
THE COUNCIL 2/10/25

Present: Ioan Thomas (Chair)
Elin Walker Jones (Vice-Chair)

Councillors: Craig ab Iago, Menna Baines, Beca Brown, Stephen W. Churchman, Robert Glyn Daniels, Anwen J. Davies, Dafydd Davies, Elwyn Edwards, Elfed Wyn ap Elwyn, Alan Jones Evans, Gwilym Evans, Dylan Fernley, Delyth Lloyd Griffiths, Jina Gwyrfaï, Annwen Hughes, John Brynmor Hughes, Louise Hughes, R Medwyn Hughes, Elin Hywel, Nia Wyn Jeffreys, Anne Lloyd-Jones, Berwyn Parry Jones, Dawn Lynne Jones, Dewi Jones, Elwyn Jones, Gwilym Jones, Gareth Tudor Jones, Huw Wyn Jones, June Jones, Eryl Jones-Williams, Olaf Cai Larsen, Beth Lawton, Dafydd Meurig, Dilwyn Morgan, Linda Morgan, Dewi Owen, Edgar Wyn Owen, Gwynfor Owen, Llio Elenid Owen, Gareth Coj Parry, Geraint Wyn Parry, Nigel Pickavance, Rheinallt Puw, Arwyn Herald Roberts, Beca Roberts, Elfed Powell Roberts, John Pughe Roberts, Meryl Roberts, Richard Glyn Roberts, Huw Rowlands, Paul John Rowlinson, Angela Russell, Peter Thomas, Menna Trenholme, Rhys Tudur, Hefin Underwood, Einir Wyn Williams, Elfed Williams, Gareth Williams, Gruffydd Williams, Sasha Williams and Sian Williams

Officers:

Dafydd Gibbard (Chief Executive), Dewi Morgan (Head of Finance), Iwan Evans (Monitoring Officer), Dylan Owen (Corporate Director), Catrin Thomas (Corporate Director), Carys Fôn Williams (Head of Housing and Property), Ian Jones (Head of Corporate Services), Gwern ap Rhisiart (Head of Education Department), Dewi A Morgan (Head of Finance), Aled Gibbard (Interim Head of Children's Department), Sharron Carter Williams (Interim Head of Children's Department), Sion Huws (Propriety and Elections Manager), Vera Jones (Democracy and Language Service Manager) and Annes Sion (Democracy Team Leader).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Gareth A Roberts.

2. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous Council meeting held on 3 July 2025 as a true record.

3. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received.

4. THE CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Condolences were extended to the family of the late William Tudor Owen - former Member and Chair of this Council, and Cllr Dewi Jones paid tribute to him.

Condolences were extended to the family of the late Ieuan Roberts, Porthmadog, who had been a Member of this Council. A tribute was paid to him by Cllr June Jones.

Also noted was the recent death of the famous minister, Reverend Marcus Robinson, and condolences were extended to his family also.

It was further noted that the Council wished to express condolences to everyone within the county's communities who had lost loved ones recently. The Council stood in silence as a mark of respect and remembrance.

It was noted that several members of the Council had been unwell recently and they were wished a full and speedy recovery.

Councillor Wendy Cleaver was welcomed to her first meeting after she had been elected Councillor for Barmouth during the summer, and she was wished well in her role.

Catrin Thomas was welcomed back to the Council on her commencement in post as Corporate Director.

The following were congratulated:

- Everyone from Gwynedd who had recently been successful at this year's National Eisteddfod in Wrexham was congratulated, especially Owain Rhys from Cardiff, but originally from Llandwrog, the son of former Councillor Richard Morris Jones, on winning the Crown.
- The Sir Gaernarfon Organising Committee who had been sponsoring the Royal Welsh Show this year.
- Chris Williams from Bethesda, who had been running the Cefn y Ddraig Race to thank the North Wales Society of the Blind for their support to his wife, Councillor Einir Williams.
- To the swimmer, Ela Letton-Jones from Felinheli, on winning a silver medal for Britain in the World Para-Swimming Championships in Singapore.
- Cedron Dafydd from Pentir, on winning a Silver Medal in the World Rowing Competition.
- Richard Eirig Rowlands on winning the Wales Darts Championships 2025.
- Nick Thomas on winning a gold medal in the World Para-Archery Championships.
- Ymgynghoriaeth Gwynedd Consultancy on winning the ICE Cymru Diversity awards for the Hiraef Bangor flood prevention project.

Attention was drawn to the fact that it had been 60 years since Llyn Celyn was officially opened, contrary to the wishes of local politicians and the community. It was expressed that it was integral to remember, and remind the nation, of the travesty of drowning Cwm Celyn, and many other valleys, to supply water to cities in England. It was noted that we will remember Tryweryn.

The Chair invited the Chief Executive to provide an update to the Full Council on the Child Practice Review. The Chief Executive expressed that it was not customary to make this kind of statement, but that it was essential for him to address the matter. A week ago, he explained, that arrangements were in place to publish this essentially important report, with a briefing session for Councillors arranged. But, at 16:30 the night before, a message was received to delay the publication. It was emphasised that the Council was not a part of this decision or any consultation on the matter.

He expressed that he felt the same disappointment and frustration that two years had now passed, and that staff saw this as a conclusion and felt relief as it would now give them the opportunity to discuss this openly. It was emphasised that it was going to be a painful and difficult report, but that the Council was ready to apologise to the brave individuals and was committed to improve its systems.

It was explained that there was no further information available at present, but once there was, it would be shared.

It was emphasised that the impact of deferring had been much greater on the victims, who continued to be supported.

5. URGENT ITEMS

None to note.

6. QUESTIONS

(The Cabinet Members' written responses to the questions had been published in advance.)

It was expressed that the questions had been late arriving the members today and they asked for an explanation regarding why they were received so late. Apologies were expressed for this, noting that a large number of questions had been submitted and that responding to them took time. It was noted that they would arrive earlier for the next meeting.

1. Question from Councillor Dawn Lynne Jones

I am aware that a full review was initiated on Derwen services back in 2024 due to concerns about the increasing number of children waiting for access to or for the services of Derwen. I wonder if the cabinet member can give an update on the results of the review by now, and indeed, on Derwen's situation.

Response from the Cabinet Member for Children and Supporting Families, Councillor Menna Trenholme

The decision to hold a review of the Derwen Service was made at the Management Board on 7 November 2024. As it was a joint Management Board

with Anglesey, and as the Health Board was an integrated part of the services in both authorities, the review run concurrently across both counties.

Following the decision to carry out the review, a request was made for regional money to commission external support to lead on this. Money had been attracted for the purpose and a tendering process was followed in order to commission the work. An external adviser was appointed at the end of February 2025, with a work programme to run from May until September 2025. For reasons beyond the control of both services, the work programme had slipped and it was now expected for the review to be completed by the end of December 2025.

The scope of the review included considering the existing access criteria, analysing the service's current arrangements, understanding the needs of children and their parents, understanding the expectations of stakeholders and considering the design of the service for the future.

The final report will be submitted to the Management Board initially, and the work will be included on the agenda of the Care Scrutiny Committee.

It should also be noted that internal research was being carried out to look at Gwynedd population trends, including the number of births, the existing child population, as well as the number of disabled and neurodiverse children. The purpose of this work will be to discover whether the number of disabled children and young people is increasing, even as the number of births in Gwynedd reduced since 2012, and understand the reasons for this.

The work will also consider the ability of social services and the Education Department (Additional Learning Needs), to meet the needs over the coming twenty years. The work will follow the pattern of the Llechen Lân report on older people's social services in the future, which was published in autumn 2024.

Supplementary Question from Councillor Dawn Lynne Jones

She gave thanks for the response and for the reference to the Derwen service in Social Service's annual report, and that she was aware that the schedule had slipped. Is it possible to obtain clarity on the service's criteria and how the various needs of the children in the county can be evaluated against the increasing demands on services, how can we secure robust criteria which are flexible enough to ensure a service for every child who needs it, but also protect this scarce resource?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Children and Supporting Families, Councillor Menna Trenholme

Thank you for the supplementary question. These questions are ones raising from the review, and she will share the report with the Member as it is released.

2. Question from Councillor Rhys Tudur

Given that during this year the Council has abandoned the procedure of numbering areas on waiting list application forms which has resulted in the loss of important data, to what extent were consultations, impact assessments, notices to councillors and public reports carried out to justify the decision so that it is transparent, balanced and democratic?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Housing and Property, Councillor Paul Rowlinson

I would like to refer you to the responses I gave to the similar questions asked at the Full Council meetings in July and March, when I explained that we have not lost any important data whatsoever. On the old application form, applicants for social housing were asked to note the areas they would like to live, noting them in priority order. As many applicants filled in the form without prioritising the areas, and as this prioritisation did not take any part in the housing allocation process, it was decided that there was no point continuing to ask people to prioritise areas. The application form was amended in line with that. This was an operational issue only, it was not political, and the public had not been affected in any way, except for the process being simplified for them.

Supplementary Question from Councillor Rhys Tudur

Considering that the Council should operate in a transparent and fair way, and based on robust evidence when making changes, and considering that the Council should have consulted appropriately in line with the requirements of good Governance, and that there was not, it seemed, any single public report to justify the decision. And considering the change disrupting the quality of data and making it less detailed and useful to assess local need and to give clear evidence for planning purposes. Isn't it obvious that the change is undemocratic, unfavourable to vulnerable individuals who need to note where they wish to live and cause housing developers to profiteer hugely, by enabling them to use vague data, with no detail, to support the construction of a high number of housing in unsuitable places.

Answer - Response from the Cabinet Member for Housing and Property, Councillor Paul Rowlinson

Initially, there was robust evidence that people were not filling the form correctly, and so there was no need to consult as there was no change to the housing process. The change did not disrupt data at all. Changes to forms were not something that required political input, and so there was no need for all the consultation you refer to. In terms of planning processes, the processes being used are recognised processes on a national level, and those ones seen in Councils across Wales.

3. Question from Councillor Gruffydd Williams

Following the housing department receiving advice via Cyfeillion Llŷn from the Welsh Language Commissioner noting the ability to use the Welsh language as an allocations policy consideration and following recent attempts to build a large number of social housing in Welsh-speaking areas such as Nefyn, how enthusiastically and quickly will this Council be including the Welsh language as one of the considerations of the allocations policy?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Housing and Property, Councillor Paul Rowlinson

Cyngor Gwynedd's Common Housing Allocations Policy and our Housing Action Plan plays a key part in the battle to keep the Welsh language alive in our communities. Both the influx of non-Welsh speakers and the outward migration of Welsh speakers threaten its prosperity as a community language. The strong emphasis given to a local connection in the Allocations Policy ensures that the vast majority of homes are allocated to local people.

But the outward migration of Welsh-speakers is much more of a threat to the language. It is a sad fact that over half of us here in Gwynedd cannot afford to purchase a home, and even higher in some areas. Private rent levels are also high, therefore there is a need for social housing for those who cannot purchase or rent on the market. I strongly believe that we have a right to live at home. This is a core matter to us. Some choose to move away, but no-one should be forced to leave as a result of not being able to afford to live in their habitat. And there are over 4,400 people and families (over 2,200 applications) on the waiting list.

Therefore, as we are all aware, more social housing need to be built in all parts of Gwynedd. The Housing Action Plan sets the aim of building 700 by 2029, through collaboration with our housing partners, and I'm pleased to say that we are on track to achieve this goal.

The Allocations Policy places a strong emphasis (the strongest in Wales) on a local connection, with two levels –a Gwynedd level and a community level. As a result, 97% of homes are allocated to local people with a Gwynedd connection and 60% to people in the same community. The criteria in the policy safeguards individuals who are local to Gwynedd as far as reasonably possible.

You are correct to note that the allocations policy does not specifically include the language as one of the considerations. You refer to the legal advice commissioned by the Welsh Language Commissioner. But the Council and its partners must attend to wider legal matters in regards to practical execution of the provision in a way which meets other requirements and duties.

The Housing Act 1996 places a legal duty on the Council to give reasonable priority to the applicants in most need and it defines these. We must also give "due regard" to Welsh ministers' guidance. One part of the Guidance (3.69) allows "sustaining Welsh-speaking communities by giving priority to those in housing need with a local connection to the area." That is exactly what we are doing, and the emphasis we place on the local connection is one of strongest that can be seen in Wales and goes as far as possible in what can be included.

The Allocations Policy places social housing applicants in bands and then within that band a priority is given to applicants (or family members) who have lived for five years or more in the Community Council area in question. This means that an applicant who has the same level of housing need but also has a community connection would be given higher priority than an applicant without a community connection. Should any priority be given to an applicant's ability to speak Welsh, this would have to be given after these priorities, namely the level of need, Gwynedd connection and community connection. Because of this, it is unlikely that it would make much of a difference.

The percentage of Welsh-speakers who live on social housing estates is high. Recently, we have asked housing associations to conduct language surveys on their new social housing developments. They found that 90% of residents could

speak Welsh, in wards where the average percentage of Welsh-speakers is 76%, which is 14% higher. Social housing can help to strengthen the language by providing affordable homes to local people, a high percentage of whom speak Welsh, and help them stay in their area.

Furthermore, there are a number of good reasons for not changing our current policy.

As a Council we have a duty to serve everyone in Gwynedd, the non-Welsh speaking minority as well as the Welsh-speaking majority. Giving preference to Welsh speakers would risk alienating residents who have lived all their lives in Gwynedd but cannot speak Welsh, and in doing so, creating a 'second class of residents based on language only.

We have consulted with our partners, the housing associations, those who build and manage the homes. And the answer is clear: all support the policy as it is, a policy which prioritises the people of Gwynedd and opposes the principle of discrimination on the basis of the language people speak. If we were to follow that path, there is a risk that some would refuse to operate in Gwynedd anymore.

The Council must execute the policy fairly and consistently and the legal advice we

received stated that the practicality of its introduction would be extremely complex. Certainly, it would create difficulties in terms of how to define and objectively assess an applicant's and their families' language ability and conduct a review every year as is needed.

Those are the reasons why I believe the Common Housing Allocations Policy is fit for purpose and does not need to be changed for now. That being said, the Homelessness and Social Housing Allocation (Wales) Bill is currently making its way through the Senedd. If it becomes law, Welsh Government will publish new guidance and we will certainly be reviewing our policy at that time.

Supplementary Question from Councillor Gruffydd Williams

Considering my experience in Nefyn and nearby villages, and having spoken with my fellow members in Dwyfor, the numbers who speak Welsh in new and old social housing has seen a marked decline, as there is a high and regular turnover in the tenancy of social housing and as no allocation consideration is given to Welsh than adequate local demand. Isn't it obvious that we need to stop being so unwise and surrender to the power we have according to the Welsh Language Commissioner to use the Welsh language as an allocation policy consideration in those areas.

Response from the Cabinet Member for Housing and Property, Councillor Paul Rowlinson

I have provided an extensive report and I have covered the points. Any such change would have to be in parallel with the 1996 Housing Act considerations, and there are also practical problems as well as a matter of principle, and this is why there will be no reform at present.

4. Question by Councillor Huw Llwyd Rowlands

Does Cyngor Gwynedd consider that the culture of Ffordd Gwynedd, which is to provide the best possible service to the residents of Gwynedd, is operating efficiently and successfully in all parts of the Council? My experiences suggest that it is not.

Reply – Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Councillor Llio Elenid Owen

The annual report presented to the Cabinet meeting on 8 July 2025 shows that Gwynedd Council recognises that the Ffordd Gwynedd culture and the “way of working” are moving in the right direction, with several examples where departments are taking proactive steps to promote the plan’s objectives.

However, the report is also honest about the fact that progress and efforts to embed the culture remain mixed, and there are variations between individual departments and across the Council as a whole.

The report emphasises that the role of technology, training, and continuous evaluation is key to the success of this culture, but there are some areas where best practices have not yet been fully embedded. For example, there is a need to extend basic training on the “way of working”, embed the practice of continuous evaluation, and promote ownership of performance among all Council staff.

There is a specific plan within the work programme regarding customer care, and the Cabinet also approved a new Customer Service Strategy at its meeting on 8 July 2025. The work programme of this strategy will place particular emphasis on responding to enquiries and correspondence from residents and members, with the aim of seeing improvement in the Council’s performance.

If anyone receives a substandard service, they are encouraged to bring it to our attention through the relevant processes so that we can identify exactly where those weaknesses are and address them.

Supplementary Question by Councillor Huw Llwyd Rowlands

Bearing in mind that the Ffordd Gwynedd culture had been in progress for over 10 years, are you confident that Cyngor Gwynedd is sufficiently prioritising this matter, in order to ensure improvement and a marked change in the Council's culture within a specific period, e.g., 12 months?

Response of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Councillor Llio Elenid Owen

Ffordd Gwynedd's principles are to put the people of Gwynedd at the centre of everything, listening to their needs, and establishing the best possible way to respond and ensuring that this happens well and in a timely way. Committing to this culture in the Council is a priority for me and the Cabinet, and they are tireless in their commitment. Culture changes take time, and over the last 10 years, I believe that the vast majority of the Council's staff are buying into the culture.

It is unfortunate that those 10 years have been 10 years of financial cuts, and that this has affected the progress. However, we cannot merely hide behind financial cuts, and there is no doubt that some aspects of the culture still need to

be improved, and responding to member enquiries is one of those. I am aware that the Chief Executive and Members of the Management Team share this view and that plans are already afoot to improve that aspect specifically, and that there are plans for members to scrutinise and assist with the work and that they are in contact with you and ready to start that conversation.

5. Question by Councillor Linda Morgan

In view of the decision of the North Wales Safeguarding Boards to delay the publication of the CPR report last week, can the Leader give an update on the current situation with regard to the CPR please.

Response from the Leader of the Council, Councillor Nia Jeffreys

Thank you to the Councillor for the timely question and for giving me the opportunity to share the available information with the Council.

I was disappointed that the Regional Safeguarding Board was unable to proceed with publishing the report on 24 September, as we had hoped and expected. Of course, the disappointment and pain were even greater for the victims and survivors. I cannot imagine how challenging the wait for publication must have been for them, and I am truly sorry that this delay has prolonged their pain and anxiety.

We have formally contacted the Safeguarding Board to request an explanation, but unfortunately, we still have no information regarding the reasons for the delay. I can assure the Council that Cyngor Gwynedd had no role in the decision and we are eager to see the report published as soon as possible.

I anticipate that the report will highlight failures to prevent the paedophile, Neil Foden, and that many of these failures will fall under the responsibility of this Council. It breaks my heart to think that our safeguarding systems at the time failed to protect children who should have been safe in their school.

Receiving the report will give us the opportunity to fully understand what happened, what lessons need to be learned and which systems need to be strengthened to ensure our children are as safe as possible in Gwynedd and across Wales. It will give us the chance to acknowledge our shortcomings and to apologise again to the victims, to the many others affected, and to the people of Gwynedd for letting them down.

Following the adoption of the Response Plan earlier this year, a Response Plan Programme Board was established to monitor and measure the progress of the Plan and to implement the recommendations. There are now seven main objectives for this Plan: 'Acknowledge', 'Apologise', 'Support', 'Establish', 'Learn', 'Improve', and 'Accountability'.

The Response Plan Board is chaired by Professor Sally Holland, with representatives from several external agencies acting as observers to ensure independent challenge of the Board's work. Four Cabinet Members sit on the

Board, along with Council officers and representation from Ysgol Friars and the Secondary sector in Gwynedd.

I must emphasise that the adoption of the Response Plan and the establishment of the Response Plan Programme Board were not the beginning of the work. Several actions had already taken place beforehand, and much more remains to be done.

In her quarterly report to the Cabinet in July, Professor Sally Holland noted that positive progress was being made across the workstreams. That being said, there is still much more to do, and further recommendations are expected following the publication of the Child Practice Review (CPR) – we will accept all of them and implement them immediately. We will not shy away from our responsibility; everything must be done to safeguard the children of Gwynedd.

My thoughts remain with the victims, their families, and the entire community who have waited a long time to see this vitally important report.

6. Question by Councillor Louise Hughes

Following the announcement last week that the report into Foden's repulsive, predatory behaviour will not yet be released, it raises the question of how effective this Council's whistleblowing procedures are. We are all tainted by this appalling state of affairs. Parents sending their children to our schools place their trust in Cyngor Gwynedd to make sure they are safe. Withholding the findings of the report shuts down the rights of the victims, their parents and ordinary people who are justifiably angry at how this was allowed to happen over such a long period of time.

Why weren't the concerns raised in the past followed up and investigated under the Education Act 2002 for Safeguarding Children in Education - what reassurances can Cyngor Gwynedd give that future safeguarding concerns will be treated seriously and actioned robustly?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Education, Councillor Dewi Jones

Thank you for raising this serious matter. First of all, I would like to apologise sincerely to all those who have suffered as a result of the horrific acts of paedophile, Neil Foden, and emphasise that the safety and well-being of every child in Gwynedd are always our main priority.

You specifically ask why concerns raised in the past were not followed up under the Education Act 2002. An independent investigation was commissioned by the North Wales Regional Safeguarding Board to examine not only why systems that should have protected children did not work as they should but also the culture and arrangements that allowed such behaviour to continue unchallenged. Like many, I am also disappointed with the Regional Safeguarding Board's decision to delay the publication of the report. According to the Board, they need to consider their "legal obligations". I'm sure this has been a terrible experience for the children who suffered at the hands of the offender. I have not received any

further information since being informed of this at the end of the day last Tuesday.

In terms of ensuring confidence for the future:

- Gwynedd school staff receive regular training on safeguarding, with clear routes to share concerns as a key part of it. The Education Department has established a new Safeguarding and Well-being Team which has enhanced our ability to respond in a timely manner to safeguarding concerns.
- The Education Department has new arrangements in place to log and trace cases that are brought to its attention. Our Whistleblowing policy has been updated and procedures strengthened so that staff, parents and pupils themselves can raise concerns in confidence.
- Governors and heads are accountable through annual safeguarding audits, despite the national practice being every three years. These visits include: checking safeguarding policies, checking dates and levels of training, checking practical safeguarding arrangements, questioning the designated safeguarding person, staff and pupils about confidence levels and knowledge relating to safeguarding, checking the contents of the school's Safeguarding Arrangements Annual Audit and offering general support and guidance.

As Cabinet Member for Education, and a member of the Response Board, my role is to ensure that Cyngor Gwynedd acts appropriately and responds positively to any recommendations made during this process, and that lessons are learned so that safeguarding arrangements are strengthened. The Response Plan Board is chaired by Professor Sally Holland, and representatives from various external agencies attend as observers. In addition, four Cabinet Members, Council officers, and representatives from Ysgol Friars and the secondary sector in Gwynedd take part in the Board. In a report in July, Professor Holland said positive progress had been made so far with 32 of the 63 work tasks completed and a clear desire by the Council to deliver the remainder.

I would like to assure parents and carers that any safeguarding concerns raised today are treated with the utmost seriousness, promptly investigated, and robust action taken thereafter. We will tolerate nothing less.

The lessons of the past must shape the culture of the present. It is only by facing those lessons honestly, and by relentlessly strengthening our systems, that we can honour the trust that families place in us every day.

Supplementary Question by Councillor Louise Hughes

Thank you for your response, although we are ignoring the fact that Foden is a bully, that workplace bullying is unacceptable, and this should have been flagged earlier. Therefore, the complete silence on this issue means that we as Elected Members have not received any explanation on procedural departmental failings, and it raises many further questions. How often did the Ysgol Friars governing body meet? And what was the input of the safeguarding children governor? Many people have asked me whether Foden will receive his pension?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Education, Councillor Dewi Jones

As noted in the original response, culture is something that the Independent Investigation are looking into; I agree with you that workplace bullying is unacceptable and is something that Cyngor Gwynedd, in all departments, is trying to eradicate. But obviously, Foden displayed bullying tendencies and the Judge in Court also referred to him as a bully.

There are suggestions in your address which suggest that Gwynedd in some way is trying to silence people, but this is not true. It was not Cyngor Gwynedd's decision to not publish the report last week; this was the decision of the regional safeguarding board. It is not us who is investigating the Council's failings; this is done by the Regional Safeguarding Board, which is stand-alone. Therefore, hopefully what this will provide moving forward is confidence for people that the investigations have been carried out independently, thoroughly and will strengthen our systems. I am very proud to be able to say that we welcome any recommendations and are already implementing several of the recommendations; we have learnt lessons and we continue to do so. Everyone in this room has a responsibility for this. Yes, we have a Cabinet which leads the Council, but all of us in our roles as Governors, as members of the Scrutiny Committee are to ensure that lessons are learnt, and that our systems are strengthened. Because we can see what can go wrong when systems are not robust enough. I cannot say that this will never happen again, but we can do our best to ensure that we have the best possible arrangements.

This is why I am a member of this Council, and that is why I take an interest in education, as it is the future of our children that is on the line. I will do everything within my ability to enable this to happen. I speak passionately about this because this has affected me deeply, and I cannot begin to imagine how the parents, the families of the abused children feel, let alone the children themselves.

The comments about the pension; Cyngor Gwynedd do not implement the Headteacher's pension - this is an issue for the British Government. I understand that the Local Member of Parliament has raised this with the Minister in Westminster.

7. Question by Councillor Richard Glyn Roberts

Considering:

1. That the cabinet member for finance, earlier this year, stated that the Finance Department was working on a policy on the use of discretionary powers to reduce council tax liability in relation to the premium (in the case of property used for self-catering accommodation which is not subject to a planning condition restricting its use for the purpose of an ordinary dwelling) and that it is therefore recognised that there are self-catering accommodation businesses in Gwynedd which would merit consideration under such a policy;
2. That the authority continues to operate without an exemption policy, contrary to Welsh Government guidance; and

3. That the delay in introducing an exemption policy is attributable, it is said, to concern about creating *loopholes* and that implicit in that suggestion that continuing to raise a premium on property that merit being exempt is somehow better than the *possibility* that some might take advantage of an exclusion policy to avoid payment;

How does the Finance Department, in the absence of policy, deal with each case on its own merits (in line with Welsh Government guidance) and strive to act fairly and consistently and with the due measure of proportionality lest the Authority have to face a legal challenge in this matter in due course?

Response - Cabinet Member for Finance, Councillor Huw Wyn Jones

Thank you for the question.

First, I think a misconception needs to be corrected. There is no guidance from the Welsh Government requiring the Council to have an exemption policy – what it does say is that there is encouragement to consider whether there is room for councils to *use their discretionary powers to tailor a decision or to reduce council tax liability*. The legislation itself sets out statutory exemptions, and no Council is required to have an additional exemption policy.

Having said that, discussions have started over the summer regarding whether it is necessary to create a Council Tax Premium exemptions policy for Cyngor Gwynedd, and under what circumstances exemptions would be appropriate. There are several complex and technical considerations to be discussed, and we also need to fully understand what the impact of any policy would be to ensure that we do not create any undesired outcomes.

The real unfairness here is that our young people are unable to get a roof over their heads in large parts of the County. It is not clear from the question which properties "deserve" an exemption, or on what grounds.

Supplementary Question by Councillor Richard Glyn Roberts

Given

1. That the Cabinet Member for Finance maintains that the Welsh Government guidance demand that Local Authorities have an exception policy in this matter.
2. That the Welsh Government guidance on council tax on empty homes and second homes March 2023 version, clearly states "for fairness and transparency, every Local Authority should have a policy", noting the potential circumstances where a property can be considered for an exemption from the premium.
3. That there are local Welsh people who have visitor lets, who are hit with a £15,000 Council Tax bill out of the blue, with no obvious process for an exemption.

The decision-makers with this matter should be more familiar with the exact wording of the guidance; I can send you a copy?

Response - Cabinet Member for Finance, Councillor Huw Wyn Jones

The use of "must" on page 18 of the guidance, and what I would note is that the Council's interpretation, from the beginning of the paragraph, is that it is an optional issue for Authorities as to whether they use powers in 13A to reduce the tax, or impose an exemption policy. I am not a solicitor and so I am following the advice I get on this matter. Discussions have been held over the summer to identify a way to obtain an optional policy which ensures fairness and transparency and not being held open to allegations of discrimination or being left in a situation where an exemption has to be given to every empty property and second home in the county. We will introduce a section 13a policy over the summer months, but this will be broader than premium issues alone.

8. Question from Councillor Beca Brown

It was International Day of Peace on September 21st – a day that gives the people of the world the opportunity to commit to creating a peaceful world and to reflect on how we could all contribute towards creating a culture of peace.

With that in mind, I note that drone testing and development has been taking place at Llanbedr airfield in Gwynedd for over a decade, for a variety of purposes. Given the horrific effects of drones on civilians in wars, and given that we live in a world that feels increasingly unstable, can we be certain that the drones being developed at Llanbedr are not being used for military purposes?

Response - Cabinet Member for the Economy, Councillor Medwyn Hughes

Cyngor Gwynedd has been working with the leaseholders of the Snowdonia Aerospace Centre since the Site became part of the Snowdonia Enterprise Zone in 2011. The Centre offers a development space for different companies in the field of unmanned vehicles, satellites, and wider space technology. The Council has assisted them with projects that could lead to safeguarding and creating new employment opportunities in Llanbedr. They have recently received an £820,000 grant from the UK Space Agency to extend their research and testing facilities. Cyngor Gwynedd is not supporting any projects or activities on site at present.

The Council has contacted Snowdonia Aerospace LLP, the leaseholders of the Site, to obtain assurances that their customers are not developing drones for military purposes. Confirmation has been received from the Company that the site is only used by commercial companies, but as they have agreed to a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) with their customers, they are not in a position to provide details of the operations of these companies. Nevertheless, the Company has confirmed that they have no planned military drone operations with the Ministry of Defence at the site in Llanbedr.

Supplementary Question from Councillor Beca Brown

Thank you, I note from the response that there are no plans at the moment to develop or test drones for military purposes but bearing in mind that drones are easy to transfer from one use to another, how can Gwynedd residents be certain that the drones being developed in Llanbedr will never be used for war purposes?

**Response from the Cabinet Member for Economy and Community,
Councillor Medwyn Hughes**

Although this is not the company's vision at present, there are no restrictions that would prevent military drones from operating from the site in the future. The company has a certificate of lawful use, which allows un-piloted vehicle operations on the estate, but this does not differentiate between technology which can be used for commercial or military purposes. Security licences or planning consent does not differentiate between what type of drone can operate on the site. And we can clearly state to the company that there are concerns about contracts with companies that may develop drones for military purposes in the future.

7. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE 2024-25

The Chair of the Governance and Audit Committee gave a presentation, noting that it was a summary of the work done in 2024/25. It was explained that the report not only met the statutory requirements but also added value to the Council's governance arrangements, ensuring resilience in difficult periods.

It was reiterated that the financial challenges continued, and that they were scrutinising budgets to make sure that they made the best use of money. The staff and committee members were thanked for their priceless collaboration. Tribute was paid to the late Sharron Warnes and Cllr Rob Triggs, who had both passed away in recent months.

The Chair and members were thanked for their work, and gratitude was expressed for the special tributes to the two former members.

RESOLVED

To accept the report.

8. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STATUTORY DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES 2024/25

The report was submitted, noting that it had been some year for Social Services in Gwynedd, with the workforce facing challenges. It was highlighted that two years had passed since Foden's arrest, and that the work had been heavy on everyone, including Councillors.

It was explained that this report was statutory in order to report on the work being done and all staff were thanked for their work. It was emphasised that the work of the Child Practice Review had been very challenging over the last year, with both departments completely shook. Despite the awful things, it must be emphasised that good work is being done and take pride in the workforce who work so hard. It was expressed that the celebration is mitigated by the impact of what has

happened and this needed to be acknowledged.

Six original principles were highlighted which safeguards the Council, i.e., empower, prevent, safeguarding, balance, protect, work in partnership and accountability.

It was emphasised that there was no "us" and "them" when talking about social care as anyone could need the service. It was explained that a huge increase had been seen in the demand and this was highlighted in the data and the most prominent was the number of referrals to the children's department. When looking at safeguarding, it was noted that the magnitude of the work was almost 8,000 referrals, which highlighted the additional pressures on staff to respond to the need required. It was emphasised that only one miscreant was needed to make a mess of the whole system.

Attention was drawn to the progress made in direct payments, noting that it was hoped that further progress would be seen over the coming years. Through this progress, it was noted that more people would be living in their community, but the flip side of that, people were constantly waiting for domiciliary care.

The incredible plans that had been achieved over the years were highlighted, which had endless new projects. It was noted that the Council had received a Gwynedd Age Friendly Accreditation and that they had received money to continue with the work. It was expressed that a New Care Academy had been launched, with success seen with recruitment and some tens of people taking advantage of the training. It was explained that the Llechen Lân research was looking at Gwynedd's demography, looking at how this could respond to future challenges. It was emphasised that a work programme would be discussed soon. It was noted that the number of people with disabilities in work had doubled, which enabled people to earn a wage and dignity, and hopefully this would double again. It was explained that progress had been made in the use of technology (Technology Enabled Care/TEC). As a result, it was noted that there were many things to be proud of.

It was expressed that problems continued with the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS), as waiting lists were lengthy. Nevertheless, following the recommendation of the Care Scrutiny Committee, it was noted that the department had employed new staff and it was hoped that this would lead to improving the situation. It was explained that recruiting carers continued to be challenging, with 11% of care home posts currently vacant.

He emphasised that he had hoped that the Child Protection report would have been published by this meeting, but this had not been possible. Nevertheless, it was explained that the work was continuing and had started addressing the issues they anticipated would be in the report, but he expressed that there would obviously be more to do.

Members were given an opportunity to ask questions and offer observations.

Gratitude was expressed for the report and the work being done in the care field, but a question was asked about the impact on staff when other staff left the care

field or fell ill. He replied by stating that it depended on the situation, but that it could be challenging because of the lack of carers and specifically if the case was in a rural location. It was expressed that Llechen Lân had highlighted that steps were being taken to improve the situation in order to make a difference, such as extra care housing.

It was asked and agreed that a Falls Protocol would be discussed next year.

Staff were thanked for their work in such a difficult year, and for their commitment to Gwynedd services. The unpaid carers were thanked for their work and it was asked whether further attention was needed to support them and what plans were available to provide for the future. It was stressed that unpaid carers were essential to our communities and that approximately 10% of Gwynedd people were unpaid carers. Nevertheless, it was noted that the service, despite it being of high standard, was not good enough as they did not come close to seeing 10% of the population. It was highlighted that the number of carer assessments had doubled, and that there was better support for young people. It was noted that back-up plans were needed for unpaid carers, so that it was possible to identify what individuals needed if a carer was admitted to hospital, for example. It was emphasised that he was happy to come to the Care Scrutiny Committee to have a further discussion.

It was emphasised that safeguarding children is the root of the work of social services, and it was asked whether our systems are the best they can be. He replied by noting that it was impossible to be certain that every system was guaranteed, but the department was living in a system where there was room to improve, and lessons to learn which develop regularly. It was emphasised that changes have been made to the system and that there is a need to ensure that the child's voice is central to this. It was highlighted that a new safeguarding policy had been adopted and it was highlighted that further steps were in place to cross-reference cases specifically when more than one referral came in to see whether there were any patterns or reasons. Pride was expressed that a very low number had more than one referral and fewer still with live police investigations. It was explained that a procedure was in place to ensure that the decision was not made by one person, but that it was jointly or multi-agency with a discussion with the police on each case. The importance of staff and Councillors attending training was emphasised, as everyone needed awareness on the highest level.

An enquiry was made about the number of empty beds in Gwynedd Residential Homes at present, as it affected individuals being discharged from hospital. The report noted that there were many empty spaces in the County's Homes, so an enquiry was made as to whether this was because of staff shortages. As a result, individuals stayed in hospital and beds were being blocked. It was noted that there was a long waiting list for domiciliary care, and that Dyfed Edwards had announced that £30m in additional funding would be available for local authorities to provide domiciliary care - had Cyngor Gwynedd received this, as we needed to do what we could to support the Health Board to reduce waiting times in the Emergency Unit? The questions were answered by stating that the care homes were approximately 84% full - and that the department was aiming for around 90% in order to be viable. It was explained that there were reasons for the low numbers - such as work being carried out and subsequently having to close

some rooms for a period of time. It was highlighted that 11% of jobs in care homes were currently vacant, and therefore it was difficult to provide the care required. As a result, it was noted that Hospitals would be impacted as implementing the care pathways could be challenging, but the additional money would assist with this work. It was expressed that domiciliary care and direct payments needed to be used to reduce the need to be admitted to hospital, to ensure that Gwynedd is an age-friendly county where people can continue to live in their homes for as long as possible.

It was asked, considering that safeguarding systems had failed over the years, and that an increase had been seen in violence towards women, it was asked whether roles such as an IPVA or Young People Violence Advocacy Officer were needed within the Council. He replied by noting that these jobs were seen by the Police, and that the Council tended to buy-in such services to ensure high standards, but it was certainly a suggestion to consider.

A concern that was raised annually about the lack of nursing homes in Dwyfor, and the need to pursue the Government to get the work started at the location in Penrhos, was highlighted. Concern was expressed about DoLS and it was asked whether it was possible to obtain training for Councillors again. He replied by noting that he agreed 100% that the lack of nursing beds was not good enough. It was explained that Penrhos was the obvious answer and that he was confident that it would happen, but that it would take 3 years to be developed after receiving Government approval. Therefore, although there was a plan there, it would not be sorted overnight. In terms of DoLS, it was expressed that it was a challenging situation, but that this was the case nationally. It was explained that an annual assessment was needed, and this and individuals requiring assessments led to resource problems.

It was expressed in terms of the Child Practice Review, the need to ask for a Public Inquiry was noted, as they felt that the report, as it stood, did not have enough teeth. He replied by noting that the report was thorough and that a high number of individuals had been a part of it. It was expressed that it would make for uncomfortable reading and that it was quite challenging, and that this highlighted how thorough they had been, but that there was a need to look at it first, and then make a decision.

Pride was expressed that work was being done to look at staff recruitment and retention, specifically as care work could be difficult and challenging on such a low wage. In respect of direct payments, it was highlighted that not many people understood them and maybe there was a need to better show how it worked. The drop in numbers receiving Telecare was highlighted - a question was asked about whether this was due to the switch to digital systems. He replied by noting that a reduction had occurred due to the impact of digitisation as they found that individuals did not use it. It was reported that an increase had occurred since April.

An enquiry was made about the plans for the Fron Deg Home in Caernarfon, as there had been plans years ago to demolish and build extra care homes there, and the member asked whether there was any update. It was noted that this plan was one which was still being discussed, but that the work was taking time and

that obtaining grants was not easy. He expressed that he would be happy to get back to the Councillor with further information.

RESOLVED

The content of the report presented by the authority's Statutory Director for Social Services was noted.

9. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC SAFEGUARDING PANEL 2024-25

The report was submitted by Councillor Menna Trenholme, the Chair of the Safeguarding Strategic Panel during 2024/25.

She expressed thanks for the opportunity to share the report which highlighted how the Council was achieving its statutory safeguarding duties, which included children, vulnerable adults, serious violence and counter-terrorism. It was explained that the Operational Group, as well as an external inspection, ensured that safeguarding arrangements were robust across the Council.

It was noted that during 2024/25, there had been a substantial increase in the referrals of children with complex needs, which had placed substantial pressure on the workforce.

It was expressed that there had been a serious incident at Ysgol Friars in September 2023 and this had led to urgent action with a desktop review and the commissioning of a Child Practice Review by the North Wales Safeguarding Board. A specialist barrister in the child protection field had been commissioned to look specifically at what had been raised in the court case.

In the Adults field, it was explained that the number of referrals was increasing gradually, with the complexity of cases intensifying. It was highlighted that the DoLS work continued to be challenging but that further investment and resources were now in progress.

It was explained that substantial steps had been taken to strengthen safeguarding in Schools, with every school now receiving a visit within 18 months. It was added that high percentages among staff and governors had now completed specific and basic training. Attention was drawn to an increasing number of children who were home educated.

It was explained that the Council continued to raise awareness and acted pro-actively by means of training, multi-agency partnerships and case reviews. It was noted that there had been an increase in cases of stalking and harassment which had led on partnership work with the Police. It was highlighted that a reduction had been seen in anti-social behaviour, but that modern slavery continued to be a matter of concern.

Looking ahead, it was noted that the Panel's priority was for the workforce to understand safeguarding systems, and completing the necessary training, and learning continuously. It was reiterated that safeguarding arrangements

continued to develop in response to legislation, regional partnerships and experiences, and thus ensure the safety of the residents of Gwynedd.

Members were given an opportunity to ask questions and offer observations.

Gratitude was expressed for the report and a request was made for confirmation as to whether the reviews within schools were carried out by staff outside the school. It was confirmed that a team within the Education Department went to the schools to carry out the safety inspections.

It was highlighted in the Terms of Reference that Health and Safety staff were not a part of the monitoring group.

Attention was drawn to the increase in the number of children being home educated, enquiring how the department would safeguard these children. It was noted that the department sought to get to the root of the reasons, as they were eager to get the children into school in order to monitor their safety. Nevertheless, it was noted that there were specific steps to keep an eye on the children's safety.

It was expressed with two years having passed since the Headteacher of Ysgol Friars was arrested, and the delay of the publication of the Child Practice Review, it was asked whether the Council could take development and improvement steps without the report being published. It was expressed that work had commenced, and they were presuming what would be in the report and were trying to act on this already.

Concern was expressed about the welfare of children on School buses, as well as who made decisions regarding school buses. The point regarding safety was accepted, and it was agreed to look at the matter and have a further conversation about this issue.

RESOLVED

To accept the report presented on the work of the Strategic Safeguarding Panel for the 2024/25 year.

10. SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2024-25

Councillor Beth Lawton, Chair of the Scrutiny Forum during 2024/25, presented the report.

It was noted that the report gave an overview of the scrutiny work done in 2024-25, highlighting the reason for scrutinising and the impact of the scrutiny work. It was highlighted that 41 items had been scrutinised. Attention was drawn to several pieces of work done, which included the establishment of the Safeguarding Arrangements in Schools Scrutiny Investigation, which would report on the work in 2025/26. Another example where the Care Scrutiny Committee had invited external partners on three occasions, and the

Communities Scrutiny Committee had pre-scrutinised the proposal to introduce an Article 4 Direction to control the use of second homes and holiday accommodation.

It was expressed that practical adjustments had been made to scrutiny arrangements to make effective use of time by holding informal meetings. It was noted that briefing meetings would be held to give focus on the questioning strategy at the meeting. It was noted that making clear and purposeful recommendations was critical to good scrutiny, and it was explained that they were continuing to develop this element, which, in turn, would enable them to identify the impact of scrutiny.

The officers and members were thanked for their work, as well as the Forum members for the collaboration and the discussions which had contributed to improving scrutiny arrangements.

Members were given an opportunity to ask questions and offer observations.

It was expressed that in terms of the report, it was difficult to see what the end of the journey would be and that the actual impact of scrutiny was not obvious. A response was given by noting that this had been identified, but some were expressing that they were moving in the right direction in order to get a system that worked better.

Cabinet Members expressed gratitude for the work of the Scrutiny Committee, and that it was reassuring that recommendations were proposed, and that they were highlighting whether the work was going in the right direction.

RESOLVED

To accept the Report.

11. REVIEW OF THE DELEGATION SCHEME

The report was submitted, noting that reports sometimes came with a change in the constitution. This was one of them. It was expressed that this work was the fruits of the labour of collaboration between the Legal Department and the Housing and Property Department to adapt the thresholds for buying, selling and letting land. It was explained that this was because of a change in land costs over the past year. As a result, there was a need to revisit the delegation scheme.

It was detailed that the current procedure was difficult to understand and its wording was vague, and that it had been the subject of some confusion in terms of officer rights. It was explained that the new delegation scheme had higher values, as the vast majority of decisions were made almost without exception by means of a Cabinet Member decision notice. It was expressed that the new arrangements facilitated the department's efficiency. It was emphasised, obviously as with other Delegation Schemes, conditions would be subject to aspects such as Council policies, standing orders and consultation with local members when disposing of land. It was noted that the latest Scheme provided

more flexibility but ensured regular communication with the Cabinet Member.

It was noted that the Scheme had been submitted to the Governance and Audit Committee, who had supported it. It was emphasised that this scheme was moving from an unclear position to a modern procedure. It was explained that the Legal Department had looked at similar schemes across North Wales, and that the Council was going for a middle-ground scheme in comparison.

Members were given an opportunity to ask questions and offer observations.

One member expressed their objection to the Scheme as there were cases where the Council was buying houses with a 106 condition on them, and thus reduced the stock of scarce affordable housing available in the county. Attention was drawn to a case where the Council had offered a price that was much higher than the asking price, which prevented a local person from buying the house. It was expressed that this was the risk posed by delegating the decision to officers and the need for Cabinet Members to continue to make the decision was noted, as the Members believed that a democratic body should make the decision.

Officers responded by noting that the Scheme did not change rights, but rather changed the financial threshold. It was explained that almost twenty years had passed since they had been set, and that they did not reflect today's rights. It was expressed in this case and it was noted that this had happened at the start of the house purchase and that a solution had been found immediately. It was noted that the Council did not want to compete with individuals when buying houses, but rather wanted to buy houses that did not sell or where there was a risk that they would be bought by someone from outside the county. It was emphasised that such decisions were only submitted before the Cabinet in very specific circumstances, and mainly it was a Cabinet Member decision.

RESOLVED

To adopt the amendments to the Delegation Scheme for Officers, about procuring and disposing of property.

12. COMMUNITY REVIEWS UNDER THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (DEMOCRACY)(WALES) ACT 2013

The report was submitted by Councillor Llio Elenid Owen, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Legal.

It was noted that the purpose of the report was to submit the final proposals of the Community Reviews for approval. It was explained that two types of reviews had been held. The first of community boundary surveys where matters had been brought to our attention, and the second survey of electoral arrangements in every community, looking at whether communities should be split into wards for the purposes of community council elections.

Back in March 2024, the Council agreed to conduct the reviews and a statutory consultation was held on the proposal and terms of reference. Subsequently, draft plans were developed and submitted to the Council in March, and then a statutory consultation was held on the draft proposals.

The responses received were considered and modifications were made where appropriate to create the final proposals. It was explained that if approved, those involved with boundary changes would be presented to the Boundaries Commission for decision on whether to create an order to implement them. It was emphasised that the Council has the right to make an order to bring changes to community wards into force, however, initially, a report would need to be published, including the Final Proposals, and for it to be sent to the bodies and persons prescribed in the Act. When creating the order, consideration must be given to any representations being received from the Council during the six week period after publication.

Members were given an opportunity to ask questions and offer observations.

A request was made for confirmation of when the second statutory consultation was carried out. It was confirmed that it was undertaken from March to May.

RESOLVED

To approve:

- 1. the Final Proposals under sections 25 and 31 of the Local Government (Democracy)(Wales) Act 2013 and publish the Final Reports**
- 2. To authorise the Head of Legal Services to make and seal the Order for Revision under Section 31**
- 3. To present the recommendations for change under Section 25 for submission to the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales**

13. NOTICE OF MOTION

14. NOTICE OF MOTION BY COUNCILLOR BECA ROBERTS

(A) Submitted - the following notice of motion by Councillor Beca Roberts under Section 4.19 of the Constitution, and it was seconded:-

1. Recognising that the Pensions Committee has and intends to address these issues as part of a review of the Responsible Investment Policy that Cyngor Gwynedd requests the Committee and the Wales Pension Partnership, to consider the extent it can move as soon as possible to disinvest in fossil fuels as part of the desire to be net zero carbon, in a transparent and accountable manner and in line with its legal duties to the fund.

2. That Cyngor Gwynedd calls on the UK Government to establish an annual conference on ethical and sustainable investment with a view to promoting the best use of the funds available.

The member set out the context to her motion, noting:-

- That Wales is a unique nation where vows are included in the law, by means of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, to consider the next generation.
- A duty to invest responsibly in the financial future and environmental future of the county was highlighted.
- It was noted that looking after pensions involved securing robust investments that looked towards the future.
- It was highlighted that there was no long-term sense or guarantee in investing in fossil fuels as the world moved towards renewable energy.
- Investing in renewable energy, affordable homes and local infrastructure would offer a more prosperous, safe and reliable future.
- She expressed that only 2.5% of the Pension Fund was invested in fossil fuels, but what about investing in things that would bring direct benefits to communities, such as affordable housing, regenerative agriculture and funds for Social Enterprises.
- If Gwynedd showed leadership in this arena, it would provide a clear example of good practice in relation to the application of the Well-being of Future Generations Act to secure the best outcomes.

Support was expressed to the amendment.

RESOLVED to adopt the motion, namely:-

- 1. Recognising that the Pensions Committee has and intends to address these issues as part of a review of the Responsible Investment Policy that Cyngor Gwynedd requests the Committee and the Wales Pension Partnership, to consider the extent it can move as soon as possible to disinvest in fossil fuels as part of the desire to be net zero carbon, in a transparent and accountable manner and in line with its legal duties to the fund.**
- 2. That Cyngor Gwynedd calls on the UK Government to establish an annual conference on ethical and sustainable investment with a view to promoting the best use of the funds available.**

(B) Submitted - the following notice of motion by Councillor Beca Roberts under Section 4.19 of the Constitution, and it was seconded:-

3. Recognising that the Pensions Committee has and intends to address these issues as part of a review of the Responsible Investment Policy that Cyngor Gwynedd requests the Committee and the Wales Pension Partnership, to consider the extent it can move as soon as possible to disinvest in fossil fuels as part of the desire to be net zero carbon, in a

transparent and accountable manner and in line with its legal duties to the fund.

4. That Cyngor Gwynedd calls on the UK Government to establish an annual conference on ethical and sustainable investment with a view to promoting the best use of the funds available.

The member set out the context to her motion, noting:-

- That Wales is a unique nation where vows are included in the law, by means of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, to consider the next generation.
- A duty to invest responsibly in the financial future and environmental future of the county was highlighted.
- It was noted that looking after pensions involved securing robust investments that looked towards the future.
- It was highlighted that there was no long-term sense or guarantee in investing in fossil fuels as the world moved towards renewable energy.
- Investing in renewable energy, affordable homes and local infrastructure would offer a more prosperous, safe and reliable future.
- She expressed that only 2.5% of the Pension Fund was invested in fossil fuels, but what about investing in things that would bring direct benefits to communities, such as affordable housing, regenerative agriculture and funds for Social Enterprises.
- If Gwynedd showed leadership in this arena, it would provide a clear example of good practice in relation to the application of the Well-being of Future Generations Act to secure the best outcomes.

Support was expressed to the amendment.

RESOLVED to adopt the motion, namely:-

3. **Recognising that the Pensions Committee has and intends to address these issues as part of a review of the Responsible Investment Policy that Cyngor Gwynedd requests the Committee and the Wales Pension Partnership, to consider the extent it can move as soon as possible to disinvest in fossil fuels as part of the desire to be net zero carbon, in a transparent and accountable manner and in line with its legal duties to the fund.**
4. **That Cyngor Gwynedd calls on the UK Government to establish an annual conference on ethical and sustainable investment with a view to promoting the best use of the funds available.**

1. **with a view to promoting the best use of the funds available.**

15. RESPONSES / UPDATES TO PREVIOUS NOTICES OF MOTION

The meeting commenced at 1.30 pm and concluded at 5.30 pm

CHAIRMAN