when they go back to school but is perhaps too difficult for them when they go back. It might be nice; it would give an opportunity to create something specifically for immersion learners."

"Teacher 3: Yes, that's it. Effectively, one has to create their own resources, in that respect."

Pupils' Progress

Teachers and pupils alike acknowledged the value of the immersion provision in terms of developing pupils' Welsh oral skills, emphasising that the immersion provision provided robust and invaluable support towards pupils' language proficiency.

Pupil 1

"When I first joined, well, when we first joined, they said in a meeting in school, they said, "You won't be fluent, but you'll know a lot. And I was thinking I might not catch it in time. But I think I've learnt a lot so far."

Pupil 2

"Some of my friends who have done the Welsh unit, and they told me that you won't learn everything. You won't learn like how to write in Welsh, but if you get caught in a conversation, you'll know. If you need to talk, you're good. You learn most of the basics and most of the stuff you'll need."

The qualitative data highlighted that high-quality work takes place within the immersion centres, which leads to a considerable increase in fluency that could not be achieved to the same extent within a normal educational context in mainstream schools.

Teacher 1

"The strength lies in the fact that we could never do the work they do in ten weeks in a mainstream school."

However, some teachers expressed concern that the new 10-week model was less effective, noting that perhaps pupils' progress in their language skills is now not as solid as it used to be under the former system. According to the views of some teachers in this study, some pupils had difficulty incorporating the Welsh language into school life after leaving the immersion provision.

The immersion centres currently assess pupils' progress in accordance with the National Literacy Framework and the oracy strand for the purpose of tracking and assessment. There is a national intention to look at these measures in accordance with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

Implication

There is an opportunity to further explore how pupils use the Welsh language and integrate back to the school, a year after having been engaged in the immersion scheme.

Pupils' Motivation

The themes emerging from pupils' interviews showed that the learner's voice highlighted positive experiences at the Immersion Centre which are supported by purposeful second language teaching strategies.

The data showed that the attitudes of most pupils towards being at the immersion centre and towards learning Welsh were positive. It became obvious that overall, pupils enjoy learning Welsh and find the teaching strategies to be effective in developing enjoyment and motivation, without feeling too pressurised.

Pupil 2

"So I'm grateful that we do it in fun songs and fun ways and games and stuff instead of someone pushing us to do it and pushing us to do it."

Pupils expressed that they enjoyed engaging with the teaching approaches, particularly language games, songs etc.

The centres made good use of the 'Class DoJo' reward system, which motivates pupils more so to use Welsh and to which pupils responded very positively. The reward system had been clearly structured and inter-weaved naturally into a range of teaching and learning activities during the day and week.

The centres had designed the reward system to reinforce their teaching methods to support pupils with their acquisition of the Welsh language, even when they were being rewarded.

Immersion Teacher 8

"They are given a target at the beginning of the week, say 80 points, and they are given one point for good effort in singing, or for sitting down nicely at the table. Or for speaking Welsh in the playground, which might be three points."

The Teacher's Input and Immersion Methods

There was evidence of the immersion teacher using language effectively, by slowing down and breaking down language patterns, and modelling correct use. Effective use of these language teaching strategies is helpful as pupils develop their understanding of the language. Pupils described how immersion teachers used comprehensive input in a positive manner, which is effective in ensuring that appropriate language scaffolding is in place to support pupil fluency (Tedick & Lyster, 2019).

Pupils noted that specific instructions around basic skills and knowledge to develop fluency were useful e.g. understanding the Welsh alphabet, which is crucial to support pupils' development in their pronunciation of the target language.

Pupils noted that the use of strategies at the centres such as pattern repetition was a valuable practice, and this highlighted effective language teaching practices which enabled pupils to understand meanings instinctively.

Pupil 1, 2 and 3

"Pupil 1: Even if they say something you don't know, then they kind of slow it down and say it again, emphasise every word, and then you figure it out."

Pupil 3: Yeah. 'Cause they don't say a Welsh word like diolch and then tell you that it means thank you. They say it and say it and say it, and then you just know that it is thank you."

Pupil 2: Yeah. You just process that, and you understand."

An analysis of teacher focus groups reinforced the pupils' positive attitudes towards their experiences at the language centres. There is a strong relationship between pupils' positive attitudes and motivation and the focused second language teaching methods used by teachers at the language centres.

Immersion Teacher 8

"You know, saying the word or the first word just to cue them in, to remind them. I think that helps. Pictures, there are a lot of pictures aren't there, on the wall. Writing, pictures, using gestures, whatever, things like that."

A variety of activities were being provided in the immersion provision, and a system and routine were planned purposefully, e.g. pupils phoning the canteen to order lunch, a reward system being constantly reinforced.

The classroom environment had been purposefully planned, demonstrating consistency across the centres in terms of the use of the educational space to provide visual clues in the form of pictures and key vocabulary on the walls to support pupils.

Teachers at the immersion centres were confident in choosing and selecting appropriate strategies to support pupils' language acquisition, whether through body language, gestures, repetition, which is crucial to develop long-term understanding and language acquisition. Another strength was that the immersion teachers' competence in using these strategies meant that there was no reliance on using English in class.

Immersion Teacher 7

"Simplify and mime things if they don't understand. And only say the English word if necessary. And then you just repeat the Welsh words lots of times. Yes, repeat, simplify. Model the language to them. They get a sample of the question. "

The language provision and support for pupils as they returned to mainstream schools was not as robust. No structured professional learning offer had been provided for the staff of mainstream schools to be able to develop the necessary skills to develop pupils' language development effectively within the new immersion model. Consequently, no consistent use of second language learning strategies were observed, such as purposeful and effective use of the target language, language modelling, use of visual clues, or use of adequate resources to support children's language development.

Professional Learning

Some members of staff at the language centres engaged in international discussions on second language teaching and shared good practices through national networks. However, professional learning pathways in language immersion are few and far between at a national level for immersion staff. It appears that engagement with international good practice depends on individual efforts or the leadership of centres at a local level rather than a national vision and professional learning pathway.

Immersion Teacher 4

“Personally, I have been doing much research of my own into English as an additional language, also in the Basque Country, and seeing what the principles are in America in terms of learning Spanish as an additional language there.”

In addition, many staff at the centres used intervention programmes such as ELSA. As a result, staff at the centres noted that they incorporated language patterns effectively into well-being support strategies.

“I have planned language into circle time lessons to look at the well-being element with the children, for us to do it through the medium of Welsh, building on language patterns from week one, looking at emotions and building on that.”⁴

Implication

The lack of structured Professional Learning opportunities for mainstream school staff hinders their ability to fully support pupils attending the immersion system. The implications for upskilling mainstream staff who will be supporting the pupils during the immersion period were not given due consideration when developing the new model.

Communication

Despite there being robust procedures in place in an attempt to share crucial information between the language centres and the mainstream schools, as seen in Table Eight, it appears that the information was not reaching the relevant staff.

Table 9: Activities to support school staff and parents during the model

Support Programme for Staff and Parents	Communication between the Centre and Mainstream School
Before the pupil arrived at the centre	Immersion Teacher going to the mainstream school to meet the child and class teacher
Open Morning before starting the course	Pupil and parents visiting the centres

⁴ These strategies were not observed in use during this study.

	Local providers, e.g. Dysgu Cymraeg GO, Menter Iaith present to share information about extra-curricular events to support the learning of Welsh
Week 1	On-line meeting to support mainstream teachers and staff Share timetables Share access to <i>Google Classroom</i> Share effective immersion strategies with mainstream teachers Share language patterns
Week 6	On-line meeting to support mainstream teachers Share further language patterns Opportunity to discuss and share information
Week 10	Open morning at the centre Parents, class teacher and headteachers invited
Week 11	Staff at the centre attend mainstream school to share the children's work Present completion certificate to the immersion pupils

Although the language centres share the learning material through a digital medium such as *Google Classroom*, the information and resources did not always reach the mainstream class teacher, and the attendance of mainstream schools at the support events varied.

Teacher 1

"Interviewer: How does the class teacher know about the language work and the level of the work being completed at the immersion centre for you to be able to refer to on the Friday in lessons?"

Teacher: I don't think they know in that respect."

Immersion Teacher 4

"If the headteacher, obviously, shared the information with all members of staff in terms of a child's linguistic ability, shared the language pattern and that teachers used the same language patterns every Friday and in lessons, then there would be potential. But it's inconsistent."

Although some examples of weekly e-mails are shared by teachers at the centres, it appears that mainstream schools find that these messages are irregular, and that key information does not reach the right class teachers.

Teacher 2

"I don't receive something every week. I did a few weeks back for a while, and at the beginning for a while. Therefore, I don't receive anything on a weekly or fortnightly basis. But that e-mail, there is one e-mail with five units or something in it, I'm sure."

It also appears that teachers at the centres are uncertain at times as to who are pupils' class teachers, especially when it comes to larger mainstream schools or secondary schools, causing further challenges when sharing crucial information about development and providing support for the pupils' progress and well-being.

Immersion Teacher 1 and 2

"Teacher 1: I e-mail the class teachers too. You won't get a reply from everybody. Only some reply to e-mails, to tell you the truth."

Teacher 2: I try to e-mail the class teachers. But if I'm not sure who the class teacher is, then I ask the headteacher to forward the message."

Teacher 1: It's difficult in a big school, isn't it."

It also appears that informal conversations were the main method of communication when updating mainstream schools on pupils' weekly progress on the Friday, except for the programme highlighted in Table 8. There were no formal weekly meetings or structures in place to share information between both settings.

Immersion Teacher 6 and 7

"Teacher 6: Just a quick chat. Nothing formal as such, just to report back. And then sometimes they have questions about the individual or language patterns and so forth. But no meetings. I only have that kind of conversation."

"Teacher 7: I wouldn't say that it's something that happens every week on a Friday, that you talk to every teacher and discuss, because a lot of the time, they don't have time, and you don't have much time either..."

Such informality, although useful for small schools where engagement and sharing information is easier and happens naturally, can be problematic in larger establishments, leading to patchy or insufficient communication. In the larger schools, staff often found it difficult to keep in regular contact, relying heavily on contact with headteachers or administrative staff to share key information, further affecting the support and consistency of communication to ensure the well-being and development of staff attending the centres.

Immersion Teacher 3

"Also, in terms of communication, I think it depends on the school. I go to three schools. There are a few schools where I perhaps see the teacher every week because I have to go through the class to go to the room where I work with the child. But there's a school where I only see the secretary, and that's it, because everybody's busy etc."

The practice of sharing weekly language patterns through platforms such as *Google Classroom* was welcomed. However, the way these resources were distributed and used was still inconsistent, depending largely on the initiative of individual staff in the mainstream schools rather than robust organisational processes and structures.

Teacher 2

"I like that we get to see the resources and what they have been doing from one week to the other. More so than what we were told before they were there. It was more of a period where they were there for a while and then came back and that was it. At least now we get to see the patterns."

Immersion Teacher 2

"Every headteacher and class teacher have been invited to the Google Classroom that we use at the unit so that they can use those with the entire class if they want."

Although staff from the immersion centres attend mainstream to support immersion pupils further on Fridays, there was no opportunity to communicate and work with the mainstream class teacher every time. This was a missed opportunity to share information between one learning setting and the other to ensure the richest experiences for immersion pupils. There was a perceived lack of understanding between some members of staff about the learning content being completed at the immersion centres, meaning that ensuring continuity and pupils' engagement with the language at mainstream was less effective than it could have been.

Teacher 1

"No, we don't have a clue, well I don't, what they do in class all week, to be completely honest."

Implication

There is a need to develop systematic structures to improve communication across the provision by all key stakeholders, including the mainstream schools. Tightening collaboration systems can not only improve the consistency and quality of the educational provision and learners' outcomes in terms of their acquisition of the Welsh language, but also sustain their academic engagement in other curricular areas over the ten weeks.

Extra-curricular Use

There are processes in place to seek to coordinate between the leisure provisions on a local level and Welsh language support for the immersion pupils. There is evidence in this study of close collaboration between the language centres and organisational bodies e.g. The National Welsh Language Learning Centre, Menter Iaith, to introduce clear support structures for families to support their children when acquiring the Welsh language.

Nevertheless, this study has highlighted challenges when seeking to ensure a Welsh language provision jointly with local leisure services.

Teacher 1

"It is very difficult in this area in terms of the fact that many of the clubs and activities are held in English."

Implication

Consideration could be given to developing a programme of language enriching activities for the immersion pupils and their families in collaboration with leisure services, local clubs and organisations, Learn Welsh - North West and Menter Iaith.

Extra-curricular Opportunities in the context of Education

Pupils' informal use or use of language tended to be English at nearly all the schools that were observed, even among pupils who are not part of the immersion provision. In nearly all the situations that were observed, the bulk of the evidence notes that English is the school yard's informal language, at mainstream school and at the immersion centres.

Pupil 13

"I don't really speak Welsh with my friends. Nobody speaks Welsh when they're out of the classroom."

It was seen that pupils' attitudes towards using the Welsh language in mainstream schools tends to be more negative than attitudes towards its use in the Language Centres, with pupils highlighting that peers do not speak with each other in Welsh, and that English is the natural language of their friendship group.

Immersion teacher 5

"And I do try to ask those I think who would tell me the truth. And there's very little Welsh. I think it's a habit, and it doesn't just happen with other friends and children either. Staff and teachers also are just used to it (Speaking English)."

The lack of use of the Welsh language by pupils across the mainstream schools that were observed was a cause for concern. This means that integrating the immersion pupils to use Welsh in the mainstream space is more challenging, and places them in a space that is a complete contrast to the language environment of the immersion centres.

Nonetheless, the data shows that smaller sized schools find it easier to monitor language use in more informal contexts, namely on the school yard.

Teacher 2

"We're a small school as well, we have (x number) pupils here from Nursery to Year 6. Therefore, it's easier for us to hear if they are speaking English during dinnertime or on the school yard, and that we remind them again rather than needing to implement a major strategy to ensure this. It is easier for us to monitor it."

Evidence suggests that some pupils are more likely to use the Welsh language when living in smaller communities where the language continues to be used socially in the local area.

Pupil 1

"It depends who's there for me. Because I know quite a few people in my village. So, like, if I know them as like a friend or something, I would speak like a whole conversation with them, and then they'll help me learn if I say something wrong."

The pupils who attend the immersion centres in the secondary sector note the value of the Welsh language in terms of casual employment, while others emphasise the importance of being able to communicate with people in the village through the medium of Welsh, recognising support for the language and their journey to acquire the language locally.

"I have a job at the (name of local pub), so people speak to me in Welsh. I have to say, "I can't speak Welsh yet." So it will help me communicate with people."

Home Attitudes and Support

The data highlights the significant impact of family attitudes and activity on the language progress of pupils who learn Welsh in the immersion centres. There are examples of parents and other members of the family getting to grips with learning Welsh themselves to support the children and engage with the community, which nurtures stronger engagement with the language outside the classroom and encourages active use of the language in the home.

Pupil 13

"I tell my mum and dad what I learnt today. And I do with my brother sometimes, but not much because, usually, he's messing around somewhere other than with me. I just speak Welsh with my mum and dad. My dad's learning Welsh on Tuesdays."

Pupil 1

"My parents are going to a Welsh class, so we all try and help each other."

In several cases, pupils shared what they have learnt with their parents and siblings, strengthening the use of the Welsh language beyond the classroom. This emotional and practical support contributes to the pupils' confidence and linguistic motivation.

Immersion Teacher 4

"Parents' attitude is important, isn't it. It feeds in to so much."

Additionally, the data noted that teachers witness a difference when positive attitudes towards the Welsh language come from the home, and when the Welsh language's social and cultural value is recognised by parents, the pupils' attitudes towards learning the language is more positive.

Pupil 2

"Pupil 2: My nan knows a lot of people in (village name omitted), like here and about, so she introduces me to people, and more than half of them probably only speak Welsh. And, obviously, I speak back, and I try to do it. They're normally quite impressed when I speak it 'cause they don't know that I'm learning Welsh."

***Interviewer:** And how does that make you feel?*

***Pupil 2** Definitely happy and proud. I'm progressing. I'm learning. I'm not at a stop point where I don't know anything. I'm moving forward in my knowledge."*

The data highlighted the importance of the attitudes of the older generation in supporting pupils to learn Welsh, along with family support to nurture positive attitudes towards learning and using the Welsh language. Often, learners relied on the linguistic capital of older members of the family, especially grandparents, who enable valid opportunities to use Welsh in the community.

Further evidence showed that a pupil's family takes an active part in supporting the pupil to learn the language outside the immersion centre by using digital resources such as Google Classroom to strengthen the learning at home. These examples suggested that family members, especially in

Welsh-speaking communities, operate as positive linguistic models and offer emotional and practical support that contributes to the learner's linguistic development and confidence.

Conclusion

The evidence gathered shows that pupils enjoy attending the immersion centres and witness progress in their ability to use the Welsh language. Nevertheless, teachers at the language centres and at the mainstream schools feel significant frustrations around the immersion model in its current form. The design of the current model has not fully considered the pupils' well-being when they return to mainstream. Teachers at the centres, mainstream teachers and pupils alike often feel frustrated with the model, be that due to missing engagement time in a specialist space, insufficient time to complete tasks, or lack of systems to transfer information effectively enough.

While a range of very robust practices, and specialist language teaching methods are used across the immersion centres, the support available in the mainstream varies a lot, with some robust and effective practices to be seen, but there are other practices that do not succeed in supporting the pupils efficiently enough when they return on a Friday.

This next section presents two Case Studies that attest to the range of experiences seen as part of the observation data that was collected for this study.

Case Studies

Case Study 1

Background

Child A, a pupil in Year 6, moved to the local area during the summer of 2024. The language of the home was English, and they were enrolled at a small primary school which provided education in mixed year classes. Pupil A began attending the Language Immersion Centre at the start of the autumn term, following a two-week period in the mainstream school.

Early Weeks: Weeks 1-2

During the first week at the Immersion Centre, Child A was very enthusiastic and responding well to the immersion education, by engaging robustly, displaying a willingness to answer questions and using the Welsh language confidently. They quickly established positive relationships with peers showing their obvious delight in contributing to class activities.

Upon their return to mainstream school during the second week, Child A was participating in a class task in a small group with two other pupils. After only two weeks of experience in the immersion programme, they demonstrated a firm commitment to speaking Welsh. The pupil was able to communicate basic needs (such as asking to go to the toilet) in Welsh with confidence but was more hesitant in trying to answer questions in front of the whole class. On a small group level, they were much more confident, using strategies such as code-switching (English and Welsh) and working with peers to overcome any linguistic barriers. The teacher provided continuous support by providing feedback, encouragement and modelling the language regularly.

During 'play time' or 'Amser Aur' (golden time), Child A used Welsh independently in activities, e.g. mathematical activities on a computer, although the use of English was also prominent in the social interaction.

Development during Weeks 8-9

Upon returning to the mainstream school in week 8, the school's Welsh-speaking ethos was apparent and effective in strengthening and developing Child A's linguistic confidence. They used Welsh naturally when communicating with staff members and peers, only relying on code-switching when they were uncertain or expressing more complex ideas. The staff always responded in Welsh. This encouraged Child A's use of the Welsh language.

During rehearsals for the Christmas show, Child A demonstrated an obvious ability to participate in Welsh cultural activities. They used visual strategies, such as following the teacher's lead, to cope with uncertainty, and they clearly enjoyed it when familiar with the content.

By week 9 in the Language Centre, Child A was able to introduce themselves confidently by using basic Welsh sentences in front of the class. Child A was able to make effective use of language strategies, asking for support in Welsh first. The teacher's consistent support enables Child A to overcome linguistic barriers by developing confidence and independence when using the Welsh language.

Generally, Child A demonstrated significant increase in confidence and engagement with the Welsh language as a direct result of a structured immersion programme and the mainstream school's continuous support. Child A established positive and strong relationships with peers and staff members, demonstrating enthusiasm and an appetite to learn and use Welsh.

Case Study 2

Background

Child B was a pupil in Year 5, who had moved to the local area recently. The language at home was English and the child had enrolled at a large primary school which provided education per academic year. Pupil B began attending the Language Immersion Centre after spending three weeks at the mainstream school.

Early Weeks: Weeks 1-2

Pupil B engaged appropriately with the Welsh language during the Week 1 observation. Although Pupil B was not confident in using the language, they were willing to engage with fun activities in the classroom, or oral tasks with peers. Pupil B responded to the teacher's questions, despite not being confident in doing so. There was an effort to use the Welsh language with teachers and support staff, e.g. to ask for equipment or permission.

In Mainstream, Pupil B was observed at the beginning of a lesson, where children in the class were asked to express what they had enjoyed during the week. The children in the class raised their hands and discussed the matter with enthusiasm. However, Pupil B did not appear to follow and continued with their colouring work without participating in the discussion. The teacher naturally repeated the children's responses and used techniques to reiterate the learning e.g. clicking fingers and pointing towards sentences on the whiteboard. Although Pupil B did try to engage with the task towards the end, they were not actively included in the discussion.

When Pupil B was given instructions, it was done so through the medium of English. There was no opportunity for Pupil B to complete the same work as the rest of the pupils in the class, and there was a tendency to draw attention to this, highlighting the difference rather than attempting to use inclusive immersion teaching methods to support pupil B to acquire the language.

When the teacher was not supervising the group's interaction in the classroom, the pupils turned to English and Pupil B was not part of those discussions either. The situation continued on the school yard, with pupils interacting in English, and Child B playing alone until they were joined by two pupils from another class, who also attended the immersion unit. Pupil B interacted with those two pupils and other pupils in English.

During a Maths lesson, Pupil B worked on a task that was different and easier than the task given to her peers in the class. Later, when half the class moved to a drama lesson, Pupil B continued to work alone without any further guidance on the work.

There was an example of Pupil B attempting to use the language when asking to go the toilet in Welsh, but rather than praise Pupil B for using the language, Pupil B was reminded to use 'os gwelwch yn dda' (please) at the end of her sentence.

Development during Weeks 8-9

Upon returning to the mainstream school in week 8, the children were all rehearsing for the Christmas show in the hall. However, Pupil B (along with the other immersion pupils) had been instructed to work on *Chromebook* to complete the work set by the immersion unit. Pupil B was unsure of the procedure for using laptops and whether a laptop had already been allocated for Pupil B. Additionally, there were other difficulties in trying to log in (e.g., could not find a password). Pupil B appeared unsure and confused, and needed support from the administrative team to assist them with the work.

Upon returning to the hall to join the other pupils, Pupil B was told to sit on a bench at the back of the hall, separate to the remainder of the class. Pupil B was again asked to work on a different task to the remainder of the class. Although Pupil B appeared happy and was communicating in English with other peers who were also pupils in the immersion provision, Pupil B was asked to be quiet and there was no opportunity to use the target language in a classroom environment. There was no support to encourage use of the Welsh language as a social language or as a means of communicating with staff or other pupils.

On the school yard, Pupil B and one other member of the immersion unit looked happy and were engaging in social play with other children. They were part of the same group and displaying signs of social integration. All communication between the children was done in English.

Pupil B's case demonstrates complexity in trying to support immersion pupils in the mainstream settings in a meaningful way. Further opportunities need to be considered when supporting every immersion pupil at mainstream school in terms of accessing the Welsh language, and in terms of the culture of the school, the classroom community and the broader school and when developing relationships with staff and peers.

By week 9 in the Language Centre, Pupil B was demonstrating much more confidence in interacting with other pupils and in using the Welsh language. Nevertheless, there was a tendency to use English with peers in the classroom even unless the teacher reminded the pupils to use Welsh. Pupil B's language when interacting informally on the school yard was English.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

This study has highlighted several strengths within the immersion provision. There are robust teaching methods in place to support pupils on their journey to becoming new speakers. There is effective collaboration between the centres and organisations, such as Learn Welsh - North West, to support families with learning the language.

The pupils who attend the centres enjoy them overall and view it as a positive experience. Nevertheless, research has highlighted challenges and defects in the current 10-week model.

This detailed study has highlighted that most key stakeholders, including immersion teachers and leaders in mainstream schools, find there are defects in the current model, which is impacting the effectiveness with which the pupils acquire the Welsh language, as well as their well-being and academic engagement when they return to mainstream education on Fridays.

The next section will highlight the main findings that emerged around the research questions, **before presenting four recommendations to Cyngor Gwynedd** to develop the immersion provision in accordance with the research questions.

How suitable and effective is the model in ensuring pupils' use of the target language when they return to the mainstream school?

The current model is not as effective as it could be in ensuring pupils' use of the target language when they return to mainstream schools on Fridays. At most of the observed locations, there was a lack of focused planning to support the immersion pupils when they returned to the mainstream school to use the language.

There was evidence of pupils returning to mainstream settings and the Welsh language not being sufficiently reinforced. More often than not, pupils completed work that was unsuitable on the mainstream day, and rarely engaged with the usual curricular content, nor were they given the opportunity to intentionally apply the target language.

Undoubtedly, Welsh was not the informal language of most of the school pupils in mainstream contexts (with the exception of some smaller schools in rural communities), and this was particularly true outside the classroom e.g. on the school yard.

There is room to strengthen communication structures between the language centres and the mainstream schools when planning and preparing curricular content across the ten weeks, to support the pupils' linguistic development in Welsh, but also in subjects across the mainstream curriculum for them to have a better understanding of the content of what they are learning on Fridays.

How effective is the model in terms of enabling learners to acquire Welsh sufficiently?

It was firmly noted that losing ten days from the traditional immersion timetable in the Primary sector does have an impact on pupils' confidence and engagement with the language and it also impacts their well-being. Supporting the pupils was challenging for the mainstream teachers, and the school structures did not generally facilitate or reinforce this gap in the immersion pupils' education in an effective manner.

Nevertheless, by securing investment to support this vision and model, there is a foundation here to develop a model that would embed immersion education across the local authority's schools and within teachers' pedagogy. By drawing on the robust practices observed at the language centres and investing in better systems to develop professional learning opportunities for mainstream school staff, amending this model could lead to an immersion provision that would lead the sector, nationally and beyond.

Are there opportunities to further strengthen the Welsh language in the Immersion System and in mainstream schools?

Although good practices to strengthen the Welsh language have been observed and noted in the language centres, there is certainly room to strengthen these opportunities on Fridays. Resources were shared by the immersion centres through mediums such as Google Classroom, however; these resources do not necessarily always reach the relevant mainstream class teachers who support the immersion pupils. Time is also a factor for mainstream teachers who have received the resources but find it challenging to familiarise themselves with the work and prepare around it. The language centres are not necessarily aware of the curricular work or themes followed in mainstream provision, therefore there are no opportunities to reinforce the mainstream education at the centres or during one-to-one sessions in the mainstream. By redesigning support arrangements, this could be an opportunity to strengthen collaboration and information sharing between the two settings.

Although most schools that were observed make use of the Language Charter resources, the informal use of English among pupils in mainstream schools is currently an enormous challenge across the schools that were observed in the local authority. There is room, therefore, to consider broader plans to implement the Welsh language more robustly in these spaces, and not in terms of immersion pupils only. Without due attention to pupil's social use of English, there is a risk that the progress achieved by immersion pupils from Monday to Thursday is futile if the use of the Welsh language is not normalised in mainstream schools.

There is close collaboration between some key stakeholders and the immersion centres, but these could be strengthened further by also securing input from the mainstream schools when identifying suitable extracurricular opportunities in the local communities for pupils and their families to be able to learn and use the language.

How suitable and effective is the model when considering pupils' well-being during the immersion period?

Attending the mainstream schools for a day a week, especially during the initial weeks when they do not have a strong grasp of the language means that the majority of pupils feel insecure when returning to the mainstream school. This can have a negative impact on pupils' well-being in some cases. The pupils are happy at the immersion centres, and they nurture strong relationships with their peers, which appears to be more challenging in the mainstream.

Recommendations

1. There is a need to revise the current immersion model to ensure sufficient contact hours for pupils in immersion spaces, and that they do not receive fewer contact hours in their journey to fluency. We recommend examining well-being and emotional assurance alongside pupil language development when planning the model. There are opportunities to consider developing the use of digital technology to support continuous contact with the mainstream rather than returning to the mainstream during the first half and integrating gradually with the mainstream during the second half of the immersion block as a further consideration. It is suggested that the model of returning to mainstream on Fridays should be revised to returning on Mondays with an opportunity to feed language models that are linked to the pupils' class work and provide opportunities to make use of that language by maintaining contact virtually.
2. Consideration should be given on both a national and local level to how to strengthen professional learning pathways for mainstream teachers, supply teachers and assistants to develop effective immersion education strategies to support Welsh language acquisition in cooperation with the immersion centres and experts and embed them in the pedagogy of all teachers. With the advent of Yr Athrofa as part of the Education Bill (Wales), Adnodd (Welsh Government) and the new national plans for Professional Development for teachers, it would be appropriate to ensure that immersion pedagogy is an integral part of this support for teachers.
3. More effective collaboration structures should be developed between the language centres and the mainstream schools during the immersion period and beyond. There is room to look at how the immersion staff can be used in the mainstream on Fridays to support and assist the pupils more effectively within the mainstream school, rather than removing the pupils from the classroom to work in isolation with the immersion teacher.
4. It is recommended to explore whole-school methods in the mainstream schools to boost children's confidence when using the Welsh language. Particular attention should be given to the linguistic culture of the school yard, as this informal environment is not only central to the linguistic development of immersion pupils, but also to the school ethos.

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How we inspect

Welsh language immersion arrangements in local authorities

For inspections from 2024



This guidance for inspectors outlines Estyn's approach to inspecting Welsh language immersion arrangements in local authorities. It should be read alongside '[What we inspect](#)'.

This guidance is also available in Welsh.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of publication. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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Introduction

Purpose of the guidance handbook 'How we inspect'

This handbook sets out our approaches to inspecting Welsh language immersion arrangements in local authorities. It explains **how** we inspect. The guidance is essential reading for reporting inspectors and all other members of the inspection team. It may also be useful for providers to support their understanding of the inspection mind-set and methodologies.

The guidance should be read alongside '[What we inspect](#)', which outlines the inspection framework. Local authorities and Welsh language immersion providers can use this guidance to see how inspections work.

Where the inspection identifies practice worth sharing, inspectors will include a spotlight of this practice as part of the inspection report. Where the inspection identifies important concerns in relation to standards, quality of education and training or leadership and management, we will arrange follow-up activity to support improvement. Guidance on follow-up activity is available on p13 of this handbook.

There is further information about inspections on our website www.estyn.gov.wales

Legal basis and policy background for the inspection of local government education services

Inspections of LGES are carried out under Section 38 of the Education Act 1997 which provides that His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales

(HMCI) 'may, and, if requested to do so by the Secretary of State, shall, arrange for any local authority to be inspected'. Such an inspection 'shall consist of a review of the way in which the authority are performing any function which relates to the provision of education for (a) persons of compulsory school age (whether at school or otherwise) or (b) for persons of any age above or below that age who are registered as pupils at schools maintained by the authority'.

Section 51 of The Children Act 2004 changes the Education Act 1997 so that 'An inspection of a local education authority in Wales under this section shall consist of a review of the way in which the authority are performing:

- any function conferred on them in their capacity as a local education authority
- the functions conferred on them under sections 25 and 26 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000 relating to education, training or youth support services'

Policy background

This guidance handbook takes account of current Welsh Government policies.

More information on Welsh Government policies can be found at [Education and skills | Topic | GOV.WALES](#)

Part 1: Arrangements for engagement with providers

Introduction

This section applies across the breadth of Estyn's engagement with schools and other providers. We expect all inspectors, including those contracted to Estyn and those working as peer inspectors, to adhere to these principles.

Principles of our work

We expect our inspectors to work according to a number of key principles. They will:

- take a pupil-centred approach to any activity and engagement
- always focus strongly on the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning
- take into account the specific context of the provider and adapt their approaches accordingly
- use a range of tailored methodologies and approaches to evaluate the breadth of the provider's work robustly and fairly
- adopt a constructive approach that makes the interaction with the provider a professional learning experience for their staff

During inspections, we expect inspectors to consider everything in the 'what' and 'how' we inspect guidance documents, but only report on the key strengths and areas for improvement.

In addition, our inspectors will:

- ensure that all activity and engagement is responsive to the needs of all pupils
- ensure that evaluations are secure, reliable, valid and based on first-hand evidence
- keep to a minimum any requirements for documentation and preparation by the provider
- gain the perspective of learners and other stakeholders
- apply the principle of equality for Welsh and English to all our activity

In inspections, our inspectors will:

- involve the provider fully in the inspection process, including the opportunity for the local authority to select a nominee (who should normally be a representative from the local authority with responsibility for Welsh language immersion arrangements)
- take suitable account of the provider's chosen improvement priorities, in addition to other key areas identified by the inspection team
- include peer inspectors in the inspection process

Our mind-set

Estyn's approach to engagement activity is:

- **Fair and impartial** – this means that we work to be independent, objective and balanced. We are robust and consistent in our work. We weigh the evidence and its significance to provide an honest, credible and accurate view of the provider's strengths and areas for improvement.
- **Supportive** – we work to guide providers to implement improvements that benefit learners. Wherever appropriate, we encourage innovation and recognise good intentions. We are friendly but always professional in our approach. We support educational reform. We work hard to develop meaningful relationships with providers and local and regional organisations.
- **Reflective** – we are open-minded. We listen to a wide range of stakeholders and reflect on their responses. We are thoughtful, measured and careful. We plan opportunities to think carefully about the inspection findings and to discuss them with others in the team.
- **Transparent** – we are well informed and communicate clearly, directly and succinctly. We use efficient and effective inspection methodologies to respond to the provider's unique situation. We plan our engagement and inspection activity and report on strengths and areas for improvement in ways that reflect the particular circumstances of each individual provider. As a result, our actions promote trust and respect.

Expectations of inspectors

Our expectations of inspectors explains how we embody our mind-set through our actions. Inspectors should uphold the highest possible standards in their work. All inspectors have to meet the expected standards of behaviour and conduct.

When conducting engagement with a provider, inspectors will:

- be courteous and professional
- establish and maintain appropriate professional boundaries when talking to both pupils and adults
- carry out their work with integrity, respect and due sensitivity
- take all reasonable steps to prevent undue anxiety and to minimise stress during inspection activity
- evaluate the work of the provider objectively using clear and robust evidence
- report honestly, fairly and impartially without fear or favour
- communicate clearly and openly
- act in the best interests of pupils
- respect the confidentiality of all information received during the course of their work
- respond appropriately to reasonable requests

It is important that we evaluate the effectiveness of provision and leadership on their impact and not on the basis of any preferences for particular methods. The key to our evaluations is whether the methods and organisation are fit for the purpose in supporting all pupils to achieve high standards and strong levels of well-being.

Inspectors should inform Estyn of any perceived or actual conflicts of interest whenever they receive notification of engagement, for example that they are part of a provider's inspection team.

Expectations of providers

In order that inspection and regulation are constructive and beneficial, it is important that inspectors and providers establish and maintain a professional working environment based on mutual courtesy, respect and professional behaviour. We expect inspectors to uphold Estyn's Code of Conduct, but we also expect providers to:

- be courteous and professional, treating inspectors and inspection support staff with respect
- act in the best interests of pupils
- provide evidence – or access to evidence – that enables inspectors to conduct the inspection in an open, honest and objective way
- recognise that inspectors need to observe practice and to talk to staff, pupils and other stakeholders without the presence of a manager or senior leader
- work with inspectors to take all reasonable steps to minimise disruption, stress and bureaucracy
- maintain a purposeful dialogue with the reporting inspector and other inspectors
- draw any concerns about the inspection to the attention of inspectors in a timely and suitable manner through the nominee
- give due regard to the health and safety, and wellbeing of inspectors while on the premises
- maintain the confidentiality of meetings and inspection findings until the final publication of the report
- ensure that inspection teams have access to a private area to discuss inspection evidence and hold confidential discussions
- refrain from taking photographs or videos during the inspection process, including of draft evaluations developed during the inspection

Any CCTV and recording equipment should be brought to the attention of the team during the initial team meeting.

At the point of the inspection notification, the local authority should review the composition of the inspection team. It is the local authority's responsibility to highlight any perceived or actual conflicts of interest prior to the start any engagement, for example prior to their on-site inspection.

The Welsh language

We will carry out any engagement, including inspections, in line with our [Welsh Language Policy](#), available from our website. Inspectors will also use our supplementary guidance on literacy and Welsh wherever appropriate.

Safeguarding, including health, safety and well-being issues

Inspectors will carry out inspections in accordance with Estyn's guidance on inspecting safeguarding. If they observe anything that they think constitutes, in their

opinion, a danger to the safety of staff, visitors or pupils, inspectors should alert managers at the provision and the local authority with responsibility for the provision.

If an inspector becomes aware of a safeguarding allegation/suspicion in respect of a child, young person or vulnerable adult, they should follow the procedures set out in the current version of '[Estyn's policy and procedures for safeguarding](#)', which is available on our website.

In all cases inspectors should record details of the concern. They should inform the Reporting Inspector (RI) who should then contact one of Estyn's safeguarding lead officers. The lead officer will advise the RI of the next steps to take including what to record in the evidence base for the appropriate inspection area. This includes any risks relating to pupils' health, safety and well-being. The officer will also advise the RI whether or not to share the concern with the local authority.

Where these risks are a serious concern during core inspection activity, inspectors should include a short comment in the report's text and a recommendation in the report.

We will send a well-being letter to the provider and the local authority asking them to outline how they will address the shortcoming.

If an inspector identifies a site security concern, they should inform the RI. If the RI considers that the concern can be addressed quickly, they should inform the local authority who will be expected to provide evidence of the concern being resolved during the inspection. If the concern/s is more serious and cannot be addressed quickly, the RI should inform the IC who will issue a site management letter to the local authority. It will be their responsibility to ensure that the issue/s is addressed. The centre should also be informed of this. If a less significant issue is not addressed satisfactorily during the inspection, then this process will also apply.

Part 2: Core inspection activity - Approach to inspections

The length of the inspection and size of the team may vary according to the number of providers of Welsh language immersion in the local authority.

The Virtual Inspection Room

We will use an electronic system, called the 'Virtual Inspection Room' (VIR), for managing many aspects of the inspection. It is a web-based system that allows providers to upload information before the inspection and to download guidance from us about the inspection process. The VIR is also the place where nominees can access the post-inspection questionnaires (PIQs).

We ensure the security of information uploaded by subjecting the VIR to security testing. This testing evaluates systems security. We identify and implement any actions to prevent unauthorised access. All users of Estyn's VIR system have a username and password, which are recorded and maintained securely within an active directory. The system also has features to ensure password protection including threat detection and conditional access.

The inspection team

There are different roles within the inspection team.

Team member	Explanation	Role
Reporting inspector (RI), may also be referred to as the lead inspector	<p>The RI for an inspection will be one of His Majesty's Inspectors of Education and Training in Wales (HMI).</p> <p>HMI are appointed by the crown. They are civil servants employed directly by Estyn.</p>	The RI leads and manages the inspection team. They liaise with the local authority / Welsh language immersion provider and the team ahead of the inspection, and quality assure their team's work. The RI is the first point of reference for everyone during the on-site part of the inspection process.
Team inspectors (TI)	The number of team inspectors is determined by the number of Welsh language immersion providers in the local authority. Team inspectors may be HMI or contracted additional inspectors who have been trained by Estyn. All team inspectors are qualified teachers.	Team inspectors may take responsibility for gathering evidence to inform the team's evaluation of different aspects of the inspection. The RI directs and manages the team inspectors' work.

Peer inspector (PI)	A peer inspector is a serving senior leader in a local authority, school or Welsh language immersion provider who has completed Estyn's PI training and assessment. All inspection teams have a peer inspector as a team member.	PIs also take responsibility for gathering evidence to inform the team's evaluations. They are an integral part of the inspection team. The RI directs and manages PIs' work.
Nominee (from the local authority being inspected)	We will invite a representative of the local authority to become the nominee, to work with the inspection team. The nominee acts as a link between the provider and the inspection team.	Providers can access the guidance for nominees on preparing for the inspection from links within the initial contact form (ICF), completed by the Inspection Co-ordinator (IC) and available via the VIR.

Contacting the local authority responsible for Welsh language immersion arrangements before a core inspection

The local authority will receive 15 working days' notice of a core inspection.

The inspection co-ordinator will contact the local authority by telephone to set up the arrangements for the inspection. During this discussion, the inspection co-ordinator will:

- explain the purpose of the inspection and discuss an outline programme for the inspection
- discuss the specific information required before the inspection and make arrangements for receiving information electronically through the Virtual Inspection Room
- ask if there are any issues or risks the team should be aware of, and request a general health and safety briefing for the team at the start of the inspection
- establish whether the provider wishes to have a nominee and, if it does, agree the role of the nominee and explain the process for completing the nominee guidance
- provide links and guidance for the completion of the suite of online pre-inspection questionnaires (e.g. pupils, parents, staff etc)
- ensure that there are agreed procedures for addressing any concerns or complaints that might arise during the inspection
- arrange for teachers and support staff within the Welsh language immersion providers to meet inspectors during the inspection period
- arrange for headteachers of schools where pupils are registered to meet inspectors during the inspection period
- organise any domestic arrangements, such as a base for the inspectors, parking and internet access across all sites where appropriate
- set up the arrangements for feeding back the inspection findings

- agree the arrangements for completing the post-inspection questionnaires (PIQ)
- inform the provider in writing, through the initial contact form, of the key inspection arrangements

The inspection co-ordinator will request the following information from the provider through the Virtual Inspection Room as soon as possible after the formal notification of the inspection:

- key background information e.g., names of staff and information about their roles and responsibilities
- details of the location of all Welsh language immersion providers and providers who access support for immersion
- details of the number of pupils attending each provider, where appropriate
- a copy of the most recent development or improvement plan
- a copy of the local authority's WESP
- details of the timetables for the period of the inspection
- a list of staff DBS checks (formally CRB) with the check numbers, issue date and level of check completed e.g. enhanced with barring list

If the inspection takes place early in the school year, providers may wish to share samples of pupils' work from the previous year with inspectors, if available. If providers are unable to share pupils' previous work, inspectors will take this information into account when discussing work and progress with staff and pupils.

When we notify providers of the inspection, they will receive information on how to access online questionnaires for pupils, parents/carers, staff and headteachers. The outcomes of the pre-inspection questionnaires will form part of the pre-inspection evidence and support inspectors to form their evaluations.

Planning the inspection and preparing the team

The reporting inspector will plan the inspection and allocate responsibilities to members of the inspection team, taking into account the provider's improvement priorities and any other information.

We require providers to place a full plan of all the activities during the inspection week in the VIR. The reporting inspector will plan the team's activities based on the information provided.

During the inspection

Initial team meeting

The initial inspection team meeting is likely to include:

- a health and safety briefing from the provider
- a briefing from the local authority about the context of the local authority's arrangements for Welsh language immersion. This should last no longer than 20 minutes
- a brief position statement from the local authority to set out the provider's strategic priorities and its current stage of development aligned with the WESP.

- a discussion with the local authority (led by the RI) about the improvement priorities identified by the provider and the progress to date in its improvement work
- a discussion regarding how inspectors will be able to access important information

The RI will confirm these arrangements with the local authority during the pre-inspection Teams call.

Gathering and reviewing inspection evidence

The team will plan the inspection so that they can cover the reporting requirements of the three inspection areas. The RI will plan the inspection activity flexibly, in response to the provider's individual circumstances. This means that the activities planned in one provider may not mirror those planned in another. In addition, inspectors report 'by exception'. This means that the team will always consider everything within the inspection areas but the final report may not include every aspect of the framework.

The main forms of evidence are:

- observation of teaching and other activities, including evidence gathered through learning walks
- samples of pupils' work
- discussions with pupils (past and present), staff, leaders, managers, headteachers of pupils' registered schools and others
- pre-inspection questionnaire responses
- documentary or electronic evidence, e.g., information on pupils' progress
- relevant information from the local authority

The team will use direct observation of pupils' work wherever possible to gather evidence to support their evaluations. Inspectors may select an additional sample of pupils' work, if required, to support their evaluations of a specific aspect.

Providers should make information available to the inspection team about the standards achieved by pupils, particularly the results of any initial screening tests and other relevant assessments. This will help inspectors to evaluate pupils' progress, to come to a view about the standards pupils achieve compared to their starting-points and the way teachers use the information from assessment to influence their planning and their lessons.

The team will consider stakeholders' views on the provider and test out the validity of those views during the inspection.

Recording inspection evidence

Inspectors will complete their evidence forms electronically as part of Estyn's digital system for collecting, collating and recording inspection findings.

Team meetings

The main purpose of team meetings is to arrive at an accurate, reliable, valid and corporate view of learning, and the quality of provision and leadership. Meetings will provide opportunities for inspectors to:

- test the validity of the local authority's self-evaluation processes and priorities for improvement
- discuss emerging issues
- identify any gaps in the evidence base
- consider the main inspection findings and any recommendations

Professional dialogue

Throughout the inspection, inspectors will engage in professional dialogue with practitioners. This dialogue may include meeting with individual teachers, often in their classrooms to discuss their planning and assessment of pupils' work. Inspectors may want to meet with groups of support staff if appropriate. Inspectors may decide to meet with leaders such as headteachers of schools who host Welsh language immersion providers, headteachers of pupils' registered schools or of schools who receive peripatetic support, to understand the impact of the local authority's leadership on bringing about improvements to pupils' outcomes.

Professional dialogue enables inspectors to gain first-hand evidence from practitioners that can be triangulated with other sources of evidence. The dialogue will provide emerging, interim findings on aspects of the evidence base. These findings may be amended, on reflection, for example after scrutiny of pupils' work or talking to pupils or as the result of moderation within the team.

Normally, following a lesson observation, inspectors will offer a brief professional dialogue with the member of staff on the learning seen. It may be necessary, in some cases, to conduct this discussion later during the inspection.

At all times, the main focus of the professional dialogue should be on the pupils, the progress they make during the lesson and the standards they achieve. Inspectors should try to focus on any strengths or areas for improvement in relation to the specific work seen.

Due to the nature of learning walks, inspectors will not be in a position to offer professional dialogue to individual teachers after learning walk activity.

Formal feedback

At the end of the on-site part of the inspection, the team will provide verbal feedback to senior leaders such as local authority representatives and senior leaders.

The feedback meeting provides the opportunity for leaders and managers to hear and to reflect on the team's findings. The feedback should focus on the strengths and areas for improvement and the factors that contribute to them, including the recommendations. The reporting inspector should explain to the provider that issues may be clarified and factual matters may be corrected. However, the purpose of the meeting is for the local authority to understand rather than negotiate the inspection team's findings.

During the inspection, the team will consider if there is any effective practice that is worth sharing with other providers. Where this is the case, the reporting inspector will include a spotlight of this practice as part of the inspection report.

During all core inspections, the inspection team will consider whether the local authority needs any follow-up activity. The reporting inspector will inform leaders if any follow-up activity is required.

All the evaluations and findings reported during an inspection, including follow-up if appropriate, are provisional and subject to moderation and validation by HMCI. They are confidential to the provider's staff and managers. They should not be communicated beyond this group, including via social media, until we publish the report on our website.

Complaints about the inspection process

If there are any issues about the inspection process overall or the conduct of individual inspectors, then the nominee should raise these directly and as soon as possible with the reporting inspector. The nominee should not wait until after the inspection but should raise any issues while the team is on site. Issues occasionally arise due to misunderstandings, and these can usually be resolved quickly and satisfactorily, close to the time when they occurred.

There is guidance on our complaints handling procedures on our website.

However, there are some things that we do not address through our complaints-handling procedure, for example complaints, or challenges, about evaluations or follow-up decisions made after an Estyn inspection or review. This is because, before and during an inspection, the local authority has the opportunity to provide all of the evidence needed for the inspection team to reach its judgements accurately and fairly.

After the inspection

The inspection report

The reporting inspector is responsible for producing a final inspection report that is clear to a lay audience and helpful to the provider.

When writing reports, inspectors should take account of Estyn's writing guidance, which is available on our website www.estyn.gov.wales.

We will publish reports bilingually, where local authorities have made this request, in line with our Welsh Language Policy.

We base the structure of the inspection report on our inspection framework. We will produce the report within statutory timescales.

The factual accuracy check

We will give the local authority a draft of the report prior to publication, to help check the factual accuracy of the content. The local authority will normally have five working days in which to consider the draft report and to identify any errors.

The focus of the check is on resolving any factual inaccuracies in the inspection report. It does not focus on the findings. There is further guidance for providers on the nature and scope of this check on our website.

Assuring the quality of inspections

We are committed to:

- effective selection, training, briefing, support and deployment of inspectors, including peer inspectors
- effective training, briefing and support to allow the nominee to play an active role
- regular dialogue with the nominee during inspections
- criteria and recording systems that comply with inspection guidance
- careful review and analysis of evidence
- providing clear verbal feedback of the team's main findings and the detail for each inspection area
- producing accurate and well-presented reports

As part of our quality assurance procedures, we invite the local authority to complete a post-inspection questionnaire (PIQ). The questionnaire will be available in the VIR. The local authority should complete the first part of the PIQ as soon as possible after the on-site inspection and submit it electronically to Estyn through the VIR system. They can complete the second part of the PIQ after the publication of the inspection report, again through the VIR system.

We apply a robust quality assurance process to all of our inspections. The reporting inspector will quality assure the team's work in the first instance. After the end of on-site activity, the report and evidence base are quality assured by an experienced HMI who has not been involved in the inspection thus far. The full evidence base is scrutinised and matched to the report text, to ensure that the two align. In addition, the quality assurance process considers the appropriateness of the level of follow-up, and the recommendations emanating from the inspection. As part of the quality assurance process, recommendations may be amended, removed or added.

There is then a further moderation process. The evidence base and the report are scrutinised by the appropriate assistant directors. Whenever the outcome of an inspection is statutory follow-up, in addition to an assistant director, the strategic director moderates the report alongside the evidence base, on behalf of HMCI. On a very few occasions, this moderation process may result in a change to the level of follow-up.

In addition, we quality assure a sample of inspections through on-site visits. Our full arrangements for assuring the quality of inspections are available on our website www.estyn.gov.wales.

Part 3: Follow-up guidance

There will be one category of follow-up for inspections of Welsh language immersion arrangements in local authorities: 'causing significant concern'. The guidance below sets out how we will work with a local authority where arrangements cause significant concern following their inspection. Follow-up activity may involve virtual meetings online rather than on-site meetings. These will be used with discretion, either where circumstances or regulations necessitate it, or where it is efficient without impeding the effectiveness of the inspection process or inconveniencing anyone involved.

Monitoring visit

We will carry out a monitoring visit around a year after the core inspection. We will formally notify the authority 15 days in advance. The size of the team and design of the visit will be tailored to the specific context of the local authority and the nature of the recommendations.

We may use a survey to gather the views of relevant stakeholders before a monitoring visit. We may also carry out preliminary activities with relevant stakeholders, in person or online, such as meeting a group of headteachers.

A VIR will be set up for the visit, which will allow the local authority to share a few key documents and supporting information that is relevant. During the monitoring visit, inspectors will consider how well the local authority has addressed each of the recommendations and how much progress has been made overall.

Removing follow-up

After any monitoring visit, inspectors could recommend to HMCI that the Welsh language immersion arrangements for a local authority, is no longer causing significant concern and can be removed from follow-up. We will publish a report of the monitoring visit. The report will include an evaluation of progress, a summative commentary on progress and an overall judgement on progress, which will confirm whether or not the local authority has made sufficient progress to be removed from follow-up. If inspectors are not satisfied with progress, we will return in around a year's time for a further monitoring visit.

Guidance for inspectors

What we inspect: Welsh language immersion arrangements in local authorities

For inspections from 2024



This guidance is also available in Welsh.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of publication. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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Introduction to 'What we inspect'

This handbook sets out what inspectors need to consider when evaluating the three inspection areas for Welsh language immersion arrangements in local authorities. It explains 'What we inspect'. The guidance is essential reading for reporting inspectors and all other members of the inspection team, including the nominee. It may also be useful for providers to support their understanding of the inspection guidance. There is a separate handbook that explains the inspection process and methodology, '[How we inspect](#)'.

The three inspection areas are set out below:

IA1: Teaching and learning

IA2: Well-being, care, support and guidance

IA3: Leading and improving

There is further information about inspections on our website www.estyn.gov.wales

Evaluating each inspection area (IA)

Inspection teams will not give overall grades for each inspection area. However, they will make a robust and thorough evaluation of the Welsh language immersion arrangements of the local authority and its impact on pupils' learning and well-being.

Inspectors will always include clear evaluations in relation to the main foci in each inspection area, as exemplified. However, what inspectors report on within each inspection area may differ depending on the context and relative significance of what they find in each local authority. Inspectors may report 'by exception'. This means that they may report on some aspects only where there are particular strengths or weaknesses.

Where inspectors identify any interesting or innovative practice that is worthy of sharing more widely, they will include a short 'spotlight on...' within the report (a short paragraph). We will showcase a range of these spotlights on our website. Where inspectors identify serious shortcomings in one or more inspection areas, the local authority will require a level of follow up in relation to its arrangements for Welsh language immersion. There is further guidance about follow-up activity in 'How we inspect'.

The inspection reports

Following an inspection, each provider will receive a report. The reports will be published on the Estyn website. Publication dates can be found on the website. The following outlines what is included in each section of the report.

About the Welsh language immersion arrangements in the local authority

This section of the report will be brief and contain only factual background information about arrangements for Welsh language immersion in the local authority and will not contain any evaluation of the provision. The reporting inspector normally

agrees the content of this section with the local authority during the inspection and during the factual check of the draft report prior to publication. If there is disagreement about the content of this section, the reporting inspector will make the final decision about what to include in the report. This section will contain brief information on:

- the nature and locations of Welsh language immersion providers in the local authority
- the background and circumstances of the pupils, any other relevant factors, such as the proportion of pupils with additional learning needs or the degree to which pupils leave or join the provider during the academic year (depending on numbers)
- the date of opening of the Welsh language immersion provider within the local authority
- the month/year of the local authority's previous Welsh language immersion inspection

Summary

The summary of an inspection report will summarise the main points of the inspection report. The summary will include the main strengths, the main areas for improvement and the recommendations.

Recommendations

Recommendations should come directly from the content of the report, identify what needs to improve and be written in priority order.

What happens next

The 'What happens next' section will set out what the provider needs to do following the inspection. In all cases, leaders will need to respond to the recommendations by putting in place the actions needed to make the improvements identified by the inspection team.

It should identify any interesting or innovative practice spotlights that we have included in the report.

This section will explain if the Welsh language immersion arrangements of the local authority requires follow-up. The reasons for the follow-up should be clear in the main body of the report.

Main evaluation

The main evaluation will report on:

- (a) the quality of the education provided in the centre
- (b) how far the education provided in the centre meets the needs of the range of pupils
- (c) the educational standards achieved in the centre
- (d) the quality of the leadership in and management of the Welsh immersion arrangements of the local authority, including whether the financial resources

are managed effectively

- (e) the contribution made by the centre to the well-being of those pupils

Spotlights on interesting and innovative practice will also be included in this section. It will include a brief heading, which captures the theme of the spotlight followed by the narrative. The heading and narrative will be contained in a separate box. In addition, we may invite the local authority to contribute a more in-depth case study when appropriate.

Evidence base of the report

Inspectors use a wide range of evidence to make sure that their findings are valid, accurate and reliable. This section of the report will explain the sources of evidence that they used as well as the range of activities that they carried out during their visit.

What we inspect:
Welsh language immersion arrangements in local authorities

Inspection areas

The following section explains what each inspection area covers and what inspectors need to keep in mind when evaluating each one. The inspection areas are numbered 1 – 3, but they are all equally important.

The inspection report will cover all three inspection areas. It will always report on all the main foci but not necessarily in the order of this handbook. The main foci for each inspection area are:

1. Teaching and learning	2. Well-being, care, support and guidance	3. Leading and improving
<p>Focus How effectively does the curriculum, teaching and assessment support all pupils, including those at risk of adverse outcomes, for example those pupils affected by poverty, with ALN or other identified barriers to progress to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learn and make progress in their Welsh language skills? • develop their knowledge, skills and understanding of the Welsh language in a variety of contexts? • develop positive attitudes to learning? 	<p>Focus How effective are the care and support arrangements in ensuring that all pupils, including those at risk of adverse outcomes, for example those pupils affected by poverty, with ALN or other identified barriers to progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are safe and secure? • attend regularly? • are respected and fairly treated? • develop leadership skills and take on responsibility? • receive the guidance and support they require for the next steps in their development, including support whilst in their registered schools? 	<p>Focus How effectively do leaders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • manage the organisation of the providers across the local authority including admission arrangements? • manage the resources for Welsh language immersion across the local authority? • ensure that all pupils learn and make progress in their acquisition of the Welsh language? (This includes those at risk of adverse outcomes, for example those pupils affected by poverty, with ALN or other identified barriers to learning.) • develop a culture, inclusive ethos and strategic direction that support the progress and well-being of all pupils? • identify and address areas for improvement and management? • ensure that professional learning supports improvement and equips all staff to carry out their roles?

The inspection team will consider all of the inspection areas. The team may not report on each one separately and not necessarily in the order above. They will make connections between the areas to tell the unique story of the provider and its context.

There is a series of supplementary guidance documents available on our website. These provide further information about our approaches to inspecting specific aspects of this framework.

2024 Draft framework

Across the inspection framework, inspectors will consider the focus areas in relation to the impact they have on all pupils' learning and well-being.

1 Teaching and learning

Focus

How effectively does the curriculum, teaching and assessment support all pupils, including those at risk of adverse outcomes, for example those pupils affected by poverty, with ALN or other identified barriers to progress to:

- learn and make progress in their Welsh language skills
- develop their knowledge, skills and understanding of the Welsh language in a variety of contexts
- develop positive attitudes to learning

Inspectors should consider the aspects below in light of the difference they make to pupils' learning. They should consider how well teachers and other practitioners:

- ensure that their **teaching**:
 - enables pupils to acquire and develop their Welsh language skills in a range of contexts
 - moves learning along at the right pace and presents all pupils, including those pupils with ALN and pupils who are adversely affected by poverty and disadvantage, with the appropriate level of challenge and support
 - demonstrates high expectations of all pupils
 - uses questioning and feedback to support pupils' progress
 - responds to pupils' learning during lessons and over time, and adapts accordingly
 - helps pupils to understand their own strengths and areas for improvement and to develop as effective learners
 - makes the learning environment stimulating and engaging
 - makes provision that is well matched for pupils with additional learning needs and based on a secure understanding of their needs
 - provides pupils with opportunities to work independently and collaboratively
 - provides pupils with opportunities to influence how and what they learn where appropriate
 - includes provision for teachers to deploy additional staff to support pupils' learning where appropriate
- understand what they want pupils to learn and why by **delivering a curriculum** that:
 - provides pupils with opportunities to develop their Welsh language skills within a suitable breadth and depth of learning across areas of learning and experience
 - reflects the cultural, linguistic, and diverse nature of the local community, Wales, and the wider world

- **develop pupils' skills** systematically and progressively during lessons and over time so that they:
 - acquire the necessary Welsh language skills in speaking and listening, and reading and writing, where appropriate
 - apply their skills at an appropriate level across the curriculum
- support pupils to develop positive **attitudes towards learning**, so that they:
 - behave well and participate positively in learning activities
 - persevere or look for new solutions when they face difficulties
 - foster positive working relationships with adults and their peers
 - respond positively and purposefully to feedback

2 Well-being, care, support and guidance

Focus

How effective are the care and support arrangements in ensuring that all pupils, including those at risk of adverse outcomes, for example pupils affected by poverty, with ALN or other identified barrier to progress:

- are safe and secure
- attend regularly
- are respected and fairly treated
- develop leadership skills and take on responsibility
- receive the guidance and support they require for the next steps in their development, including support whilst in their registered schools

Inspectors should consider the aspects below in light of the difference they make to pupils' well-being and development. They should consider how well teachers and other practitioners:

- create and maintain a **culture of safeguarding** including following child protection procedures so that pupils are:
 - safe and secure
 - respected and treated fairly
 - free from bullying and harassment
 - free from physical, emotional, and verbal abuse
- ensure that pupils **attend regularly**, for example by:
 - promoting and monitoring attendance including that of specific groups
 - challenging persistent absenteeism
 - working in partnership, for example with partner schools, educational welfare services, social services, police, and other agencies
- co-ordinate suitable support for pupils with **additional learning needs**, including working in partnership with external agencies when appropriate

- support positive behaviour
- ensure that pupils with a history of exclusion demonstrate improved behaviour and attitudes to learning
- encourage pupils to influence the life and work of the centre and to develop leadership skills and take on responsibility
- provide pupils with effective and impartial advice relating to the next steps in their development, for example in relation to their transition to the next phase of learning

3 Leading and improving

Focus

How effectively do leaders:

- manage the organisation of the providers across the local authority including admission arrangements
- manage the resources for Welsh language immersion across the local authority
- ensure that all pupils, including those at risk of adverse outcomes, for example pupils affected by poverty, with ALN or other identified barriers to progress, learn and make progress in their acquisition of the Welsh language
- develop a culture, inclusive ethos and strategic direction that support the progress and well-being of all pupils
- identify and address areas for improvement, management and governance
- ensure that professional learning supports improvement and equips all staff to carry out their roles

Inspectors should consider the aspects below in light of the difference they make to pupils' progress, well-being and development. They should consider how well leaders:

- establish a vision for Welsh language arrangements in their local authority
- develop and sustain provision for Welsh language immersion in line with the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP)
- develop a culture, inclusive ethos and strategic direction that are suitably focused on improving pupils' learning of the Welsh language and well-being
- set and communicate **high expectations** for staff, pupils and themselves
- have clear admission procedures
- **evaluate** the provider's strengths and areas that require improvement, and bring about improvement
- have established a track record of making and sustaining improvements and the extent to which they have led to a positive impact on pupils' learning and well-being
- plan and deliver **professional learning opportunities** for staff that have a positive impact on pupils' learning and well-being
- manage the **performance** of staff to improve their practice and address underperformance where necessary

What we inspect:
Welsh language immersion arrangements in local authorities

- promote the **Welsh language**, and take actions to address other national priorities, where appropriate (for example, equity, ALN reform, Curriculum for Wales)
- provide effective **governance** that offers support and challenge
- distribute **roles and responsibilities** to meet pupils' needs and bring about improvement in the provision for Welsh language immersion:
- consider staff workload and well-being
- develop productive relationships with parents, partner schools/PRUs, external bodies and the wider community
- deploy **resources** to ensure high quality teaching and learning and support for pupils' well-being
- use grant funding to improve outcomes

Assessment of Effect on Gwynedd Residents.

This document assesses the impact that the policy, procedure, plan etc will have on the population of the county and operates on the basis of a number of laws.

- **The Equality Act 2010.** It places a duty on public organisations to pay due attention to the impact of any new policy, procedure, scheme etc (or in adapting them) on people with protected characteristics. We are asked
 - abolish unlawful discrimination, harassment and persecution and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
 - promote equal opportunities between people who share a relevant protected feature and those who do not.
 - foster good relationships between people who share a protected trait and those who don't.

In Wales the specific duty sets out the need to carry out an impact assessment following specific guidelines to consider the impact that a change in any policy or procedure (or the creation of a new policy or procedure) will have on people with protected equality characteristics. A timely assessment must be made before a decision is made on any material change (i.e. affecting people with a protected feature).

- **Socio-Economic Duty.** Wales has now implemented this duty which is part of the Equality Act 2010 giving a duty to address socio-economic disadvantage in strategic decisions.
- **Welsh Language Standards (Section 44 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011).** The Council is required to consider the impact that a change in any policy or procedure (or the creation of a new policy or procedure) will have on opportunities for people to use Welsh and to ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than English. This document therefore ensures that these decisions protect and promote the use of the Welsh language.

- **Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015.** The Council has a duty to implement the five ways of working, and to respond to the 7 national well-being goals.
- **The Armed Forces Act 2021.** Councils must give due regard to the impact of this proposal on those serving or having served in the Armed Forces, as well as their families.

Author: Siwan Llwyd Roberts (EDUCATION)

Date: 9/23/2025 12:00:00 AM

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

1. What kind of document or procedure is being assessed?

New or revised policies, practices or procedures (involving a change in service provision or employment practices)

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

It is planned to evaluate potential models and opportunities identified by Estyn and Bangor University to develop the Immersion Education Scheme for the future.

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

Pupils

Parents

Immersion Centre Staff

Gwynedd schools

STEP 2 - Engagement Data and Impact Assessment

4. Has an attempt been made to comply with the duty to engage in accordance with what is described above and has sufficient information been gathered to proceed?

Yes

Details of engagement. Please note any consultation or engagement you have made or intend to do

Operation	Dates	Knowledge
Bangor University Report	2024 - 2025	Information about engagement embedded in the report
Headteacher Focus Group	September 17th, 2025	Verbal consultation with the Headteachers who have referred learners to the centres during the Autumn Term 2025
Gwynedd Secondary Headteachers (GCSU)	October 15th, 2025	Consultation on the recommendations of the reports
Gwynedd Primary Headteachers (GYDCA)	October 14th, 2025	Consultation on the recommendations of the reports
Staff at Gwynedd immersion centres	September 2024	Further consultation following the publication of the Bangor University report , July 2025

5. What information is available about the impact on each of the features and topics below?

	Relevant Evidence, Information and Data	Potential Positive and/or Negative Impact
Race	The aim of the Language Centres is to provide an intensive course in Welsh to all newcomers to Gwynedd to enable them to integrate into and participate fully in the bilingual society.	No effect has been identified from any possible remodelling.
Disability	No new information to submit. Schools refer new pupils to Gwynedd and the IDP and IMP are shared with the centres to ensure that the action is in line with the child or young person's targets. The centres are accessible spaces that have been designed to provide easy and full access to learners with any physical and medical needs. Suitable transportation to the immersion centers is arranged.	No discrimination on the basis of disability has been identified and any possible remodelling is unlikely to have any impact.
Sex	The centres offer provision for all children between years 2 and 9 moving to Gwynedd. The provision ensures full access to facilities for all individuals.	No change to the current provision is anticipated when considering remodelling and therefore no impact has been identified.
Age	The Immersion Education Scheme provides a late immersion course at centres for pupils between years 2 and 9. It works with schools to deliver up-to-date resources for older learners.	By remodelling, it is not anticipated that there will be a change to the current provision for pupils from years 2 to 9 so no impact has been identified. The provision of late immersion resources for older learners - years 10 and 11 in particular - could have a positive impact on their ability to learn Welsh as new speakers.
Religion and belief	All children from years 2 to 9 have access to the Immersive Education Provision. Schools will provide information about dietary requirements, dress code and about holidays or religious activities. Periods of fasting are responded to through a shared fasting policy with parents. Every child is encouraged to feel positive about their family, culture and faith.	Remodeling is not anticipated to have any known impact.

Sexual Orientation	The centres offer provision for all children between years 2 and 9 moving to Gwynedd. The provision ensures full access to facilities for all individuals without exception - following Gwynedd Council's policies.	As there will be no change to the provision by remodelling, no impact has been identified.
Gender reassignment	The centres offer provision for all children between years 2 and 9 moving to Gwynedd. The provision ensures full access to facilities for all individuals without exception - following Gwynedd Council policies.	No effect has been identified as a result of any possible remodeling.
Marriage and Civil Partnership	This has not been identified as a consideration relevant to the Immersion Education Regime.	No effect has been identified
Pregnancy and Maternity	The Immersion Education Regime follows the guidelines of Gwynedd Council's Contracts and Wages Unit and any remodelling will not change statutory or occupational rights.	No effect has been identified
Iaith Gymraeg	<p>One of the recommendations of the Bangor University report is that: - <i>The current immersion model needs to be reviewed to ensure adequate contact hours for pupils in an immersion setting.</i></p> <p>The Estyn report states that "<i>staff provide a rich range of interesting and creative experiences that support pupils to make constructive progress in acquiring Welsh. Through this, from their starting points, almost all pupils (including pupils with additional learning needs and those who have been affected by poverty) make remarkably solid progress in their Welsh language skills within the course duration.</i>"</p> <p>Following the above findings and the consultation that has taken place with schools, pupils, parents and staff at the immersion centres we will be planning the next steps to ensure that pupils make full use of the Welsh language, particularly when returning to schools on Fridays.</p>	<p>Positive</p> <p>Increasing hours within the immersion centres could ensure that pupils are more confident when returning to schools and more willing to use Welsh in their lessons and socially. Facilitating access to training and resources could increase the opportunities to use the Welsh language as immersion pupils return to schools.</p> <p>Changing the arrangements when regime staff go to schools on Fridays could increase the use of Welsh by facilitating practical support in the lessons for immersion learners.</p> <p>Negative</p> <p>Increasing the hours in the immersion space could lead to negative impacts on pupils' wellbeing as there would be no opportunities to keep in touch with their school and peers. Increasing the hours in the immersion space could lead to less collaboration between the Regime and the schools, less sharing of expertise in terms of immersion principles and fewer opportunities for the Immersion Education Regime to be able to provide guidance, support and share resources with schools to</p>

		enable them to support learners to make further progress in terms of their confidence/skills in Welsh
Socio-Economic Considerations	The centres are strategically located in six areas across the County in order to provide convenient access. Three sites offer provision for primary age learners and three sites offer provision for year 5 and 6 learners and secondary age learners up to and including Year 9. Flexibility between sites is ensured as per demand. Transport is provided to all immersion centres and pupils eligible for free school meals will receive those meals. Each centre provides breakfast every morning to ensure that all pupils are offered a meal on arrival.	Remodelling the weekly provision is unlikely to have any identifiable socio-economic impact.
Those who serve or have served in the armed forces, together with their families	The Immersion Education Regime follows County policies and procedures. A place is offered to all pupils who are enrolled at a school in Gwynedd.	No effect has been identified given the options for change.
Skip to footer	Human Rights and the articles are considered in accordance with all Gwynedd Council services.	It is not anticipated that there will be any change from the adoption of a new model.
Other	The Immersion Regime gives access to all children from years 2 to 9 who apply. Full consideration is given to each pupil's situation and how access can be facilitated is always discussed.	It is not possible to predict any impact as the change to the model will not influence these factors.

6. Are there any data or information gaps and if so, what are these and how are they intended to be addressed?

Data has been collected as part of Bangor University's research and the Estyn inspection. Since the Regime was remodelled data has been retained on many aspects including levels of achievement, confidence levels, numbers, attendance, satisfaction, participation. Questionnaires are shared at the beginning and end of each course and provision is adjusted according to seasonal findings. A meeting with the schools is held at the beginning of each course and feedback from those meetings facilitates adjustments to arrangements. Staff at the centres visit the schools weekly and take advantage of opportunities to discuss progress, wellbeing and support.

7. When considering other key decisions affecting these groups, is there a incremental effect (cumulative effect)?

Bangor University's recommendations suggest that returning to school on a Friday is not a successful arrangement at all schools.

The view of Headteachers within the focus group is that an arrangement ensures weekly contact with the school and also an opportunity to work with the staff of the immersion centres.

Staff at the immersion centres believe that increasing the hours in the immersion centres at the start of the course would ensure that the language is practised and rooted before pupils return to schools but they question whether this would have a negative impact on wellbeing and on families' willingness to engage.

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

Positive Impact on Equality – Increasing hours at Immersion Centres

- Elimination of discrimination: An extra day reduces the risk of pupils being negatively impacted due to time constraints
- Promoting equal opportunities: Increasing access for all
- Building good relationships: Reduces stress at schools on Fridays and supports a positive experience in the centres

Negative Impact – Increasing hours at Immersion Centres

- Elimination of discrimination: An extra day increases the risk of pupils being excluded from the school curriculum and increases the risk that pupils are not ready to practise their Welsh in schools.
- Nurturing good relationships: Temporarily reduces stress at schools on Fridays but does not address the need for pupils to form positive relationships with their peers at schools as pupils' Welsh skills increase.

9. How does the proposal show that due attention has been given to the need to address inequalities in the cause of socio-economic disadvantage? (Note that this is about closing inequality gaps rather than just improving outcomes for all)

The potential modelling does not close gaps in inequality, rather, it changes provision for all.

Model 1: Continue with the current model of 10 weeks at the Immersion Centre - 4 days at the Centre, Friday at the school.

Model 2 : Modify the current model 10 weeks at the Immersion Centre - 4 days at the Centre, Monday at the school. . . .

Model 3 : Adaptation of the current model - 10 weeks at the Immersion Centre - 5 days at the Centre for 5 weeks , then equivalent to 3 days at the Centre and 2 days at school for 5 weeks

Model 4: Increase the time in the Immersion Centres by 10% - 10 weeks at the Immersion Centre - 5 days at the Centre for 5 weeks, then equivalent to 4 days at the Centre and 1 day at school for 5 weeks.

10. How does the proposal demonstrate action in accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011), not to treat the Welsh language less favourably than English, and to ensure opportunities for people to use Welsh? Also how will action be taken in accordance with the Council's language policy and strategy to take advantage of every opportunity to promote the Welsh language (beyond providing services bilingually) and increase opportunities to use and learn the language in the community?

Gwynedd Council's Language Policy is based on the principle that Welsh is the Council's natural language and that Welsh is the primary administrative and public language, with all services, meetings, correspondence and signage bilingual but with priority given to Welsh. It ensures that the public and staff are given services in Welsh, that Welsh skills are essential to all jobs, and organisations that receive support from the Council are also expected to promote the Welsh language. In relation to education, the policy emphasises the central role of schools and education providers in passing on the Welsh language to the next generation and reinforcing its use as the main language of learning and community. The models all contribute to this principle and introduce options to modify the provision somewhat, in order to develop the service.

11. How does this proposal meet the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act by implementing the five ways of working, and responding to the 7 national well-being goals including creating a More Equal Wales?

The **arrangements of the Immersion Regime** contribute directly to the Act in several ways:

1. **A prosperous Wales** – bilingual skills increase job opportunities and strengthen the economy.
2. **A resilient Wales** – the language is part of our identity.
3. **Healthier Wales** – immersion supports emotional wellbeing and positive identity, which is linked to strengthening mental health
4. **A more equal Wales** – access to immersion ensures linguistic and social equity for all children, regardless of their background.
5. **A Wales of cohesive communities** – the language connects people to their communities and fosters a sense of belonging.
6. **Wales with a vibrant culture where the Welsh language is flourishing** – this is the main direct link: immersion is one of the main means of achieving this goal.
7. **Wales has a global responsibility** – by protecting a minority language, Wales contributes to the world's linguistic and cultural diversity.

The five ways of working are in place

Long-term – building solid linguistic foundations in order to maintain the Welsh language for future generations.

Prevention – ensuring that children do not miss the opportunity to become fluent in Welsh through early action.

Integration – linking to education, culture, health and equality.

Collaboration – partnerships between schools, local authorities, parents to provide immersion pathways.

Content – giving families and learners a voice in the formulation and development of immersion arrangements.

PHASE 3 - Procurement and Partnerships

12. Will this policy or practice be carried out in whole or in part by contractors or in partnership with other organisation(s)?

No

What action will be taken to comply with the General Equality Duty, Human Rights and Welsh language legislation and the Socio-Economic Duty in relation to procurement and/or partnerships?

Procurement:

Partnership:

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

13. In considering proportionality, does the policy or practice cause a significant positive or negative impact or create unequal outcomes?

Significant Positive Impact:

The models need to be considered to see which should have the greatest positive impact on pupils' ability to acquire Welsh but it is not possible to predict what the impact will be and if that impact will be significant. Immersion pupil achievement levels have remained robust over the period of the restructure. The inclusion of Year 2 pupils in the current model has not had a significant impact on achievement.

Significant Negative Impact:

The models need to be considered to see if there would be a negative impact on pupils' ability to integrate back into schools. It is not possible to predict what the extent of the impact will be and if that impact will be significant.

14. Any intentional negative impact and why it is believed that there is justification for such action (for example, on the basis of improving equal opportunities or fostering good relationships between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not or because of objective justification or positive action)

While there is a possibility that parents would not be as supportive of sending their children to immersion provision that is carried out with less contact with the schools, there are linguistic benefits in terms of acquiring the basics of the language at the start of the immersion course. There are two possible different models, which are attending the immersion centres for 5 days for 5 weeks at the start of each course and then either 3 days at the centre and 2 at school for 5 weeks or 4 days at the centre and 1 at school for 5 weeks.

15. Will any of the negative impacts identified count as unlawful but unavoidable discrimination (e.g. reduction of funding)?

No

Please note the reason for saying so and the justification for continuing

n/a

16. What other measures or changes could be included in order to strengthen or change the policy/practice to demonstrate that due consideration has been given to promote equal opportunities; helping to eradicate unlawful discrimination, harassment or persecution and foster good relationships and wider community cohesion; as addressed in the General Duty of the Equality Act 2010?

We will look at the results of consultation and consider any further action.

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

These considerations clearly demonstrate that the Immersion Regime has **given due regard to reducing inequality** and is in line with the duties of **the Well-being of Future Generations Act** and **the Equality Act**:

- Ensure transport for pupils and consider expanding immersion opportunities within the centres
- Adapting teaching methods and offering additional support to pupils experiencing disadvantage
- Ensure that the voices of families from all backgrounds are involved in the development and evaluation of provision.

- Carry out equality impact assessments before introducing new policies or plans.
- Measuring the impact of immersion not only on language skills but also on social participation, confidence and fairness of opportunity.

18. What other measures or changes could be included to strengthen or change the policy/practice to demonstrate that due regard has been given to the need to increase opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and not to treat the Welsh language less favourably than English in accordance with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and to reduce or prevent any adverse effects that the policy/practice may have on the Welsh language?

Any changes in the provision of the Immersion Regime are due to a commitment to ensure linguistic and social equity for all children, regardless of their background. The language is part of our identity, bilingual skills increase job opportunities and strengthen the economy. The aim is to build strong linguistic foundations in order to maintain the Welsh language for future generations, to ensure that children do not miss the opportunity to become fluent in Welsh through early action, to link to education, culture, health and equality, to maintain partnerships between schools, local authorities and parents to provide immersion pathways. To give families and learners a voice in the formulation and development of immersion arrangements.

19. Is there enough information to form a balanced view and move forward?

Yes

STEP 5 - Decide to Go Ahead

20. Given the information gathered at Steps 1-4, is it possible to proceed with the policy or practice, and if so, on what basis? Choice of:

Continue the exercise.

PHASE 6 - Actions and Arrangements for Monitoring Results and Reviewing Data

The AEC process is an ongoing one and does not end when the policy/practice and the AEC have been agreed and implemented. There is a specific legal duty to monitor the impact of the policies/practices on equality on an ongoing basis to identify whether the outcomes have changed since you introduced or modified this new policy or practice. If you do not have the relevant data, you should be taking action to correct this in your action plan. To view the EHRC's guidance on data collection you can review their [Measurement Framework](#)

21. What actions identified in Steps 1-5 or any additional data collection work will assist in monitoring the policy/practice when implemented:

Operation	Dates	Timetable	The Responsibility of Arewiniol	Add to Service Plan
None				No

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

Monitoring and Review Arrangements (including where the results will be recorded)	Timetable and Frequency	Responsibility of	Addition to Service
Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee	October 16th	Head of Immersion Regime	
to be determined following scrutiny	to be specified	Head of Regime	

MEETING	Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee
DATE	16 October 2025
TITLE	Procurement Strategy 2025 – 2030
REASON FOR SCRUTINY	Scrutiny Forward / Council Plan 2023-28 – A Prosperous Gwynedd
AUTHOR	Ian Jones, Head of Corporate Services Department
CABINET MEMBER	Councillor Llio Elenid Owen

1. Why does it need scrutiny?

- 1.1. In light of new procurement legislation, the Council is reviewing its Procurement Strategy.
- 1.2. The Council is responsible for procuring substantial goods, services and works by external companies and enterprises. The Council is keen to see local businesses compete for these contracts with the aim of keeping the Council's expenditure local. Procurement is also a means to achieving other priorities such as decarbonisation and fulfilling our socio-economic duties.
- 1.3. The progress made on the Keeping the Benefit Local project, which is a priority project within the Council Plan, was scrutinised on 8 December 2022. It was decided to accept the report, asking the Procurement Service to report back on the 'Innovative Procurement – Social Value Procurement Model' pilot's outcome to the Committee.
- 1.4. Forward scrutiny of the Strategy will give the Committee the opportunity to consider the Procurement Strategy's content and provide comments.

2. What exactly needs scrutiny?

- What has been done in response to the Procurement Act 2023
- The contents of the new Procurement Strategy
- What were the results of the 'Innovative Procurement – Social Value Procurement Model' pilot?
- What successes came from the workstream to maximise social value?
- What are the next steps?

3. Summary and Key Matters

- 3.1. Earlier in 2025, the Procurement Act 2023 came to effect, making substantial changes in public procurement.

- 3.2. It is timely for the Council to create a new Procurement Strategy, and a draft has been recently prepared. The aim of the Strategy is to set a strategic direction and vision for all of the Council's procurement activity for the next five years. Please see a draft of the Strategy attached to this report (Appendix 1).
- 3.3. The Strategy will set direction and vision through establishing priority fields to be achieved to ensure that the Council's expenditure provides the best value for money whilst delivering the best benefit to the residents of the County.
- 3.4. We present the Procurement Strategy to the Scrutiny Committee for the purpose of forward scrutiny and to receive comments on the Strategy.

4. Background / Context

What is procurement

- 4.1. Procurement is the process of securing goods, services or works. Procurement is often seen as just the act of purchasing, but purchasing is only a small part of the procurement process. Procurement is a long-term method of securing goods, services and works, and involves actions such as engaging with the market, negotiating, and contract management. Buying is a more short-term, reactive approach.
- 4.2. Public procurement in Wales and further afield in the United Kingdom (UK) is a tightly regulated area, reflecting the fundamental principle that public bodies spend taxpayers' money and must do so responsibly. Public sector procurement is governed by a range of laws and policies that enforce transparency, fairness, accountability and ensure value for money. As a local government, the Council must comply with this legal framework.

Procurement in Cyngor Gwynedd

- 4.3. Procurement plays a key role in all of Cyngor Gwynedd's activity. Indeed, without appropriate procurement processes, the Council would not be compliant with statutory requirements when procuring and awarding contracts, which would lead to the inability of our officers to provide services to the people of Gwynedd.
- 4.4. Through procurement activity, the Council spends around £200 million a year on services such as care, transport, waste and recycling, fleet, buildings, systems and much more.
- 4.5. This expenditure ensures that essential or statutory services are delivered, for example, that a pupil is transported to school, that a resident receives a new recycling trolley, that one of our elderly receives suitable care in a care home, or that the Property service ensures that the Council's buildings are safe for the people of Gwynedd.
- 4.6. We operate category management procurement arrangements in the Council, where an organisation's expenditure is grouped into categories. There are three

main categories in the Council which are responsible for coordinating procurement activity within their category. The three categories we have in the Council are: Corporate; Environment; and People. A team of officers oversee each category, located within the following departments: Environment Department; Highways, Engineering and YGC Department; and Leadership Team Department, and they are supported by the central Procurement Service located in the Corporate Services Department. The central Procurement Service offers strategic and operational guidance, as well as support on procurement matters across the Council, such as by developing strategy, policies etc., and is responsible for creating materials on procurement arrangements and raising awareness of them and developments in the procurement field.

What has been done in response to the Procurement Act 2023

- 4.7. The Procurement Act 2023 and the related legislations relating to the procurement reform represent a significant transformation of public procurement in the UK.
- 4.8. The Council is required to comply with the requirements of the Act, and a wide range of activity has been underway to ensure that we comply with the new requirements and prepare for the change.

Communications

- 4.9. Before the Procurement Act 2023 came to effect, the Procurement Service arranged for an expert from the Welsh Government to hold a session for officers who procure to share information and to raise awareness about the changes that were underway – this was an opportunity to learn about the changes and to discuss what needed to be done in response to the Procurement Act.
- 4.10. We also communicated relevant updates regularly with Council officers during the period leading up to the Procurement Act, so that there was a consistent understanding across the Council of the changes that were imminent.
- 4.11. In order to prepare businesses for the changes, the Procurement Service worked with the Economy and Community Department to provide information and updates on the upcoming changes in the Gwynedd Business Bulletin to local businesses.

Review of governance arrangements

- 4.12. Soon after the Procurement Act 2023 came to effect, the Council's Contract Procedure Rules were updated (section 17 of the Council's Constitution) in response to the Act, receiving the Full Council's approval in March 2023. Please see paragraph 9.1 of this report for a link to the relevant Full Council meeting.
- 4.13. In response to the Act, the Procurement Service has developed and is reviewing a range of templates and supplementary materials to support Council officers. These materials have been designed to support the changes in procurement arrangements in light of the recent reforms and to help officers clearly understand the new requirements, ensuring compliance.

- 4.14. Following the procurement reform, it was timely to produce a new Procurement Strategy for the Council – a draft of the Strategy has been prepared and attached to this report (Appendix 1). Once a final draft of the Strategy has been approved, we intend to review and update the Council's Procurement Policy as well.
- 4.15. At a national level, there has been a significant change to the national platform that publishes contract notices. Although the Welsh Government is responsible for the system, a considerable amount of resources have been provided by the Council to test the new system, familiarising ourselves with the new arrangements, educating other officers in the Council about the changes, and providing feedback the Government and the relevant parties.

Training

- 4.16. A range of training on the procurement reforms was prepared by the UK Government and Welsh Government, and relevant Council officers have been able to access these training materials.
- 4.17. In addition to Government training, the Council's Procurement Service has designed and delivered a number of training sessions for Council departments and services, to educate staff about the changes that have resulted from the procurement reform. The feedback has been positive so far, and work continues with further sessions and training being arranged.

Summary

- 4.18. The Procurement Service has been reporting on the work being done in response to the Procurement Act 2023 and the wider procurement reforms during the Corporate Services' Performance Challenge and Support meetings.
- 4.19. The recent reforms as a result of the Procurement Act 2023 are significant and therefore the response to the Act is ongoing. In addition, we are also proactively preparing for the implementation of the procurement requirements of the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023, which are expected to come into force in 2026, ensuring that our processes align with the new legislative expectations.

Contents of Cyngor Gwynedd's new Procurement Strategy

- 4.20. As already noted, a draft of a new Procurement Strategy has recently been produced. The aim of the Strategy is to set a strategic direction and vision for all of the Council's procurement activity for the next five years. See draft Strategy attached to this report (Appendix 1).

Background and purpose of the Strategy

- 4.21. The current Strategy is outdated and it is timely to update it following the recent procurement reforms. It is important to set a unified strategic direction for everyone

involved in procurement in the Council, to ensure that everyone works towards the same goals and priorities, strengthening the Council's procurement results and ensuring the best benefits to the residents of Gwynedd.

- 4.22. The Strategy will not only set a strategic direction and vision for procurement activity in the Council but also establish priority fields to be achieved to ensure that the Council's expenditure provides the best value for money whilst also providing the best benefit to the residents of the County.
- 4.23. The publication of a Strategy now will also put the Council in a firm position for new legislative requirements due in 2026 (Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023) when it will be a statutory duty to prepare and publish a procurement strategy.
- 4.24. Because we as a local authority spend public money, procurement is a heavily regulated area, and there are a number of legal requirements that the Council must comply with when procuring. This Strategy outlines those laws and regulations and they have been fully considered in the formulation of the Strategy to ensure that all Council's procurement activity is accurate, appropriate and in compliance with all relevant rules.
- 4.25. The Council also has a Sustainable Procurement Policy. The Strategy sets out the vision and priorities at a strategic level, while the Policy covers the operational details. As previously noted, once a final draft of the Strategy has been approved, we intend to review and update the Council's Procurement Policy, aiming to be operational from 1 April 2026, to ensure that the Council's operational procurement arrangements are robust.

Content of the Strategy

- 4.26. The Strategy contains seven priority fields for the Strategy period, which is the next five years, with each priority field identified as key areas in the context of procurement in Cyngor Gwynedd.
- 4.27. All priority fields include its background and information about why it is a priority, what has been done so far and so on. A vision is set for where we wish to be for all priority fields and information about how we intend to achieve that vision.
- 4.28. The Council's legislative and constitutional context is also included in the Strategy.
- 4.29. The seven priority fields are set out in the Procurement Strategy in alphabetical order, and are as follows:
 - **Local benefit – supporting local business to thrive**
Raising awareness of procurement opportunities and reducing barriers for local businesses and enterprises to bid for work with the Council

- **Carbon zero – undertake a key role in the aim of achieving carbon zero**
Develop the understanding of the Council's contracts' carbon emissions and working with Council services to help reduce the organisation's carbon emissions
- **Value for money – ensuring value for money**
Ensuring that all money spent through procurement activity delivers value for money for the Council and for the people of Gwynedd
- **Social value – maximising social value through procurement activity**
Maximising the economic, social, environmental and cultural value that derives from contracts and procurement activity to support Gwynedd's local communities
- **Technology – supporting and enabling the Council to make the best use of technology**
Maximising the opportunities that are created by developments in the field of technology to provide a strong foundation for procurement
- **Governance arrangements – implementing effective governance arrangements**
Ensuring that our internal procedures, understanding and expertise of procurement and contract management arrangements enable us to act appropriately and effectively
- **The Welsh Language – promoting the Welsh language**
Ensuring that the Council's procurement activity promotes the Welsh language and that the Welsh language has a clear place in our processes

Summary

- 4.30. After receiving the Scrutiny Committee's comments, it is intended to go ahead to seek the approval of the Council's Cabinet for the publication of the Strategy.
- 4.31. After the Strategy goes live, the Procurement Service will lead on producing a Delivery Plan, which will outline the steps needed to take to realise the Strategy's vision and priorities.

What is the outcome of the pilot 'Innovative Procurement – Social Value Procurement Model'?

- 4.32. On 8 December 2022, a report was submitted to the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee, which included information about a trial being piloted at the time, looking at the introduction of a new tender assessment methodology through the Council.

- 4.33. For the convenience of Members, a link to that report is included in paragraph 9.2 of this report. Briefly, the pilot trialled a new approach to assessing social value in the procurement process, namely the use of the National Themes, Outcomes and Measures (TOMs) for Wales, which is a recognised procedure in procurement to measure, report and manage social value. The system consists of themes (which, in Wales, reflect the seven well-being goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015) and a range of quantitative measures related to those themes – each measure has a proxy value which is a financial estimate of its social impact.
- 4.34. The new system of social value assessment was piloted across several areas within the Council.
- 4.35. After the pilot period ended, a report was presented before Cyngor Gwynedd's Cabinet on 7 December 2023 summarising the pilot and making recommendations on the way forward – please see paragraph 9.3 of this report for a link to the relevant Cabinet item.
- 4.36. On the whole by using the new approach, contractors offered a range of positive social benefits to Gwynedd, for example:
- employment to people living in Gwynedd;
 - expenditure resulting from the contracts spent in the local supply chain;
 - financial donations to charities and community clubs;
 - voluntary time to support local charities;
 - and developing the Welsh language skills of the workforce.
- 4.37. The pilot found that the new approach offered a transparent and quantitative way of assessing social value as part of evaluating companies' bids. It was noted that the new approach for assessing social value could help local businesses and enterprises, such as through the local employment and expenditure measure. It was also seen that including a social value assessment in a tender increases the likelihood that a company will create benefits for Gwynedd even if the company is based outside of Gwynedd.
- 4.38. It was recommended in the Cabinet report to amend the Sustainable Procurement Policy. However, due to the changes that were underway with the procurement reform as already mentioned, it was decided that it would be better to delay the revision of the Policy in view of the changes that were on the horizon. As already noted in this report, as most of the changes resulting from the procurement reform are now in place, it is now time for us to publish a Procurement Strategy and then review and amend the Procurement Policy.
- 4.39. It was also recommended to continue to evaluate social value in relevant tenders. Subsequently, the new approach was used more expansively, using it in a range of tenders. That has allowed us to gather more information about its use and effectiveness, and give us a better understanding of the advantages and disadvantages involved. Some examples and successes are set out in the next section of the report.

Summary

- 4.40. The results of the 'Innovative Procurement - Social Value Procurement Model' pilot were presented to Cyngor Gwynedd's Cabinet in 2023. Overall, positive outcomes were seen as a range of social benefits was offered by contractors.

What successes come from the workstream to maximise social value?

- 4.41. Social value is a broad term used to describe the social, environmental, and economic impacts of actions taken by communities, organisations, governments, and individuals.¹
- 4.42. In the procurement field, social value may be included as part of a tender evaluation and/or contract terms with the intention of achieving results that offer any added social, environmental, economic and cultural value.
- 4.43. Overall, we find that incorporating social value as part of the tendering process produces positive outcomes in terms of gaining social benefits for Gwynedd. Since we started using the National Themes, Outcomes and Measures for Wales (**TOMs**) as a method of measuring the monetary value of social benefits, companies have offered over **£4 million** worth of social benefits to Gwynedd as a result of Council contracts, through a variety of means, such as:
- Employment for Gwynedd residents;
 - Spending with local and Welsh suppliers;
 - Various offers of work experience;
 - Financial donations to local charities.
- 4.44. The work on social value for our food supply contract to schools and care homes was shortlisted for a national procurement award.
- 4.45. As can be seen above, the examples show a positive impact on communities in Gwynedd. As already mentioned, assessing social value using the National Themes, Outcomes and Measures for Wales can boost local businesses, such as if they employ local workers and spend within the local supply chain.
- 4.46. Even if a company based outside of Gwynedd is awarded a contract by the Council, some of the examples we have seen so far show that including a social value assessment in a tender can increase the likelihood that a company brings benefits to Gwynedd. Positive examples of social value that companies from outside Gwynedd have offered include: employing local individuals from Gwynedd to work on a Council contract; donations to charities in Gwynedd; work experience for residents in Gwynedd with a national company.
- 4.47. One of the main drawbacks associated with the new system of social value evaluation is that it requires more resources, time and expertise to implement it effectively, creating additional pressure on procurement officers and contract management officers in the Council. In addition, it can be equally challenging for

¹ Welsh Government (2025) Welsh Procurement Policy Note (WPPN) 003: Social value clauses/'community benefits' through public procurement, <https://www.gov.wales/wppn-003-social-value-clauses-community-benefits-through-public-procurement.html>

smaller businesses and enterprises, creating barriers to their ability to compete fully and to deliver strong responses to tenders.

- 4.48. In response to the potential barrier for local businesses and enterprises, a range of actions have been put in place to seek to reduce the potential barrier:
- Information packs for businesses are included in the tender documents when social value is included as part of the evaluation, to increase businesses' understanding of the arrangements
 - We also emphasise the importance of engaging with the market before going out to tender to ensure businesses have the opportunity to understand our needs and the opportunity to ask any questions
 - Furthermore, we are in the process of formulating a lighter version of the social value requirements that may be more suitable in some tenders.

Summary

- 4.49. On the whole, adding social value as part of the tendering process brings additional benefits to Gwynedd, and is also able to recognise the benefit that elements such as local employment and local expenditure through our contracts can bring to the County.
- 4.50. As part of the Procurement Strategy, we intend to continue to maximise social value in the Council's procurement processes.

5. Consultation

- 5.1. In drawing up the Strategy, the opportunity was taken to consult with several services across the Council in order to receive input and reflect on the views and opinions of different departments that will be using and implementing the Strategy.
- 5.2. These services included the Corporate Category Team (Environment Department), the Environment Category Team (Highways, Engineering and YGC Department) and the People Category Team (Leadership Team Department). The content of the Strategy was also discussed with the Economy and Community Department.
- 5.3. Following receiving and discussing their comments, amendments were made as the Strategy was designed to reflect those comments.
- 5.4. Once the Strategy has been approved, we as a central Procurement Service will lead on the formulation of a Delivery Plan, and we will work with the Council's Category Teams and procurement officers in its preparation. We will also consult with any other service in the Council as the need arises.

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

- 6.1. Procurement can make a significant contribution to improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, particularly when it is guided by the principles of sustainability and social value.

- 6.2. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 was fully considered in the drafting of the Strategy, and the well-being goals that each priority field addresses can be seen in the Strategy – please see an example below. We will use the five ways of working to implement the Strategy and procurement across the Council.



- 6.3. Social value realised through procurement plays a vital role in fulfilling obligations under the Well-being of Future Generations Act. By embedding social value in the procurement process, we can ensure that the goods, services and works we procure contribute positively to the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, supporting the seven well-being goals of the Act, and ultimately, ensuring that our spending delivers long-term and sustainable outcomes that improve the quality of life of current and future generations.
- 6.4. The National Themes, Outcomes and Measures for Wales have been designed to support the well-being goals of the Act, and therefore the impact of the social value can be measured against the well-being goals.
- 6.5. When the procurement duties of the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023 come into force, we as Cyngor Gwynedd and other public bodies will be required to improve economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing through procurement in a socially responsible way. These duties will complement the existing well-being duties that certain public bodies have under the Well-being Act.

7. Impact on Characteristics of Equality, Welsh Language and Socio-Economic Duty

- 7.1. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed in draft form to accompany the Procurement Strategy, and a final copy will be submitted when the Strategy is presented before the Cabinet.
- 7.2. Please see a copy of the draft Equality Impact Assessment attached to this report (Appendix 2 – Equality Impact Assessment).
- 7.3. The assessment at this time does not show any significant impacts. Generally, the Strategy does not have any negative impact, but a positive impact can be seen on several characteristics.

- 7.4. The Strategy is considered to have a positive impact on the Welsh language – promoting the Welsh language is a priority field in the Strategy. We promote the Welsh language in our procurement processes, whether that is when dealing with Welsh or non-Welsh companies. The Strategy maximises the use of social value by noting that it should be regularly included as part of tender evaluation criteria, where appropriate, which also promotes the Welsh language as some of the social value measures reflect the well-being goal of ‘A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language’.
- 7.5. The Strategy also has a positive impact on socio-economic elements, with the priority field of maximising social value through procurement activity increasing the likelihood social and economic benefits being delivered to Gwynedd through the Council's spending with contractors, such as local employment, supporting young people and disadvantaged individuals into employment, supporting health promotion efforts, support for the disadvantaged, reducing crime, building stronger communities and efforts to protect wildlife and culture.

8. Next steps

- 8.1. We will continue to respond to the requirements of the Procurement Act 2023 and raising awareness of the new arrangements across the Council.
- 8.2. Following receipt of the Scrutiny Committee's comments, the Procurement Strategy is scheduled to be presented to Council Cabinet in November 2025.
- 8.3. Once the Strategy has received Cabinet approval, the Procurement Service will lead on the formulation of a Delivery Plan, which will outline the steps to be taken to realise the vision and priorities of the Strategy.
- 8.4. Following the publication of the Procurement Strategy, it is planned to review and update the Council's Procurement Policy, aiming for the revised Policy to be effective from 1 April 2026.
- 8.5. In terms of social value, we will continue to maximise the use of social value and it has been included as one of the priority fields in the Procurement Strategy for the next five years.

9. Background Information

- 9.1. Cyngor Gwynedd Full Council, 6 March 2025, Item 14 – Constitution Changes – New Contract Procedure Rules (Section 17) – [Agenda for The Council on Thursday, 6th March, 2025, 1.30 pm](#)

- 9.2. Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee Cyngor Gwynedd, 8 December 2022, Item 5 – Progress Report – Keeping the Benefit Local – [Agenda for Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee on Thursday, 8th December, 2022, 10.30 am](#)
- 9.3. Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet, 7 November 2023, Item 9 – Social Value Procurement – [Agenda for The Cabinet on Tuesday, 7th November, 2023, 1.00 pm](#)

10. Appendices

- 10.1. Cyngor Gwynedd Procurement Strategy 2025 – 2030 – draft version
- 10.2. Equality Impact Assessment – draft version

Procurement Strategy

2025 - 2030

“Maximising value for every pound in Gwynedd”



CORPORATE
SERVICES

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CYNGOR GWYNEDD

Foreword

I am pleased to present the Procurement Strategy 2025-2030, which sets out the vision and strategic priorities for the Council's procurement activity for the next 5 years.

In this Strategy, we aim not only to continue to achieve efficiency and value for money, but also to support Gwynedd's wider economic and social objectives, by achieving what is important to Gwynedd while also ensuring compliance with a range of legal and national obligations.

Procurement plays a central role in enabling the Council to provide a range of vital services to the residents of Gwynedd. With demand for public services increasing, and local authorities facing significant financial challenges, it is vital that we use our spending power to its full potential. This means not only ensuring good quality and value for money, but procurement can also play a central role in delivering broader priorities. Through all of this, the Council will ensure that every pound spent maximises its value to the communities and people of Gwynedd.

This Strategy establishes a strong foundation for ensuring that we maximise the value of the pound in Gwynedd. I look forward to seeing the Strategy realise its vision and objectives.

Councillor Llio Elenid Owen

Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Legal and the Welsh Language



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Introduction

Cyngor Gwynedd provides a wide range of services to the people of Gwynedd, and the procurement of services, goods and works is a key part of providing these services, such as:



Construction,
and
maintenance



Transport



Care for
adults and
children



Systems,
and IT
equipment



Supply of
bins



Fleet - cars,
vans, etc.

The Council spends around £200 million annually through procurement activity with a range of suppliers, from small and medium-sized enterprises, the third sector, and large companies. It is crucial that this money is spent in a responsible manner that ensures value for money.



In addition, procurement is increasingly recognised as a key instrument to achieve a range of priorities – whether local or national, as well as economic, social, environmental and cultural objectives for the present and future generations.

Events around the world in recent years have created challenges for supply chains highlighting the need for procurement to be flexible whilst also being resilient, and in a complex and volatile world, these challenges are likely to persist. It therefore remains a period of change, including a significant reform in public procurement with substantial legislative and statutory changes. This changing landscape presents opportunities and challenges, and highlights the importance of procurement.

What is procurement?

Procurement is “the process whereby organisations meet their needs for goods, services, works and utilities in a way that achieves value for money on a whole life basis in terms of generating benefits not only to the organisation, but also to society and the economy, whilst minimising damage to the environment.”^[1]



The process covers the entire procurement cycle – from the initial stage of identifying needs, to the end of a service contract or the useful life of an asset.

The Aim of the Strategy.

The aim of this Strategy is to outline the strategic vision for all procurement activity in Cyngor Gwynedd as well establishing key priorities to be achieved whilst managing public resources responsibly and effectively.

The Strategy, direction and key priorities were developed following consultation with stakeholders to ensure that what we do meets a wide range of needs. The formulation and publication of the Strategy is only the beginning, delivering the vision and priorities will depend on the commitment and support from all Council departments and services.



National regulatory context

There are a range of laws, rules and policies that are in place to govern the way public bodies procure. It is vital that the Procurement Strategy recognises and aligns with these to ensure that the Council's procurement arrangements comply with the regulations, and incorporate national priorities.

Procurement Act 2023

The main procurement legislation in the United Kingdom which came into force in February 2025, replacing the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. The Act aims to make the public procurement regime faster, simpler, more transparent and to better meet the needs of the UK while also continuing to comply with international obligations.



Procurement Act 2023

The Procurement (Wales) Regulations 2024 also apply to Devolved Welsh Authorities.

Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023

This Act builds on the duties of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The procurement duties of the Social Partnership and Public Procurement Act 2023 include a duty to procure in a socially responsible way (seeking to improve economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being) in order to use the power of the public purse to drive improvement and achieve outcomes that benefit society.



Social Partnership and Public Procurement
(Wales) Act 2023

It is expected that the socially responsible procurement duties will come into force in 2026.

Wales procurement policy statement

The Policy sets out the strategic direction and vision for public sector procurement in Wales, by setting out ten principles that public bodies in Wales should follow. The ten principles are based on the goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act and key Welsh Government policies.

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The ambition of the Act is to improve the social, cultural, environmental and economic well-being of Wales. The Act requires public bodies in Wales to think about the long-term impact of their decisions, thereby helping to shape Wales into a better place to live, now and into the future.



Procurement has been identified as one of the seven corporate areas for change in the Act, and has been identified as a key focus area for public bodies as they carry out their duties under the Act.

Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011



The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 sets a legal framework regarding the use of the Welsh language in the delivery of public services. The Measure gives the Welsh language official status in Wales, and establishes the office of the Welsh Language Commissioner. The Measure also gives the Commissioner the power to set specific Language Standards on public bodies.

Cyngor Gwynedd have committed to comply with the Welsh Language Standards, as set out by the Welsh Government under Section 44 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

Net zero carbon status by 2030

The Welsh Government has set a collective ambition for the public sector in Wales to reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions by the year 2030. Procurement has been identified as a priority area for action to achieve the goal by 2030.



Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 brings together a wide range of separate pieces of legislation into a single Act. The Act lists protected characteristics, and places a duty on public bodies to give due regard to the impact that any new policy, procedure, plan etc. will have on people with protected characteristics

Local regulatory context

As well as the national regulations and policies that need to be followed, there are a range of local priorities that influence the Council's procurement activity, which have been taken into account when forming this strategy.

The Cyngor Gwynedd Plan 2023-2028

The Cyngor Gwynedd Plan sets out the Council's vision and priorities. The Plan includes a series of projects for the period 2023-2028 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.



The Council's Constitution

The Constitution of the Council contains rules and processes for the decision-making and management of the Council's business.

Section 17 of the Constitution contains the Contract Procedure Rules which set out the processes that the Council should follow when conducting a procurement exercise and in particular any procurement exercise that is under the procurement legislation thresholds. Section 17 of the Constitution was reviewed and updated in line with the national procurement reform in 2025.

Climate and Nature Emergency Plan



The Climate and Nature Emergency Plan outlines what action the Council will take between 2022 and 2030 to achieve the goal of being a net zero carbon Council. Procurement is one of the themes identified in the Plan as part of the effort to become a net zero carbon Council.

Cyngor Gwynedd's Welsh Language Policy

The Policy sets out how the Council and its staff will plan and deliver to ensure that all services meets the linguistic needs of the local population. Section 9 of the Policy refers specifically to procurement and tendering processes.



Wider policies

In addition to the above, the Council's broader policies have also been taken into account and implemented in the development of this Strategy.

Priority fields

The following are the priority fields that have been identified for the period of this Strategy:

► **Supporting local business to thrive**

Raising awareness of procurement opportunities and reducing barriers for local businesses and enterprises to bid for work with the Council

► **Undertake a key role in the aim of achieving carbon zero**

Develop the understanding of the Council's contracts' carbon emissions and working with Council services to help reduce the organisation's carbon emissions

► **Ensuring value for money**

Ensuring that all money spent through procurement activity delivers value for money for the Council and for the people of Gwynedd

► **Maximising social value through procurement activity**

Maximising the economic, social, environmental and cultural value that derives from contracts and procurement activity to support Gwynedd's local communities

► **Supporting and enabling the Council to make the best use of technology**

Maximising the opportunities that are created by developments in the field of technology to provide a strong foundation for procurement

► **Implementing effective governance arrangements**

Ensuring that our internal procedures, understanding and expertise of procurement and contract management arrangements enable us to act appropriately and effectively

► **Promoting the Welsh language**

Ensuring that the Council's procurement activity promotes the Welsh language and that the Welsh language has a clear place in our processes

Supporting local business to thrive

Background

One of the priorities in the Cyngor Gwynedd Plan is to strengthen the local economy, and through this the Council is keen to seek to ensure, as far as possible, that local businesses and enterprises are able to compete for its contracts with the aim that as much of the Council's expenditure as possible remains local.

The Keeping the Benefit Local project is one of the Prosperous Gwynedd projects in Cyngor Gwynedd's Plan 2023-28. The aim of the project is to ensure that we as a Council strive to support local businesses to apply for opportunities, within the boundaries of the relevant rules, while also ensuring that the Council gets the best value for money spent.

The Council has already sought to identify barriers for local businesses and enterprises to tender and has put in place a range of schemes to reduce them, including:

- Raising awareness of ways to reduce or prevent barriers and restrictions faced by local suppliers/providers when competing for contracts with the Council
- Publication of a list of current Council contracts
- Preparing the market by organising and holding meet the buyer sessions when going out to tender.

The Procurement Act 2023 introduces a number of reforms intended to reduce unnecessary challenges and costs for small and medium enterprises to access public procurement opportunities. With the majority of Gwynedd's local businesses being small and medium-sized businesses,² this could be beneficial in reducing barriers for local businesses.

[2] UK business: activity, size and location, Office for National Statistics, 2024



Supporting local business to thrive

Where do we want to be

- ▶ Businesses and enterprises with a good awareness of bidding opportunities with the Council
- ▶ The Council continues to identify and reduce further barriers for local businesses and enterprises to apply for work with the Council
- ▶ Good awareness, both internally and externally, of the Keeping the Benefit Local project

How will we get there

- ▶ Further develop the contract register so that businesses and enterprises have a better awareness of bidding opportunities with the Council
- ▶ Using the opportunities presented through procurement reform to reduce barriers for small and medium-sized enterprises
- ▶ Working with partners to develop the local market's capacity to bid for public contracts



Prosperous



More
equal



Cohesive
communities



Vibrant culture
and Thriving
Welsh Language



Globally
Responsible

Undertake a key role in the aim of achieving carbon zero

Background

Climate change is one of the biggest challenges facing the world. In 2019, Cyngor Gwynedd issued a statement stating that there was a climate emergency, and committed to taking action to reduce carbon emissions and strive for a zero carbon future in the Climate and Nature Emergency Plan 2022/23 – 2029/30. The Welsh Government has also set a target for the public sector in Wales to reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2030.

Cyngor Gwynedd's Climate and Nature Emergency Plan aims to outline what steps will be taken from 2022 to 2030 in order to achieve the goal of being a net zero carbon council and realising the ambition of being "net zero carbon and ecologically positive by 2030."³

Around 72% of the Council's carbon emissions come through procurement activity.⁴ While the Council has no direct control over these emissions, procurement presents opportunities for us to drive changes that can reduce emissions from our supply chains.

The Council has a Sustainable Procurement Policy, and one of the aims of the Policy is to reduce our environmental impact through better selection and use of goods, services and work.

[3] [Climate and Nature Emergency Plan 2022/23 - 2029/30, Cyngor Gwynedd, 2022](#)

[4] [Annual Report 2024/25 - Climate and Nature Emergency Plan, Cyngor Gwynedd, 2025](#)



Undertake a key role in the aim of achieving carbon zero

Where do we want to be

- ▶ Better understanding by the Council of supply chain carbon emissions
- ▶ Steps are taken in the procurement process to identify and reduce environmental impact

How will we get there

- ▶ Development of a suite of sustainability resources for use in the procurement process
- ▶ Provide support to the market, particularly local providers, to be able to measure carbon footprint
- ▶ Improving carbon emissions reporting
- ▶ Collaborate with other organisations to learn and share about reducing carbon emissions



Prosperous



Resilient



Healthier



Globally
Responsible

Ensuring value for money

Background

Value for money is defined as “the optimum combination of whole-of-life costs in terms of not only generating efficiency savings and good quality outcomes for the organisation, but also benefit to society, the economy, and the environment, both now and in the future.”⁵

The Council spends around £200 million on the procurement of goods, services and works. There are a range of ways in which the Council can deliver value for money – such as by awarding contracts through fair competition, using frameworks or joint procurement that increase economies of scale, or considering and reviewing options at the start of the procurement process.

With local governments facing significant financial challenges, Cyngor Gwynedd is facing unprecedented financial pressures on budgets. Along with that, the trend of prices in general has been rising in recent years (due to elements such as global events, fuel price increases, inflation, trade barriers). It is therefore crucial that any procurement activity ensures the best possible outcome for public finances while maintaining high quality services and reducing risk.

[5] [Welsh Procurement Policy Note, WPPN 01/20, Welsh Government, 2023](#)



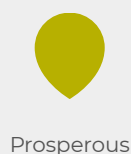
Ensuring value for money

Where do we want to be

- ▶ The Council can demonstrate that it delivers value for money through what is procured
- ▶ Develop transparency of expenditure through procurement arrangements

How will we get there

- ▶ Continue to report on how value for money is achieved in contracts when reporting on performance
- ▶ Collaborate with other public organisations where appropriate to maximise the benefit
- ▶ Reviewing and challenging spending, and identify opportunities for delivering efficiencies
- ▶ Building on monitoring arrangements to ensure value for money throughout the contract period



Prosperous



Globally
Responsible

Maximising social value through procurement activity

Background

Social value is a broad term describing “the social, environmental and economic impacts of actions taken by communities, organisations, governments and individuals”.⁶ The Council's spending power with external organisations can have a significant impact on the local economy and society and can create opportunities to deliver wider socio-economic outcomes, meeting the needs of the present while ensuring the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

In the procurement process, social value is a commitment made by tenderers to provide additional economic, social, environmental and cultural value through their performance of the Council's contract.

In 2023, a new social value methodology was piloted across several areas at the Council. Subsequently, a new social value approach was adopted. The Council now uses three different approaches to social value in procurement – core, non-core, and the National Themes, Measures and Outcomes for Wales.

The Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023 places a duty to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of the area by undertaking procurement in a socially responsible way, in accordance with the sustainable development principle. The Act requires the setting and publication of socially responsible procurement objectives that are designed to maximise contribution to the achievement of the well-being goals.

[6] [Welsh Procurement Policy Note, WPPN 01/20, Welsh Government, 2023](#)



Maximising social value through procurement activity

Where do we want to be

- ▶ Social value is regularly included as part of tender evaluation criteria, where appropriate
- ▶ Good awareness, both internally and externally, of social value in general and the social value methodologies
- ▶ Ensure compliance with national requirements for social value and socially responsible procurement

How will we get there

- ▶ Promote and educate, internally and externally, about social value
- ▶ Develop the monitoring and reporting regime on social value outcomes
- ▶ Collaborate with other organisations to learn and share regarding social value



Prosperous

Resilient

Healthier

More
equal

Cohesive
communities

Vibrant culture
and Thriving
Welsh Language

Globally
Responsible

Supporting and enabling the Council to make the best use of technology

Background

Technological changes and advancements are emerging at a significant speed and scale. These developments present opportunities to transform the Council and its services and while it is important to take advantage of these opportunities, it is also important to be aware of the risks and try to mitigate them.

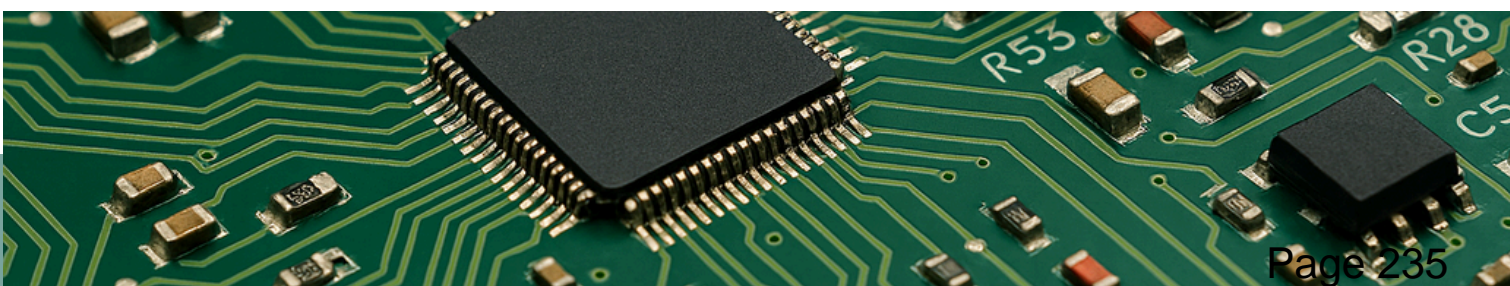
New technologies can also transform public procurement – from automating repetitive administration to providing information and analysis of spending patterns – new technology can enable better decisions, lower costs and increase transparency.

In 2023, the Council published a Digital Plan which is a strategy to outline the path the Council will follow in order to adapt to the 'digital future'. The Plan's ambition is to “develop, improve and embed digital thinking and solutions naturally and effectively in all activities, to strengthen and improve our services, administer more efficiently, and to better use information to make smarter and more informed decisions – all in a digital environment that is safe and resilient.”⁷

Procurement can also be a central enabler to be able to take advantage of new technologies – for example, some of the priority elements in the Digital Plan will need to be procured in order to realise the vision set out in the Plan.

Along with general technological development, artificial intelligence capabilities are developing at an astonishing pace, and it is increasingly rooting its place in procurement. It offers opportunities such as through data analysis, and the ability of artificial intelligence to enhance automation within procurement processes. But it's not without its challenges and risks – such as around data use and data protection, the upfront cost, or not having a thorough understanding of how it can be used and what the limitations are.

^[7] [Cyngor Gwynedd Digital Plan 2023-28, Cyngor Gwynedd, 2025](#)



Supporting and enabling the Council to make the best use of technology

Where do we want to be

- ▶ Good awareness of technological advances and taking advantage of them where appropriate
- ▶ Strengthening the grasp of key data to provide a firm foundation for procurement

How will we get there

- ▶ Continuously evaluate new technologies to improve the procurement process, reduce costs, and increase efficiency
- ▶ Collaborate with partnerships and other public organisations to develop a better insight into technological developments and share experiences



Prosperous



Globally
Responsible

Implementing effective governance arrangements

Background

As has already been highlighted in this Strategy, there are a range of laws and policies that need to be complied with in the area of public sector procurement – from specific procurement regulations, to a range of wider regulations and policies such as the Welsh language, pollution, health and safety.

The procurement reform places emphasis on governance arrangements in procurement. One of the aims of the Procurement Act 2023 is to embed transparency throughout the procurement cycle so that the expenditure of taxpayers' money can be scrutinised. The Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act will also develop the aim of transparency through imposing a requirement on public bodies to prepare and publish a procurement strategy, prepare and publish an annual report and publish a contract register.

As any developments in procurement come into effect, it is vital to ensure that staff have an understanding and knowledge of the changes, that any documents are properly updated, and that internal processes and policies are in line with the developments.

In addition to the legislative and national requirements, the Council's internal procurement rules are contained in the Contracts Procedure Rules and the Sustainable Procurement Policy which contain rules about the procurement process as a whole.

To ensure compliance, it is important to ensure that good governance arrangements are in place and followed. This will help to minimise any risks and ensure that the best value is achieved through our procurement activity.



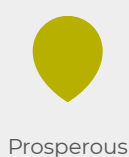
Implementing effective governance arrangements

Where do we want to be

- ▶ Ensure that procurement rules and procedures are correctly implemented across the Council
- ▶ Procurement policies, guidance and documentation are up-to-date and purposeful
- ▶ Effective contract management arrangements in place
- ▶ Robust procurement understanding and expertise across the Council

How will we get there

- ▶ Regularly review templates, guidelines and documentation and make any changes as the need arises, communicating any changes with the relevant officers in the Council
- ▶ Developing and implementing standard contract management arrangements
- ▶ Increasing procurement understanding and expertise across the Council
- ▶ Further develop monitoring and support arrangements



Prosperous



Globally
Responsible

Promoting the Welsh Language

Background

Gwynedd is a unique county in terms of the Welsh language, and a commitment to be at the forefront of promoting the use of the Welsh language is identified as one of the main priorities in the Council's Plan.

The Council's Welsh Language Policy (2022) ensures the Council's compliance with the Language Standards. Principles and standards to be complied with in procurement and tendering are set out in Section 9, such as:

- The Council, in developing structures and agreements with others, will protect and ensure the needs of the residents of Gwynedd in terms of receiving bilingual services;
- To take advantage of every opportunity to raise awareness of the profile and importance of the Welsh language within the County with fellow providers.

Procurement is already making a contribution to promoting the Welsh language in a variety of ways: the inclusion of clauses in contracts with contractors specifying the requirements and expectations of the Welsh language; publishing external documents bilingually.

The Keeping the Benefit Local project aims to maximise the Council's locally held expenditure, and with Gwynedd being a unique county in terms of the Welsh language, this can help promote and develop the language.

The Council has adopted the use of the National Themes, Measures and Outcomes for Wales, which is a framework of various social value measures reflecting the seven well-being goals in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act. The framework can be used to measure and evaluate the quantitative and qualitative aspects of social value offered by tenderers as part of the tender response. There are two measures that reflect the well-being goal of 'A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language'.



Promoting the Welsh Language

Where do we want to be

- ▶ That all procurement activity continues to comply with the Council's statutory duties under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and associated Standards, together with the Council's Language Policy
- ▶ The Welsh language is promoted and encouraged in the Council's procurement and contract processes

How will we get there

- ▶ Meet the Language Standards and comply with the Council's Language Policy
- ▶ Include relevant language requirements in procurement documents and agreements
- ▶ Maximise the use of social value measures to encourage the use of the Welsh language



Vibrant culture
and Thriving
Welsh Language

Implementation

The delivery of this Strategy will depend on a number of elements that will enable the vision and priorities to be realised. These include:

- commitment and support from all Council departments and services;
- skilled procurement professionals with up-to-date knowledge of legislation and best practice;
- effective stakeholder engagement to foster collaboration and transparency;
- clearly defined efficient processes that support consistency, compliance, and continuous improvement.

Together, these will support efficient, compliant and socially responsible procurement outcomes.

The need to be realistic about what can be achieved within the current resource constraints should be recognised. We will commit to maximising the resources available, operating efficiently and effectively. In addition, we will seek to identify and take advantage of opportunities to collaborate with other organisations, in order to strengthen the impact and value created.

The Strategy will be reviewed annually, and any amendments will be made as the need arises.

Delivery Plan

A Delivery Plan will be developed to accompany the Strategy, outlining the specific actions to be taken in implementing the Strategy, which will then be used to manage and monitor progress.

The Delivery Plan will be reviewed and updated annually.





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**CORPORATE
SERVICES**

CYNGOR GWYNEDD

Assessing the Impact on the People of Gwynedd

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

- **The Equality Act 2010.** It places a duty on public organisations to pay due attention to the impact of any new policy, procedure, scheme etc (or in adapting them) on people with protected characteristics. We are asked to
 - abolish unlawful discrimination, harassment and persecution and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
 - promote equal opportunities between people who share a relevant protected feature and those who do not.
 - foster good relationships between people who share a protected trait and those who don't.

In Wales the specific duty sets out the need to carry out an impact assessment following specific guidelines to consider the impact that a change in any policy or procedure (or the creation of a new policy or procedure) will have on people with protected equality characteristics. A timely assessment must be made before a decision is made on any material change (i.e. affecting people with a protected feature).

- **Socio-Economic Duty.** Wales has now implemented this duty which is part of the Equality Act 2010 giving a duty to address socio-economic disadvantage in strategic decisions.
- **Welsh Language Standards (Section 44 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011).** The Council is required to consider the impact that a change in any policy or procedure (or the creation of a new policy or procedure) will have on opportunities for people to use Welsh and to ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than English. This document therefore ensures that these decisions protect and promote the use of the Welsh language.
- **Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015.** The Council has a duty to implement the five ways of working, and to respond to the 7 national well-being goals.

- **the Armed Forces Act 2021.** Councils must give due regard to the impact of this proposal on those serving or having served in the Armed Forces, as well as their families.

Author: Arwel Evans (GC)

Date: 9/1/2025

Version: Draft 1

STAGE I - Main Aims and Objectives of the Policy or Practice

1. What kind of document or procedure is being assessed?

- Setting objectives (for example, well-being objectives, equality objectives, Welsh Language strategy)

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

The previous Procurement Strategy has come to an end, creating the need for a new Strategy that aligns with legislation and the recent public procurement reform, and combines local priorities and national implications, in order to set a unified strategic direction for all procurement activity across the Council for the period 2025-2030.

The Strategy contains seven priority fields for the Strategy period, with each priority field identified as key areas in the context of procurement in Cyngor Gwynedd:

- Local benefit – supporting local businesses to thrive
- Carbon zero – undertake a key role in the aim of achieving carbon zero
- Value for money – ensuring value for money
- Social value – maximising social value through procurement activity
- Technology – supporting and enabling the Council to make the best use of technology
- Governance arrangements – implementing effective governance arrangements
- The Welsh language – promoting the Welsh language.

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

The main advisory group is the Council's Category Teams (teams and procurement officers that operate for different departments within the Council).

Some of the other stakeholders we have consulted include:

- Economy and Community Department

- Council Cabinet Members
- Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee

STEP 2 - Engagement Data and Impact Assessment

4. Has an attempt been made to comply with the duty to engage in accordance with what is described above and has sufficient information been gathered to proceed?

Yes

Details of engagement. Please note any consultation or engagement you have made or intend to do.

Operation	Dates	Information
Feedback from the Category Teams	2024	Feedback was received from the Category Teams' Managers confirming the need for a new Procurement Strategy following the expiry of the previous Strategy.
Discussions with the Category Teams	Spring-Summer 2025	Sessions were held with the Category Teams' Managers to receive comments and discuss the content of a draft Procurement Strategy.
Economy and Community Department	Spring-Summer 2025	Discussion of the vision and content of the Procurement Strategy and Gwynedd's Economy Strategy.
Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee	October 2025	The Strategy will be scrutinised by the Council's Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee in October 2025.

5. What information is available about the impact on each of the features and topics below?

	Relevant Evidence, Information and Data	Potential Positive and/or Negative Impact
Race	No comments.	No impact predicted or identified.
Disability	The Strategy emphasises the importance of including social value as part of a tender evaluation criteria where appropriate. Further to this, the National Themes, Measures and Outcomes for Wales include a measure that reflects the value of providing employment for disabled people.	Maximising the importance of including social value in the Strategy and thereby increasing use of the National Themes, Measures and Outcomes for Wales can emphasise the importance of providing jobs for disabled people, and potentially therefore increase the possibility of companies working for the Council providing jobs for disabled people.
Sex	No comments.	No impact predicted or identified.
Age	No comments.	No impact predicted or identified.
Religion and belief	No comments.	No impact predicted or identified.
Sexual Orientation	No comments.	No impact predicted or identified.
Gender reassignment	No comments.	No impact predicted or identified.
Marriage and Civil Partnership	No comments.	No impact predicted or identified.
Pregnancy and Maternity	No comments.	No impact predicted or identified.
Welsh language	According to the 2021 Census data, 64.4% of the population of Gwynedd can speak Welsh. Promoting the prosperity of the Welsh language is a priority area in Cyngor Gwynedd's Plan. Promoting the prosperity of the Welsh language	We anticipate that the Procurement Strategy will lead to a positive impact on the Welsh language by promoting the Welsh language in our procurement processes, whether that be with Welsh or non-Welsh speaking companies; we welcome and facilitate the

	is also one of the priority fields in the Procurement Strategy.	submission of tenders in Welsh; include measures in our social value model that promote the Welsh language; as part of social value, social benefits may include employing local workers who may be Welsh speakers given that the majority of Gwynedd residents are able to speak Welsh; ensure that contracts with suppliers comply with the Council's Language Policy.
Socio-Economic Considerations	The Welsh Government has identified that the spending power of public organisations creates opportunities to realise socio-economic and environmental outcomes, with social value being able to contribute significantly to meeting the socio-economic duty. The results that the Council has already achieved by using social value as part of tender evaluation also show that the social value we obtain through Council contracts yields positive socio-economic outcomes.	It is anticipated that the Procurement Strategy, through placing emphasis on including social value in the evaluation of tenders, will create positive socio-economic outcomes.
Those who serve or have served in the armed forces, together with their families	No comments.	No impact predicted or identified.
Human rights	No comments.	The Procurement Strategy itself does not directly discuss elements such as human rights, slavery, ethical employment etc. as these are a more operational part of procurement that we have in our standard terms and conditions (such as the human rights and ethical employment clauses), and the pre-qualification questions that check whether suppliers have been guilty of any related breaches of law. However, the priority field of 'Implementing effective governance arrangements' and the work that will accompany this

		priority field can ensure that the more operational arrangements of procurement are implemented effectively and therefore have a positive impact in ensuring that we uphold standards our supply chains.
Other	No comments.	No impact predicted or identified.

6. Are there any data or information gaps and if so, what are these and how are they intended to be addressed?

No gaps identified.

7. When considering other key decisions affecting these groups, is there an incremental effect (cumulative effect)?

No incremental effect has been identified.

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

The Procurement Strategy sets strategic, high-level aims and direction for procurement across the Council, and all relevant duties and laws have been considered in its formulation. The equality duty is dealt with at Policy level, to ensure that the relevant equality considerations are taken into account when conducting all procurement exercises. The current Procurement Policy states that equality should be considered at the stage of drawing up procurement documentation, which is the responsibility of whichever service is procuring. The templates for which the Procurement Service is responsible and which the Strategy refers to in the priority field 'Governance arrangements' address the equality duty – such as the standard terms and conditions of the Council which will form the basis of a contract with companies including clauses regarding equality, non-discrimination, equal opportunities.

9. How does the proposal show that due attention has been given to the need to address inequalities in the cause of socio-economic disadvantage? (Note that this is about closing inequality gaps rather than just improving outcomes for all)

As noted above, our spending power as a local government creates opportunities to realise positive socio-economic outcomes, and in particular the social value element in our procurement processes can contribute to tackling the inequalities of socio-economic disadvantage. The National Themes, Outcomes and Measures for Wales are specifically designed to measure social value in terms of economic, social and environmental contributions.

10. How does the proposal demonstrate action in accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011), not to treat the Welsh language less favourably than English, and to ensure opportunities for people to use Welsh? Also how will action be taken in accordance with the Council's language policy and strategy to take advantage of every opportunity to promote the Welsh language (beyond providing services bilingually) and increase opportunities to use and learn the language in the community?

The importance of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Council's Language Policy are highlighted at the beginning of the Strategy where a summary is given of the regulatory context for the Strategy. Promoting the prosperity of the Welsh language has been identified and included as a priority field in Strategy.

11. How does this proposal meet the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act by implementing the five ways of working, and responding to the 7 national well-being goals including creating a More Equal Wales?

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 was given full consideration in the drafting of the Strategy, and it is possible to see which of the well-being goals each priority area addresses in the Strategy. We will use the five ways of working to implement the Strategy and procurement across the Council.

PHASE 3 - Procurement and Partnerships

12. Will this policy or practice be carried out in whole or in part by contractors or in partnership with other organisation(s)?

No

Further comments

While the Strategy sets direction for procurement activity, the implementation and delivery of the Procurement Strategy is within the Council's internal control.

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

13. In considering proportionality, does the policy or practice cause a significant positive or negative impact or create unequal

outcomes?

Significant Positive Impact:

As noted above, the Procurement Strategy is considered to have a positive impact on a number of features including disability, the Welsh language and socio-economic considerations. By creating the Strategy, we are setting a unified strategic direction for all procurement activity in the Council, maximising the value of the pound and strengthening procurement outcomes, thereby ensuring maximum benefit for Gwynedd residents through our contracts.

Significant Negative Impact:

The Procurement Strategy is not considered to cause a significant negative impact or create unequal outcomes.

14. Any intentional negative impact should be explained, and why it is believed that there is justification for such action (for example, on the basis of improving equal opportunities or fostering good relationships between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not or because of objective justification or positive action)

Not applicable.

15. Will any of the negative impacts identified count as unlawful but unavoidable discrimination (e.g. reduction of funding)?

No

16. What other measures or changes could be included in order to strengthen or change the policy/practice to demonstrate that due consideration has been given to promote equal opportunities; helping to eradicate unlawful discrimination, harassment or persecution and foster good relationships and wider community cohesion; as addressed in the General Duty of the Equality Act 2010?

It is considered that due regard has been given to these elements, such as that building good relationships with stakeholders to collaborate and share good practice etc. is a key part of achieving a number of priority fields. The elements of equal opportunity and eradication of discrimination are already being implemented in our procurement processes and are addressed by the Procurement Policy.

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

It is considered that due regard has been given to minimising unequal outcomes as a result of socio-economic disadvantage as the Procurement Strategy has been formed. We expect that maximising the importance of incorporating social value.

18. What other measures or changes could be included to strengthen or change the policy/practice to demonstrate that due regard has been given to the need to increase opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and not to treat the Welsh language less favourably than English in accordance with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and to reduce or prevent any adverse effects that the policy/practice may have on the Welsh language?

We already take every opportunity, within our means and within the boundaries of public procurement legislation, to promote the Welsh language through our Procurement Strategy and procurement activity in general, and we comply with the Council's Welsh Language Standards and Language Policy. The Strategy does not treat the Welsh language less favourably than English, nor does it have any adverse effect on the Welsh language.

19. Is there enough information to form a balanced view and move forward?

Yes

STEP 5 - Decide to Go Ahead

20. Given the information gathered at Steps 1-4, is it possible to proceed with the policy or practice, and if so, on what basis? Choice of:

Continue the policy or practice in its current form.

PHASE 6 - Actions and Arrangements for Monitoring Results and Reviewing Data

The AEC process is an ongoing one and does not end when the policy/practice and the AEC have been agreed and implemented. There is a specific legal duty to monitor the impact of the policies/practices on equality on an ongoing basis to identify whether the outcomes have changed since you introduced or modified this new policy or practice. If you do not have the relevant data, you should be taking action to correct this in your action plan. To view the EHRC's guidance on data collection you can review their [Measurement Framework](#)

21. What actions identified in Steps 1-5, or any additional data collection work will assist in monitoring the policy/practice when implemented:

Operation	Dates	Timetable	Lead Responsibility	Add to Service Plan
Produce a Delivery Plan which will outline the steps to be taken to realise the vision and priorities of the Strategy	2025-2030	Annually	Arwel Evans	No

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

Monitoring and Review Arrangements (including where the results will be recorded)	Timetable and Frequency	Lead Responsibility	Add to Service Plan
Monitor the Delivery Plan	Every 6 months	Arwel Evans	No
Performance Challenge and Support arrangements	Reporting cycle	Arwel Evans	No

MEETING	Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee
DATE	16 October 2025
TITLE	Performance Report of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services Department
REASON TO SCRUTINISE	To report to the Scrutiny Committee on the performance of the Corporate Services Department
AUTHOR	Ian Jones - Head of Corporate Services Department
CABINET MEMBER	Councillor Llio Elenid Owen

1. Why it needs scrutiny?

In order that Committee Members can be satisfied that I, the Cabinet Member for the Corporate Services Department, have a grasp of performance matters within the Department.

2. Background / Context

2.1 Background / Introduction

The purpose of this report is to update you on what has been achieved in the field that I am responsible for as Cabinet Member for the Corporate Services Department. This includes outlining the latest regarding the pledges in the Council Plan and the Department's day-to-day work for the period up to the end of August 2025.

We are implementing the Council Plan for 2023-28, and I herein report on progress made to the end of August 2025. All matters have been the subject of discussion and have been scrutinised by myself at a performance challenge meeting, and I am satisfied with the Department's performance.

2.2 Rationale and justification

Performance of Projects in the Council Plan

The Corporate Services Department is leading on six projects within the various priority areas of the Council Plan for 2023-2028, namely:

1. Keeping the Benefit Local
2. Promoting the Use of the Welsh Language by Gwynedd Residents
3. Workforce Planning
4. Ensuring Fairness for All
5. Women in Leadership
6. Strategic Review of Health and Safety Management

I am very satisfied with the work carried out during the period under review, and Appendix 1 outlines the progress against the milestones set for the six priorities.

Please note that there has been a slippage on progress with the two milestones of the 'Strategic Review of Health and Safety Management' project. In terms of the first milestone the slippage is due to corporate changes to the Council's computer system, this had a direct impact on this milestone.

In relation to the third milestone there has been a delay in the submission of the detailed action plan to the Council's Management Team, it has not been possible to proceed with discussions with departmental managers regarding the development of the five-year audit programme. However, plans are underway to use the Corporate Forum and Departmental Forums as platforms to facilitate these discussions. This approach will enable managers to contribute directly to the process, fostering a sense of ownership for the plan and ensuring that the audit model reflects the operational needs of the organisation.

We are confident that this project is on the right track and that the work will be fully executed.

The Department's day-to-day work

Appendix 2 includes performance measures for the Department's Services. Which includes data for the latest period, context and observations that explain the performance of all areas.

The Corporate Services Department has several different services and various areas of responsibility. I wish to note my appreciation of the work of all the officers in the Department and recognise the key contribution they make to supporting the Council's work.

External Auditors' Reports (if relevant)

The June report reported on the concern expressed in terms of the Council's performance in relation to the rate of response to requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) and the Environmental Information Regulations. The Information Commissioner's Office was commissioned to carry out an audit into the Council's arrangements. This was a voluntary act on the part of the Council to find out if there were shortcomings in its arrangements which resulted in delays or non-compliance with the requirements of the Act. The audit was conducted in April 2025 and the draft report was published at the beginning of May, 2025.

The Auditor's view was that the Council had 'reasonable' arrangements in place to respond to the requirements of the Act. The Governance and Audit Committee has already received a copy of the report which was discussed at the meeting held on 22 May 2025.

A detailed work programme has been drawn up to address the recommendations. The recommendations have been prioritised (on a high, medium and low basis) and are in place. I would like to report that very positive progress is being made against the recommendations. The Information Commissioner's Office will revisit the Council in October.

3. Consultation

The report has been produced based on the information and content of the latest challenging and supporting meeting on the performance of the Corporate Services Department, attended by the Corporate Director, Head of Department, Assistant Head, Service Managers and myself.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Council Plan Priority Areas Progress Reports

Appendix 2: Corporate Services Department Performance Measures

Cyngor Gwynedd Plan 2023-28 - Year 3 Actions

A Prosperous Gwynedd: Strengthening the economy and supporting the residents of Gwynedd to earn a worthy wage

Department & Project	What we want to achieve during the THIRD year 2025-26 (milestones):	CONCISE update on progress against milestones to date	Is the milestone completed/likely to be completed by the end of the financial year (Yes / No)
Corporate Services Department Project: Keeping the Benefit Local	1. Develop a new procurement strategy to drive the principles and aim of the keeping the benefit local plan.	April - August 2025 A Draft Strategy was presented to the Leadership Team on 6 May. The Strategy will be presented to the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee on 16 October 2025.	Yes
	2. Report on the Council's procurement performance - local expenditure.	April - August 2025 We continue to be able to report on and analyse the Council's local expenditure	Yes
	3. Raise awareness of the project and the objectives of buying locally, gaining social value and reducing carbon (climate) with council officers and County businesses.	April - August 2025 As well as creating a new Procurement Strategy, learning materials are being developed with training sessions also being organised.	Yes

Gwynedd Gymraeg (A Welsh Gwynedd): Ensuring that our residents can continue to live in a naturally Welsh speaking community

Department & Project	What we want to achieve during the THIRD year 2025-26 (milestones):	CONCISE update on progress against milestones to date	Has the milestone been completed / is it likely to be completed by the end of the financial year? (Yes / No)
<p>Corporate Services Department</p> <p>Project:</p> <p>Promoting the Use of the Welsh Language by Gwynedd Residents</p>	<p>1. Implementation of the Gwynedd Language Strategy Work Programme 2023-2033.</p>	<p>April - August 2025</p> <p>Attention was paid to increasing the use of Welsh in workplaces and the recruitment challenges. We worked with the Welsh Language Sub-group of the Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board to produce a brief for commissioning a company to deliver digital resources for public organisations that dispel myths about the Welsh language and help to recruit Welsh speakers.</p> <p>Attention was also paid to supporting workers in care homes and those who provide domiciliary care to improve their Welsh language skills.</p> <p>Work has begun on trying to get businesses to pay more attention to the Welsh language by planning a day</p>	<p>Yes, in terms of what will be achieved by the end of the 25/26 financial year.</p>

		<p>of activities for Gwynedd Business Week. Work has also begun on planning accreditation for businesses that use the Welsh language.</p> <p>A draft response plan has been drawn up in response to the recommendations of the Communities Commission for supporting and sustaining communities with over 60% Welsh speakers. Some steps still need to be developed, including ensuring adequate funding.</p> <p>A grant was awarded to Menter Iaith Gwynedd for the delivery of some elements of Gwynedd's language strategy and to contribute towards staffing costs in 2025-2026 including families, children and young people and the community.</p> <p>An officer gave input to TUC Cymru's Welsh Language Growth Charter and attended the official launch at the National Eisteddfod. The officer was also a panel member discussing the importance of the Welsh language in the workplace and what others could do to increase the use of the Welsh language in the workplace.</p>	
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		<p>Menter Iaith Gwynedd has received a grant to contribute towards the costs of employment and various projects that deliver against some of the objectives and priorities of Cyngor Gwynedd's language strategy.</p> <p>Early years</p> <p>Menter Iaith worked closely with Sesiwn Fawr Dolgellau to host a Welsh language nursery rhymes event for parents and children. This project is one that the Menter is developing with folk musicians to introduce/re-introduce the people of Gwynedd to traditional nursery rhymes that can be sung to children. The work includes a playlist that will be professionally recorded so that people can listen and sing along at home. A play session of playground games in Welsh was also held at Ysgol y Garnedd in Bangor and activities for children, with the opportunity to discuss with parents, at Ysgol y Faenol in Bangor during their summer fair.</p> <p>The Language of Learning</p> <p>Attention was paid to raising awareness and creating positive messages for young people about the Welsh language and its value in the world of work. Collaboration took</p>	
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		<p>place with Siarter Iaith Gwynedd (Language Charter) officers to host a tour of Arfon secondary schools with Gareth the Orangutan and Hywel Pitts, a total of 5 schools. This was a show for children of transitional age with elements of the show discussing what jobs require Welsh language skills after leaving school. A music tour around Gwynedd schools also took place, with Ed Holden conducting rapping workshops and Mei Emrys doing commentary workshops with visits to Brynrefail, Tywyn, Ardudwy, Friars, Moelwyn and Dyffryn Nantlle. An officer from the Menter attended a meeting of the schools' Language Council (full school council in some schools) and a language awareness session was held to discuss how the Menter could support them to promote the Welsh language in the school.</p> <p>Work and Service</p> <p>Attention was paid to developing the use of the Welsh language by businesses and offering more services to the public in Welsh, targeting 20 businesses in Dolgellau and Porthmadog during this period. As a result, 20 businesses are now displaying the "Hapus i Siarad</p>	
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		<p>Cymraeg" sign following a visit and encouragement. There will be a county campaign to raise awareness of the scheme, amongst learners, Welsh speakers and Businesses, in conjunction with Cyngor Gwynedd's Language Unit and Economy Department, in November 2025.</p> <p>Communities</p> <p>Attention was given to increasing informal training and learning opportunities in the community and ensuring there are opportunities available in every part of the county by discussing with the Urdd, Youth Service and Byw'n Iach to ensure that there is no duplication of activities in some areas and that resources are targeted in the best places. There are plans to support local volunteers to start a new 'aelwyd' (group) for young people in Llanystumdwy and Penrhosgarnedd from September 2025.</p> <p>A total of 13 activities and community chat sessions were also held for learners, one in each well-being area in Gwynedd, which gave learners the opportunity to practise and gain confidence in an informal atmosphere. Community organisations were</p>	
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		supported to increase the use of the Welsh language locally including the Rhiwlas hall committee and a group in Dinas Mawddwy. Progress has also been made with the Sports Clubs Project. Sports clubs were consulted and an outline pack put together that will support them to use more of the Welsh language/ continue in Welsh while also welcoming new arrivals to their clubs and to the language. The following clubs - Felinheli FC, Cae Glyn FC, Bethesda Rugby Club, Caernarfon Rugby Club, Dolgellau FC and Llanystumdwy FC attended a special event in Porthmadog mid-August to see the contents of the pack and input ideas.	
	2. Implementation of the Place Names Work Programme 2025/26.	<p>April - August 2025</p> <p>We worked with Arfon and Dwyfor Engineers to install around 12 new street signs.</p> <p>We continued to advise Building Control on property naming as well as advising Conwy Council and Monmouth Council on our internal processes relating to property naming, digital name map and name app for staff.</p> <p>More articles 'Yr Enw a'r Hanes' (<i>Name and History</i>) were published on the</p>	Yes

		<p>Intranet and a document on Bangor's place names was provided to Menter Iaith Gwynedd. A contribution was also made to the National Place Names Forum.</p> <p>A Project Board was convened to update all members on progress and to begin preparing a package to transfer some aspects of the project to others when project funding ends in March 2026.</p>	
	<p>3. To further develop Prosiect 15 in order to increase the use of the Welsh language by children and young people.</p>	<p>April - August 2025</p> <p>Since the beginning of April, Mentera has embarked on the management of the social media content of Prosiect 15. There has been an increase in Prosiect 15 followers on all social media platforms with special attention given to the main platforms used by young people namely TikTok and Instagram.</p> <p>Posts have been published relating to the Caernarfon Food Festival, AI characters, LGTBQ Pride Week, the landscape of Gwynedd, the Urdd Eisteddfod, Facts about Gwynedd in 15 seconds, the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show and collaborations with various influencers. One video clip of Oshi G, a 16-year-old agricultural influencer</p>	<p>Yes</p>

		from Gwynedd of popular clothing in the show has attracted over 161,000 viewers.	
	4. Sustaining and Developing Gwynedd Language Forum.	<p>April - August 2025</p> <p>An annual meeting of the Gwynedd Language Forum was held in the Dafydd Orwig Chamber at Cyngor Gwynedd. There was also an opportunity to contribute towards the creation of a language strategy for the forum. While the Forum's work progresses, it remains dependent on the leadership of Cyngor Gwynedd officers.</p> <p>The outcomes of the consultation on young people's attitudes towards the Welsh language were shared with the young people's sub-group of Fforwm Iaith Gwynedd. There were 200 responses to the questionnaire which was shared among 16-18 year olds living or working in Gwynedd and 4 focus groups were held to get more detail on their attitudes. The data highlighted that there is a difference in the use of and confidence to use the Welsh language with social media where the Welsh language is at its weakest and also a fall in those who are confident in writing in Welsh, compared to speaking it.</p>	Yes

		Discussions will continue as a sub-group about the interventions to take on the challenges, with two phases emerging; namely to ensure that courses in the medium of Welsh are followed by young people, that will lead to Welsh careers and to raise young people's awareness that there is a demand for Welsh by employers.	
	5. Researching the public's choice of language when accessing our services and understanding more about people's attitudes towards the Welsh language.	<p>April - August 2025</p> <p>Following the results of a pilot measuring the use of the Welsh language, work began to try and find suitable interventions to increase the use of the Welsh language in formal situations and in the provision of digital services.</p> <p>Council officers led the consultation on young people's attitudes towards the Welsh language on behalf of Fforwm Iaith Gwynedd young people's sub-group including the analysis of the results (see above).</p>	Yes

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

Department & Project	What we want to achieve during the THIRD year 2025-26 (milestones):	CONCISE update on progress against milestones to date (specify date)	Has the milestone been completed / is it likely to be completed by the end of the financial year? (Yes / No)
Corporate Services Department <i>Also</i> Cross-departmental Project: Workforce Planning	1. Work with departments and services to produce workforce plans, by advising managers on adhering to the following steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identify key positions, assessed on the basis of risk to continuity of service. b. Analyse team workforce profiles, to identify potential risks to staffing levels/skills needs. c. Produce action plans. ch. Establish arrangements to review plans. 	April - August 2025 The new plan to be presented to the leadership and management teams in the autumn. A new cross-departmental project group will meet in September to agree on the development of detailed milestones to move the project forward.	Yes
	2. Review the process and methods of attracting staff to work for the Council, in order to continue to improve the experience for job applicants and ensure that the Council attracts the most qualified workforce possible. Steps to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Review how we advertise jobs and attract candidates and introduce new approaches. 	April - August 2025 The new plan to be presented to the leadership and management teams in the autumn. A new cross-departmental project group will meet in September to agree on the development of detailed milestones to move the project forward.	Yes

	<p>b. Review the application submission process and adapt as necessary.</p> <p>c. To conclude on how additions or modifications can be introduced to the terms and conditions package and adapted as required.</p>		
<p>Corporate Services Department</p> <p>Project:</p> <p>Ensuring fairness for all</p>	1. Reviewing and changing our approaches to recruiting people into the workforce, to ensure that we give potential candidates the best possible experience, but also offer ourselves as a leading employer for everyone from all parts of society	<p>April - August 2025</p> <p>This milestone is included in the work programme of the Workforce Planning Project.</p>	Yes
	2. Create a dashboard of data about Gwynedd to use to create evidence-based impact assessments and improve our services.	<p>April - August 2025</p> <p>Developmental work is ongoing.</p>	Yes
	3. Continue to raise managers' awareness of the importance of using equality impact assessments effectively.	<p>April - August 2025</p> <p>Resource available on the Leadership and Management Hub. Officers to raise awareness among management teams over the coming months.</p>	Yes
	4. Carry out an Equal Pay Assessment on the Council's pay systems and respond to any messages arising from the results.	<p>April - August 2025</p> <p>We will look to commission an independent adviser over the next few months to undertake the work, with a view to producing the report by March 2026 - the exact timetable for completing the assessment is yet to be confirmed, depending on the adviser.</p>	Yes
<p>Corporate Services Department</p>	1. Continue to maintain and develop the activities that form the basis of the project's work such as the Potential Development Programme, 'Sgyrsiau dros Baned' (A cuppa and chat);	<p>April - August 2025</p> <p>Sgyrsiau dros baned – summer series of the popular "Sgyrsiau Dros Paned"</p>	Yes

<p>Project:</p> <p>Women in Leadership</p>		<p>hosted by in-house speakers. A chat with Keira Sweenie, Planning Manager, was held on 4.6.25 and following her appointment to the post of Director with the National Park; a chat with Councillor Nia Jeffreys, Council Leader, was held on 7.7.25.</p> <p>Arrangements are in place to arrange further talks for the winter series. The ongoing intention is to be targeting a bigger range of job levels in speakers to include Managers and Team Leaders with the intention of targeting young women to take the first step.</p> <p>Developmental Programme - The sixth series of the Developmental Programme has been scheduled to start on the 17.9.25. 13 worthy women from a variety of Council departments have been selected to be part of the series. The series will run from September to December this year.</p>	
	<p>2. Conducting interventions to raise awareness among men;</p>	<p>April – August 2025</p> <p>The intention is to hold a specific talk session for men with speakers from the Highways, Engineering and YGC Department explaining what they have done to change the culture within the Department.</p>	<p>Yes</p>

		Arrangements to be confirmed in due course.	
	3. Continuing to build on the statistical base that has already been established for the purpose of measuring the success of the project;	April – August 2025 Data on the progress and impact of the project is constantly being updated. The figure for women in managerial positions is currently 45%, a sharp increase of 15% since the start of the project. There are differences between Departments and also differences between job tiers. Ongoing work will take place over the year to update the data.	Yes
	4. Continue to find out what Services across the Council are doing to encourage women to apply for senior positions in order to identify and share good practice, and tailor interventions as required by Departments where necessary;	April – August 2025 Work is ongoing to complete conversations with all Departmental Heads.	Yes
	5. Organising an event to celebrate the success of the project's work to date	April – August 2025 Planning work is underway to celebrate the success of the project work to date. Looking into the possibility of creating a short video.	Yes
	6. Using networks such as 'Managers' Network', 'Live Session with the Chief Executive' to further raise awareness of the work of the project.	April - August 2025 Video produced for International Women's Day and shared through the usual internal communication media. Along with that, a new brand was launched for the project.	Yes

		During the Chief Executive's 'Live Session' in July the video produced for International Women's Day was highlighted and the link to the video was shared in the chat section.	
Corporate Services Department Project: Strategic Review of Health and Safety Management	1. Continue to roll out the new IT system for Health and Safety across the Council. The work is structured in three phases, with the first phase – the development of the electronic accident form – nearing completion.	April - August 2025 Corporate changes to the Council's computer system are set to have a direct impact on this project. In the meantime, we continue to meet regularly with the IT team to try and complete the first phase – the development of the electronic accident form – as around 95% of the work has already been completed. The decision to proceed with this phase reflects a strategic commitment to drive cultural change by moving from paper to digital processes. A request has been submitted to the Learning and Development Panel to facilitate training sessions for managers over the winter period, including a 'train the trainer' package to enable effective transfer of knowledge to the wider workforce.	No – Programme has slipped but hopefully the first phase will be completed.
	2. Continue to submit the detailed (draft) action plan to the Council's Management Team, which outlines the steps towards achieving an integrated model for Health and Safety management.	April - August 2025 Although the presentation of the detailed action plan has been delayed twice due to wider operational circumstances, arrangements are underway to reschedule the	Yes

		presentation. The project team continues to work proactively to ensure that the plan reflects the strategic steps towards implementing an integrated model for Health and Safety management, maintaining momentum and supporting the Council's commitment to improving practice and structures across the organisation.	
	3. Develop a five-year audit programme, based on the data collected through the Safety Model Questionnaires.	<p>April - August 2025</p> <p>Due to the delay in submitting the detailed action plan to the Council's Management Team, it has not been possible to proceed with discussions with departmental managers regarding the development of the five-year audit programme. However, plans are underway to use the Corporate Forum and Departmental Forums as platforms to facilitate these discussions. This approach will enable managers to contribute directly to the process, fostering a sense of ownership for the plan and ensuring that the audit model reflects the operational needs of the organisation.</p>	No – Consultation work needs to take place.



Choose Year
2025-2026

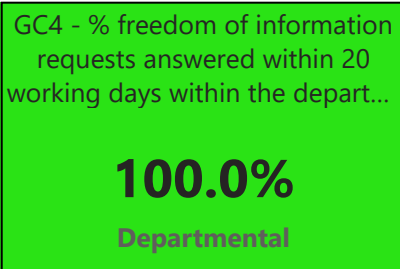
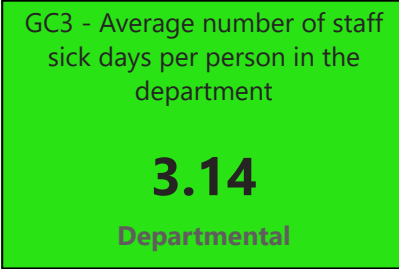
Choose Quarter
Qtr 1

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August

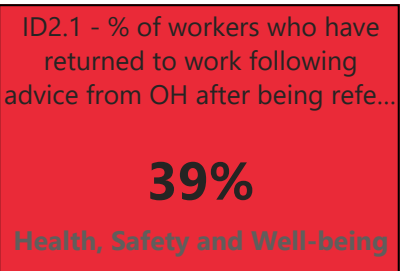
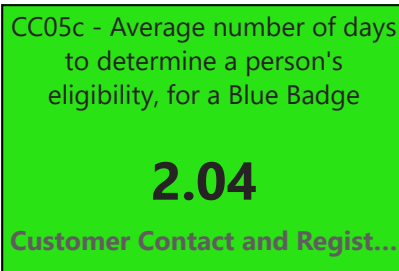
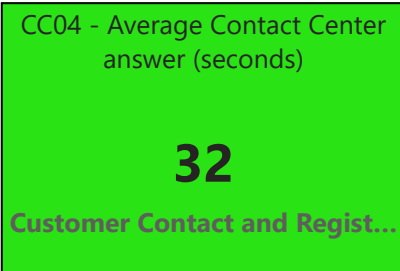
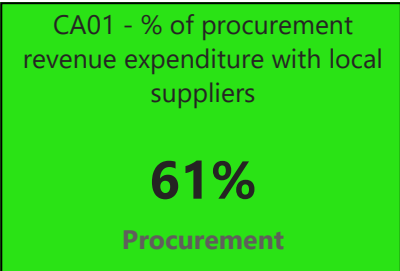
Measures

Newid i
Gymraeg

Departmental Measures



Service Measures



Purpose

Newid i Gymraeg

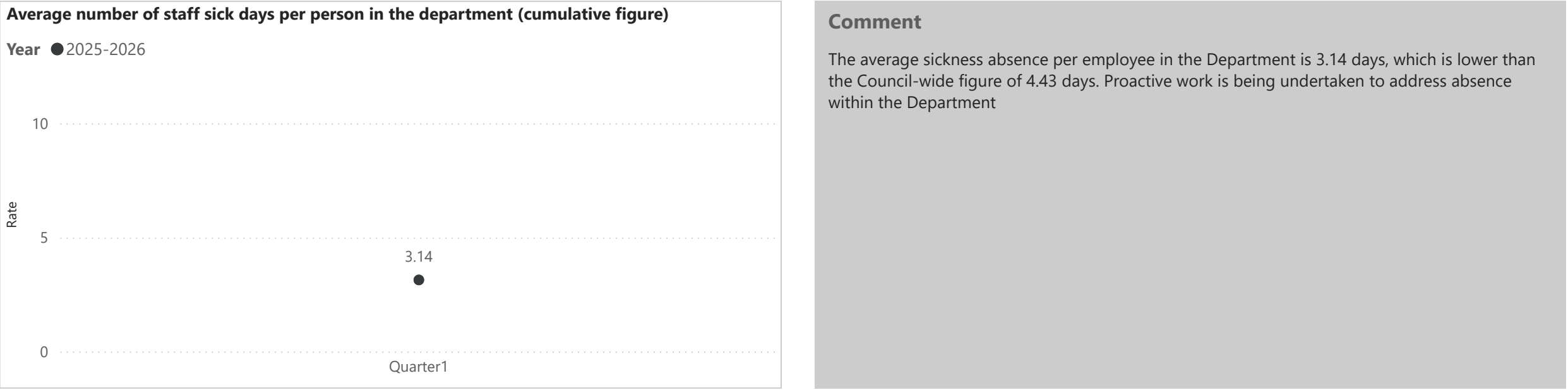
GC1 - Mandatory Title - Domestic Violence (Quarterly)



GC2 - Mandatory Title - Safeguarding (Quarterly)



GC3 - Number of Sick Days (Quarterly)



GC4 - Freedom of Information Requests (Quarterly)



GC5 - Language Assessments (Quarterly)



Choose Year

2025-2026

Choose Quarter

Qtr 1

Choose Month

August

Procurement - Arwel Evans

Purpose

To enable the Council to aim for value for money, keep the benefit local and improve the quality of Council procurement

Newid i Gymraeg

Current Risks

Red

Orange

Yellow8

Green

Click here to see the risks

CA01 - Local Suppliers (Quarterly)

Percentage of procurement revenue expenditure with local suppliers

Year

2024-2025

2025-2026

100%

80%

60%

40%

20%

0%

Quarter1

Quarter2

Quarter3

Quarter4

61%

Comment

Revenue Only

The local percentage has increased by 4% to 61% compared to this period last year. The main reasons for the increase relates to:

1. An increase of £470k with a local construction company undertaking flood management works.

2. An increase in expenditure with a number of care providers based in Gwynedd. This is partly because:

1. Increase in the cost of delivery and demand for care

2. The timing of the payments i.e. a number of care providers are paid in block and therefore a higher and lower amount can be recorded when looking at the small sample of data in Quarter 1.

Total expenditure in Quarter 1 is £44.2m with £27m retained in Gwynedd.

CA02 - Procurement Self-Assessment (Yearly)

Procurement Development (Score 0-5)

Year

2023-2024

2024-2025

1. Procurement Leadership and Governance

2. Procurement Policy and Strategy

3. Defining the Need

4. Purchasing and Collaboration Strategies

5. Agreement and Supplier Management

6. Purchasing Systems and Processes

7. Skills and People

8. Performance Measures

2.89

3.39

2.61

2.86

2.11

2.39

2.00

2.04

2.56

2.72

2.95

3.25

2.93

3.17

2.44

4.33

0

1

2

3

4

5

Score

Comment

Q1: 2025-26

Update on our efforts to improve the score by the end of August 2025.

Since the last reporting period, the national procurement regulations are in force.

There have been significant problems with the procurement system as a result of these changes, in particular the publication of tender adverts on 'sell2wales'.

Due to the shortcomings in the systems, the arrangements are not as smooth as hoped for both companies or authorities conducting tenders.

The new procurement strategy has been drafted and submitted to the Leadership Team. The strategy will be scrutinised over the winter. (Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee - 16th October)

The updating of templates and arrangements is ongoing, as well as the finalization of the procurement policy.

A new Prynu'n Ddoeth site has been created, with the need for the Category Teams to populate their contract and Framework details on the site.

There is also brief prepared to review the Council's category management and procurement arrangements with a view to appointing external support to undertake this review.

We have also commissioned an external expert to support with the creation and delivery of a new Social Value training series.

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Purpose

- Maintain staffing structure information for Departments
- Legally recruit and appoint individuals
- Enable Council staff to access information in the Self-Service Staff system
- Maintain and develop a Benefits program for Council staff
- Provide Printing and Post Services along with administration of Freedom of Information requests for Council Departments, as well as processing orders and invoices
- Ownership and responsibility for implementing the Council's Complaints and Service Improvement arrangements

Newid i Gymraeg

Current Risks

Red

Orange

Yellow

Green

51

Click here to see the risks

CE01 - Employment Contracts

Submission of an employment contract (which is legally to have been submitted) before or by the employee's start date

Year

2024-2025

2025-2026

Percentage

April

May

June

July

August

September

October

November

December

January

February

March

46%

52%

58%

55%

54%

Comment

There is a 9% failure rate by the Support Service to process agreements in a timely manner, mainly due to staff illness, which means we have to prioritise work to ensure that staff salaries are paid on time. Departments continue to send information late (37%). A plan is in place to target Departments to raise awareness of the legal requirements on the Council to have legally issued a Statement of Employment to the worker before or on the start date.

CE02 - Candidate Satisfaction (Quarterly)

"Are you fully satisfied with the service you received from the Support Service" - Candidates

Year

2024-2025

2025-2026

Percentage

Quarter1

Quarter3

Quarter4

Quarter2

93%

96%

96%

95%

Comment

A total of 1,075 job applications were submitted during the first quarter, and 82% of the applicants completed feedback on their satisfaction with the job application process. Of that feedback, 97% were completely happy with the process. For the 3% who provided comments about the system, the main feedback has been addressed by IT, i.e. the 'time out' on the system has now been extended so that the system no longer shuts down while completing the form.

Thank you messages are being received from the public for the support of the Service Improvement Officer regarding the complaints procedure. The feedback is visible on the "Wal Lwyddiannau" on the Intranet.

CE03 - Satisfaction - Council Services (Quarterly)

"Are you fully satisfied with the service you received from the Support Service" - Council Services

Year

2024-2025

2025-2026

Percentage

Quarter1

Quarter3

Quarter4

Quarter2

100%

Comment

Praise and thanks are received by Staff and Managers for the support given to them by Support Staff when assisting them with enquiries or when completing work tasks.

CE04 - Finance and Administrative Team - Timesheets

Process "Timesheets" within the set deadline

Year

2024-2025

2025-2026

Percentage

April

May

June

July

August

September

October

November

December

January

February

March

100.0%

100.0%

100.0%

100.0%

100.0%

Comment

The timetables have been processed by the payroll deadline

CE08 - Finance and Administrative Team - HS11

Process "HS11" within the set deadline

Year

2024-2025

2025-2026

Percentage

April

May

June

July

August

September

October

November

December

January

February

March

100.0%

100.0%

100.0%

100.0%

100.0%

Comment

HS11 accident forms have been entered into the system in a timely manner

CE09 - DBS

Percentage of staff who have not renewed DBS on time

Year

2024-2025

2025-2026

Percentage

April

May

June

July

August

September

October

November

December

February

March

0.9%

0.9%

1.0%

1.1%

1.2%

Comment

The current situation today is that there are 58 council staff without a current DBS. There are 14 applications sitting at the DBS in Liverpool awaiting processing. A further 44 applications are awaiting a staff member or manager to be checking the documents in order to release them for processing. The system generates an email to the member of staff on the 5th day and to the manager on the 10th day and every 5 days thereafter reminding them of the need to complete the DBS form. The quarterly Safeguarding Executive Group discusses the Departments' DBS performance. Following from this Group a sub-group was established to discuss DBS data. Figure changes daily as staff complete the forms and more other staff come into the renewal window.

CE11 - Complaints and Achievements

Requests to the pay service for emergency payments as a result of an error in administration by the Support Service or late administration by a manager, as % of total requests

Year

2025-2026

Percentage

April

May

June

July

76%

85%

74%

77%

Comment

The figure for August is not available at the time of writing the report.

CE12 - Staff Well-being - Benefits (Quarterly)

Comment

The role of the Service Improvement Officer, who leads on the Benefit Schemes to staff, has transferred from the Learning and Organisational Development Service to the Support Service in April this year. Since the transfer, attention has been given to the 'Cycle to Work' scheme, where both the loan amount and the lease period have been increased for staff. This change helps more staff take advantage of the scheme if they are interested in leasing a bike, and two events have been held with 'Evolution Bikes' to promote cycling to staff.

Work continues to promote Local Businesses to staff, encouraging them to support these businesses and benefit from discount offers when purchasing during the month from the business

CE99 - Other Activity by Support Service

Comment

Training has been developed by the Service for Managers and Team Leaders on the changes that have taken place in the process of checking staff DBS applications, with training dates scheduled during September and October

Purpose

To enable the Council to share information and hold a two-way dialogue with the people of Gwynedd and the Council's Elected Members.
To enable the public to self-service on Cyngor Gwynedd's website 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and offer a more cost-effective way to contact the Council for a service.

Newid i
Gymraeg

Current Risks

Red

Orange

1

Yellow

2

Green

Click here to see the risks

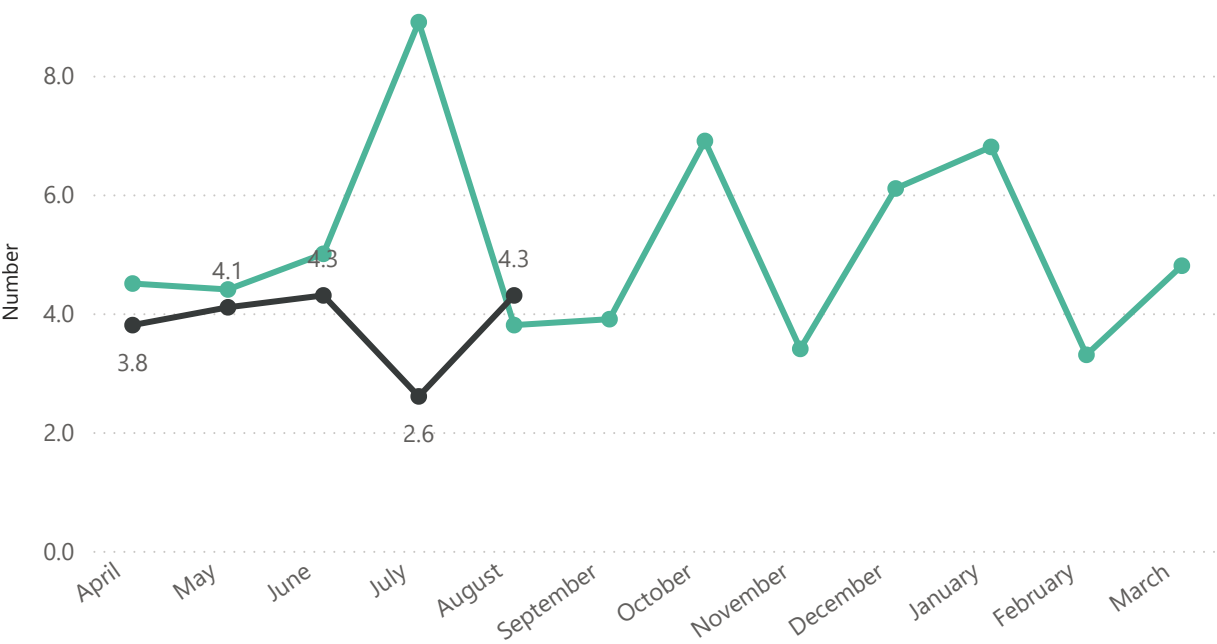
CY01 - News items and/or Press Reports

An average number of news items and/or press reports resulting from proactive press releases issued by the Council during the month

Year

2024-2025

2025-2026



Comment

Proactive:
10 press releases were issued during August, which resulted in 43 news items. The three statements that performed strongest over the month were – a statement promoting the message that more residents are now eligible for a grant to renovate vacant homes; an update on the Gwynedd Home Purchase Scheme; and a statement responding to misinformation on social media. These three releases resulted in 6 news items each. Statements regarding A-Level and GCSE results also performed well.

Responsive:
The Council received 36 press enquiries during the month. These included queries relating to parking problems and complaints about campervans at various locations in the county; Various enquiries were also received on the theme of housing asylum seekers.

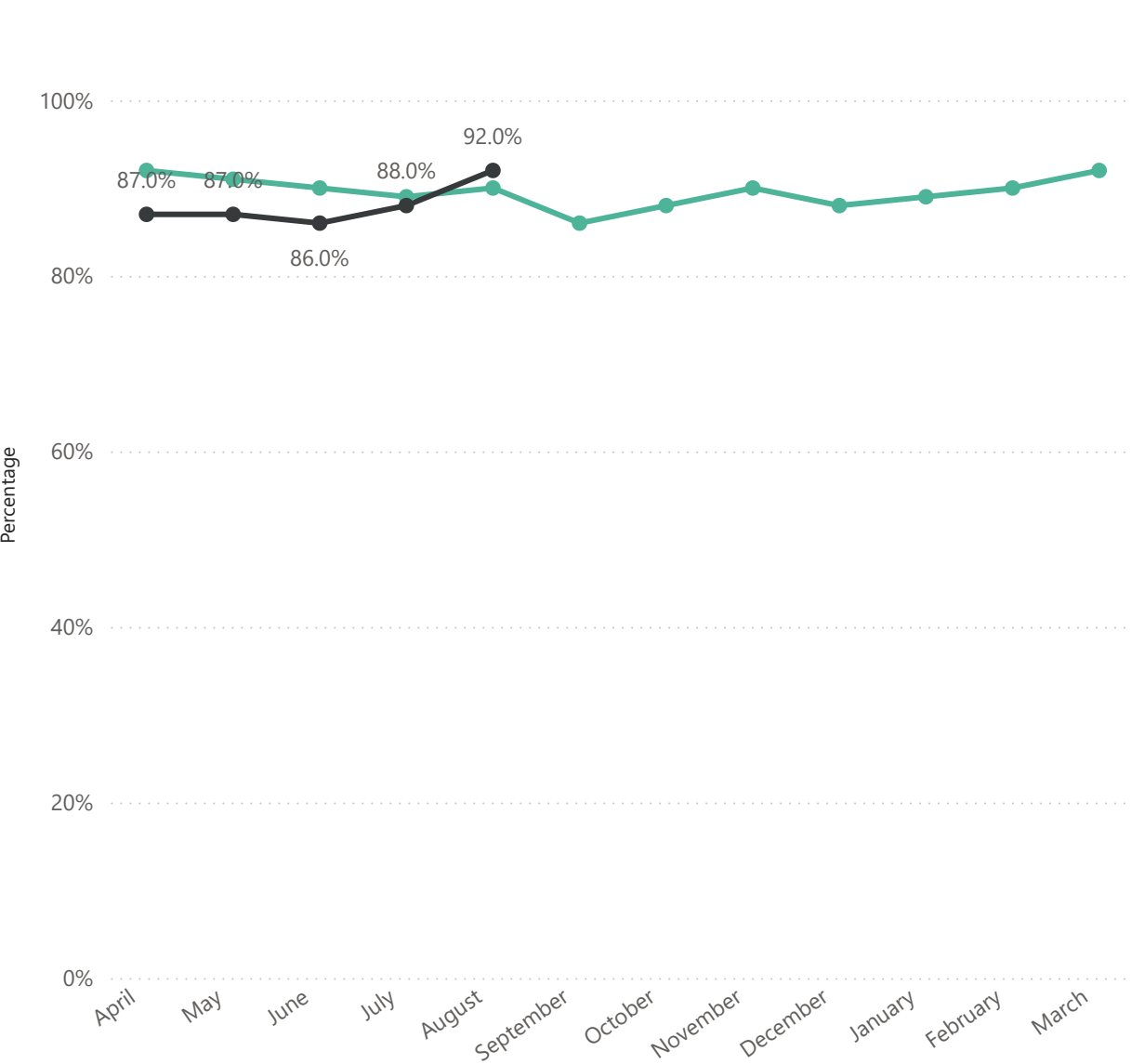
CY02 - Website Satisfaction

Percentage of individuals reported a score of 5 out of 5 for the Council's website

Year

2024-2025

2025-2026



Comment

Number of visits to Website: (August 2025) 230,171

Total responses to the satisfaction survey: 153

Number who gave a score of 5 out of 5: 141 = 92%

Details of respondents who gave a score of 4 or lower:

Complaint about the website (within Communication and Engagement's responsibility): 3, e.g. difficulty finding information / search system

Complaint about the website – specific Service's responsibility: 1, e.g. no data available for waste collection dates

Complaint about a specific Service: 7, e.g. parking charges at Morfa Bychan, waiting times for land searches, no one answering the phone when calling, etc.

Complaint about a third party system: 1, difficulty viewing a planning application on the Tascomi system

These complaints are passed on to the relevant Services and they are supported to resolve these matters as appropriate.

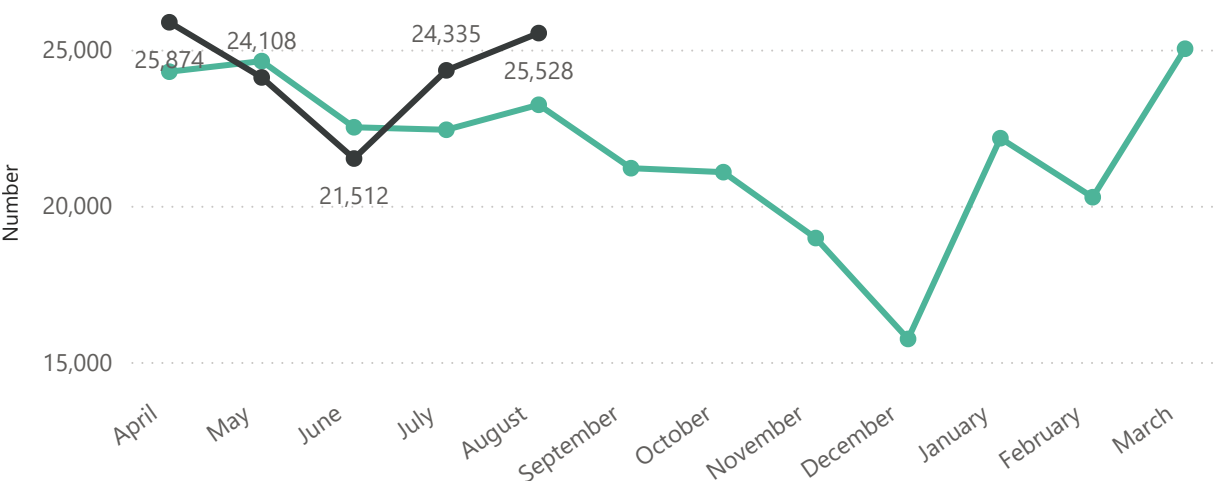
CY05 - Service Requests

Number of service requests submitted online

Year

2024-2025

2025-2026



Comment

2,295 more service requests were submitted than in August 2024.

Several services have seen a slight increase in the number of requests, e.g. Applying for Council Tax reductions, Applying for a Council Tax e-bill, Applying for a bulky waste collection, but two applications have seen a significant increase compared to August 2024:

1. Booking a recycling centre slot – there were 1,308 more applications this year than last year
2. Ordering waste and recycling equipment – there were 754 more applications this year than last year as orders were put on hold last August to enable the service to catch up with a backlog of orders.

CY99 - Other Activity by the Service

Comment

- A social media campaign was conducted in partnership with the Eryri National Park Authority to promote safety among residents and visitors exploring the mountains and coastline of Gwynedd.

- The Council's Social Media Guidelines have been revised, and all Services who manage individual accounts have been requested to adhere to the updated policy.

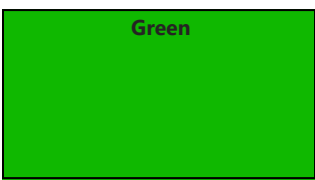
- To ensure the Council website's compliance with the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Apps) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 and the Equality Act 2010, there is a need to update page templates. Work has been underway for 2 months to move this content to new software, which will solve the accessibility problems that currently exist. The work will take a few months to complete, and it is intended to publish the redesigned website early in the next financial year.

Purpose

Purpose of the Service / Unit: Customer Contact: "To provide prompt and accurate support to our customers to access Council services, by providing solutions, guidance and service"
Purpose of the Service / Unit: Regsitratin - "To hold ceremonies and enable the public to register events and provide copies of certificate in accordance with the requirements of the act"

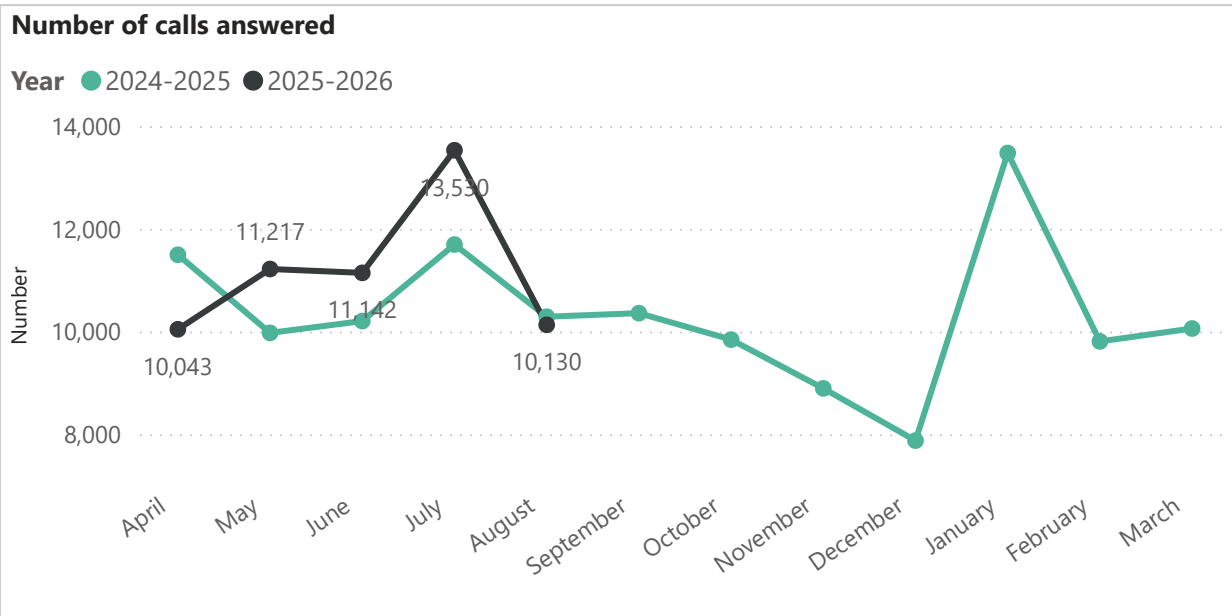
Newid i
Gymraeg

Current Risks



Click here to see the risks

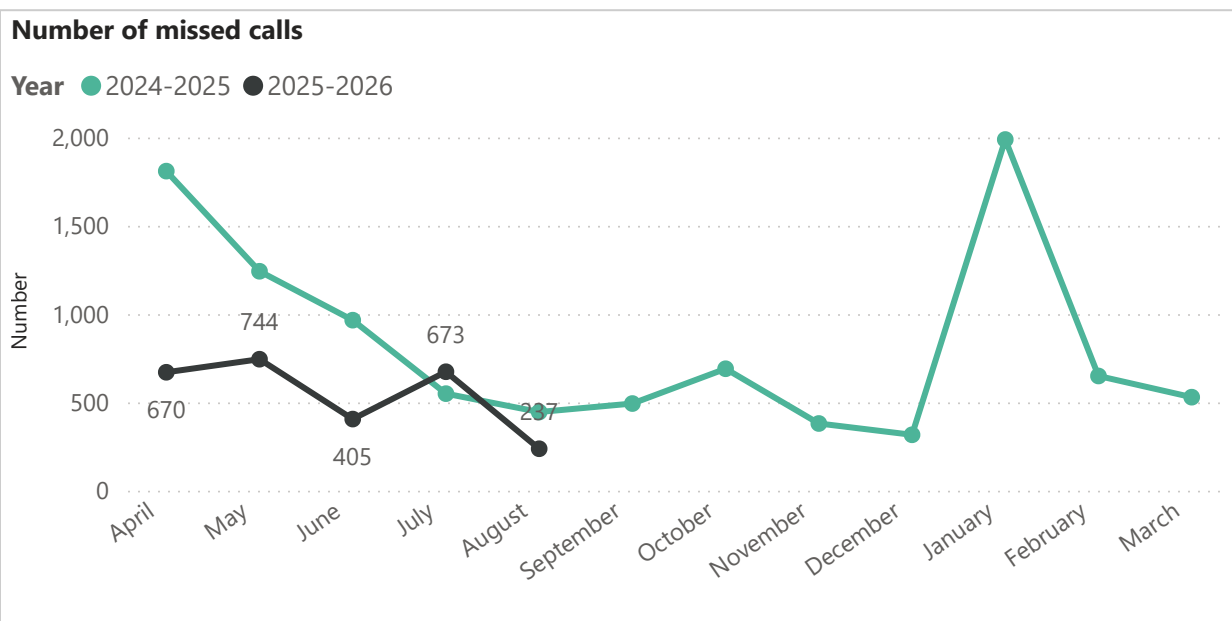
CC03 - Contact Centre Calls



Comment

The number of calls answered / received by the Council has increased during the first four months of this year, with August figures similar to August 2024. There is no obvious reason for this, and the increase appears to be in switchboard calls rather than specific services in the IVR. Galw Gwynedd has moved to using the Council's new phone system (Cisco Webex) since the beginning of May, and the data we get from the system gives us much more detail. Once the rest of the Council has transitioned to using the new phone system, we will be in a better position to start improving service for our customers.

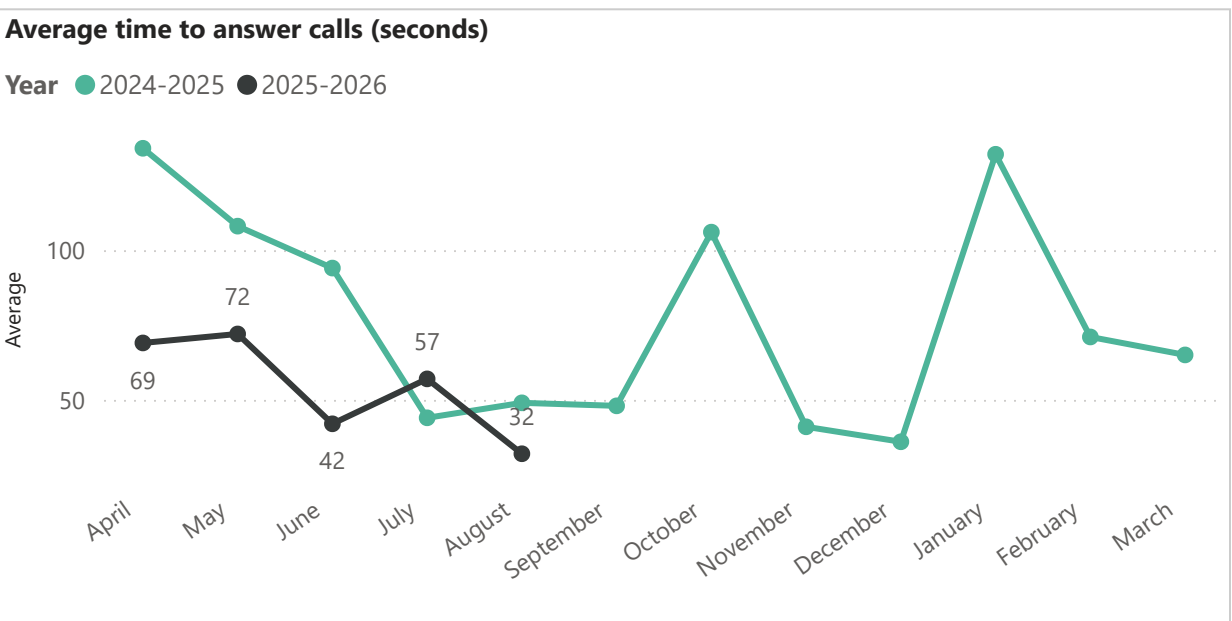
CC03a - Contact Centre Calls



Comment

We had vacancies in the staffing structure during the first four months of this year, which meant we unnecessarily missed calls. We have now filled those positions and recruited casual staff over the summer period, which has led to an improvement in performance and fewer calls being missed.

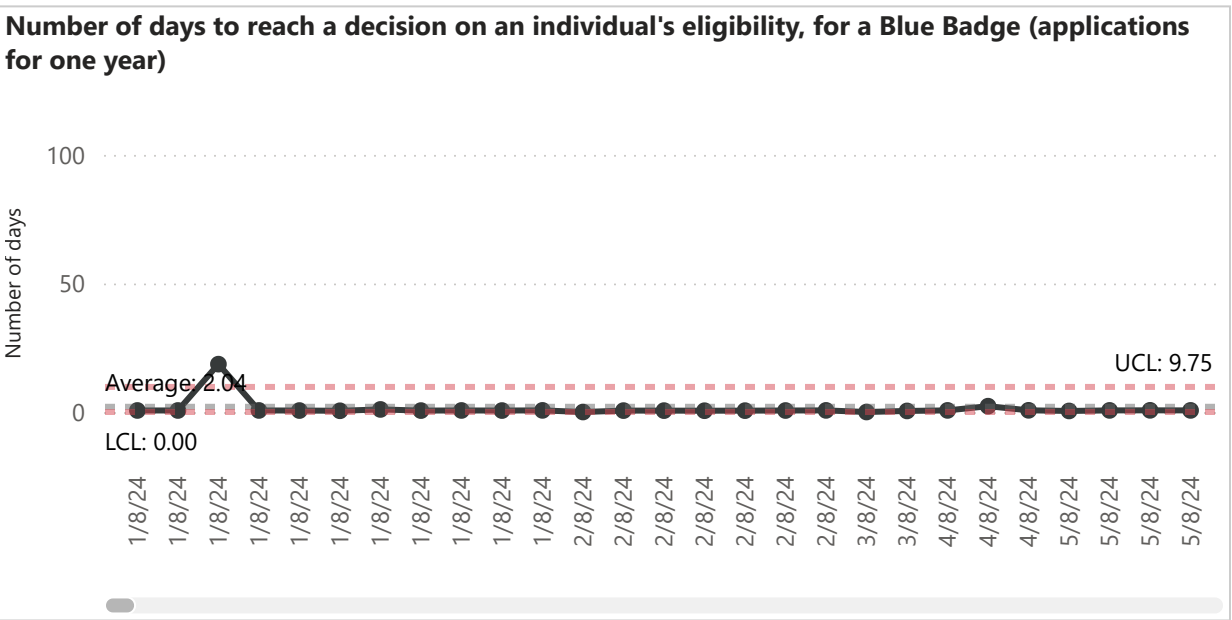
CC04 - Contact Centre Calls



Comment

As noted in the previous indicator, staffing levels has an affect on our ability to answer calls promptly, with customers waiting longer than a minute for us to answer their call during April and May. However, the average response time has come down following recruitment to vacant posts, and also the introduction of the new telephone system which enables us to manage performance more effectively.

CC05c - Blue Badges

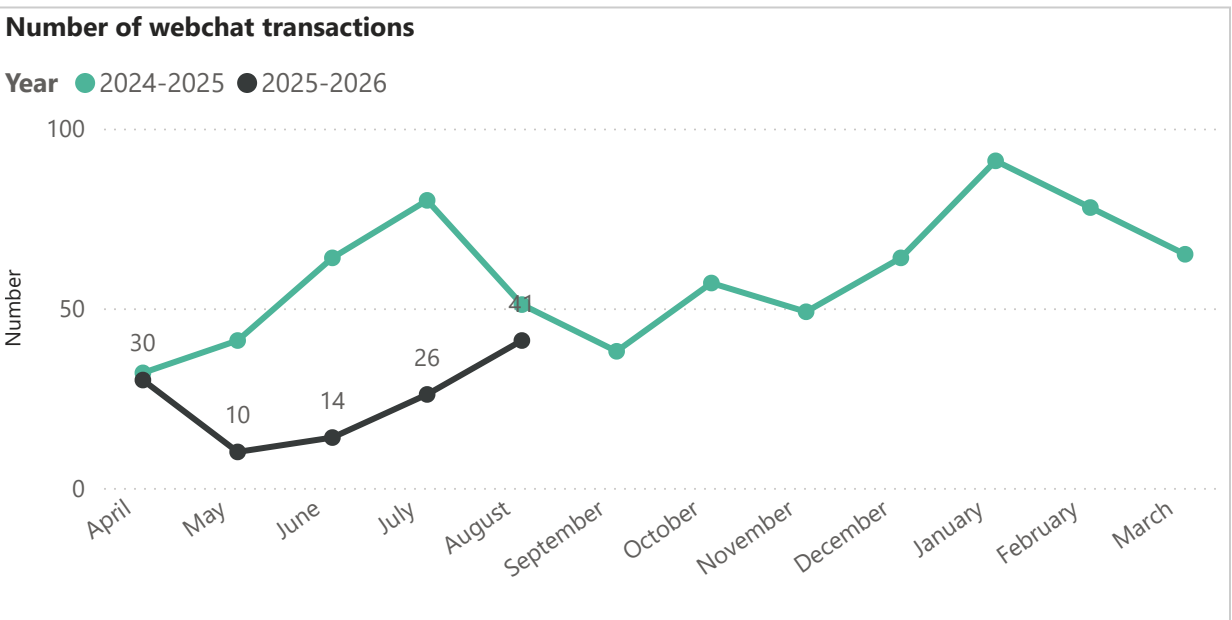


Comment

Over the past year, from August 2024 to July 2025, on average it is reasonable for an individual to wait between 2.04 and 9.75 days for us to reach a decision on their application, after we receive a complete application from the customer. Performance has improved somewhat since March 2025, but the inability to access DWP systems to verify an individual's eligibility for automatic applications has prevented us from making further improvements.

We have received information from Welsh Government that the independent assessment company conducting mobility assessments ceased trading on 31/07, and therefore we have applications awaiting mobility assessments. The Welsh Government has appointed a new company, who are likely to begin assessing during September. It is premature for us to know what impact this change has had on our performance, but we are monitoring the situation to ensure individuals are not waiting too long for a decision on their application.

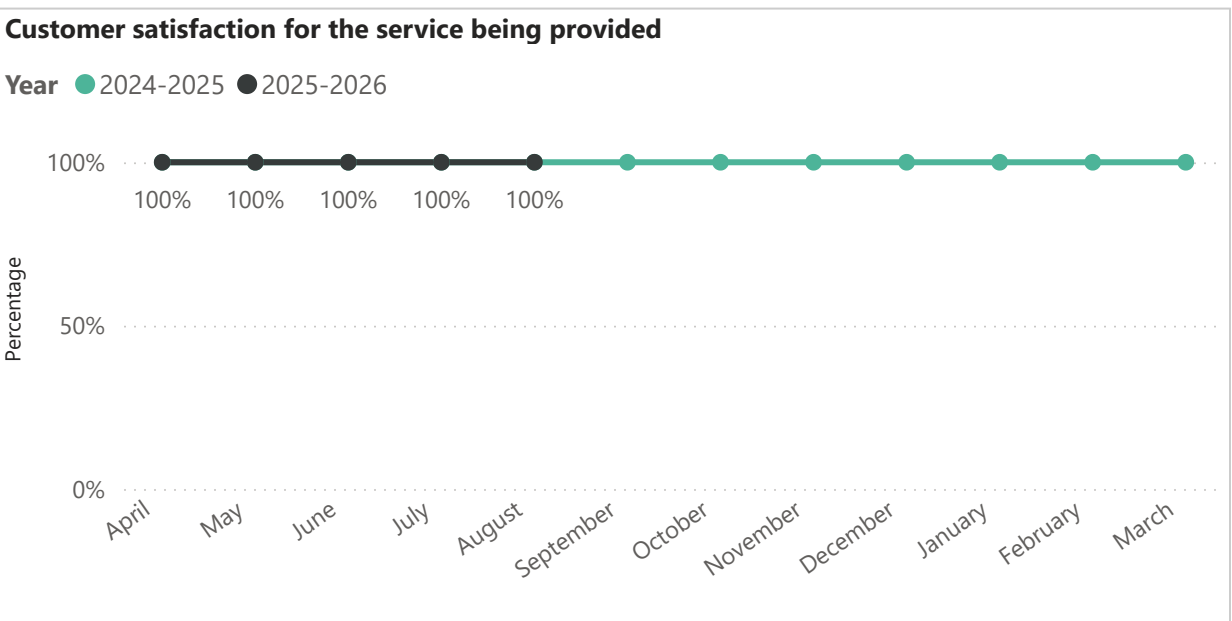
CC06 - Webchat



Comment

Vacancies and absences within the structure have prevented us from offering a regular live chat service over recent months, and this is reflected in the number of interactions we have dealt with. We have appointed 3 officers who will start over the next month, with the hope of being able to offer a more stable service going forward.

CC09 - Customer Satisfaction - Registration Service



Comment

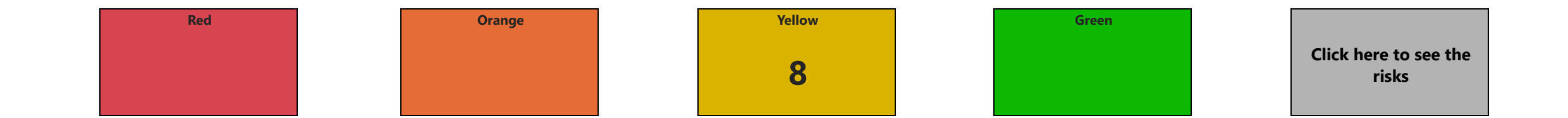
No comments to report; everyone who has completed the customer satisfaction questionnaire is happy with the service that has been provided.

Purpose

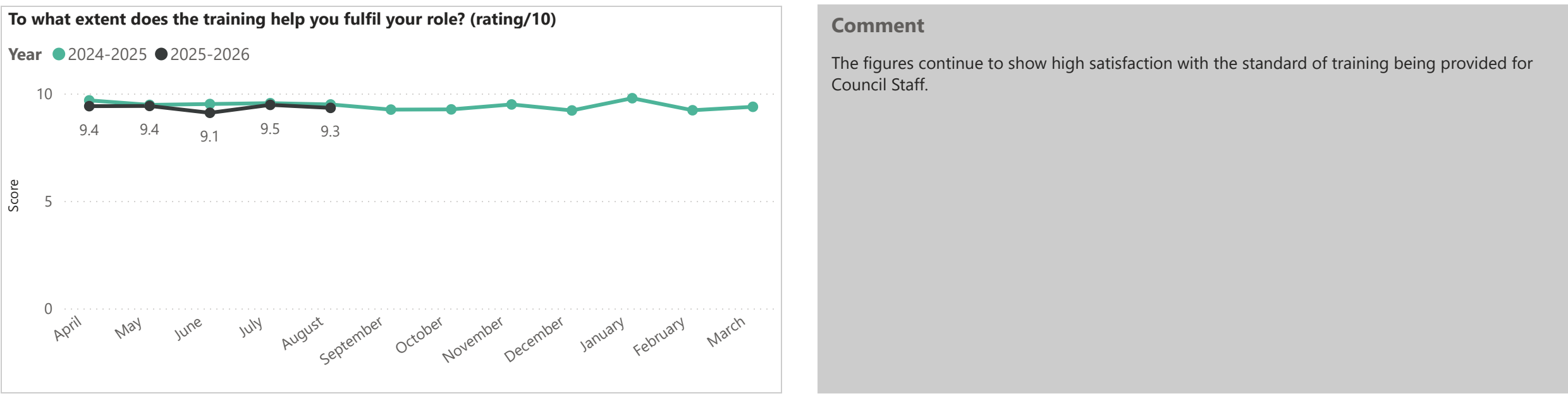
- To support and develop individuals and teams to achieve their role to the best of their ability, in order to provide services of value to the people of Gwynedd
- To develop and foster a culture that enables staff and Members to give their best for the people of Gwynedd
- To attract and develop an appropriate workforce for the future
- To contribute to the development of plans that improve services for the benefit of residents and communities of Gwynedd and local businesses

Newid i Gymraeg

Current Risks



DD1.1 - Training - Satisfaction



DD1.2 - Development Programmes

Comment

Learning and Development Framework – Work ongoing to expand on the range of training courses available to staff. Training courses that had been 'lost' are back, as well as the introduction of new courses. A number of staff from the Learning and Development service are part of the training staff and a forum has been created to support all staff who are involved in training. At present, many of these courses are aimed at Managers and there are plans to expand the range for staff as well.

Organisation Development – 8 members of staff who are Head of Department or Assistant Head of Staff have the opportunity to attend a course organised by Academi Cymru for all north Wales councils, starting September 2025.

Talent and Apprenticeships – The latest round of Recruitment Centres has successfully attracted 10 apprentices and 6 Professional Trainees. This means that the 16 are part of the 46 apprentices and professional trainees currently on the scheme.

DD1.3 - Developments

Comment

In addition to the development and expansion of the Framework work is taking place within the service to identify the different areas within the service, and specific field meetings have been set up to discuss and prioritise work.

Members – A lot of effort is put into encouraging and supporting Members to complete Core training and other training courses to support Members in their role.

Business – Identify opportunities to expand on training delivery and collaborate with external providers and the Procurement regime.

Support – This is a group of service staff who are instrumental in ensuring that all Learning and Development provision is in place and running smoothly.

Organisation Development - Discussions are held on how to develop different cohorts of Council staff. How to support and develop staff, Managers, Assistant Headteachers and the Management Team is in place.

Learning – Undertakes the maintenance of the new Learning and Development Framework and identifies ways to improve and expand provision using multiple sources of information.

e-Learning – There is a great deal of development of e-modules, mandatory courses etc currently taking place as well as identifying new approaches to engaging with staff.

Marketing – There is a definite challenge in trying to engage with all Council staff about the activity of the Learning and Development service, and there are ideas and discussions about how to do that more effectively.

Maes Iaitn – As well as providing training to support Welsh language standards for Staff across the Council, work is being done to support many other projects to promote, encourage and support by working with the Language Unit, reporting on the Language Designations etc.

DD2 - Changing the Culture (contibution to Ffordd Gwynedd)

Comment

Work on piloting the Ffordd Gwynedd training modules is underway.

DD3 - Priorities

Comment

Implement and develop on the Learning and Development Framework (2025/2026) ensuring quality, refining bespoke engagement and promoting work.

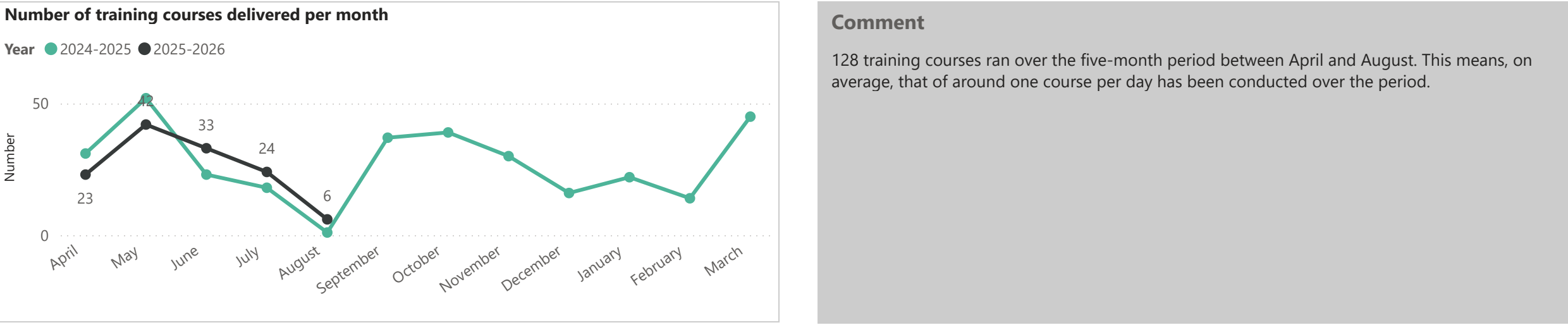
Develop a Framework for Senior Officers and Members.

Expanding on our training/support provision frameworks by meeting the needs of the range of job levels.

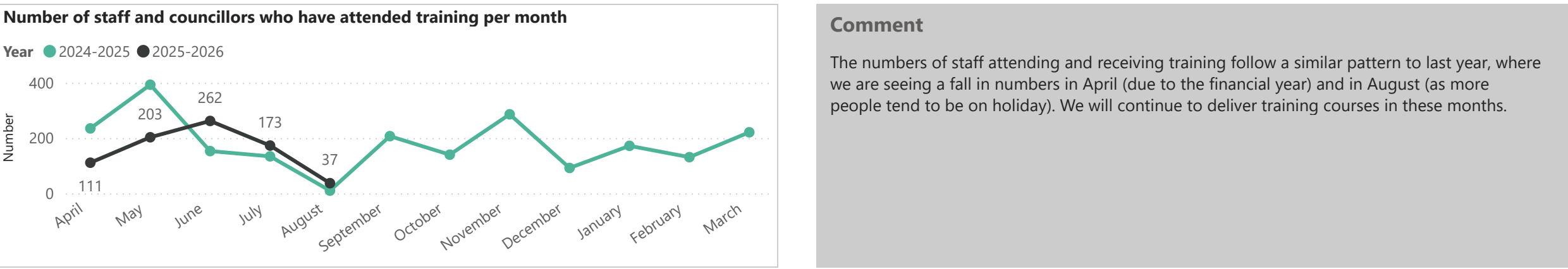
Continue to develop and support Workforce Planning and Talent Development work.

Continue to establish and set up Business and Commissioning arrangements in order to obtain concrete steps in the commissioning of work and to ensure quality for the work of the service.

DD4 - Training



DD5 - Staff and Councillors who have received Training



DD6 - Feedback from Events

Comment

April

DiSC - Very good session that I will take back to my place of work with me. Preferred this session to the 2 day one I had previously done. I think these sessions would be very beneficial to be given to all staff within the home.

Holding Effective Meetings - A practical, valuable session, perhaps coupling the training with training how to chair a Meeting?

Your Financial Well-Being – It's important that everyone has an understanding of this area. Possibly, the content was too detailed.

I-ACT - Got an eye-opening of the things that can be affecting the wellbeing and mental health of staff, and myself!

May

Equality - LGBTQRA+ - The presenter was very good and ran the session naturally and effectively. It sparked interest through it and got everyone in the group to contribute. It would have been good if the slides had been at 2 slides per page, as the text is terribly small.

Welcome - This was a real Welcome Workshop, as we were given a very nice welcome to Gwynedd Council. Thanks a lot.

Ask and Act – Looking at slides on a team call for a morning is challenging. Not enough discussion, videos etc. A face-to-face session would be preferable.

June

Managers Network – feeling that three elements had been too much – the AI presentation and the Customer Charter were new and timely. Could there be some going over old land with Ffordd Gwynedd or could this presentation be made shorter? The room itself was good and much easier and nicer to chat in than in Galeri. What wasn't so good was the screen--small, and hard to see because of light from the roof. It's probably hard to do much about this but having a copy of the slides/presentations in order to read them properly would be useful now.

IOSH - This training was a 'spot on' fair play. This ranged from the resources and structure of the training to the tutor(s) who were particular – they obviously knew his stuff but also knew the organization and how Health and Safety issues were relevant in a local authority context. It is always good to do training with colleagues from other departments within the Council as this is an opportunity to learn about their experiences and also in general to network and meet peers. I've got a lot out of training - learned a lot and enjoyed the experience. Thank you very much for the opportunity. I will encourage all managers within the Service, if they are not ready, to undertake this training. It's hard to see relevance with teams that are in the office all the time. See from our course more relevant to field staff.

July

Basic iGwynedd - It was clear and being able to do an activity ourselves was helpful as it is easier to remember something after doing it yourself in general. The course was basic, but to be fair, it was a Basic Course but there was an opportunity to ask questions of benefit. It will be useful to have the team training available and possibly advanced iGwynedd training to show things that we may not know the system can do. It was useful to find out about Portal 365 which allows sharing documents with Councils and other organisations.

Excel Basic – A great introduction to Excel. Very thorough and not over-simplistic either. A little more time to finish the tasks while in the session would be useful.

August

Equality – LGBTQ+: Sam has made everyone feel confident to be able to speak openly and share opinions. I enjoyed the LGBTQ+ course yesterday. It was full of valuable information and covered important and relevant topics. The discussions were lively and constructive, creating an inclusive and open atmosphere where everyone felt comfortable sharing their views. Sam the coach was excellent and encouraged honest and considerate conversations. An extremely valuable session that left a positive impact on me - I would suggest anyone attend. Perhaps to be more comprehensive of the history in order to give a more definitive background as to why it is important that we are aware of ways to be more inclusive at work, I think this would add to the depth of the session.

Ongoing Evaluation Talks (for Managers and Team Leaders): Mari presented exceptionally well and the toolkit received was extremely good. I would encourage any manager or team leader who wants to be evaluating to attend the course, whether they are an experienced manager or not. An activity or a little more focus on presenting the two-way conversation to our staff has been helpful because evaluation as a label is a barrier for some and there is a small amount of work in terms of persuading us that it is something useful to support staff rather than a hierarchical tick box exercise which is some form of test. It could be in the PowerPoint that's on for iGwynedd but we didn't go into the details of that content.

Choose Year

2025-2026

Choose Quarter

Qtr 1

Choose Month

August

Democracy and Language - Vera Jones

Purpose

To support the Council's democracy arrangements and promote the Welsh language continuously.

Translation - To provide a standard translation service into Welsh and English both in writing and orally for staff, members and Gwynedd's residents.

Democracy - To provide quality support to Gwynedd Councillors

Language and Scrutiny - To promote and boost the use of the Welsh language in all parts of life in the county and lead on Gwynedd's scrutiny arrangements

Newid i
Gymraeg

Current Risks

Red

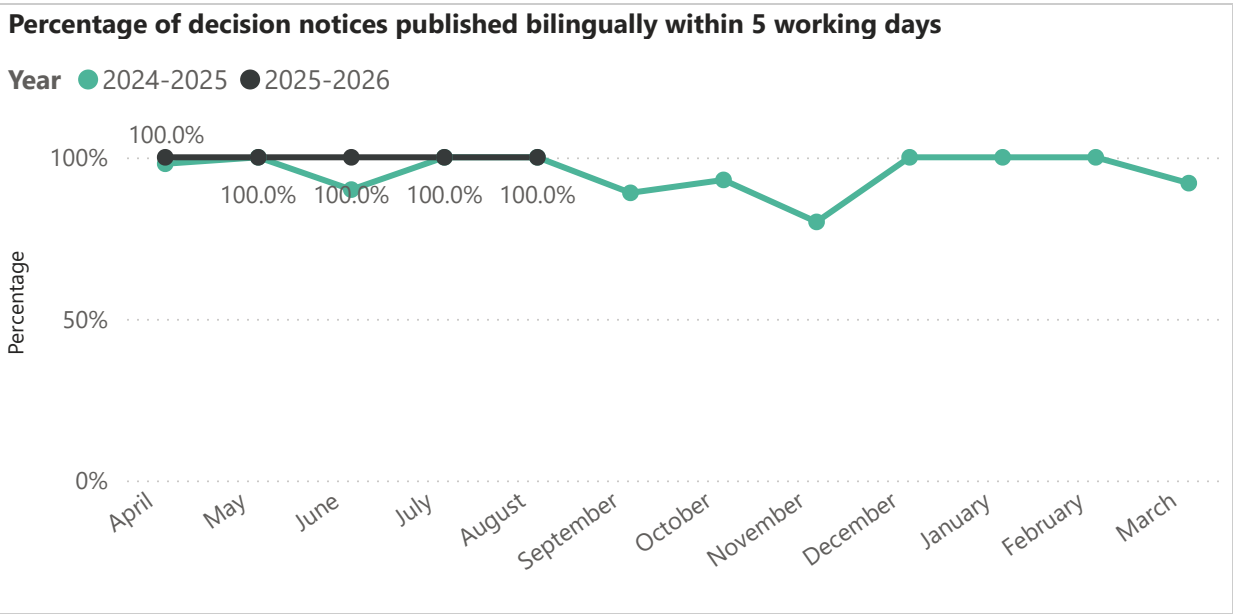
3

4

Green

Click here to see the risks

DI1 - Decision Notices



Comment

Every Decision Notice has been published in accordance with the time scale since April 20025. One Decision Notice was published during August.

DI2 - Satisfaction - Elected Members (Yearly)

Comment

DI3 - Translation Service

Comment

The team has remained very busy in this period, with a high demand for our service, particularly simultaneous translation, within the Council and regionally and nationally.

One ongoing obstacle we have faced is that it is not possible to offer the simultaneous translation service in informal hybrid meetings in Council meeting rooms as the quality of the audio is not of a high enough standard. The IT service is looking into this and hopes to be able to find a satisfactory solution to improve the audio in these rooms.

Further problems have arisen recently with simultaneous translation within Teams. This platform does not seem to allow some contributors from outside the Council to listen to the English translation, and this has affected some meetings, with some having to be rescheduled at short notice. The issue has been raised with the IT Service, but Welsh Government is now looking into it with Microsoft as this is not unique to the Council.

The team has received very positive feedback from our customers both within and outside the Council, and here is a selection of the latest comments we received:

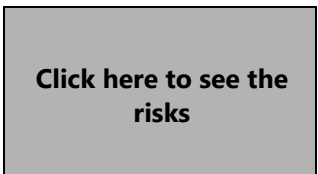
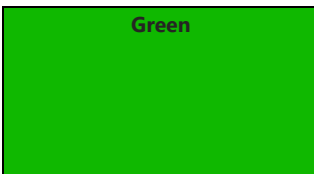
"Thank you very much for responding to this at short notice."
 "Just a note of thanks to you both for the translation today, it was a great help to us. Hopefully everything went okay for you with the arrangements."
 "Great service from the translation team, thank you for your quick response (Proofreading)."
 "Thank you for doing it so quickly, and for responding to the last-minute request to release it sooner because of the reporting timeframe."
 "First time using the service - great! Thank you very much for the prompt and accurate work - very happy Barrister."
 "Thank you from the Plaid Cymru Group for the high standard of translation at each group meeting"
 "Thank you so much for paying urgent attention to this translation - really appreciated!"

Purpose

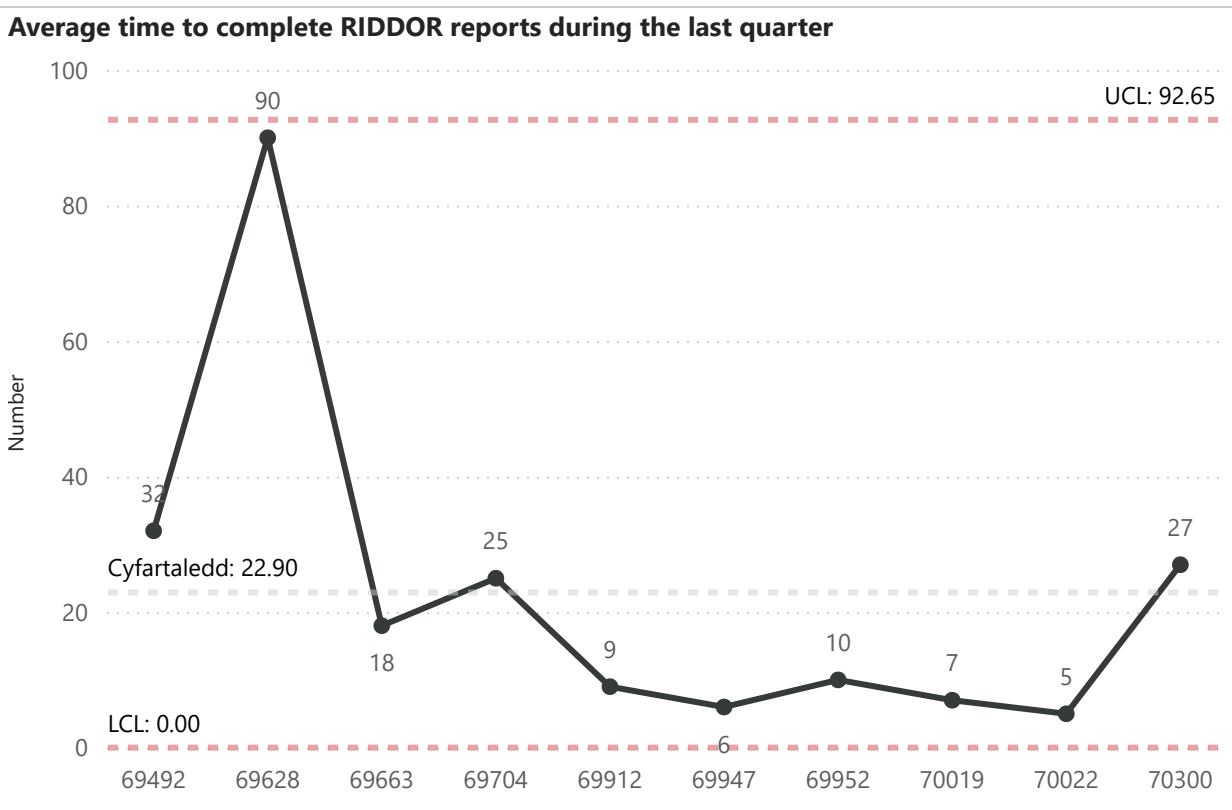
To provide expert guidance, advice and training in the areas of Health, Safety and Well-being in a proactive and efficient manner. This is to enable the Council to address requirements and reduce internal risks.

Newid i Gymraeg

Current Risks



ID1.1 - RIDDOR Reports (Quarterly)



Comment

The new chart shows the dates on which incidents that are reportable under the RIDDOR regulations occurred, and then the date the incidents were reported to the Health and Safety Executive.

Incidents are reportable within 10 or 15 days depending on their RIDDOR category.

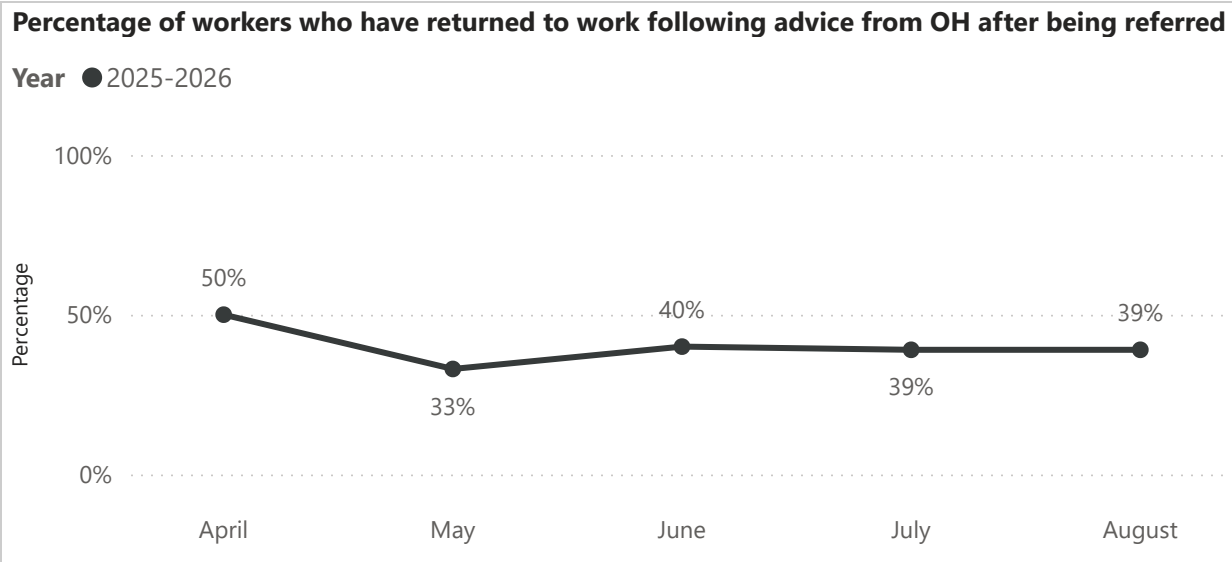
In Quarter 1, 4 out of 10 incidents were reported within the timeframe required under the regulations.

Unfortunately, 3 incidents were reported late because the incident report was late reaching the Health and Safety Unit from the relevant manager.

Another 2 incidents were late due to the staff members not being absent from work, but following an initial investigation it was understood that the staff member had their duties amended. Absences of more than 7 days are reportable under RIDDOR, and the need for amendments to duties for more than 7 days is also reportable.

1 incident, reference 69628, was reported on day 90 which is far beyond the legal requirement. There was no certainty that the Council owned the land, with the possibility that it was owned by Network Rail. Following discussions and then an agreement that the Council is responsible for the land, the incident was then reported by us.

ID2.1 - Referrals to Occupational Health



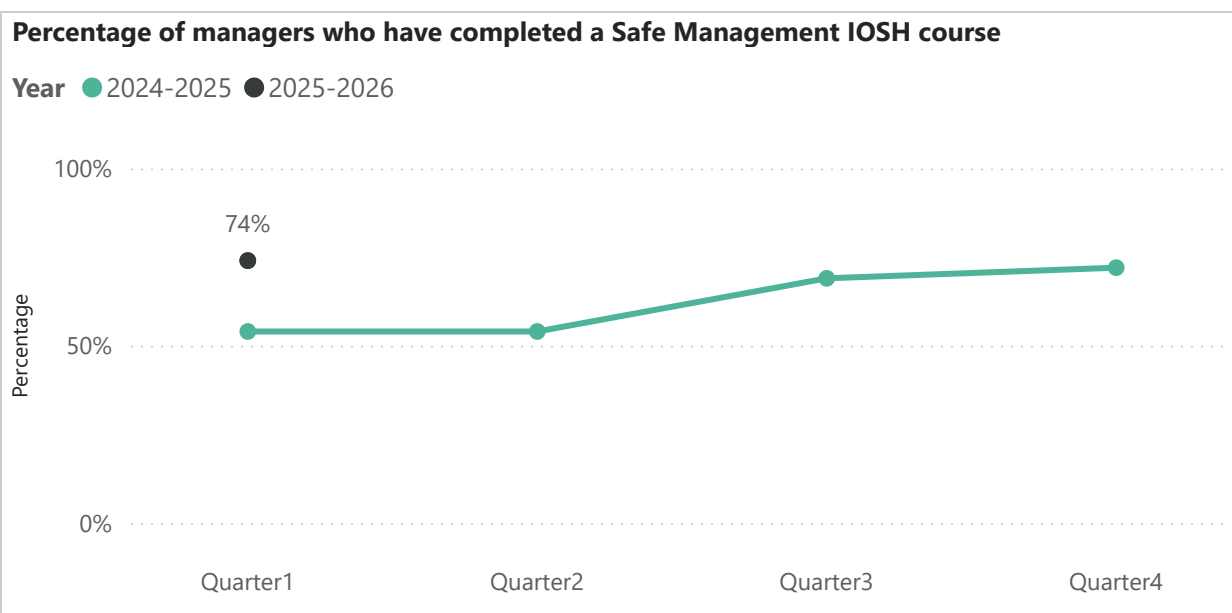
Comment

52 referrals were received to the Occupational Health Unit during August. The number of referrals are always lower for August due to the Summer holidays.

48 staff members attended an appointment at the Unit. 40 out of the 48 appointments were absent from work.

Following interventions such as a phased return program, reasonable adjustments to name a few, 19 individuals have declared they are returning back to work.

ID3.1 - IOSH Training (Quarterly)

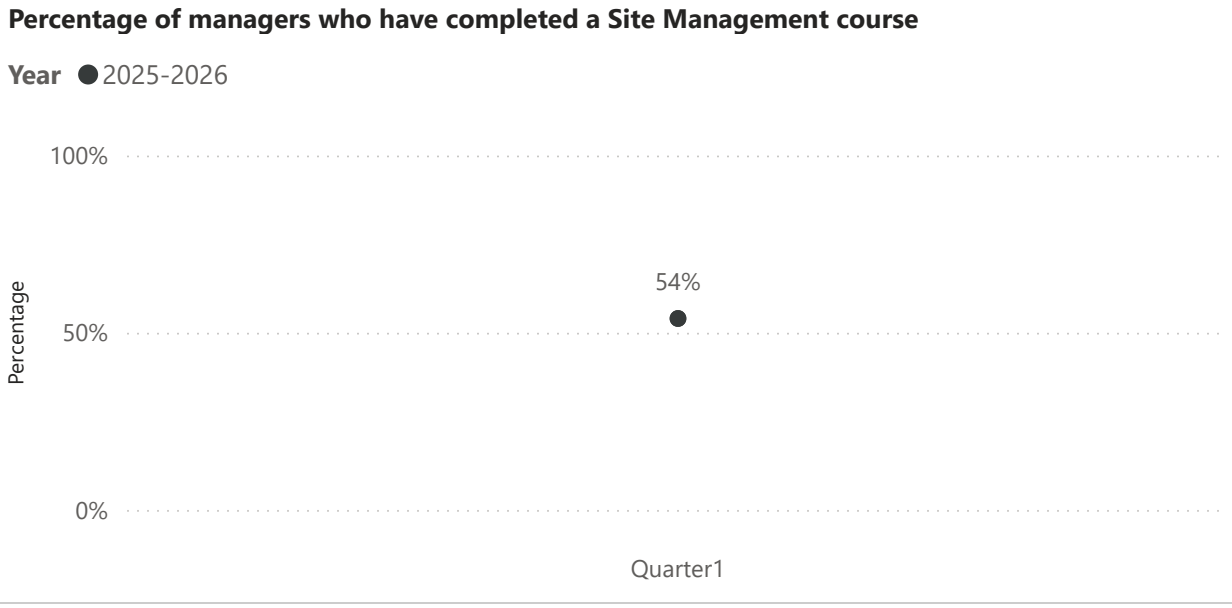


Comment

74% of managers (including Deputy Heads of Department, School Headteachers, Service Managers, Team Leaders/Supervisors, and site managers) have completed IOSH Managing Safely training within the last three years - either the original course or a refresher course.

By the end of 2025, on the basis of how many managers have registered on courses in September - December, the figure should increase to 78-79%.

ID3.2 - Site Management Training (Quarterly)

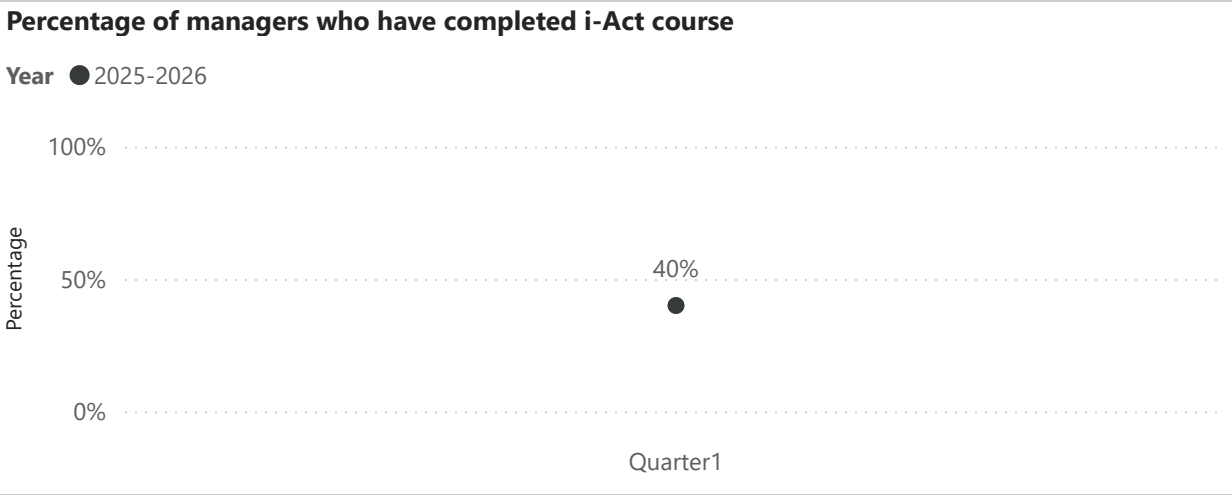


Comment

54% of site managers have completed a Site Management course within the last three years - either the original face-to-face course, or a refresher course.

The refresher course is new within the last few months and work continues to raise awareness of it amongst site managers and it is hoped that this percentage will increase substantially by the end of the year.

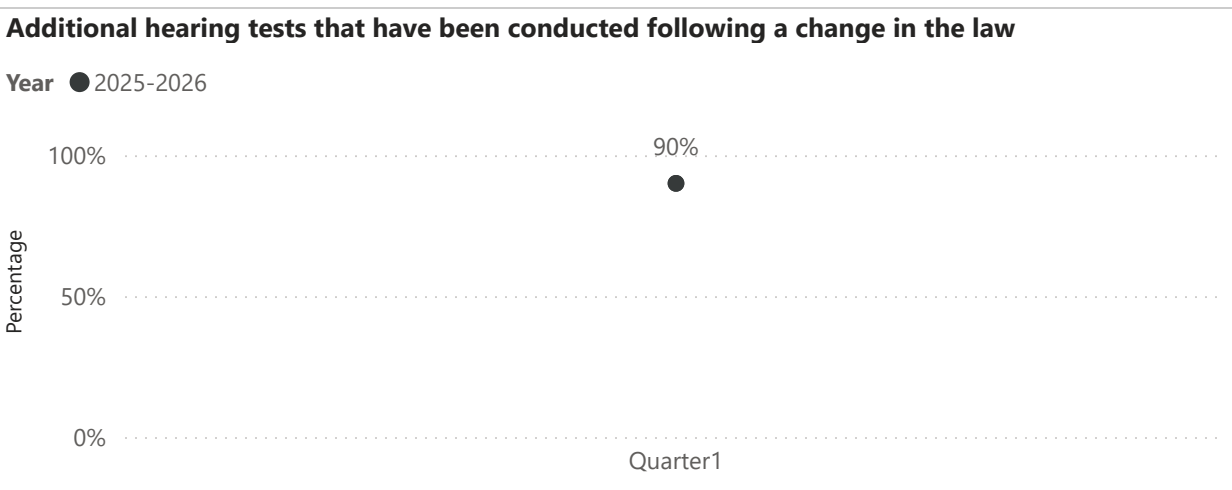
ID3.3 - i-Act Training (Quarterly)



Comment

40% of managers (including Deputy Heads of Department, School Headteachers, Service Managers, Team Leaders/Supervisors) have completed i-act training within the last three years.

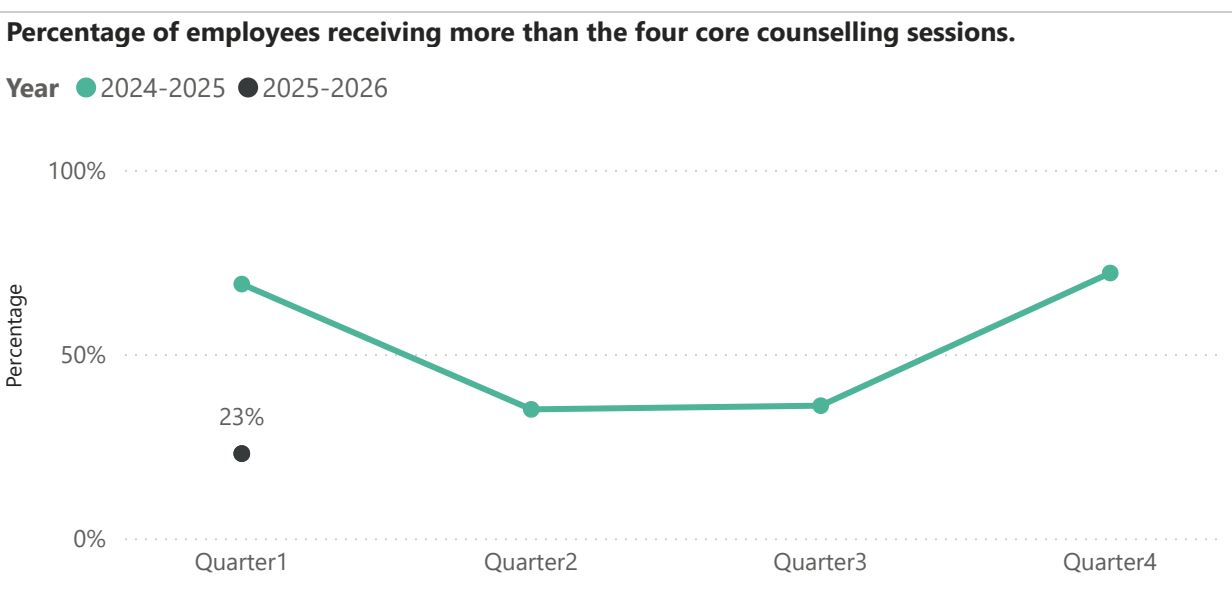
ID4.1 - Hearing Tests (Quarterly)



Comment

Health Surveillance testing were carried out on 60 staff members during quarter 1. 54 of those staff members need to be called back for further testing following a change in the law.

ID5 - Counselling (Quarterly)



Comment

A total of 87 members of staff have received referrals to MEDRA during quarter 1. 20 of those staff have received more than the four core sessions for counselling.

Purpose

To enable the Council to handle and manage information in line with statutory requirements and to use it to make the best possible decisions, and enable the public to get access to data and information.

Information Gymraeg

Current Risks

Red

Orange1

Yellow2

Green

Click here to see the risks

YG1 - Data Breaches

Number of data breaches reported to the Data Protection Officer

Year

2024-2025

2025-2026

Comment

At present the number of data breaches is substantially lower than last year (9 up to the end of August, compared with 24 in the corresponding period in 2024/25 [some cases are still being investigated, with the possibility therefore that the reported number could be slightly higher by the date of the meeting, since the chart uses 'live' data]).

There is no obvious pattern in this reduction; the largest single category is information e-mailed to the incorrect recipient (3 of the 9 breaches this year); these numbers have reduced compared to this time last year (11 of the 24 breaches) but there has also been a similar reduction in the other categories of breaches. It appears therefore that the efforts to raise awareness of this issue, devoting particular attention to e-mails, could be starting to bear fruit although the trends will need to be monitored over a longer time period.

Nevertheless, the number of incidents which were sufficiently serious to be reported to the Information Commissioner has remained at the same level as last year (2 breaches).

YG1a - Data Breaches - Schools

Number of data breaches reported to the Data Protection Officer

Year

2024-2025

2025-2026

Comment

▲ This is a new measure for this year following the transfer of the advisory function for data protection in schools to the Research and Information Service.

3 breaches have been reported this year (April - August); we will need to assess patterns over the longer term to establish the 'usual' current level (on the face of it 3 breaches appears to be a high figure compared with the total of 4 reported last year, but arrangements for recording and reporting data breaches in schools have been strengthened since then).

YG2 - Freedom of Information Requests

Percentage of Freedom of Information Requests answered within 20 working days

Year

2025-2026

Comment

* August figure is provisional at present since the target date for a number of requests received in August has not yet been reached *

This is being monitored on a monthly basis for the first time this year, but performance for the full year 2024/25 was 76%.

There has therefore been a significant improvement, with performance now having stabilised at around 90%.

It is believed that this improvement is a result of efforts to raise awareness and strengthen arrangements, and the higher profile of this issue in general following the Information Commissioner's Office audit of Council arrangements earlier this year. The work programme in response to this continues.

In addition, a new Power BI dashboard has been published in order to enable officers to maintain 'live' oversight of volumes of requests and response performance by Department and respond to any problems as they arise.

YG3 - Data Protection Requests (Quarterly)

Percentage of Data Protection Requests answered within the timetable

Year

2024-2025

2025-2026

Comment

▼ 18 requests were received during the quarter, with 13 responded to within the timetable.

The response percentage does tend to vary by quarter within relatively small numbers of requests; in addition half the requests received related to Childrens services, a number of which were complex requests which were challenging to respond to within the timescale. There is concern about the resource available to respond to the requests, if the numbers / complexity of requests in relation to Childrens services were to continue at this level.

YG3a - Data Protection Requests - Schools (Quarterly)

Percentage of Data Protection Requests answered within the timetable

Year

2025-2026

Comment

▲ New measure, following the transfer of the advisory function for Data Protection for schools to this Service. 5 requests were received during the quarter.

YG4 - Research and Information Projects

Comment

▼ An annual customer satisfaction questionnaire is sent to users of the Record Centre (the Council's paper file store, on the top floor of the Penrallt building). The results of the latest questionnaire show that 100% of users rate the service as 'Excellent' or 'Good' (based on 30 responses), with comments including:
"The service I've received from you has been exceptional "
"A clear process and steps in place, the staff are patient, helpful and ready to help if someone is unsure of the Centre's processes"
There were also a number of useful detailed comments that we will be following up on to improve elements of the arrangements.

Over the past few months Service officers have been working with other departments and an external consultant on a project to transform the way data is used within the Council, as part of the Council's Digital Plan. The project (in this guise) runs until October and the results will include:
- A Data Charter, which will set out a framework and guidance for staff on all aspects of the handling, sharing and communication of data
- Case studies showing how the use of data can lead to better services for Gwynedd residents, which we can then use to promote this agenda across the Council
- Future clarity on the Council's use of platforms to analyse and communicate data
- Establish a list of systems and data fields, which will form the basis for further work on improving data standards.

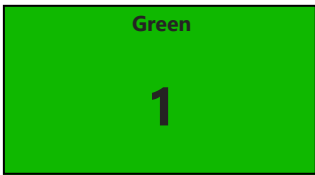
Otherwise, the recent work of the Research team has focused on the evidence needs of some of the Council's main projects including in the areas of second homes, care, homelessness and poverty. It is also worth noting that the team was part of a small group of councils who were allowed access to initial results of the Office for National Statistics exercise to use administrative data to estimate population figures (this was intended to be used in place of holding a Census). Concerns were raised by ourselves and others about some of these results, and they have now agreed to recommend that the UK Government undertakes another Census in 2031. This is good news in terms of how accurate and reliable population figures will be in the future (while also reducing the financial risk for us of incorrect figures being used in funding formulae), as well as ensuring that Census data will continue to be available for areas such as the number of Welsh speakers. We will continue to keep an eye on this agenda as it develops.

Purpose

To support managers and staff to be satisfied and productive in their work, by providing advice and guidance on employment and equality issues and promoting good practice in both areas
To lead the work of developing local working conditions, and ensuring that equality issues are central to the work of all our services.

Newid i
Gymraeg

Current Risks



Click here to see the risks

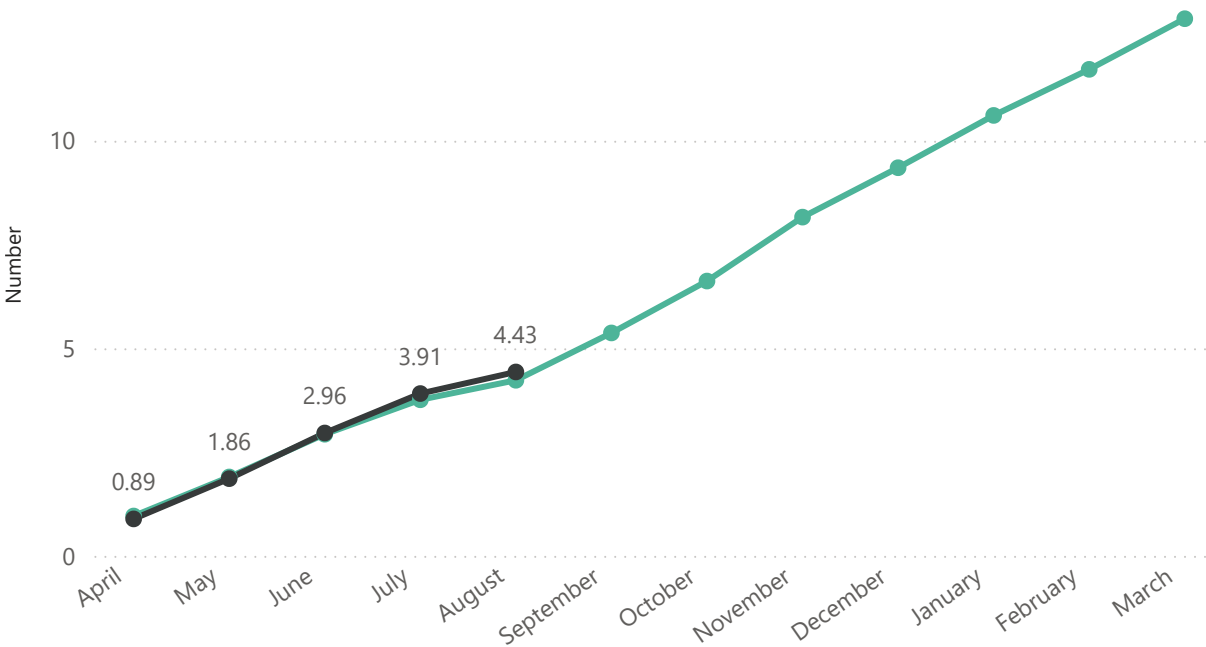
AD01 - Sickness Days

Average number of staff sick days per person in the Council

Year

2024-2025

2025-2026



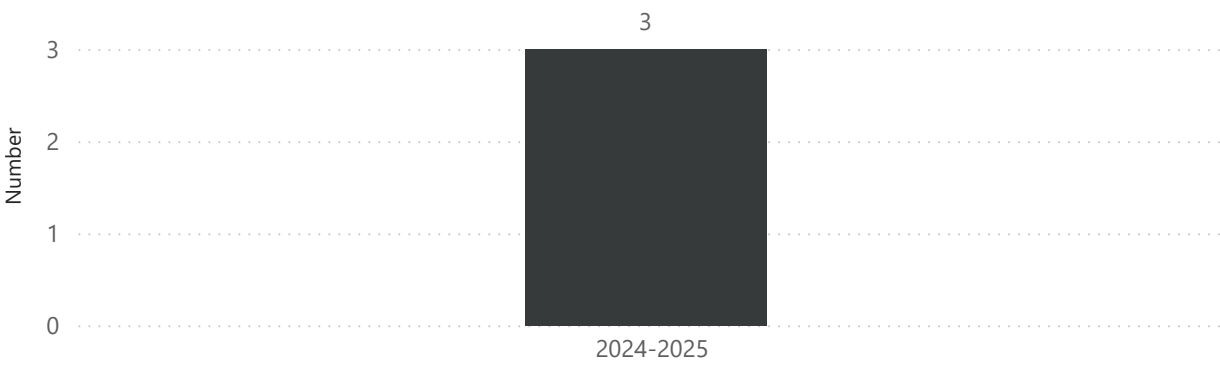
Comment

The latest figure available represents the period between April and August. Even though it is early in the reporting year, the trend thus far reflects what has taken place over the past few years, with an average cumulative 4.43 days lost per employee to sickness absence across all of Cyngor Gwynedd's services (including schools) during the three months in question. In comparison, 4.23 days had been lost at the same stage last year.

A detailed analysis on the year end situation for 2024/25 is to be presented to the Senior Management Team and Local Joint Consultative Committee during the autumn, as a basis for providing a steer on next steps.

AD02 - Employment Appeal Committee (Yearly)

Number of appeals decisions supporting the employer's decision (employment cases referred to the Employment Appeal Committee)

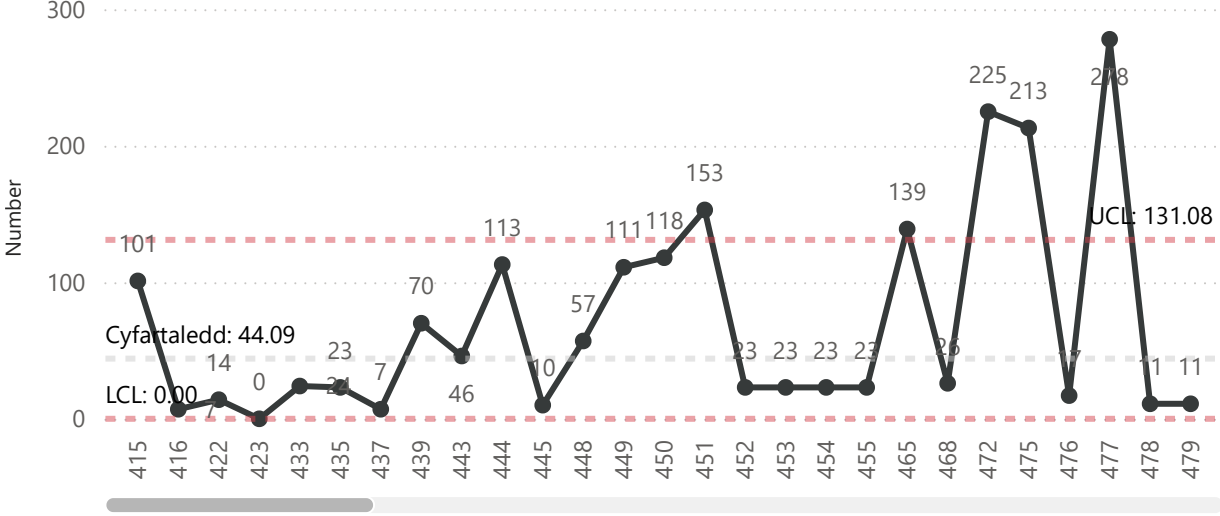


Comment

To be reported upon on an annual basis - as soon as possible following 2025/26

AD03a - Disciplinary

Number of days taken to complete staff disciplinary proceedings



Comment

The trend in the graph shows that the amount of time it takes to resolve disciplinary issues is improving, with the average days being 44 at the moment. This is of course very positive, but we must take heed that performance in this area, be that positive or concerning, can depend on various factors and therefore can fluctuate; some of those factors are complexity and unique factors relating to a case, pressures on the HR Service and the employing departments. in addition to input in some cases from external agencies.

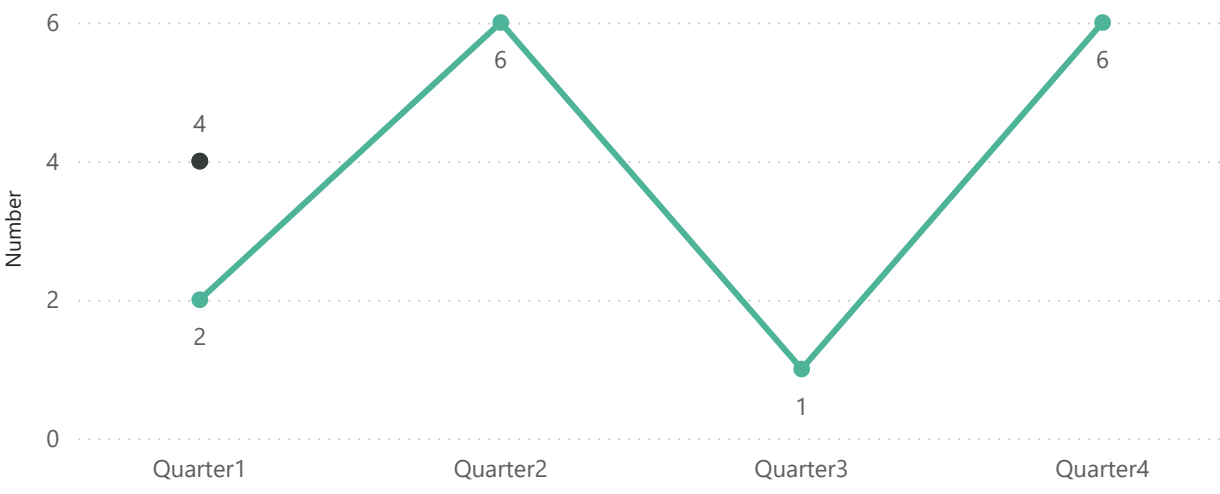
AD03b - Complaints (Quarterly)

Number of staff complaints

Year

2024-2025

2025-2026

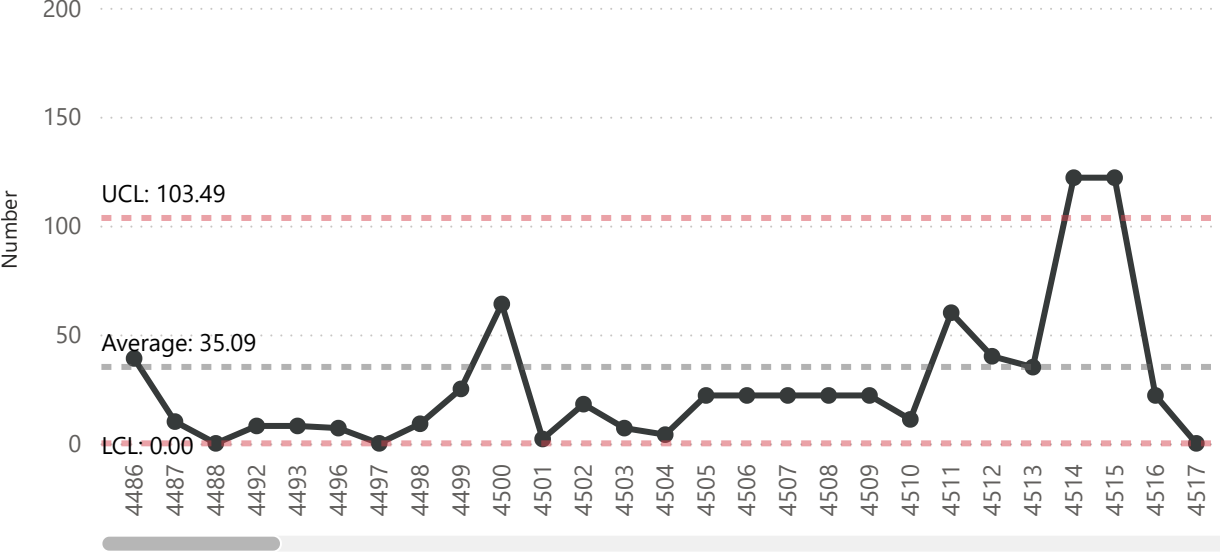


Comment

4 grievances were issued by staff during the first three months of the financial year. 2 of those remain open. In addition, one grievance from 2024/25 remains open.

AD04 - Completion of Job Appraisals

Number of days to complete a job appraisal



Comment

This measure shows the average number of days it takes for the team to complete a job evaluation process on jobs. At the end of 2024/25, the average days were 49.04, but by the end of August this year the figure was 35.09 days. As previously noted, this information does reflect the teams performance in this area, but that performance also depends on the number of applications received and also what are the team's wider priorities.

AD99 - Other Activity by the Service

Comment

We are awaiting detailed guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission, further to the legal decision in relation to For Women Scotland vs The Scottish Ministers. Whilst that decision was effective immediately upon its announcement in April 2025, it does mean that organisations will need to consider how they can fully comply with all of the relevant legislation. Publishing the anticipated guidance will be key to the response.

MEETING	Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee
DATE	16 October 2025
TITLE	Corporate and Legal Cabinet Member Performance Report
REASON FOR SCRUTINY	To report on the performance of Legal Services .
AUTHOR	Iwan G D Evans – Head of Legal Services
CABINET MEMBER	Councillor Llio Elenid - Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Legal and the Welsh Language

LEGAL SERVICE

Nia Grisdale – Legal Services Manager

Purpose : To provide the Council with a legal service that enables it to work effectively for the benefit of the people of Gwynedd "

% score 5/5 or Very Satisfied with Service 2024 / 2025 93%	% score 5/5 or Very Satisfied with Service 2023 / 2024 81%	% score 5/5 or Very Satisfied with Service 2022/2023 100%
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2025-2026														
Score	Percentage	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
Very Satisfied 5	91%	19	11	7	8	7								52
Satisfied 4	9%													5
Reasonably Satisfied 3														
Dissatisfied 2														
Very Dissatisfied 1														
Total questionnaires returned	27%	20	11	8	11	7								57
Number sent out		40	29	23	74	77								243

The performance of the Service is monitored by seeking the feedback of the Departments who use the service. Opinions are measure against a scale of 1-5 in the form of a simple email and the monitoring procedure has improved. (5 = Very Satisfied down to 1 = Totally Dissatisfied). It is also possible for sections to add a comment along with a rating. During the 2024 – 2025 financial year, the result were 100% very satisfied or satisfied with the service.

A new system of soliciting feedback by filling out an email questionnaire has been brought into force since March 2024. In 2024-2025 only about 14% of questionnaires had been returned, which is clearly low but over the year work has been done on promoting and encouraging Clients to complete responses. There is certainly an improvement to be seen in the first months of 2025-2026 with 23% returning the questionnaire.

In terms of the response received, it is encouraging that a number of additional comments are being made on the questionnaire with a response saying:

"Very happy with the quality and timing of the service"

"Very satisfactory - thank you very much"

"Quick work with no problems to report. Very happy."

"Excellent service once again"

"Great service as usual"

"Very good experience of working with the service to charge against the grant. Nice to be able to close one particular link within the service"

"Great experience, the advice I received prior to the release of the agreement was brilliant, and acted on sealing the document very quickly.

hard work and on time."

"Work thoroughly and guided me through the process as this was the first time I had dealt with such an issue. It was a result that I and the public had reached, which allowed us to operate."

"Responded to the Licence application very quickly in the middle of the Christmas period with holidays etc planned. The clients on the other side were not easy to deal with but dealt with brilliantly and managed to get them to sign the deal."

"More resources to assist the lawyers to complete the work in a more reasonable timeframe."

"Excellent quality of work but long timeframe to complete the instructions."

"Professional and timely service"

"Disappointing that the case has been open for a number of years and has been dealt with by several locum lawyers with no progress but has returned and worked miracles to complete this matter in a very short timeframe and has communicated an update to us on a regular basis."

"More resources to assist the lawyers to complete the work in a more reasonable timeframe."

"Excellent quality of work but long timeframe to complete the instructions."

"-All things are very positive"

"very happy with experience"

"No problems and everything went smoothly – thank you Erin!"

"Professional and timely service"

"Completed this case immediately and without any prior notice that he was on the way."

"A good and close and honest constructive approach moving things forward Feedback on the spot – Managerial contact – Looking at a conversation with Heads of Department annually – Door open. “

In addition to a questionnaire at the end of each case, an annual questionnaire has been sent to the Heads and Managers of the department asking for their views on service as a whole. The questionnaire was sent out in mid-February and received about 33% of responses. There have been very positive responses with all responses saying that the service currently being offered is good or very good.

- “We receive legal advice and assistance in matters of education modernisation and education properties, leases etc”
- “I think the contact has improved recently and responded to our questions sooner. The link is friendly and easily talk to them. The guidance is standard and thorough.”
- “I feel we are receiving a great service – a timely and always supportive response to the service.”
- “Excellent, extremely supportive and valuable”
- “Over the past year we have had quite a bit of support from the legal department and the process has been very smooth.
- “It's been a big help to be able to get in touch with one lawyer for all the support and this has made things easier excellent support. prompt and thorough response.”

In terms of a suggestion on how to improve the service into the future and what the challenges are, there have been responses to consider it as well as a positive one

- “The biggest challenge is their capacity and there is sometimes time between responses creating delays, and as it happens we have a number of questions raised at the end of the day. “
- “No need to improve”
- “More resources will be needed to deal with the department's upcoming workload in the coming months. “

DEPARTMENTAL PLANS

We will continue to develop the Legal Team to build resilience within the Team

What has been achieved?

The department has been part of the Cynllun Yfory scheme for some years and has benefited from employing a trainee who has then progressed to qualify and works within the department as a solicitor.

Further, the department has also taken advantage of the apprenticeship scheme and hired the department's first paralegal apprentice. This is working well, and the apprentice has started on her Paralegal qualification and is a great help to the department's lawyers.

The service has moved on from it's previous recruiting issues and can concentrate on providing and improving the service for the Councils Departments.

Following some of the comments received as a result of the questionnaires and feedback from Heads an assessment of capacity and expertise within the department will be considered regularly to ensure that we meet the requirements of our clients.

We will be looking to complete work after surrendering Lexcel accreditation for maintaining professional standards of appropriateness and standards

What has been achieved?

The department has now incorporated a new case management system and has looked to incorporate features of the Lexcel accreditation that would benefit the department. We are specifically looking at a form of supporting each other through colleagues' feedback on cases through file reviews (the accreditation was surrendered as a saving) There is no intention to seek the Lexcel accreditation but rather to use some of the principles to develop the way of working and to strengthen systems.

What we've been doing, examples:

- Supporting Article 4 Work, planning section, challenge risks
- Supporting a decision to appeal the High Court's ruling on the Article 4 work
- Child protection cases – a large number relating to injuries and requests for secure care.
- Dealing with and advising on employment matters including before Employment Tribunals
- Supported several projects Housing Strategy – Purchase of around 15 new homes over a 12 month period as well as a first time purchase grant scheme and the adaptation of vacant houses
- Work still ongoing on the development of Menai Centre Bangor in conjunction with Llyw Cymru and Betsi
- Implemented a grant to help Galeri purchase a number of buildings and upgrade others in Caernarfon
- Renewal of good income leases in Penrallt for Gwynedd Council
- Working on the Snowdonia Business Park's 'Joint Venture' in conjunction with Welsh Govt
- To deal with DOLS applications before the Court of Protection and "ordinary residence" matters ensuring that other Authorities accepted responsibility for individuals who were not the responsibility of Gwynedd.
- Social Services debt collection (£800k brought in over 18 months)
- A number of prosecutions including environmental and planning issues, health and safety, and also parents who are unable to ensure their children's attendance at school;
- Traffic Orders
- Legal support stems from Friars' position.
- Education Appeal Panels
- Orders in changing the network of public rights within the county.
- Advising on new Legislations – Procurement Legislation 2023; Special Processes under the Public Health Act;
- Lloyd George Museum Trustees Memorandum of Understanding

PROPRIETY

Iwan Evans – Head of Legal Services – Monitoring Officer.

Purpose : To maintain the confidence of the people of Gwynedd in the Council by ensuring and promoting the appropriateness of its activities and the highest standard of behaviour among councillors.

DEPARTMENTAL PLANS

We will continue to support and advise on the Council's functions in terms of ensuring constitutional, legal and administrative propriety.

What has been achieved?

This work is ongoing but in particular a series of "Good Decisions" seminars are planned to be held from October onwards. The aim of the courses is to explain the fundamentals of decision-making in public bodies as well as the constitutional and regulatory framework that applies to this area. We are awaiting confirmation of dates with the Training Service.

We provide comments and opinions on all Cabinet and Full Council reports to ensure legal and constitutional propriety as well as generally advising on issues such as the correct decision-making body and policy and strategic issues.

We will work with the Standards Committee, Leaders of Political Groups and Members along with relevant officials to maintain and support high standards of behaviour among councillors.

What has been achieved?

Arrangements for the implementation of the duty of leaders of political groups are in place but a need to re-establish focus on the work has been highlighted.

The work is ongoing and meetings have been held with Group Leaders during September. The fruits of this work will be reported to the Standards Committee but the results are positive and the level of collaboration is good.

We will be completing the training of Gwynedd Council members in Code of Conduct matters by offering in-depth training sessions on the Code to non-attending members.

What has been achieved?

Courses were held in December and January 24/25 and a recording was also provided for the use of the members available online with a test to complete. It is one of the core courses but there are still members who have not taken advantage of the course and this is being discussed with individual Political Group Leaders to highlight and encourage the members to complete the training. We continue to work with the Leaders to press members who have not yet taken advantage of the online course to complete the work.

We will support the Standards Committee to develop arrangements to implement its responsibilities towards Town and Community Councils by offering training sessions.

What has been achieved?

The Standards Committee undertook a review of the joint relationship with Town and Community Councils and identified that there was a need for action to strengthen this partnership. To complement this, a virtual training course has been prepared for them and two initial courses have been held by the end of the year with an online offer also available. This provision will be a stable proposition for the Town and Community Councils going forward.

We will review and ensure adequate resources to support requirements on the Service arising from regional work

What has been achieved?

As the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee into an operational configuration, there is an increase across the board in resource demand. The current period is particularly challenging because many elements of the CJC's work become operational during the current quarter. In addition, the UK and Welsh governments have jointly placed responsibility for the Flintshire and Wrexham Investment Zone on the CJC. This was added as responsibility for the Regional Transport grant was attributed to the CJC. Although there is a lead period in this increases the work. In addition, the team with Locum provision has been leading on the establishment of a Governance and Audit Sub-Committee and commencing the establishment of the scrutiny regime through the Joint Regional Scrutiny Committee. The Service and a leading role ensured the transfer of the North Wales Growth Plan to the CBC. This has created a platform to move to a long-term SLA regime and free up resources for recruitment. The financial resources are in place in the budget of the Joint Corporate Committee and it is planned to proceed to recruit the post of Solicitor and Deputy Monitoring Officer of the CBC. However growth in the WBC means that it is also timely to be reviewing the requirements in the medium and long term,

We will continue to keep the Constitution under review aiming to complete the main tasks by December 2025

What has been achieved?

This will include:

Review of Officer Delegation Schemes
Review of Section 11 Officers provisions within the Constitution in conjunction with the Human Resources Service
To contribute to the review of the Whistleblowing Policy
Update as needed

It must be recognised that this work is continuous and also responds to changing demands.

What we've been doing, examples:

- Advising on all Cabinet and Council reports
- To support and advise on constitutional issues that arise as necessary
- Provide appropriate guidance on Leadership Team issues
- Review of the Constitution in particular the functions of Full Council and Panel Performance Assessment
- Advising on specific High School issues
 - Responding to an increase in the speed of bringing projects forward following a review of the work of the CBC Portfolio Office
- Lead on the establishment of a Joint Regional Scrutiny Committee for the WBC
 - CBC – advising the governing body on the establishment of a new Constitution for the body – Commencement of work on preparation for the transfer of BUE to CJC
- Advising on propriety and constitutional issues in general
- Supporting Members with Code of Conduct issues

ELECTIONS AND ELECTORAL REGISTRATION

Siôn Huws Propriety and Elections Manager

Purpose : To ensure that the people of Gwynedd have the opportunity to vote easily, and that their vote is counted in the way they intend.

DEPARTMENTAL PLANS

We will work to support the Returning Officer and the Electoral Registration Officer in particular saluting:

Holding Elections

What has been achieved ?

A county by-election for the Abermaw ward was held in August 2025. The work of holding a further county by election has started

Paratoi ar gyfer Etholiad y Senedd yn 2026

The election will be conducted on the basis of new constituencies and using a new voting system. The new 'Gwynedd Maldwyn' constituency will be a combination of the UK parliamentary constituencies of Dwyfor Meirionnydd and Montgomeryshire and Glyndŵr, and will include parts of four local authority areas. The Chief Executive of Gwynedd has been appointed as the Returning Officer for the election and there will be significant implications for the service due to the geographical size of the constituency, the number of voters and the necessary cross-border arrangements. Planning work has commenced as well as an audit of our resources. Further cross-border arrangements will need to be established in respect of that part of Gwynedd that will be in the 'Bangor Conwy Môn' constituency.

Carrying out a Statutory Community Review

We will undertake a Statutory Community Review process looking at the boundaries of certain specific communities and the electoral arrangements (wards and councillors) within the communities across the county.

What has been achieved?

Following initial information gathering, collation and engagement work the intention and terms of reference to undertake a community review and a review of electoral arrangements in parallel were approved. Since then the following statutory actions have been taken:

1. November/December 2024 – First consultation period on the terms of reference
2. March 2025 - Approval of draft proposals
3. March – May 2025 - Consultation period on the draft proposals

Next steps

There has been a slippage in the timetable which meant that the final proposals were submitted to the Full Council on 3rd October 2025. Any changes to community boundaries will have to receive the approval of the Democracy and Boundaries Commission for Wales which has the power to make the necessary order. The changes will take effect in 2027 in time for the next local elections.

Welsh Government Automatic Registration Pilot Scheme

We have volunteered to be one of four authorities across Wales that are part of the scheme. The Elections and Elected Bodies (Wales) Act 2024 has introduced an automatic electoral

registration system ('automatic registration') for local government and Welsh Parliament elections, but the procedure must be piloted before it can come into force for the whole of Wales in order to assess the practical implications.

The Act imposes a duty on Electoral Registration Officers to register electors without receipt of an application, where they will have sufficient details. An eligible individual will receive notice and have an opportunity to object to the registration within 60 days.

What has been achieved ?

There are two main streams to the work.

1. The core process of collecting and matching data to identify individuals and register them.
2. Identify and engage with individuals who are unlikely to be identified by the data matching process and encourage and help them register. Small Axe is leading on this work on our behalf. They identify areas and groups where there is the greatest 'registration gap' and work with the relevant groups and organisations in the community to develop resources and methods to reach these people. They will also contact individuals directly and assist them in registering. Only Gwynedd does this aspect.

Timetable

The pilot period is from January to December 2025 with the registration and engagement activities taking place between June and September. The Welsh Government will then proceed to assess the pilot's advances.

The period during which automatic enrolment was possible ended on 30/09/25. Some engagement work will continue until the end of October where registration support will be offered to individuals delivered through patrols in the voluntary sector.

The Annual Canvas

The annual canvas was commenced during September. This is a statutory duty and involves contacting every residential property in Gwynedd to ensure that the Electoral Register is as accurate and up to date as possible

CORONER

Sion Huws Propriety and Elections Manager

Background

The North West Wales Coroner's Area covers Gwynedd and Anglesey. The service is jointly funded by both authorities, but Gwynedd takes the lead role as the statutory 'relevant authority'. This places a duty on Gwynedd Council to ensure adequate resources for the service. The Senior Coroner and Assistant Coroners are appointed and paid by the Council. The service is the responsibility of the Senior Coroner himself. North Wales police provides 'Coroner's Officers' who liaise with families, police, witnesses, doctors, hospital staff etc on its behalf.

Kate Robertson is the Senior Coroner and the Assistant Coroner is Sarah Riley. We employ one full-time member of staff as a personal assistant to the Coroner with additional support coming from the Administrative Unit and the Elections Unit.

We will continue to provide and improve the support available to the Coroner

What has been achieved?

We have continued to work to strengthen the administrative support, by looking at specific processes and developing experience and skills within the Administrative Unit. We have also been reviewing the arrangements with the funeral organisers working on behalf of the Coroner including holding a meeting to give them the opportunity to raise any issues with the Coroner, the Police (who are responsible for calling the undertakers out to death) and the authority.

While agreeing pay is a matter for each Senior Coroner and their authority individually, in practice this has been happening through a Joint Coroners' Negotiation Committee, where the local authority side and the coroners' side are represented, who have agreed a model and scale of pay for England and Wales and the annual pay increase. In March this year it was announced that the coroners' side had withdrawn from the Joint Committee because they considered it was no longer an appropriate method of setting their salaries. It will therefore be necessary to work to determine the way forward to establish new arrangements. Discussions are ongoing with the Senior Coroner to agree a new scale. At the same time we will be reviewing the arrangement for converting the daily pay scale for a part-time Senior Coroner to an annual salary on the basis of an assessment of the work anticipated to be achieved.

MEETING	EDUCATION AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE	16 October 2025
TITLE	Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee Forward Programme 2025/26
PURPOSE OF THE REPORT	To present the Committee's draft work programme for 2025/26 for adoption
AUTHOR	Bethan Adams, Scrutiny Advisor

1. All Council members, co-opted members, Cabinet Members, Heads of Department and the public were given the opportunity to propose potential items for scrutiny during 2025/26.
2. At the Committee's informal meeting on 17 July 2025, the potential items for scrutiny during 2025/26 were considered.
3. Information about the potential items was provided in advance to the committee members. The items included those that had been proposed at the Chair and Vice-chair's liaison meetings with the relevant Heads of Department and Cabinet Members and scrutinised items that required follow-up. There were also two items that had been proposed by Council members.
4. Items were prioritised at the meeting, keeping in mind the purpose of scrutiny in Gwynedd, namely to:

CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS DRIVING IMPROVEMENT IN SERVICES FOR THE PEOPLE OF GWYNEDD

This will be done constructively by:

- Investigating concerns about the quality of our services
- Acting as a Critical Friend, ensuring that appropriate attention is given to the citizen's voice
- Identifying good practice and weaknesses
- Holding the Cabinet and its members to account
- Reviewing or scrutinising decisions or actions that are not the responsibility of the Cabinet

5. Members were asked to consider the following factors when prioritising items:

- ❖ *Does the matter affect the residents of Gwynedd?*
- ❖ *Can scrutiny make a difference / have an influence? (people / service / performance)*
- ❖ *Is it timely to scrutinise the matter?*

- ❖ *Is the matter a priority for the Council?*
- ❖ *Are we clear about what we are trying to improve?*

6. An attempt was made to prioritise a maximum of three items per meeting to ensure that matters received due attention and that scrutiny could add value. This was not possible this year with four items having been scheduled for each meeting. Members felt that the items prioritised needed to be scrutinised during the year. All members are expected to ensure their attendance at both the morning and afternoon session.
7. 'Attendance and behaviour of pupils in Gwynedd schools' and 'School Improvement Service' were identified as items to be scheduled in 2026/27.
8. The work of the Safeguarding Arrangements in Schools Scrutiny Investigation is ongoing. The intention was to present the investigation's final draft report to the Committee meeting on 11 December 2025.
9. Members of the investigation as well as the Crime Response Plan Programme Board have emphasised the need to ensure that pupils' voice is given due attention as part of the investigation. To ensure this, it is inevitable that the timetable for submitting a final draft report to the Committee will have to slip.
10. The scrutiny investigation will undoubtedly have the greatest possible impact on improving safeguarding arrangements through the undertaking of rigorous and comprehensive work, making recommendations that have been formulated with due regard to the voice of pupils.
11. The aim is to present the final draft report for consideration by the Committee at the meeting on 12 February 2026.
12. As a result of rescheduling the scrutiny investigation report, the work programme drawn up at the informal meeting will need to be amended. The relevant departments were contacted regarding the possibility of rescheduling an item from the February meeting to the December meeting. The Education Department has confirmed that the 'Education Strategy' item can be moved to the meeting on 11 December 2025.
13. See attached as an appendix to the report, the Committee's draft work programme.
14. The scrutiny forward programme is a live programme which will be reviewed regularly over the year to ensure that the proper matters are addressed. Consideration will be given to prioritising matters that arise during the year, e.g. matters arising from performance scrutiny, items on the Cabinet's forward programme and the Council's work programme in response to the Child Practice Review.
15. **The Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee is asked to adopt the work programme for 2025/26.**

EDUCATION AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE DRAFT FORWARD PROGRAMME 2025/26

Date	Items	Reason for scrutiny
19/6/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft Education Language Policy Task and Finish Group Report Cabinet Member for Education - Performance Report Cabinet Member for the Economy - Performance Report Cabinet Member for Finance - Performance Report Cabinet Member for Corporate and Legal Services and the Welsh Language - Performance Report 	Task and Finish Group
		Scrutiny of the performance of Council departments
16/10/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gwynedd Economy Strategy Immersion Education System Procurement Strategy Cabinet Member for Corporate and Legal Services and the Welsh Language - Performance Report 	Pre-decision scrutiny / Strategic Plan
		Council Plan 2023-28 – Gwynedd Gymraeg (A Welsh Gwynedd)
		Pre-decision scrutiny / Council Plan 2023-28 – A Prosperous Gwynedd
		Scrutiny of the performance of Council departments
11/12/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education Strategy Cabinet Member for Education - Performance Report Cabinet Member for the Economy - Performance Report Cabinet Member for Finance - Performance Report 	Pre-decision scrutiny / Council Plan 2023-28 – Tomorrow's Gwynedd
		Scrutiny of the performance of Council departments
12/2/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safeguarding Arrangements in Schools Scrutiny Investigation Report Education Transport Tourism Levy 	Scrutiny Investigation
		Overspending in the field
		Impact on Gwynedd

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benefit of the Growth Plan for Gwynedd 	Matter arising from performance scrutiny
23/4/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital Plan 2023-28 Town Centre Vibrancy Gwynedd Economic Development Project Curriculum for Wales: The Relationships and Sexuality Education Code (RSE) and healthy relationships 	Council Plan 2023-28 - An Efficient Gwynedd
		Follow up / Council Plan 2023-28 – A Prosperous Gwynedd
		Follow up / Council Plan 2023-28 – A Prosperous Gwynedd
		Follow up to scrutiny in the 20 October 2022 meeting

Items to be scheduled in 2026/27 - Pupils' attendance and behaviour in Gwynedd schools, Schools Improvement Service