

Complete Agenda



Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.

This document is also available in Welsh.

CABINET

CYNGOR GWYNEDD

DATE	Tuesday, 20th January, 2026
TIME	1.00 pm
LOCATION	Cyfarfod Hybrid / Hybrid Meeting
CONTACT POINT	Gwen Alaw Roberts cabinet@gwynedd.llyw.cymru

GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET MEMBERS

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

AGENDA

	Item	Submitted by	Officer	Page
1	APOLOGIES			
2	DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST			
3	URGENT ITEMS			
4	MATTERS ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY			
5	MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 DECEMBER			4 - 14
6	EDUCATION TRANSPORT POLICY (DRAFT)	Cllr Dewi Jones	Debbie Jones, Assistant Head of Education	15 - 49
7	PROCUREMENT STRATEGY 2026 - 2031	Cllr Llio Elenid Owen	Arwel Evans, Procurement Manager	50 - 97
8	WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY	Cllr Llio Elenid Owen	Eurig Williams, HR Service Manager Jac Ynyr Evans, Solicitor	98 - 127
9	REVENUE BUDGET 2025/26 - END OF NOVEMBER 2025 REVIEW	Cllr Huw Wyn Jones	Ffion Madog Evans, Assistant Head of Finance Department - Accountancy and Pensions	128 - 156
10	CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2025/26 - END OF NOVEMBER REVIEW (30 NOVEMBER 2025 POSITION)	Cllr Huw Wyn Jones	Ffion Madog Evans, Assistant Head of	157 - 170

			Finance Department - Accountancy and Pensions	
11	SAVINGS OVERVIEW: PROGRESS REPORT ON REALISING SAVINGS SCHEMES	Cllr Huw Wyn Jones	Ffion Madog Evans, Assistant Head of Finance - Accounting and Pensions	171 - 179

THE CABINET, TUESDAY, 16 DECEMBER 2025

Present -

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

Also present -

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

1. APOLOGIES

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

An apology was received from Cllr Nia Jeffreys.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

There were no declarations of personal interest.

3. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

There were no matters arising from overview and scrutiny.

5. MINUTES

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

6. ESTABLISHMENT OF A NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT BOARD

The report was presented by Cllr Craig ab Iago.

DECISION

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

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

DISCUSSION

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

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

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

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

Observations arising from the discussion:

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

- It was confirmed that the Board would be established as soon as possible.

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

The report was presented by Cllr Craig ab Iago.

DECISION

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

DISCUSSION

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

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

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

Observations arising from the discussion:

- It was acknowledged that there was a chance of being able to recover a portion of these costs, but the need to be realistic was noted. It was emphasised that the Council did not own the building, therefore the Council's role was solely to make the site safe.
- Clarity was requested as to who owned the building. Reference was made to the challenge of attempting to pinpoint ownership when dealing with a building like this.
- It was noted that much of this work was responsive work that was difficult to predict, so the Department was constantly cautious of that risk.
- When discussing the intervention powers that the Council had in relation to a dangerous building, it was explained that the first step was to serve a notice to the owner. It was added that this meant that the Council could only intervene if the owner failed to carry out the necessary work to make the site safe. It was noted that the location of the dangerous building also played a role here.
- A member questioned whether there was an end to this problem, and was concerned about having to pay more maintenance costs on the building for years to come. It was highlighted that there was no certainty about how the building would behave in the future, but it was confirmed that the building would be monitored continually.

8. TWF – THE WELSH LANGUAGE AT WORK CHARTER

The report was presented by Cllr Llio Elenid Owen

DECISION

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

DISCUSSION

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

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

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

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

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

Observations arising from the discussion:

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

9. ANNUAL REPORT ON EMPLOYMENT

The report was presented by Cllr Llio Elenid Owen.

DECISION

To approve the annual report for 2024/25.

DISCUSSION

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

She went through the main points of the report:

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

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

Observations arising from the discussion:

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

10. HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELL-BEING ANNUAL REPORT

The report was presented by Cllr Llio Elenid Owen.

DECISION

To accept the report and approve the recommendations.

DISCUSSION

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

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

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

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

Observations arising from the discussion:

- It was confirmed that the report included data from schools as well.
- It was asked whether the high number of accidents came from a particular place within the Council. It was stated that staff were encouraged to report any accidents so that the organisation could get a picture of where these accidents originated, and how to prevent problems in the future.
- It was explained that children's needs were becoming more profound and that we may need to consider how to respond to this.
- The violent incidents that take place outside the area of Education were discussed, noting that there was a range across the Council in terms of the type of incidents and the severity of those incidents. The need to report such incidents was emphasised.
- A member asked for an explanation for the increase in the number of members of the public being transported to hospital. The duty to report such cases was highlighted, and it was noted that the incidents ranged from school children and people in residential homes to people in leisure centres, for example.

11. COMPLAINTS AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2025/26

The report was presented by Cllr Llio Elenid Owen.

DECISION

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

DISCUSSION

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

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

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

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

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

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

Observations arising from the discussion:

- A member asked about the main lessons learned from the complaints and how this would lead to improvement. It was highlighted that the main cause of the complaints was a lack of response, and it was highlighted that the work pressures on staff was a contributing factor here. It was noted that customer care courses were being offered, and the further work that was required to address this issue was mentioned.
- It was proposed that 'lack of response' was the easiest category to address, and the member suggested the need to revisit this. It was explained that a lack of resources and the pressures on staff had a bearing on what was possible, and that departmental priorities varied.
- It was noted that acknowledgement was given upon receipt of all complaints. It was added that the department was looking at a potential system to address this and to be more proactive.

12. PENRHOS CARE HOME OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE

The report was presented by Cllr Dilwyn Morgan.

DECISION

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

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

DISCUSSION

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

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

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

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

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

The Local Member for Llanbedrog and Mynytho Ward was welcomed to the meeting. She emphasised that it was wonderful to see the site being developed. She suggested that the development was something that the whole of Wales should take note of. She noted the importance of keeping Community Councils aware of developments and getting local people involved in the project and asked if meetings could be held to do this.

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

Observations arising from the discussion:

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

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

The report was presented by Cllr Dewi Jones.

DECISION

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

DISCUSSION

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

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

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

The Local Member for Glyder Ward was welcomed to the meeting. She emphasised the importance of this investment to Welsh-medium secondary education in Bangor. She reiterated the words about the condition of the building and that they were old and fragile.

Observations arising from the discussion:

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

building's carbon emissions would also have to be taken into account with any alterations to the building.

14. GWYNEDD EDUCATION LANGUAGE POLICY

The report was presented by Cllr Dewi Jones.

DECISION

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

DISCUSSION

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

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

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

It was noted that this was a draft policy and that the Council had no right to impose any language policy on schools. It was added that it was a decision for the Governing bodies of the schools to adopt any policy.

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

Observations arising from the discussion:

- Support for the draft Policy was expressed, and a member questioned what support would be available to those schools that would be required to change as a result of the draft Policy. The members were assured that all schools would have time to prepare and submit their delivery plans. Furthermore, it was noted that the purpose of presenting the draft Policy at this point was to ensure that schools had enough time to prepare and plan in advance for adopting the Policy. It was added that school staff were also receiving support to increase

their confidence in using Welsh, and that there were plans to expand this provision through sabbatical schemes.

- Members expressed their desire to see these transitioning schools move across the continuum and being able to show that they were making steady linguistic progress.
- The Welsh Government's announcement stating that it planned to undertake a review of Governing bodies and their role, particularly in relation to policies such as this, was welcomed.
- It was recognised that influencing the social language of schools was challenging, but it was hoped that this draft Policy would enable us to work with schools to promote the social opportunities and extra-curricular experiences that use Welsh.

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

The report was presented by Cllr Huw Wyn Jones.

DECISION

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

DISCUSSION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Observations arising from the discussion:

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

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

CYNGOR GWYNEDD CABINET



Date of meeting: 16 January 2026
Cabinet Member: Councillor Dewi Jones
Contact Officer: Debbie Jones – Assistant Head of Education
Title of Item: Education Transport Policy (Draft)

A report to a meeting of the Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet

1. THE DECISION SOUGHT

- 1.1 The Cabinet's permission is sought to hold a consultation on the Education Transport Policy (Draft).

2 THE REASON FOR THE NEED FOR A DECISION

- 2.1 The current Education Transport Policy was adopted in 2009, and while there is no change to the statutory requirements related to providing transport for learners, it is timely to review the policy because of the need to:

- 2.1.1 Ensure we are meeting current statutory requirements and guidance:
- The need for consultation at least 12 months before introducing a change to some or all of the discretionary elements of the policy
- 2.1.2 Ensure clarity on the discretionary elements for fairness for children, young people and their families:
- There is inconsistency in the content of the policy across all areas, and it is also inconsistent with the transport policies of some other counties.
- 2.1.3 Ensure that the Policy is fit for purpose in terms of the reasonableness of operating within the resources available:
- The Policy is outdated which means that elements of it can no longer be implemented considering statutory requirements and guidance.
 - The Policy is vague which hampers the Authority's ability to make clear and balanced decisions, leaving us open to challenge and complaints.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 (the Measure) sets out the legal framework that specifically applies to travel and transport provisions for learners travelling from home to school in Wales; with 'Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance' (The Guidance) published in 2014.
- 3.2 The Measure states that local authorities must:

- Assess the travel needs of learners in their authority area;
- Provide free home-to-school transport for learners of compulsory school age attending a primary school and who live two miles away from the nearest suitable school;
- Provide free home-to-school transport for school-age learners attending a secondary school who live three miles away from the nearest suitable school;
- Assess and meet the needs of 'looked-after' children in their authority area;
- Promote access to Welsh-medium education and faith schools;
- Promote sustainable modes of transport.

3.3 The Local Authority has a statutory duty to provide transport from the home to school in accordance with the requirements of the Measure. At the same time, within the Measure, the Local Authority may make discretionary arrangements under part 6 of the Measure, based on the Authority's choice and discretion.

3.4 In accordance with the Learner Travel Information (Wales) Regulations 2009, Local Authorities are required to publish information about their policies for providing discretionary transport within their Education Transport Policy, and if an Authority makes use of Part 6 powers to provide discretionary transport, the Authority also has the right to revoke the provision at a later date. In order to do this, under statutory guidance 2014, the Authority is required:

- To conduct a consultation before revoking or modifying a discretionary provision; and
- Publish the arrangements by 1 October the previous year.

4. INTRODUCTION

4.1 The main changes proposed to the Education Transport Policy (Draft) for the purpose of consultation relate to the Authority's discretionary transport provision in the following areas:

- Empty Seats Scheme
- Faith Schools
- Dual Residency
- Post-16

4.2 Empty Seats Scheme

4.2.1 At present, learners who are not entitled to free transport are offered a vacant seat if there is a seat available on transport and are charged for that seat. Taking advantage of the scheme is subject to:

- Empty seats being available;
- Not requiring the vehicle to divert from its normal journey;
- No additional costs to Cyngor Gwynedd;
- Paying the current fee for an empty seat.

4.2.2 The scheme is not available on public transport contracts, and there is no assurance that the vacant seat will be available throughout the academic year. We try to provide at least one week's notice should the arrangement have to end.

4.2.3 In light of the statutory requirements to consult and publish any changes before 1 October in the previous year, it is not possible to implement the Empty Seats Scheme as intended without committing to offering an empty seat throughout the whole academic year. This contradicts the essence of the scheme of being a flexible arrangement i.e. being able to offer an empty seat without committing to providing the seat for a fixed period, as that could lead to additional costs for the Authority. As a result, the Empty Seats Scheme as a heading has been revoked as an offer of the Education Transport Policy (Draft).

4.3 Faith Schools

- 4.3.1 There is currently no reference to faith schools in the Education Transport Policy although transport is currently provided to learners who choose to attend the faith schools in accordance with the statutory requirement. Gwynedd has two faith schools (voluntary aided schools), and the schools themselves are the admission authorities rather than the Council, therefore there are no specific catchment boundaries for them as with the rest of the county's schools.
- 4.3.2 The authority is required to promote access to faith schools, therefore the offer of transport to faith schools has been added to the Education Transport Policy (Draft). The proposal sets out the intention to provide free transport for learners in accordance with the statutory requirement, and for learners living no more than five miles from the nearest suitable (faith) school, reflecting the fact that a faith school serves a wider area than a school's normal catchment area, which offers clarity within the policy on the right to transport.
- 4.4 Dual Residency**
- 4.4.1 Where parents share responsibility for a child and the child resides in two households, which are the homes of both separate parents, the Authority will provide transport from the main address, which is the address at which the learner usually resides, with at least one of those residences being in Gwynedd. This is on the condition that the school attended is the nearest suitable school from the main residence, or it is agreed that it is the most suitable considering the locations of the two residences.
- 4.4.2 The Education Transport Policy (Draft) provides further clarity, namely that transport will be provided in accordance with the statutory requirement, but that transport will not be provided from either residence if it is more than 5 miles from the nearest suitable school.
- 4.5 Post-16 Transport**
- 4.5.1 At present, the Council provides discretionary transport for full-time post-16 learners to the following educational establishments:
- Secondary schools catering for Years 12 & 13.
 - Special schools catering for Years 12 & 13 & 14
 - Grŵp Llandrillo Menai – Dolgellau, Pwllheli, Glynllifon, Parc Menai Site - Bangor, Llangefni and Caernarfon sites.
- 4.5.2 The Education Transport Policy (Draft) proposes that the authority provides discretionary transport beyond statutory school age where eligible learners living in Gwynedd live 3 miles or more from the nearest suitable post-16 school or college that is providing the course.
- 4.5.3 The proposal to provide post-16 transport to the nearest catchment/suitable school, as well as to the nearest college site providing the course:
- is consistent with the rest of the Education Transport Policy for learners of statutory education age.
 - means that the transport provision supports post-16 provision across the county and contributes to ensuring the viability of the provisions across the county, in Arfon, Dwyfor and Meirion when transporting learners to the nearest sites that provide the course.
 - meaning that Bangor University students will not be eligible for post-16 transport as the proposal relates to transport to secondary schools or Grŵp Llandrillo Menai sites only
 - means an age restriction of being younger than 19 years old on 1 September in the academic year in which the course was taken. This is consistent with the transport policies of other counties.
- 4.5.4 It is noted that learners have the right to choose any site for their post-16 education, but if a learner does not choose the nearest school/college site providing the course then they would lose their right to free transport, in the same way as the Education Transport Policy for learners of statutory education age.
- 4.6 Further Clarity**
- 4.6.1 There are also other fields within the Education Transport Policy where we have added detail and clarity to the policy, but those additions do not result in any change to the commitment to provide transport in accordance with the current Transport Policy. Those fields include:

- Measuring the Travelling Distance
- Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and Medical Conditions
- Looked after Children
- Schools Reorganisation
- Expectations on parents/guardians
- Transport charges

5. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee

- 5.1.1 The Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee will have an opportunity to scrutinise the comments received in response to the consultation and submit recommendations to the Cabinet. The recommendations of the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee will be considered as part of reporting back to Cabinet on the findings of the consultation, as well as to present the final version of the Education Transport Policy to be adopted.

5.2 Equality Impact Assessment

- 5.2.1 An equality impact assessment has been carried out on the Education Transport Policy (Draft), the full assessment can be found in Appendix 2.
- 5.2.2 The assessment gives particular attention to different equality elements such as race, gender, disability, language, religion or belief and age. The assessment sets out the current situation and shows that the policy is in line with equal rights. We will consider the assessment further and adjust when new information is received as a result of the consultation.
- 5.2.3 Having weighed up the relevant factors, it is concluded that the Education Transport Policy (Draft) is likely to have a positive and negative impact on some equality characteristics. From an age point of view, there is a possible positive impact as the proposed Policy will set clear guideline for learners since learners of all eligible ages will be treated fairly and according to their needs. However, there is a potential negative impact on a small group of learners aged 19 and over who currently take advantage of the Post-16 Travel Pass.
- 5.2.4 In the same way, there is a possible positive impact on a small group of learners who choose to attend faith schools in Gwynedd, as the draft Policy offers guidance and clarity in terms of applicable travel distance. However, there is also a possible negative impact as the Draft Policy offers to transport learners to faith schools from a maximum distance of 5 miles, while the current Policy is more ambiguous about the transport distance.
- 5.2.5 It is envisaged that implementing the proposal would reduce the inequality in the case of socio-economic disadvantage by ensuring that everyone is given opportunities to attend the nearest catchment area/suitable education sites. There is a possible positive effect of providing free transport to post-16 learners on a discretionary basis, so that they can continue studying in a sixth form or further education college with free transport provision. The Council would follow normal processes by supporting and monitoring, to ensure the compliance of education transport arrangements with the equality characteristics.
- ### **5.3 The Well-being of Future Generations Act**
- 5.3.1 The aim of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act places a well-being duty on public bodies and aims to fulfil the seven well-being goals by following the five ways of working. The Act places a well-being duty on the Council to carry out sustainable development work by working in alignment with the 'sustainable development principle'. This means that the impact on people in the future must be considered when making decisions.

- 5.3.2 Following consideration and assessment in accordance with the requirements of the well-being act, consideration was given to the 7 aims of the well-being act and the Council's well-being objectives and it is concluded that the proposed Education Transport Policy (Draft) contributes to all 7 well-being goals, including a more equal and prosperous Wales. The full assessment can be found in Appendix 2.

6. NEXT STEPS AND TIMETABLE

- 6.1 Should the Cabinet decide to support the recommendation presented in this report, a period of public consultation on the Education Transport Policy (Draft) will need to be held.
- 6.2 In accordance with the requirements of the *Learner Travel: Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance (June 2014)* document, any change to the content of the Education Transport Policy must be subject to consultation, and the arrangements must be published by 1 October of the previous year. It is therefore anticipated that the consultation period would take place during the months of February-March 2026.
- 6.3 As part of the public consultation, it is intended to seek the views of several stakeholders, including:
- Schools
 - Governing Bodies
 - Grŵp Llandrillo Menai
 - Parents / Guardians
 - Children and Young People
 - Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee
- 6.4 Following this, a further report will then be submitted to the Cabinet during the summer term to report back on the results of the consultation. The Cabinet will then be required to consider the results of the consultation and decide whether or not to adopt the revised Education Transport Policy.
- 6.5 If the revised Education Transport Policy were to be adopted by the Cabinet, the new Policy would be published before 1 October 2026, to ensure that it would come into force in Gwynedd in September 2027, in line with the *Learner Travel Information (Wales) Regulations 2009*.
- 6.6 The proposed timetable is as follows:

Steps	Timetable
Submit the Draft Education Transport Policy to the Cabinet to be approved for consultation.	January 2026
Consultation on the Draft Education Transport Policy (4-6 week period).	February-March 2026
Report on the consultation findings to the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee	June 2026
Report back on the consultation findings as well as the recommendations of the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee and submit the final Education Transport Policy before the Cabinet for adoption.	July 2026
The revised Education Transport Policy is published.	1 October 2026
The revised Education Transport Policy becomes operational.	1 September 2027

7. VIEWS OF THE STATUTORY OFFICERS

7.1 Chief Finance Officer:

“The change in policy is unlikely to have significant budgetary effect, and I agree with the need for the policy to be current, clear, and fit for purpose. I therefore support the decision sought.”

7.2 Monitoring Officer:

“This work has been supported with advice and guidance from the Legal Services. I have no observations to add in relation to propriety”

14 Appendices

Appendix 1: Gwynedd Education Transport Policy 2026 (Draft)

Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment

EDUCATION TRANSPORT POLICY

CYNGOR GWYNEDD



DRAFT POLICY
(January 2026)



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Cyngor Gwynedd has a duty to provide transport to school in accordance with the *Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008* and *Learner Travel: Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance 2014*. This Learner Transport Policy outlines how the Authority provides transport to school learners and Grŵp Llandrillo Menai learners who reside in Gwynedd, and the eligibility criteria.
- 1.2 To meet this requirement, the Authority will consider the following when making arrangements for learners residing in Gwynedd:
- The learner's age
 - The distance from their home to school
 - The nature of the journey from home to school
 - Requests for faith education
 - The needs of learners with disabilities or additional learning needs
 - The needs of learners who are looked after by the Local Authority
 - The needs of learners with dual residency.
- 1.3 The Measure allows the Local Authority to use discretion in relation to the services provided under some circumstances. These discretionary elements are outlined in Part 3 of this policy.
- 1.4 Transport is provided to post-16 learners under the policy as a discretionary arrangement. See Part 3.3.
- 1.5 It is a requirement for the Authority to provide free transport from home to school under some circumstances. These are outlined in Part 2. The duty to provide that transport is only relevant if the child resides in the Authority area.
- 1.6 The Local Authority will continuously strive to provide safe, affordable, efficient and cost-effective transport to those learners who are eligible under this policy.
- 1.7 Transport is provided from home to school to eligible learners between their home addresses or designated pick-up point and the nearest suitable school where they are registered. Free transport is not provided to or from the addresses of other family members or friends, the parents' work addresses or any type of childcare facilities.
- 1.8 The Policy will come into effect from 1 September 2027 onwards. The transport arrangements assessed and provided under the Local Authority's previous policy will

continue but there will be a material change in circumstances requiring making a new application, e.g. moving home or school / post-16 school or college.

2. TRANSPORT FROM HOME TO SCHOOL

2.1 Eligible schools

2.1.1 Cyngor Gwynedd will provide free transport to learners who meet the criteria for transport set in this policy. The policy refers to transport to and from eligible schools in the following categories:

- Community, foundation, controlled or voluntary assisted schools
- Non-maintained special schools
- Pupil referral units
- Independent schools named in a statement of special educational needs

2.2 Distance Criteria

2.2.1 The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 stipulates that free transport will only be provided for mandatory school age learners, if the distance from home to their nearest suitable school is at least:

- a) 2 miles for Primary School learners
- b) 3 miles for Secondary School learners

2.3 The nearest suitable/catchment School

2.3.1 A learner's catchment school is defined by specific catchment areas and based on the location of the learner's home. The nearest suitable school for transport purposes would be the school under Cyngor Gwynedd's care that is nearest to the learner's home. Further information about the nearest suitable/catchment school is available by visiting the 'Where I live' link on Cyngor Gwynedd's website: [Search for an address](#)

2.3.2 If the nearest suitable / catchment school is full, the availability of the next available nearest suitable school is assessed to accept the learner. The same distance criteria will be relevant.

2.3.3 Transport is provided from home to school for eligible learners between their home addresses or designated pick-up point and the nearest suitable school where they are registered. Free transport is not provided to or from the addresses of other family members or friends, the parents' work addresses or any type of childcare facilities.

2.4 Measuring the Travelling Distance

- 2.4.1 For assessments under the distance criteria in Part 2.2, the work of calculating the distance from home to school adheres to the guidance provided in the *Learner Travel: Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance 2014*.
- 2.4.2 Where learners are reasonably expected to walk to school, the distance is measured according to the shortest route available that the child, whether independently or with a chaperone, could walk, reasonably safe along it; considering the child's needs and age.
- 2.4.3 The suitability of the travel route is assessed in terms of the safety of the learner when walking along it, and thorough risk assessments are conducted by officers of the Integrated Transport Unit (Cyngor Gwynedd) at the likely time of day where the learner would use it.
- 2.4.4 Having undertaken a risk assessment of the learner's travel route (whether walking independently or with a responsible adult), if it is deemed that the travel route from home to school is dangerous, the learner cannot be expected to walk to school, although the distance from home to school is shorter than the statutory distance noted in 2.2 above. In these circumstances, the learner has a right to free transport provision.
- 2.4.5 The definition of a dangerous road is where the nature of the road, including public footpaths, means that it is not reasonable to expect learners to walk relatively safely. In assessing the comparable safety of a road, the Authority will assess the dangers that the learners could face; these could include rivers, ditches, traffic speed along the road, the data of past accidents, trees and branches, as well as other features that could impair drivers of vehicles from being able to see pedestrians on the road.
- 2.4.6 For assessments over the distance criteria noted in 2.2, the distance of the route to school is measured from the home's boundary to the nearest entrance available to the school, and it could include public footpaths, bridleways and other paths, as well as adopted roads. It does not have to represent the shortest distance on the road. The distance is measured by a digital mapping system (GIS).

NOTE: Parents/Guardians should also refer to Part 5.5 for information about sustainable modes of transport to school.

2.5 Primary and Secondary School Transport

- 2.5.1 The Authority will provide free transport to the nearest suitable/catchment school in accordance with the criteria of this policy for Primary and Secondary Schools. Discretionary provision could be relevant, by virtue of the criteria shown in Part 3.

2.6 The Parents / Guardians' Choice of School

- 2.6.1 Parents / guardians have a right to choose any school for their child's admission subject to the availability of spaces. Should the request be accepted, the parent / carer will lose their right to free transport if this is not their nearest suitable school / catchment school, or if it is not the designated Secondary school for the feeder primary school that they attended.
- 2.6.2 This is consistent with and meets the requirements outlined in the *Learner Travel: Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance (June 2014)*.

IMPORTANT: Parents / carers are advised to consider the implications of school transport before declaring their choice for space in a school. See Part 2.3 on the nearest suitable/catchment school, as well as Part 4.4 on the impact of transport.

2.7 School Admission

- 2.7.1 If parents / carers are unable to secure a place for their child in their nearest suitable/catchment school, or if their designated Secondary school (from the appropriate feeder primary school) is full, then free transport will be provided to their next nearest suitable school, on the condition that the distance criteria is met in Part 2.2.

2.8 Pick-up and Drop-off Sites

- 2.8.1 For learners eligible for transport, there will be an expectation that they start from a pre-determined pick-up point, unless noted otherwise when the application is processed. The Authority will strive to locate pick-up points reasonably close to the learners' home and not further than the statutory distances outlined in Part 2.2. Any distance measured will follow the principles outlined in Part 2.4. The assessment will also consider dangerous paths, following the principles noted in Part 2.8.
- 2.8.2 It is the responsibility of the parent / guardian to ensure that their child reaches the pick-up point in a timely manner and gets in the vehicle safely. They must also ensure

that a responsible adult is there to meet the child on the return journey, if the child's age or needs require a chaperone provision.

- 2.8.3 If there is no responsible adult there to meet the child who requires a chaperone provision in terms of age or needs, then additional costs will be payable by the parent/guardian, as Officers may have to seek guidance from the Children Services and, if required, arrange to take the child to a safe place by Cyngor Gwynedd.
- 2.8.4 Nothing in this Policy creates the expectation that every child should walk to the pick-up points, as this would be unsuitable in some cases. The Authority keeps a register of the known dangerous paths, and this forms part of the consideration given when assessing transport requests. However, if a parent / guardian believes that the use of the pick-up point is unsuitable for their child, they should express their concerns to the Authority, who will look into the circumstances to decide whether additional or alternative transport arrangements are required for that child; to ensure that the requirements of *the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008* are met. However, parents / guardians are expected to make arrangements for the first two miles to meet any transport provided by the Authority.
- 2.8.5 The Authority has the right to review the pick-up points to ensure that a safe path is continuously maintained and subject to ensuring that the most cost-effective provision is in place.
- 2.8.6 Once eligibility for school transport is confirmed, the Integrated Transport Unit will inform the school with a request for the school to share the relevant information with the parents / carers.
- 2.8.7 Where transport is used to take learners to pick-up points, the learners must stay with the taxi until the vehicle to transport them onwards arrives. Drivers are expected to report to the Integrated Transport Unit about any learner who does not comply with this expectation.
- 2.8.8 Contractors who provide these services have been instructed to wait with learners to ensure that they go into the vehicle that provides their onwards transport. Parents / guardians are also encouraged to report to the Integrated Transport Unit about any cases where drivers do not do this.

2.9 Dangerous Paths

- 2.9.1 For learners who live under the statutory eligibility distance shown in Part 2.2, the Authority will provide transport to the school if it is considered that the path is dangerous. Dangerous paths are assessed by the Integrated Transport Unit, following

the guidelines provided in the *Learner Travel: Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance 2014*.

- 2.9.2 Where pick-up points are used, the Local Authority will also consider whether there are dangerous paths that could reasonably prevent learners from walking to these locations, accompanied by a chaperone as required. In those cases, the Local Authority, after assessing, will provide free transport from the home to the pick-up point, or refer to the school (whichever is most effective).

NOTE: Where parents / carers have exercised their right to choose a school according to their wishes (see Part 2.6), then it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to arrange transport from home to school.

- 2.9.3 If a parent / guardian believes that a specific path is dangerous, they should express their concerns to the Authority, who will investigate to confirm whether any additional or alternative transport arrangements are required.

2.10 ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS (ALN) AND MEDICAL CONDITIONS

- 2.10.1 The Authority will consider the learner's medical conditions, disability and additional learning needs when assessing the learners' travel needs in the area. If a learner has an Independent Development Plan (IDP), transport for the learner will be provided in accordance with the IDP – this may also include pre-school children. If the IDP is reviewed and the transport element amended, any transport arrangements will reflect the revised IDP.
- 2.10.2 The Authority can provide free transport from home to school for learners of a mandatory school age, if they do not have an IDP, when transport is sought for medical reasons or the learner's additional learning needs (ALN) or disability. This provision will be considered when an application form regarding transport on a medical basis is completed, as well as evidence from an adviser or a person of a similar status (not a GP, Nurse or Practitioner). Transport for learners with medical difficulties/ALN will depend on their individual circumstances and the path that is required for the learner to travel. These transport arrangements are reviewed annually.
- 2.10.3 The Authority is committed to support learners to travel independently where practically possible. The annual review of the travel arrangements will consider the type of transport provided to the learner and, if a personal travel assistant is provided,

whether or not there is a need to continue with that arrangement. Cyngor Gwynedd can make changes to transport arrangements following the review.

2.11 Looked-after Children

- 2.11.1 Looked-after children is the term used in the Children Act 1989 to describe children under 18 years old who receive care and accommodation from the Children and Supporting Families Department, Cyngor Gwynedd, often with foster carers.
- 2.11.2 Looked-after children (according to the Children Act 1989 definition) have the same right to receive transport as children who are not looked after; however, there are no requirements for them to attend the nearest suitable school to their home or the placement's address.
- 2.11.3 If a looked-after child attends a school that is closer than the required distance shown in Part 2.2, free transport will not be provided. Exceptions by virtue of the criteria shown in Part 3 may also apply.

2.12 Dual Residency

- 2.12.1 When parents share responsibility for a child and the child resides in two households, which are the homes of both parents, the Authority will provide transport from the main address, which is the address where the learners usually reside, with at least one of those residences being in Gwynedd. This is on the condition that the school attended is the nearest suitable school from the main residence, or it is agreed that it is the most suitable considering the locations of the two residences. Transport will not be provided from any of the two residences if they are more than five miles from the nearest suitable school.
- 2.12.2 Parents must provide evidence if they believe that the time between both addresses is equal and meets the eligibility criteria.

NOTE: The Local Authority also retains the right to prove the reasonableness of the transport requested under this condition, considering distance, safe and accessible paths, the length of the journey, cost, as well as proximity to other suitable education settings.

3. DISCRETIONARY SCHOOL TRANSPORT

3.1 Within *the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008*, discretionary arrangements can be made under part 6 of the Measure. In some cases, there can be a charge for the cost of those arrangements to the responsible parent / guardian.

3.2 Faith Schools

3.2.1 For faith schools, Cyngor Gwynedd will provide free transport to learners who attend their nearest faith school on a discretionary basis if this is the choice of the parents / guardians for learners who live up to 5 miles from the nearest suitable (faith) school. The statutory distance criteria in Part 2.2 are used to check that the learner is eligible, but with faith schools, the application is also reviewed against the faith school's admission criteria. Evidence of proof can include examples such as a christening certificate, a proof certificate of faith or a letter from a faith leader. If the learner does not meet the faith requirements, then the application is reviewed in relation to the requirements of the nearest school or nearest catchment area.

3.3 Post-16 Transport

3.3.1 Part 2 of *The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008* requires Local Authorities to assess the travel needs of all learners under the age of 19, (learners must be studying a full-time course and be under the age of 19 on 1 September of the academic year when the course is followed).

3.3.2 The Local Authority provides discretionary transport beyond the statutory school age to eligible learners living in Gwynedd. Transport will be provided to the nearest suitable / catchment Secondary school allocated by the Authority to serve the learners' home address only, or in the case of full-time courses at Grŵp Llandrillo Menai, to the nearest college site providing the course. Free transport will be available for learners who live 3 miles or more from the school or the nearest suitable college site. The Authority will use the distance measured by them from home to school or eligible college on the system (GIS) to confirm the actual distance.

3.3.3 Learners with additional learning needs will be able to take advantage of the Authority's post-16 transport plan for a period of up to 4 years from the beginning of their first term.

3.3.4 The policy applies to travel to the following education settings:

- Secondary Schools maintained by Cyngor Gwynedd with a provision for Years 12 and 13.

- Special schools maintained by Cyngor Gwynedd with a provision for Years 12, 13 and 14.
- Grŵp Llandrillo Menai - Dolgellau, Pwllheli, Glynllifon sites, Parc Menai Site - Bangor, Llangefni and Caernarfon. The courses available at each of these settings can be seen in their prospectuses, that are available directly from the establishments.

3.3.5 If the course location or learner transfers to another education setting during the academic year, the criteria for post-16 transport in Part 3.3.2 will still apply.

3.3.6 Transport is provided between learning establishments who work in partnership with each other by those partners.

3.3.7 More information about post-16 transport can be found in Appendix 1.

3.4 School Reorganisation

3.4.1 In cases where schools are reorganised, the Local Authority will consider the most appropriate options for school transport. This could include providing free transport for a specific period of time depending on the circumstances. Such arrangements will be provided on a discretionary basis and documented in the reorganisation process; therefore, relevant schools, governing bodies, parents / guardians and any other stakeholders will be aware of the terms of the arrangement.

3.5 Reviewing Catchment Areas

3.5.1 In cases where the Authority reviews the catchment area boundaries (outside of the schools' reorganisation process), the transport criteria in Part 2.2 will apply.

3.6 Moving Homes

3.6.1 In cases where a learner, who has been receiving free transport, moves home in the middle of the academic year, transport provision will come to an end if they no longer attend their nearest suitable/catchment school.

3.6.2 If a learner is in the middle of a GCSE year (school years 10 and 11), the Authority will continue to provide discretionary transport until the academic years are completed, i.e. until the end of year 11.

3.6.3 This commitment is subject to the learner living in the Local Authority area.

NOTE: The Local Authority also retains the right to prove the reasonableness of the transport requested under this condition, considering distance, journey time, and the proximity to other suitable education settings.

3.6.4 Every other eligibility reassessment will follow the same criteria noted in Part 2. This part will not apply where parents / guardians have previously exercised their choice as detailed in 2.6.

3.7 Controlled School Transfers

3.7.1 Where controlled school transfers are supported by the school Headteacher of the new destination and the Education Department, parents / carers will be aware of this action and will be included in these discussions at a school level. School transport under these circumstances can be supported on a discretionary basis where a part of the action and the agreement of every party is formed to change schools for the benefit of the learner.

3.7.2 It is the parent / carer's responsibility to ensure that they fully engage with the Authority and the school when pursuing a controlled transfer. These matters need to be checked, and evidence will be available. This allows the Education Department to make an informed decision based on the evidence that supports the application for transport.

3.7.3 Where evidence is not available and/or where a parent/guardian refuses to engage with the process with the school and Education Department, the request for transport will be refused. This will be based on the lack of evidence available to make an informed decision.

3.8 Medical Conditions

3.8.1 Consideration is given to the need to provide transport to those learners who need temporary school transport because the nature of their medical condition seriously impacts their mobility (e.g. a broken leg). The Authority will consider every case individually, not only for those eligible for transport based on distance. In every case, transport is only provided to the site that the learner attends.

4. OTHER INFORMATION

4.1 Nursery Education

The Authority does not provide transport to children attending nursery or nursery classes at 3 or 4 years old. Transport is provided to eligible children from the start of the school where the child reaches the age of 5 and starts full-time education, normally in the reception class.

4.2 Clubs Outside of School

The Authority will not provide transport to or from after-school clubs (i.e. breakfast club, after-school clubs etc.) or extra-curricular activities that fall outside the statutory curriculum. It is the responsibility of the parent / guardian to ensure that appropriate transport arrangements are in place if they take advantage of these provisions.

4.3 Changes to the Policy

Should this policy need to be amended, the Authority must follow the statutory requirements set in the *Learner Travel Information (Wales) Regulations 2009*. This requires the Authority to consult, agree and publish changes to the policy before 1 October in the year that pre-dates the academic year when the changes come into force.

4.4 Transport Impact

Parents / guardians must consider the implications of their chosen school on the use of private cars and the impact that could have on traffic and carbon emissions outside their chosen school. The Authority encourages parents / guardians to consider transport and active and sustainable travel to the school of their choice.

4.5 Sustainable Modes of Transport

Parents / carers must consider choices for active travel to school. Information about Active Travel in Gwynedd is available on the Council website, as well as the *Walk Wheel Cycle Trust* website in terms of cycle paths across the county.

5. TRANSPORT PROVISION

5.1 Cyngor Gwynedd Provision

- 5.1.1 The Authority will try to provide the most appropriate and suitable mode of transport to every eligible learner safely and provide the most cost-effective mode of transport. This could be on a bus, a coach, a minibus, or taxi agreements, or on public transport that already exists. These services and the associated agreements are arranged and managed by the Integrated Transport Unit.

5.2 Transport Payments

- 5.2.1 In order to meet the statutory requirements, in exceptional circumstances, the Council can offer personal budget for parents to take their children to school/college should that be cheaper than providing transport arranged by the Authority, or where there are no transport arrangements in place.
- 5.2.2 Monthly payments are made to a parent's bank account after receiving a C1 payment claim form from the Integrated Transport Unit. The application form is checked with information about the learner's attendance in the school/college that they attend. The payment is calculated based on the parent's travel distance from home to school, using the Council's digital mapping software (GIS). The cost is calculated based on the distance of the journey to and from home to school twice. Parents / guardians are not obliged to accept the offer of a repayment; however, it may be considered that this is the most reasonable mode of transport.

5.3 Inclement Weather Arrangements

- 5.3.1 In circumstances of inclement weather, it is the Headteacher's responsibility to decide whether or not the school should be closed. The Education Department is informed of any decision to close the school. The decision will depend on an assessment of the relevant factors, including the weather forecast, the situation in the area of the school, the situation for staff members in relation to travel etc.
- 5.3.2 If the provider is unable to provide a bus or taxi in the morning due to inclement weather, then that transport will not be available in the afternoon. Any parents who have decided to take their children to school under such circumstances must be informed that they need to arrange to take their children home in the afternoon as the usual school transport will not be available.
- 5.3.3 If transport providers inform the school that they are eager to transport some learners home early, the schools must agree to the request as it is the responsibility of the provider to take the learners home safely. When making such a request, the provider

will respond to weather warnings or direct evidence that the situation in terms of weather is worsening. Such a request should not necessarily lead to a decision to send every learner home early.

- 5.3.4 If it is decided to close the school, the Headteacher will contact the transport providers to inform them. They should also confirm with the providers the arrangements for the following days as soon as any relevant decision is made. If unable to contact the providers, the Integrated Transport Unit must be informed on 01766 771 000. When a decision is made to close a school, the Headteacher must inform the Education Department using the "School Closures" system on the Authority's website: www.gwynedd.gov.uk/cau

5.4 Service Monitoring

- 5.4.1 The Authority retains the right to randomly inspect Education Transport services to ensure that everyone travelling is eligible.

5.5 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Inspections

- 5.5.1 The Integrated Transport Unit (Cyngor Gwynedd) manages and arranges all the necessary education transport agreements with the appropriate service providers. This includes receiving evidence and keeping a record of the Disclosure and Barring Service inspections for every driver and travel chaperone by the providers.

NOTE: Travel chaperones are only employed on primary school transport services where it is considered appropriate, or if the child's Additional Learning Needs make this appropriate.

5.6 The Behaviour Code

- 5.6.1 Cyngor Gwynedd supports the "Travel Behaviour Code" prepared by the Welsh Government. The Code establishes the expectations of individual learners, fellow passengers and transport providers. The Code can be seen on the Council's website [Behaviour Code](#), and in this Policy's appendix.
- 5.6.2 As learners present a request for education transport, they, or their parents/guardians, must state on the application form that they have understood and are committed to adhering to the Behaviour Code and are aware of the possible results of breaching the Code.

5.6.3 An unacceptable action by a learner that is contrary to the Code could lead to:

- recovering the cost of deliberate damage from learners and/or their parents/guardians,
- cancelling the travel arrangements agreed for learners for a specific period or an unspecified period. It will be the learners' responsibility to make their own transport plans to attend school/college under these circumstances,
- disciplinary action by the relevant school or college,
- submitting a report of the incident to the Police.

6. SERVICE IMPROVEMENT

6.1 Cyngor Gwynedd is eager to receive feedback and comments from service users that could lead to improving services. Any feedback or comments regarding this Policy must be presented through the Feedback and Complaints Procedure [Formal complaint / Praise](#)

7. FURTHER INFORMATION

7.1 The following is available on the Council website: www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru

- A. Timetables and maps of the Network to the relevant establishments
- B. The Behaviour Code
- C. Application forms.
- Ch. Complaints and Comments

Asesu'r Effaith ar Bobl Gwynedd

This document assesses what impact the policy, procedure, plan, etc. will have on the county's population and will be implemented based on a number of legislations.

- **Equality Act 2010.** The Act places a duty on public organisations to give due attention to the impact of any new (or amended) policy, procedure or plan, etc. on persons with protected characteristics. We are required to:
 - eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act.
 - promote equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

In Wales, the specific duty notes the need to undertake an impact assessment following specific guidelines to consider the impact that any changes in policy or procedure (or the creation of a new policy or procedure), will have on persons with protected equality characteristics. A timely assessment should be made before any decision is taken on any relevant change (i.e. that affects people with protected equality characteristics).

- **Socio-economic Duty.** Wales has implemented this further duty, which is part of the Equality Act 2010, and places a duty to address socio-economic disadvantages in strategic decisions.
- **Welsh Language Standards (Section 44 Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011).** The Council is required to consider the impact that any change in policy or procedure (or the creation of a new policy or procedure), will have on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and to ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than English. This document therefore ensures that these decisions safeguard and promote the use made of the Welsh language.
- **Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015.** The Council has a duty to put the five ways of working in place and to respond to the seven national well-being goals.
- **Armed Forces Act 2021.** Councils must give due attention to the impact of this proposal on those who serve or who have served in the Armed Forces, as well as their families.

Click here to type a text.

Author: Robert John Jones, Education Transport Manager

Date: 23/11/2025

Version: Version 2

STEP 1 - Main Aims and Objectives of the Policy or Practice

1. What kind of document or procedure is being assessed?

- New and revised policies, practices or procedures (which modify service delivery or employment practices)

2. What are the aims, objectives and intended outcomes of the policy or practice?

The current Education Transport Policy was adopted in 2009, and while there is no change to the statutory requirements related to providing transport for learners, it is timely to review the policy because of the need to:

- Ensure we are meeting current statutory requirements and guidance
- Ensure clarity on the discretionary elements for fairness for children, young people and their families
- Ensure that the Policy is fit for purpose in terms of the reasonableness of operating within the resources available

The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 (the Measure) states that Local Authorities must:

- Assess the travel needs of learners in their authority area;
- Provide free home-to-school transport for learners of compulsory school age attending a primary school and who live two miles away from the nearest suitable school;

- Provide free home-to-school transport for school-age learners attending a secondary school who live three miles away from the nearest suitable school;
- Assess and meet the needs of 'looked-after' children in their authority area;
- Promote access to Welsh-medium education and faith schools;
- Promote sustainable modes of transport.

The Local Authority has a statutory duty to provide transport from the home to school in accordance with the requirements of the Measure. At the same time, within the Measure, the Local Authority may make discretionary arrangements under part 6 of the Measure, based on the Authority's choice and discretion.

In accordance with the Learner Travel Information (Wales) Regulations 2009, Local Authorities are required to publish information about their policies for providing discretionary transport within their Education Transport Policy, and if an Authority makes use of Part 6 powers to provide discretionary transport, the Authority also has the right to revoke the provision at a later date. In order to do this, under statutory guidance 2014, the Authority is required:

- To conduct a consultation before revoking or modifying a discretionary provision; and
- Publish the arrangements by 1 October the previous year.

The main changes proposed to the Education Transport Policy (Draft) for the purpose of consultation relate to the Authority's discretionary transport provision in the following areas:

- Empty Seats Scheme
- Faith Schools
- Dual Residency
- Post-16

There are also other fields within the Education Transport Policy where we have added detail and clarity to the policy, but those additions do not result in any change to the commitment to provide transport in accordance with the current Transport Policy. Those fields include:

- Measuring the Travelling Distance
- Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and Medical Conditions
- Looked after Children
- Schools Reorganisation

- Expectations on parents/guardians
- Transport charges

3. Who are the main consultative groups (stakeholders)?

The Authority will specifically consider the following stakeholders when undertaking the consultation:

- School Headteachers
- Governing Bodies
- Grŵp Llandrillo Menai
- Parents
- Children and Young People

The Authority will consider the comments of the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee following the consultation.

STEP 2 - Engagement Data and Impact Assessment

4. Has there been any attempt to comply with the duty to engage in accordance with what is described above and has enough information been gathered to proceed?

Yes, we are seeking Cabinet permission to proceed with the public engagement exercise.

Details of the engagement. Note any consultation or engagement you have conducted or intend to conduct.

Action	Dates	Information
Complaints and enquiries	September 2024- September 2025	<p>Following a detailed scrutiny of the complaints and inquiries received relating specifically to education transport over the period, it becomes clear that our current transport policy is weak in terms of offering guidance and the relevant detail when dealing with these issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessment and suitability of routes - The nearest catchment / suitable school - Additional learning Needs and Medical Conditions - Code of Conduct <p>As a result, we have offered further clarity and detail on these aspects in the Education Transport Policy (Draft).</p> <p>A number of requests, enquiries, and as a result complaint were also received about the Empty Seats Scheme which is part of the current Education Transport Policy. Although there is a fee attached to the Empty Seats Scheme, the scheme does not guarantee an empty seat for a specific period, and it is not possible to increase vehicle capacity to meet the need for more seats as part of the Scheme, as the intention of the scheme is to facilitate transport for learners who are not eligible under the statutory requirements, but that does not lead to additional costs for the authority.</p> <p>Due to the statutory requirements to consult and announce any change before 1 October of the previous year, it is not possible to implement the Empty Seats Scheme as intended without committing to offer an empty seat throughout the academic year. This goes against the essence of the plan of a flexible arrangement to be able to offer an empty seat without committing to providing the seat for a specific period, as that could lead to additional costs for the Authority.</p>

		As a result, the Empty Seats Scheme as a heading has been abolished as a proposal from the Draft Education Transport Policy.
Public Consultation	February-March 2026	<p>The Authority will specifically consider the following stakeholders when undertaking the consultation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School Headteachers - Governing Bodies - Grŵp Llandrillo Menai - Parents - Children and Young People - Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee <p>It is intended to consult specifically with some relevant groups i.e.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Headteachers Strategic Groups - Gwynedd Governors Forum - Children and Young People Forum <p>The Authority will consider the comments of the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee following the consultation.</p>

5. What information is available about the impact on each of the following characteristics and subjects?

	Evidence, Information and Relevant Data	Potential Positive and/or Negative Impact
Race	The Education Department, the Integrated Transport Unit and all Gwynedd schools have relevant policies in practice to protect individuals from any discrimination based on race, such as Equality, Inclusion and Anti-bullying Policies. The Anti-bullying Policy provided by Cyngor Gwynedd sets out anti-bullying guidelines and procedures based on	We have not identified a potential impact on this characteristic

	factors such as race in the school, which extend out to the transport arrangements to school and home for that specific school. Therefore, it is not anticipated that the proposed transport policy would affect this characteristic.	
Disability	It is not anticipated that the change would have a negative impact on this characteristic. An accessibility-based assessment of any provision and suitability of paths, pick-up points, transportation vehicles and relevant sites would be carried out, and we will ensure that any transport provided (in line with the Education Department's transportation policy), would be suitable for the individual's needs. The needs of any disabled child would be considered in accordance with the Education Department's Accessibility and Equality policies.	We have not identified a potential impact on this characteristic
Gender	It is not anticipated that the proposed transport policy would affect this characteristic. Implementing the said document would mean that everyone would continue to be treated according to their needs, regardless of their gender.	We have not identified a potential impact on this characteristic
Age	It is anticipated that implementing the new transport policy would mean that learners of all eligible ages would be treated fairly and according to their need. Introducing a maximum eligibility age of 19 for post-16 learners, in line with the 2008 Transport Measure, would reduce long-term transport costs and secure sufficient capacity for eligible learners.	<p>There is a possible positive effect as the new Policy will set clear guidance for learners due to the fact that learners of all eligible ages will be treated fairly and according to their needs.</p> <p>There is a potential negative impact on a small group of learners aged 19 and over who currently benefit from the Post-16 Travel Pass. There is an intention to consult on this change as part of the consultation on the draft Policy and we will consider the feedback received from the consultation, adapt and change the draft Policy as we see fit, before the policy is adopted in its final form.</p>

Religion and Belief	<p>Every school and further education college has an Inclusion Policy that deals with any discriminatory incident that may arise, associated with religion or belief.</p> <p>There is no reference to faith schools in the current Education Transport Policy, therefore there is no clear guidelines within the present policy on transport for learners who attend faith schools in Gwynedd.</p>	<p>There is a possible positive effect as the new Policy will set clear guidance for a small group of learners who choose to attend faith schools, and therefore they will be treated fairly and according to their needs.</p> <p>There is a potential negative impact also as the draft policy proposes to transport learners to faith schools for a maximum distance of 5 miles, whilst the existing policy is more ambiguous about the transportation distance. There is an intention to consult on this change and we will consider the feedback received from the consultation, adapt and change the draft Policy as we see fit, before the policy is adopted in its final form.</p>
Sexual Orientation	It is not anticipated that the proposed transport policy would affect this characteristic. Implementing the said document would mean that everyone would continue to be treated according to their needs.	We have not identified a potential impact on this characteristic
Gender reassignment	It is not anticipated that the proposed transport policy would affect this characteristic. Implementing the said document would mean that everyone would continue to be treated according to their needs.	We have not identified a potential impact on this characteristic
Marriage and Civil Partnership	It is not anticipated that the new-look policy would impact people who are married or in a civil partnership. Implementing the said document would mean that everyone would continue to be treated according to their needs.	We have not identified a potential impact on this characteristic
Pregnancy and Maternity	It is not anticipated that the draft transport policy would have an impact on anyone who is pregnant, whether staff or parents, as both schools and colleges implement the same policies. Implementing the said document would mean that everyone would continue to be treated according to their needs.	We have not identified a potential impact on this characteristic

The Welsh Language	It is not anticipated that introducing the proposed changes in the draft transport policy would affect the Welsh language. Updates to commissioning and administrative procedures and processes are the main changes here.	We have not identified a potential impact on this characteristic
Socio-economic Considerations	Providing transport for post-16 learners is not a statutory requirement, however, on a positive note, Gwynedd Council on a discretionary basis provides free transport for further education students to attend various education courses in our schools which have a sixth form and several college campuses. Ensuring free transport promotes access for all learners to be able to study in further education. We will add details about the impact on the socio economic considerations as more information becomes available.	There is a possible positive effect of providing free transport to post-16 learners on a discretionary basis, so that they can continue to study in further education with partial and free transport provision. We will consider any relevant feedback from the point of view of the socio-economic considerations received from the consultation and adapt and change the Draft Transport Education Policy as we see fit, before the policy is finally adopted.
Those Who Serve or Who Have Served in the Armed Forces, As Well As Their Families	It is not anticipated that the proposed policy would have an impact on those who serve or who have served in the armed forces, as well as their families. Children from military or ex-military families will get the same fair play whichever school they attend.	We have not identified a potential impact on this characteristic
Human Rights	It is not anticipated that changes to the transport policy would have an impact on human rights.	We have not identified a potential impact on this characteristic
Other	No further observations currently.	No further observations currently.

6. Are there any data or information gaps, and if so, what are they and how do you intend to address them?

Following guidance and subject to Cabinet decision to go out to consult on the Draft Education Transport Policy, we intend to hold a public consultation between February and March 2026. The Authority will specifically consider the following stakeholders when undertaking the consultation:

- Schools
- Governing Bodies

- Grŵp Llandrillo Menai
- Parents
- Children and Young People

The Authority will consider the comments of the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee following the consultation.

The consultation will be an opportunity to gather data and further information to be included in the Education Transport Policy, as well as the Impact Assessment. We will update the Equality Impact Assessment as the direction of the work becomes more apparent.

7. When considering other key decisions that affect these groups, is there an increasing impact (cumulative impact)?

It is not anticipated that there will be a cumulative impact from introducing the draft Education Transport Policy for consultation purposes. We will consider all the feedback received from the consultation, and adapt and change the Draft Transport Education Policy as we see fit, before the Policy is finally adopted.

8. What does the proposal include to demonstrate you have given due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty (to promote equal opportunity; help to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, or victimisation and foster good relations and wider community cohesion) as covered by the three aims of the General Duty in the Equality Act 2010?

The Policy will follow the statutory requirements to protect the learner from any discrimination, harassment or victimisation. Equal opportunities are promoted within the organisations and equality policies and procedures are followed.

9. How does the proposal show that due regard has been given to the need to address inequality due to socio-economic disadvantage? (Note that this relates to closing the inequality gap, rather than just improving outcomes for everyone.)

The proposed new transport policy will ensure that opportunities are given to everyone to attend the nearest catchment/suitable education sites. Learners are given the opportunities to follow an education pathway of their choice, following a course from the range of subjects offered across all the county's education sites, and a site that meets all the learner's needs. Suitable, orderly transport is provided, with particular links for this purpose.

10. How does the proposal show implementation in line with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011), to ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than the English language, and to ensure opportunities for people to use the Welsh language? Also, how does the proposal operate in accordance with the requirements of the Council's Welsh Language Strategy to take

advantage of every opportunity to promote the Welsh language (beyond providing bilingual services) and increase opportunities to use and learn the language in the community?

The Education Transport Policy provides transport for learners to Category 3 Welsh-medium schools and transitional schools in accordance with the statutory requirements. Facilitating access to Welsh-medium schools through the Education Transport Policy ensures that all learners have opportunities to use the Welsh language in the schools, together with taking advantage of the schools' campaigns to promote the Welsh language in the school and in the community in accordance with the vision of the Siarter Iaith.

Furthermore, every tender agreement between the Council and the education transport providers requires the contractor to comply with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards, being able to communicate and understand Welsh and English to a standard that would enable them to deal in a timely and appropriate manner with an issue that may arise during the implementation of the agreement.

11. How does this proposal meet the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act by implementing the five ways of working, and respond to the seven national well-being goals, including creating a More Equal Wales?

Following consideration and assessment in accordance with the requirements of the well-being act, the seven well-being act goals and the Council's well-being objectives were considered, and it is concluded that the proposal meets the following requirements: The Transport Policy (draft) makes a direct contribution to the Act in many ways:

1. **A prosperous Wales** - Opportunities are provided through access to educational opportunities to foster and develop a skilled and educated population.
2. **A resilient Wales** - Through their studies, learners become aware of the values which maintain social, economic and ecological resilience, as well as the ability to adapt to change.
3. **A healthier Wales** - Being a part of society which promotes physical well-being and seeks to reflect on a positive identity, which is associated with strengthening mental health. The purpose of this is to ensure that every child and young person in Gwynedd is ready to learn and can fully benefit from the education and training available, and can easily access support to improve their emotional, mental and physical well-being.
4. **A more equal Wales** - Providing access to a comprehensive education for every child, regardless of their background, seeks to ensure that every child and young person can access the highest quality education and training, which enables them to thrive and achieve their potential.
5. **A Wales of cohesive communities** - Opportunities are provided to connect people and communities by providing viable and safe transport links.
6. **A Wales with a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language** - Welsh-medium education is one of the main methods of realising this goal.
7. **A globally responsible Wales** - Access to education promotes and improves the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of our learners, in the hope that this extends to global well-being.

The five ways of working are operational in the:

Long-term - promoting access to education and reducing any frustrations for the future generations.

Prevention - ensure that children do not lose the opportunity to access the best type of education.

Integration - engagement with education, culture, health and equality.

Collaboration - partnerships between schools, local authorities and parents. **Involvement** - giving families and learners a voice when drawing up and developing a policy.

STEP 3 - Procurement and Partnerships

12. Will this policy or practice be carried out wholly or partly by contractors or in partnership with another organisation(s)?

Transport for learners will be provided through tender processes and third-party agreements administrated by the Integrated Transport Unit.

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:

The tender documents will be Cyngor Gwynedd standard documents, which note the expectations in terms of compliance with the General Equality Duty, Human Resources and Welsh language legislation and the Socio-economic Duty.

STEP 4 - Dealing with Negative or Unlawful Impact and Strengthening the Policy or Practice

13. When considering proportionality, does the policy or practice have a significantly positive or negative impact or create unequal outcomes?

Significant Positive Impact:

This is considered when engaging on the proposed draft policy. It is ensured that everyone, including the learner, can voice their opinion on the proposal. This is achieved by publishing an on-line engagement package on our corporate website, which will include a background document explaining the rationale for the consultation, the Draft Education Transport Policy, an online questionnaire, together with the Impact Assessment on the People of Gwynedd. Paper copies of all of the consultation package documents will be available from Siop Gwynedd in the Council's main buildings. We will also publish a condensed version of the Education and Transport Policy on our website, and a paper copy will also be available at Siop Gwynedd. It is emphasized that the consultation is dependent on receiving Cabinet approval on the Draft Education Transport Policy.

Significant Negative Impact:

Negative impacts may emerge when introducing some changes to the policy, particularly when removing some aspects that are currently offered and at the Council's discretion. These will be considered when engaging on the proposed draft policy, and when drawing up the final policy. We will update the Impact Assessment as the direction of the work becomes clearer.

14. Any intentional negative impact and why it is believed that there is justification for operating in this way should be explained (for example, on the grounds of improving equal opportunities or developing good relationships between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not or due to objective justification or positive action)

We will elaborate on this further after receiving further information from the consultation. It is possible that some negative impacts will derive from the Draft Education Transport Policy, for example:

- There will be stricter guidelines for learners who live in dual residences, in order to better manage costs.
- Further education learners will be expected to follow a course of their choice at the nearest college, to facilitate education transport arrangements.
- More clarity and considerations will be given to faith school catchment areas as there is no reference to them at all in the current policy.

15. Will any of the negative impacts identified count as unlawful discrimination albeit they are unavoidable (e.g. budget cuts)?

No

Note the reason for stating this and the justification for proceeding

We will act in accordance with the legal requirements imposed on us.

16. What other measures or changes could be included to strengthen or change the policy/practice to demonstrate that due regard has been given to equal opportunity; help to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, or victimisation; and foster good relations and wider community cohesion; as covered by the improvement aim of the General Duty in the Equality Act 2010?

When engaging with stakeholders, we will consider all comments received and consider whether there are opportunities to strengthen or change the policy to promote equal opportunities to help remove unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation and foster good relationships and broader community cohesion before it is adopted in its final form.

17. What measures or other changes could be included to strengthen or change the policy/practice to demonstrate that due regard has been given to the need to reduce inequalities of outcome as a result of socio-economic disadvantage?

This will be reviewed when dealing and discussing the content of the policy, we will update the Impact Assessment as the direction of the work becomes clearer.

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 in treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language as set out in the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and to reduce or prevent any adverse effects that the policy/practice may have on the Welsh language?

This will be reviewed when dealing and discussing the content of the policy, we will update the Impact Assessment as the direction of the work becomes clearer.

19. Is there enough information to make a balanced judgement and to proceed?

Yes

STEP 5 - Decision to Proceed

20. Given the information gathered in Steps 1–4 above, is it possible to move forward with the policy or practice or not, and if so, on what basis?
Choice of:

It is possible to proceed to consult on the Draft Policy.

STEP 6 - Actions and Arrangements for Monitoring Outcomes and Reviewing Data

The EqIA process is an ongoing one that doesn't end when the policy/practice and EqIA is agreed and implemented. There is a specific legal duty to monitor the impact of policies/practices on equality on an ongoing basis to identify if the outcomes have changed since you introduced or amended this new policy or practice. If you do not hold the relevant data, then you should be taking steps to rectify this in your action plan. To review the EHRC guidance on data collection you can review their [Measurement Framework](#)

21. What actions noted in Steps 1-5 or any additional data collection work would help to monitor the policy/practice when implemented:

Action	Dates	Timetable	Lead Responsibility	Add to the Service Plan
Review the Transport Policy	Summer Term	Annually	Education Transport Manager	No
Present the final Education Transport Policy to be adopted by the Cabinet	Summer Term	To be confirmed	Education Transport Manager	No

22. What arrangements to monitor and review the ongoing impact of this policy or practice will be implemented, including timeframes for when it should be formally reviewed:

Monitoring and Review Arrangements (including where outcomes will be recorded)	Timeframe and Frequency	Lead Responsibility	Add to the Service Plan
Review of the Policy	Annually	Education Transport Manager	No

CYNGOR GWYNEDD – Report to Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet



Title of item:	Procurement Strategy 2026 - 2031
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Llio Elenid Owen, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Legal and the Welsh Language
Relevant Officer:	Arwel Evans, Procurement Manager
Date of meeting:	20th of January 2026

1. Decision sought

- 1.1. To accept and approve the Procurement Strategy 2026 – 2031 (Appendix 1).
- 1.2. Approval is requested to grant the Head of Corporate Services the authority to make operational adjustments to the Strategy as the need arises to ensure compliance with statutory guidance.

2. The reason why the Cabinet must make the decision

- 2.1. The current Strategy is outdated, and public procurement requirements have changed considerably in recent years. It is therefore necessary to publish a new Procurement Strategy in order to convey the Council's vision and meet the Council's needs now and over the next five years.
- 2.2. Approval of the Strategy will put the Council in a firm position in preparation for new national legislative requirements (the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act) which are expected to come into force in 2026. Failure to create and publish a procurement strategy will breach statutory requirements.
- 2.3. The Welsh Government intends to publish guidance to accompany the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act, which will detail the requirements for Welsh contracting authorities regarding the content of procurement strategies. Although this guidance has not yet been finalised, it is not anticipated that significant changes will need to be made to the proposed Procurement Strategy as a result. However, minor operational adjustments may need to be made following the publication of the guidance and during the Strategy period to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Act and statutory guidance. It is therefore requested that the

Head of Corporate Services be granted the right to make operational adjustments to the Strategy in order to comply with the legislation and guidance once these have become clear.

3. Introduction and Rationale

3.1. Background / Introduction

- 3.1.1. Procurement is the process of securing goods, services or works. 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 for goods, services and works, which would lead to the inability of our officers to provide services to the people of Gwynedd.
- 3.1.2. Through procurement activity, the Council spends around £200 million a year on services, goods and works such as, but not limited to, care to adults and children, transport, waste and recycling, fleet, buildings, systems and much more.
- 3.1.3. The Strategy will set the strategic direction for all those who procure in the Council, and will ensure that our contracts are procured correctly and appropriately, and that our expenditure provides the best value for money while delivering the best benefit to the residents of the County.
- 3.1.4. By developing a procurement strategy, the Council provides the vision for how securing services, goods or works will have an impact on the County's residents – e.g. making every effort to keep the benefit local or supporting the Council to reach its net zero aim. As well as delivering the services, the Council has the opportunity to maximise additional benefits, such as social value, from the expenditure through procurement. The Procurement Strategy aims to maximise these additional benefits.

3.2. The rationale and justification for recommending the decision

- 3.2.1. The previous Procurement Strategy no longer reflects current priorities and needs. The new Strategy is designed to reflect and support the recent procurement reform changes as well as the current requirements and priorities of local and national policies.
- 3.2.2. The context of the priorities and policies that are relevant to the Strategy, such as the Wales Procurement Policy Statement, the Cyngor Gwynedd Plan, the Council's Climate and Nature Emergency Plan are noted in the Strategy.

- 3.2.3. As a local authority that spends public money, our procurement activity is heavily regulated, and there are several 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 development of the Strategy to ensure that all of the Council's procurement activity is correct, appropriate and complies with all relevant rules.
- 3.2.4. The Strategy will bring together procurement requirement and priorities by establishing priority fields for the next Strategy period, which is the next five years.
- 3.2.5. Through consultation with procurement experts across the Council, seven priority fields have been identified as key areas in the context of procurement in Cyngor Gwynedd, in order to maximise the benefit of procurement activity.
- 3.2.6. For example, by raising local businesses' awareness of procurement opportunities and using social value measures that can be evaluated in part on the basis of local employment, we can keep the benefit local as much as possible. Or by ensuring that clauses within contracts require supplier to operate in an environmentally friendly manner and reduce the carbon footprint, procurement can help the Council reach its zero-carbon goal.
- 3.2.7. The seven priority fields are listed in alphabetical order (please note the English version lists the priority fields in the order that they are listed in the Welsh version, as the English copy of the Strategy and this report is a translation of the Welsh copy), and include:
- **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

3.2.8. In developing and publishing the Strategy, we will set a unified strategic direction for all procurement activity in the Council, ensuring that everyone is working towards the same goals and priorities, strengthening the Council's procurement outcomes and ensuring maximum benefit for the people of Gwynedd.

3.2.9. The publication of the Strategy now will put the Council in a strong position for new legislative requirements due in 2026 (Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023) where public bodies will be required by statutory to prepare and publish a procurement strategy.

3.2.10. 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. Once the Strategy has been approved, we intend to review and update the Council's Procurement Policy, aiming for it to be effective from 1st April 2026, to ensure that the Council's operational procurement arrangements are robust.

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

3.3.1. Procurement can make a significant contribution to improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, particularly when guided by the principles of sustainability and social value.

3.3.2. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 was given full consideration in the drafting of the Strategy, and it can be seen which of the well-being goals that each priority field addresses in the Strategy.

- 3.3.3. **Collaboration** – we worked with procurement officers in various departments within the Council to consider relevant issues and perspectives when developing the Strategy. We will continue to work with relevant officers and services in the Council to implement the aims of the Strategy. Collaboration with other external organisations, such as other local authorities, is an important part of the Strategy to ensure that we share experiences and practice.
- 3.3.4. **Integration** – in developing the Strategy, we have assessed the impact of each priority field in the Strategy on all of the well-being goals, and it is possible to see which of the well-being goals the priority fields addresses in the Strategy.
- 3.3.5. **Involvement** – as noted in the Strategy, the involvement of all relevant stakeholders is crucial and a key part of ensuring the implementation of the Strategy. We included a range of stakeholders in the development of the Strategy and their input was vital to ensure that we received and considered a range of perspectives.
- 3.3.6. **Long-term** – the Strategy sets a direction to aim to ensure that, when procuring goods, services or works for short-term needs, we do our best to minimise any long-term negative impact and ensure that we are able to meet long-term and future needs, such as the priority field of undertaking a key role in the aim of achieving carbon zero.
- 3.3.7. **Prevention** – the Strategy aims to improve our procurement results and thereby seek to prevent any problems. The priority field 'Implementing effective governance arrangements' sets a goal of ensuring that procurement rules and procedures are correctly implemented across the Council to ensure that the most is made of procurement and lays a solid foundation for future procurement activity. Also, by maximising social value in our procurement activity, suppliers and providers can contribute to preventing social, economic and environmental problems as well as offering benefits to Gwynedd's communities.

3.4. Impact Assessment

- 3.4.1. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed to accompany the Procurement Strategy – a copy of the Equality Impact Assessment is attached to this report (Appendix 2 – Impact Assessment).
- 3.4.2. The assessment has not shown any significant impacts. In general, the Strategy has no negative impact, but there is a positive impact to be seen on some characteristics, such as on the Welsh language and socio-economic elements.

- 3.4.3. The Strategy is considered to have a positive impact on the Welsh language – promoting the Welsh language is a priority field in the Strategy, and we promote the Welsh language in our procurement processes, whether that be when dealing with Welsh or non-Welsh companies. The Strategy also maximises the use of social value, which in turn promotes the Welsh language as some of the Council's social value measures reflect the Well-being of Future Generations Act's aim of 'a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language'.
- 3.4.4. 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 of delivering social and economic benefits to Gwynedd through Council spending with contractors, such as local employment, supporting young people and disadvantaged individuals into employment, supporting efforts to promote health, support for the disadvantaged, reducing crime, building stronger communities and efforts to protect wildlife and culture.

3.5. Consultation

- 3.5.1. In developing the Strategy, the opportunity was taken to consult with several services across the Council in order to receive input and reflect the views and opinions of different departments that will be using and implementing the Strategy.
- 3.5.2. These services included the Environment Category Team (Highways, Engineering and YGC Department), the Corporate Category Team (Environment Department) and the People Category Team (Leadership Team Department). The content of the Strategy was also discussed with the Economy and Community Department.
- 3.5.3. Following the receipt of comments and discussion around those comments, adjustments were made as the Strategy was developed to reflect the comments.
- 3.5.4. The Procurement Strategy was presented before the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee on 16th October 2025. There was a productive discussion regarding the proposed Strategy and what is new in its content compared to the previous strategy, as well as discussion around the priority fields, such as the challenges and current progress with regards to decarbonisation.
- 3.5.5. Questions were raised about the implementation of the Strategy and monitoring arrangements. Information is included in the Strategy (page 23) on how the Strategy is intended to be implemented, including creating an action plan which will be used to manage and monitor progress.

- 3.5.6. One comment was made regarding the Welsh language in procurement and contracting. Discussions were already underway with the Member concerned outside the Committee and it was confirmed that legal advice had been received by the Department in relation to the enquiries, and shared with the Member. The legal opinion confirms that the Council is doing as much as possible, within legislative limits, to fulfil its duty to protect and promote the Welsh language in its procurement processes, and the Strategy is in line with that legal opinion. Indeed, promoting the Welsh language was an important factor when originally developing the Strategy, and it is included as a priority field. It was confirmed to the Committee that further work is underway to explore new opportunities to strengthen the use of the Welsh language in order to achieve one of the Welsh Language aims within the Strategy, namely that the Welsh language is promoted and encouraged in the Council's procurement and contracting processes.
- 3.5.7. The Scrutiny Committee decided to accept the Strategy and report, and asked the Cabinet Member to ensure that everything possible, within constraints (such as the boundaries of the public procurement legal framework), is done to try to keep the benefit local, support small companies, maximise social value and to support the Welsh language.

3.6. Conclusion

- 3.6.1. It is therefore recommended that the Cabinet accept and approve the Procurement Strategy 2026 – 2031, enabling the Procurement Service to publish the Strategy, in order to set a unified strategic direction for all procurement activity within the Council, strengthening the Council's procurement outcomes and ensuring maximum benefit for the people of Gwynedd.
- 3.6.2. It is also requested that the Cabinet grants the Head of Corporate Services the right to make minor operational adjustments to the Strategy during its period to ensure compliance with the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act and Welsh Government statutory guidance.

3.7. Next steps

- 3.7.1. If approval of the Procurement Strategy is received by the Cabinet, the next steps would be to publish the Procurement Strategy and communicate the change with all relevant stakeholders.

- 3.7.2. Once the Strategy has been approved, we as a central Procurement Service will lead on the formulation of an Action Plan, which will outline the steps to be taken to realise the vision and priorities of the Strategy, working collaboratively with the Category Teams and the Council's procurement officers in its preparation. We will also consult with any other relevant service and department within the Council as the need arises.

4. Views of the Statutory Officers

4.1. Chief Finance Officer

As set out in the Strategy, the Council spends around £200 million annually through procurement activity with a range of suppliers. A robust but flexible Procurement Strategy is a key step for the Council in setting direction so that everyone who purchases goods or services on behalf of the Council does so wisely and in a way that provides the maximum possible benefit to Cyngor Gwynedd and the local community. This document provides valuable guidance, and I support the decision sought. Finance Department officers will provide support as required across the Council to realise the implementation of the Strategy.

4.2. Monitoring Officer

I welcome this review of the Procurement Strategy. The report notes that the previous Strategy is outdated. In addition, the statutory framework that maintains the procurement regime has undergone significant change and continues to evolve. Having an up-to-date Strategy is key to ensuring that the way the Council procures gets the best results from the process to achieve its objectives and deliver the best value for the county. The Legal Service has supported and advised on this work and I am satisfied with the propriety of the decision sought.

Appendices List:

Appendix 1 – Procurement Strategy 2026 – 2031

Appendix 2 – Equality Impact Assessment

Procurement Strategy

2026 - 2031

“Maximising value for every pound in Gwynedd”

Version 1.0 - Draft



Foreword

I am pleased to present the Procurement Strategy 2026-2031, 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



Content

Introduction	1
National regulatory context	3
Local regulatory context	5
Priority fields	7
Local benefit	9
Carbon zero	11
Value for money	13
Social value	15
Technology	17
Governance arrangements	19
The Welsh language	21
Implementation	23
Contact	24

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.

The background of each priority field is outlined, together with setting goals for where we want to be, and how we will get there, as set out further on in the Strategy.

► **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

Local benefit

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](#)



Local benefit

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

Carbon zero

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](#)



Carbon zero

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

Value for money

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](#)



Value for money

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

Social value

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.



Over **£4 million of social value** offered by suppliers

(data correct as of 2025)

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](#)



Social value

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

Technology

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.

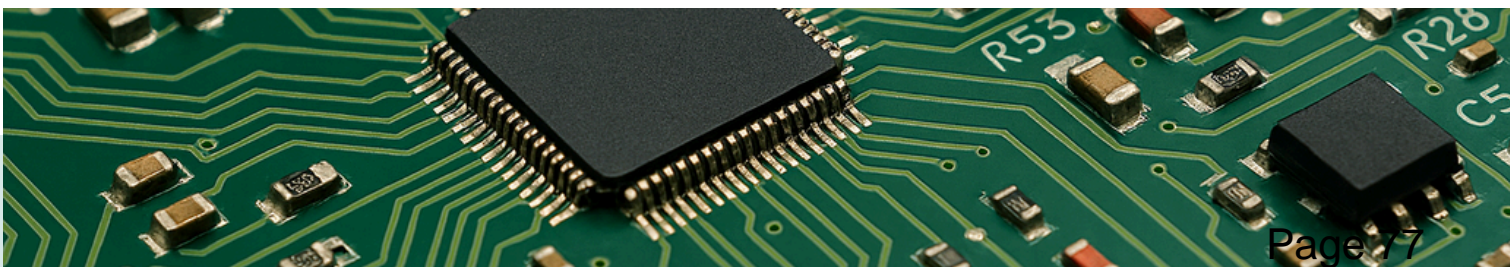
New technologies can also transform public procurement – from automating repetitive administration to providing information and analysis of spending patterns – new technology can enable better decisions, lower costs and increase transparency.

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](#)



Technology

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

Governance arrangements

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.



Governance arrangements

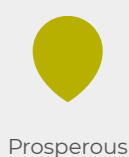
Implementing effective governance arrangements

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

The Welsh Language

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'.



The 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

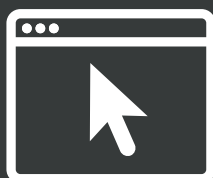
A Delivery Plan will be developed to accompany the Strategy, outlining the specific actions to be taken in implementing the Strategy, which will then be used to manage and monitor progress.

The Delivery Plan will be reviewed and updated annually.





procurement@gwynedd.llyw.cymru



<https://www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/en/Businesses/Tenders-and-procurement/Tenders-and-procurement.aspx>



Procurement Service
Corporate Services Department
Cyngor Gwynedd
Stryd y Jêl
Caernarfon
Gwynedd
LL55 1SH



**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: 15/12/2025

Version: Draft 2

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 2026-2031.

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 was scrutinised by the Council's Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee in October 2025. The decision was to accept the report and note the observations. Link to the agenda item in the Scrutiny Committee

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 is also one of the priority fields in the Procurement Strategy.	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 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	2026-2031	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

CYNGOR GWYNEDD – Report to Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet

Title item:	Whistleblowing Policy
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Llio Elenid Owen
Relevant Officers:	Eurig Williams / Jac Ynyr Evans
Meeting date:	20 January 2026

1. Decision Sought:

That Cabinet decides to adopt the revised Whistleblowing Policy set out in Appendix 1.

2. What is the reason Cabinet needs to take the decision:

Reviewing the policy and associated arrangements surrounding whistleblowing is a specific task within the Council's Crime Response Plan. The report is intended to recommend updates to the current Policy which will then be included in the Council's Constitution.

3. Background and Introduction

- 3.1 This policy and its arrangements are important as it relates to the Council's statutory duties and safeguards for "employees" under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. It provides guidance to all staff, contractors as well as suppliers who carry out work for the Council on its premises on how to share a concern that they have about malpractice, inappropriate behaviour, or illegal activity within the organisation, while also explaining the steps taken to respond. The emphasis is on sharing information about issues that may be of public interest; the policy does not apply to personal employment matters, as there are different arrangements in place to assist staff with such issues.
- 3.2 The current policy was reviewed by a working group of officers from legal services, human resources, and internal audit during the autumn months of 2025. The content was also presented at the recent meeting of the Response Plan Programme Board for comment. The detailed policy can be found in Appendix 1 and reflects legal requirements and good practice.
- 3.3 In addition, the council is developing a relationship with the charity *Protect*, which is a body specialising in whistleblowing matters, with whom we will work for a number of years to regularly review the policy, and to implement it through a programme of raising awareness and training. In that regard, we will use *Protect* to measure how successful the arrangements are under the new policy, and to continuously review and further strengthen as is necessary. The charity can provide specialist support to us as an

employer but also to staff should they wish to receive advice from an independent body.

- 3.4 Should Cabinet agree to adopt the policy, then we will proceed to raise awareness through a comprehensive communications programme and also provide training to the workforce on the principles and implementation of the policy. This programme will be tailored to different cohorts of the workforce, with chief officers, assistant heads of departments, managers and team leaders for example receiving a different level of training to staff in general. However, all individuals will be required to have an understanding of this key area.
- 3.5 The trade unions have contributed to the review of the policy and are supportive of the revised copy shown at Appendix 1. If Cabinet were to adopt the policy, we would also need the involvement of the unions in raising awareness among staff.
- 3.6 In relation to schools, it is the responsibility of Governing Bodies to adopt and implement whistleblowing arrangements for their individual school. To this end the Welsh Government recommends a specific policy for them to adopt. Given that, the exact policy in question in Appendix 1 will not be in use within schools, but the council will have a responsibility in ensuring that all of Gwynedd's schools adopt the policy recommended by the Welsh Government.
- 3.7 The aim of all these steps is to make it clear to staff and contractors how they can whistleblowing in a safe environment, thereby gradually restoring public confidence in the council's arrangements in relation to such matters. Our relationship with *Protect will* be a means of securing an independent view on the strength of those arrangements.
- 3.8 This Policy addresses specific statutory requirements within a context of protecting employment rights. It is also recognised that there are other stakeholders who may wish to raise concerns with the Council, in particular elected members. This specific Policy, action or statutory safeguards underpinning the document do not apply to these groups, due to the nature of their relationship with the council, the leadership responsibilities, or specific requirements they have. There are other arrangements in place for elected members, which may be somewhat different to those arrangements considered as 'whistleblowing'. To assist members in familiarising themselves with the various procedures that exist, we are currently drafting further detailed guidance.
- 3.9 An impact assessment has been conducted, which is in Appendix 2. The assessment meets the requirements under various legislation including the Equality Act 2010. The

assessment does not identify any reasons to amend or to decide not to adopt the decision sought.

4. Statutory Officers' Remarks.

4.1 Chief Finance Officer

Having an effective Whistleblowing Policy, which is reviewed regularly, is a core component of the Council's governance arrangements and I support the decision sought. It will be ongoing work to ensure that everyone to whom this Policy is relevant feel confident in using it should the need arise.

4.2 Monitoring Officer

As set out in the report this review has been carried out in close collaboration with the Legal Services. The report and the Policy appropriately reflect this input. If the Policy is adopted, then I will move to place it in the Council's Constitution and report on the amendment to the Full Council for information as required

SECTION 22

22. WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

22.1 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is Whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing is when an employee, contractor or supplier shares a serious concern about malpractice, inappropriate behaviour or illegal activity within the Council.

Why does this policy exist?

The policy gives people a safe way to speak out if they have serious concerns. It helps to protect the Council's standards and to ensure that inappropriate actions are prevented.

What can I raise a concern about?

A concern can be raised about anything of public interest, such as:

- fraud or misuse of public funds
- abuse or neglect towards customers or clients
- corruption or abuse of authority
- risk to health and safety
- concealment of important information or malpractice

Who can Whistleblow?

This can be done by any employee, contractor, supplier, volunteer or consultant working for the Council.

Will my name be kept confidential?

Yes, where possible. Your name will not be disclosed without your consent unless there is a legal need to do so (e.g. in a court case).

What if I don't want to give my name?

You can make an anonymous disclosure, but it can be harder to investigate the matter if you can't be contacted for further details.

Will I be protected from retaliation or persecution?

Yes. The law (the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998) protects you from any form of punishment, harassment or unfair treatment if you raise a legitimate concern.

Who should I contact to share a concern?

There are several different avenues for sharing your concerns, see clause 22.6 in this document for more information.

What will happen after I raise a concern?

The Council will confirm receipt of your concern, take steps to respond to the disclosure including initiating formal investigations and inform you of the outcome where possible. The nature of any investigation will vary depending on the disclosure.

I do not work for the Council; can I raise a concern?

This policy is relevant to Council employees. Nevertheless, the Council acknowledges that people who do not work for the local authority may wish to raise a concern. A guidance note can be found at the end of the policy, which explains how individuals who are not Council employees can raise a concern and who they should contact.

22.2 Where can I get advice or support?

Support is available through your Trade Union or through the Protect (www.protect-advice.org.uk) charity, which offers confidential advice to whistleblowers

POLICY STATEMENT

- 22.2.1 Cyngor Gwynedd is committed to providing high quality services to the people of Gwynedd and relies on the quality of staff and management throughout the authority to do this. In the event of malpractice or a serious crime, it is vital that these activities are brought to light and resolved as soon as possible in order to protect the Council's high standards and maintain public confidence. The Council therefore promotes the highest possible standards of openness, honesty and accountability.
- 22.2.2 The Disclosure Policy has been designed to open up a safe and reliable way for employees to raise concerns, without fear that someone will retaliate, discriminate against them or put them at a disadvantage as a result. Cyngor Gwynedd will not tolerate harassment or persecution of an individual who raises a genuine concern.
- 22.2.3 The policy encourages employees to act responsibly in order to protect the Council's reputation and maintain public confidence. Individuals are expected to come forward and mention serious concerns they have about malpractice.
- 22.2.4 The policy is intended to encourage and enable employees to share serious concerns within the Council rather than opting to try to resolve things externally.
- 22.2.5 Cyngor Gwynedd will respond quickly and thoroughly to concerns raised under this policy, and act responsibly and positively to ensure that malpractice does not continue.
- 22.2.6 This policy has been developed together with the leaflet which provides information and advice to employees, as well as guidance for managers on how to respond to concerns mentioned. Copies of these documents can be obtained from the Corporate Services Department.

22.3 PERSONS TO WHOM THE POLICY APPLIES

- 22.3.1 This policy applies to all Council staff and contractors who carry out work for the Council on Council property such as agency employees or builders; suppliers and those who provide services under contract with the Council in premises such as care homes.

22.4 OBJECTIVES

- 22.4.1 The policy seeks to

- encourage employees who are concerned about malpractice to feel confident enough to come forward and share their concerns
- ensure that employees understand what their responsibility is when it comes to reporting malpractice
- create reliable ways for them to report concerns and to receive full information on what happened next
- ensure that employees who share a concern are informed of the outcome of the issue, and also that they know how to take the matter further if they are not satisfied with the Council's response
- provide assurances that employees who mention a legitimate concern will be protected from any potential retaliation or persecution.

- 22.4.2 In order to do this the Council will:

- Promote this policy and the relevant guidelines for employees and managers as widely as possible to ensure that people are aware of its existence, scope and objectives.
- Include the Disclosure Policy as an essential part of the induction process for new employees.
- Promote the principles of openness and accountability in the workplace.
- Provide training to line managers on how to deal with concerns shared under this policy, support people involved in disclosure cases and the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and the legal background of 'disclosure'.
- Ensure that all complaints are treated seriously and sensitively and are thoroughly investigated.
- Take steps to protect individuals who share concerns under this policy from any retaliation or persecution.
- Try to resolve the issue in the first place within the Council.

22.5 SCOPE

- 22.5.1 The policy is primarily intended for concerns relating to situations where the interest of others or the interest of the Council itself is at risk. Employees should use this policy if they reasonably suspect that a

malpractice or crime has taken place, is about to occur or may be about to occur.

22.5.2 For the purposes of this policy, 'qualified disclosure' means any information disclosed by an employee which he or she honestly and reasonably believes to indicate malpractice or misconduct of the kind listed in section. 22.4.2 'Secure disclosure' means a disclosure made in accordance with the legal requirements in the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, so that the individual has the statutory protections.

22.5.3 Complaints can be about something that is thought to be in the public interest including something

- that is illegal, fraudulent or corrupt;
- which amounts to maladministration as defined by the Local Government Ombudsman. Maladministration encompasses, for example, unjustified delay, failure to follow the authority's rules or the law, prejudice, using inappropriate considerations, providing inaccurate information and several similar matters which cause injustice.
- that is contrary to, or is not in accordance with, the Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations or policies, codes of practice or legal obligations;
- which does not meet the established standards of practice;
- which is in breach of any statutory code of practice;
- which amounts to inappropriate behaviour;
- which amounts to sexual, physical, or emotional abuse of clients;
- which endangers the health and safety of an individual;
- which causes, or is likely to cause, harm to the environment;
- which is a miscarriage of justice;
- which is an abuse of power or the use of the Council's power and authority for some unauthorised purpose;
- which fails to rectify or take reasonable steps to report an issue which is likely to result in a large avoidable cost or loss of consequence to the Council or which would otherwise jeopardise the Council, or
- which is an attempt to hide any of the above examples.

The list is not exhaustive; it is intended to give an indication of the type of behaviour that could be considered a crime or a malpractice.

22.5.4 This policy cannot be used in relation to potential breaches of employment agreements, e.g. personal complaints or to challenge decisions, practices or policies with which individuals may disagree. The Disclosure Policy should therefore be regarded as being completely separate from processes that enable a member of staff to lodge a complaint in relation to their own employment.

22.6 HOW TO SHARE CONCERNS

22.6.1 Sharing a concern

22.6.1.1 Anyone who wants to whistleblow has a number of safe options to do so. The option that feels most appropriate should be chosen according to the nature of the concern and the circumstances.

Several avenues exist for sharing a concern. The different avenues are listed below:

- Line manager – for the line manager to refer the matter further (see below). All line managers need to be aware of the arrangements, so that they are at least in a position to be able to refer the matter to an appropriate officer.
- Head of Department / Corporate Directors / Chief Executive / Monitoring Officer. The exact avenue will depend on the nature of the concern.
- The Council's Whistleblowing Officers; namely the Council's Head of Corporate Services and Monitoring Officer. The Whistleblowing Officers are also responsible for organising a Response Group for any disclosure (see below).
- Any concern relating to the protection of children or adults will be referred immediately under the Council's safeguarding arrangements. Confidentiality should not prevent the sharing of information when there is a crime, risk of harm, or serious misconduct, and all practitioners are expected to act promptly to ensure safety.
- Any concerns about financial maladministration will be shared with the Internal Audit Service.
- If staff do not wish to use one of the above options directly, any concerns may be directed to an email address; canurgloch@gwynedd.llyw.cymru
- Whatever the method of sharing information, the information will be referred directly to the Response Group (see 22.6.2 below).
- Concerns can be shared in writing or verbally. If it is done verbally, the Executive Officer (namely the officer to whom the concern was originally addressed) will need to record as much detail as possible.
- While employees who share a concern will not be expected to provide evidence to show that the allegation is true, they will be expected to demonstrate to the Executive Officer that there are sufficient grounds to the allegation.
- Employees can seek confidential advice from a Trade Union on how to share a concern under this policy and can invite a representative to raise the issue on their behalf.
- The Council recognises that giving only one avenue for sharing concerns would not be suitable for all situations; that's why it

gives people more than one option for sharing information. You will not be at a disadvantage for choosing one of the above options over others, as long as you have acted with sincerity.

22.6.2 Whistleblowing Response Group

22.6.2.1 The Whistleblowing Response Group will act as a central forum to assess all concerns raised through the avenues referred to above, and then to determine the most appropriate way to deal with any concern or disclosure made under the Whistleblowing Policy. The role of the Response Group is to ensure that all disclosures are considered fairly, objectively and in accordance with the relevant legislation, before considering what action should be taken in order to respond.

22.6.2.2 The Council's Whistleblowing Officers, namely the Head of Corporate Services and the Monitoring Officer, are responsible for organising a Response Group for any disclosure that is made. If you therefore receive a relevant disclosure, the Officers who will arrange a meeting of the Group should be informed.

The Group will be responsible for:

- Reviewing the details of the initial disclosure;
- Deciding whether the matter falls within the scope of the Policy, or whether one of the Council's other policies should be used to address the concern;
- Deciding whether to carry out an initial assessment or a formal investigation;
- Allocating investigative responsibility to the relevant department or appropriate officer, keeping in mind the need to prioritise Whistleblowing issues;
- Ensuring that appropriate arrangements are in place to protect those who have raised the concern from any retaliation or disadvantage.
- Ensuring that contact arrangements are agreed with those who have raised the concern, and that this is implemented in accordance with the understanding.
- Confirming a designated point of contact for the individual who has made a disclosure.

22.6.2.3 The Group will consist of some or all of the following officers, depending on the exact nature of the concern.

- Chief Executive;
- Monitoring Officer;
- Corporate Directors;
- Relevant Head of Department;
- A representative from the Human Resources Advisory Service;

- A representative from the Legal Service;
- A representative from the Internal Audit Service.

22.6.2.4 No member of the Group will participate if they are directly involved in the matter in question.

22.7 How the Council will respond

22.7.1 When a disclosure of concern is received, the Council will acknowledge receipt of the disclosure within 10 working days. This response will include:

- confirmation that the disclosure has been received; and
- a brief description of the next steps in the assessment or investigation process.

22.7.2 If additional information is needed to clarify the disclosure or to assist with the initial assessment, the relevant officer will contact the person who raised the concern as soon as reasonably possible.

22.7.3 The way in which the Council will operate depends on the nature of the concern. Where appropriate, the issues raised may be:-

- investigated internally by managers, internal auditors or through another policy or procedure held by the Council
- referred to statutory processes such as child protection arrangements
- referred to the police;
- referred to external enforcement agencies such as the HSE
- referred to the external auditor;
- go to an independent investigation.

22.7.4 In order to protect individuals and those who are accused of potential wrongdoing or malpractice, initial enquiries are made to determine whether it is appropriate to conduct an investigation, and if so, how to investigate.

22.7.5 Some concerns can be resolved by agreeing what action to take without the need for an investigation. If urgent action needs to be taken, this will be done before any investigation is carried out.

22.7.6 We will undertake to complete an initial assessment (i.e., an assessment by the Response Group) of the concern within 10 working days of receipt (where practicable), in order to determine:

- whether a formal investigation is required,
- which procedure is applicable, and
- who will be responsible for the investigation

- 22.7.7 Those who raised the concern will be informed when this assessment has been completed and what next steps will be taken recognising that the information that can be shared depends on the context and legal requirements. If possible, we will always commit to updating the person making the disclosure (subject to the limitations of the law).
- 22.7.8 If a meeting has been arranged, the employee raising the concern will have the right to bring a union representative with them, or a colleague who is not related to the field of work to which the concern relates. Albeit, it is not always possible to arrange a meeting, and the response and action can vary depending on the limitations of the law.
- 22.7.9 The Council will endeavour to provide regular progress updates to those who have raised the concern, in line with confidentiality requirements and data protection laws. However it cannot be guaranteed that progress can be provided on all occasions. Updates will usually be provided:
- when the investigation has formally commenced,
 - when an important step has been completed (e.g. interviews or evidence gathering), and
 - at the end of the investigation, when a decision or outcome has been made.
- 22.7.10 When the investigation is complete, the person who raised the concern will receive a final notice stating that the process has ended and, where appropriate, a general summary of the outcome (subject to the limitations of the law).
- 22.7.11 The Council will process any personal data collected during this process in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR.

22.8 PREVENTING RETALIATION, PERSECUTION OR HARASSMENT

- 22.8.1 It's understandable that whistleblowers sometimes worry about potential impacts. Our aim is to encourage the open sharing of information and will support staff who raise genuine concerns under this policy, even if they turn out to be wrong.
- 22.8.2 Employees who share legitimate concerns about instances of malpractice are protected from prosecution and dismissal under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. The Council will not tolerate any attempt on the part of an employee, councillor, contractor or supplier to penalise or create a disadvantage for an individual who has shared a concern under this policy. Such an attempt will be treated as a serious disciplinary offence.
- 22.8.3 Every whistleblower has the right to contact the Whistleblowing Officers or the designated Contact Point directly if they receive any negative reaction, adverse treatment, or any form of detriment as a result of their

disclosure. Any such concerns must be considered confidential and in full fairness, without any prejudice to the individual raising the matter.

- 22.8.4 A confidential support and counselling helpline is available for whistleblowers who raise concerns under this policy. Their contact details are provided at the end of this policy.

22.9 CONFIDENTIALITY

- 22.9.1 The Council encourages all employees who share a concern under this policy to put their name on the complaint as anonymous allegations are much weaker and can hinder the outcome of an investigation.
- 22.9.2 If a situation arises where it is not possible to resolve the matter without disclosing the name of the employee who shared the concern, e.g. if they are required to give evidence in court, the appropriate officers will discuss with the employee whether or not to proceed with the case and how that could be done.
- 22.9.3 We do not encourage staff to make disclosures anonymously, although we will make every effort to investigate anonymous disclosures. You should be aware that a proper investigation may be more difficult or impossible if we cannot obtain further information from you. It is also harder to establish whether any allegations are credible.
- 22.9.4 Confidentiality should not prevent the sharing of information where there is a known or probable risk to safety, crime, serious misconduct, or where there is a statutory requirement to do so. In such circumstances, practitioners are expected to share information appropriately and respond promptly in order to protect individuals and the public.
- 22.9.5 Practitioners, including employees, professionals and independent contractors, must be aware that they cannot be anonymous when making a referral to social services, except where that would mean they themselves will be at risk. In this case their concern for themselves should be discussed with social services.
- 22.9.6 Whistleblowers who are concerned about potential retaliation if their identity is revealed should come forward to the Whistleblowing Officers or your designated point of contact by the Response Group and appropriate measures can then be taken to maintain confidentiality. If in doubt, you can seek advice from Protect, the independent whistleblowing charity, which offers a confidential helpline. Their contact details are at the end of this policy.

22.10 FALSE AND MALICIOUS CLAIMS

- 22.10.1 If an employee shares a legitimate concern but the investigation does not confirm it, no action will be taken against them. However, if an

employee intentionally makes false or malicious claims under this policy, the conduct will be considered as a serious disciplinary offence.

22.11 HOW TO TAKE THE MATTER FURTHER

- 22.11.1 If the employee who shared the concern is still dissatisfied after completing the internal process or does not feel it is appropriate to raise the matter within the Council, the employee can make an external disclosure in a safe and legal way.
- 22.11.2 The Council will respect the right of any employee to make an external disclosure and ensure that the act of doing so, if done in accordance with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, does not result in any retaliation, harassment or disadvantage to the individual concerned.

22.12 EXTERNAL DISCLOSURE

- 22.12.1 Any concerns are expected to be shared within the Council in the first instance. But there may be cases where an employee feels they cannot discuss the issue internally or where they do not feel it is appropriate to do so. In such cases, provided that the employee is acting sincerely and can demonstrate that there are reasonable and sufficient grounds for their concerns, they can raise the matter externally by contacting the following bodies:

- Protect – www.protect-advice.org.uk
- Local Government Ombudsman
- Trade Union
- Professional bodies or relevant management organisations
- The Police

- 22.12.2 An employee who decides to raise a concern externally should ensure that they do not disclose confidential information to someone who is not entitled to it.

22.13 RESPONSIBLE OFFICER

- 22.13.1 The overall responsibility for maintaining and implementing this policy and providing assurance as to its implementation rests with the Chief Executive.
- 22.13.2 The Whistleblowing Officers have a day-to-day operational responsibility for this policy and any questions about this policy should be directed to them in the first instance. Whistleblowing Officers must ensure that regular and appropriate training is provided to all other managers and staff who may deal with concerns or investigations under this policy.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

- **Public Interest Disclosure 1998**
- **Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013**
- **Employment Rights Act 1996**
- **The Data Protection Act 2018**
- **Health and Safety at Work Act 1974**
- **ACAS Code of Practice**
-

COUNSELLING / SUPPORT

To refer yourself for counselling:

Telephone Number: 01286 679329

E-mail: iechydgawedigaethol@gwynedd.llyw.cymru

In an emergency where staff require urgent support/advice outside normal Council hours, MEDRA can be contacted directly on 0800 132 737 and a member of the team will be able to assist or refer you to appropriate agencies.

GUIDANCE NOTE

The Council acknowledges that people can raise a concern that does not come under the formal definition of whistleblowing. This may include concerns raised by people who are not members of staff.

The Council will deal with these concerns carefully and fairly, with the same care as it deals with any whistleblowing concerns. However, it should be noted that the same duties or legal protections may not be applicable in every case.

Members

You should raise your concern with the relevant Head of Service. You may also contact the Monitoring Officer. If the concern is related to the conduct of a Head of Service or Monitoring Officer, you can contact the Chief Executive.

School Governors

You should usually raise your concern through the school's governance arrangements, for example with the Chair of the Governing Body or the School Head. If this is not appropriate, or if the concern involves the Chair or Head, you may contact a relevant officer in the Council, such as the Head of Education, the Monitoring Officer or the Audit Manager.

Partners

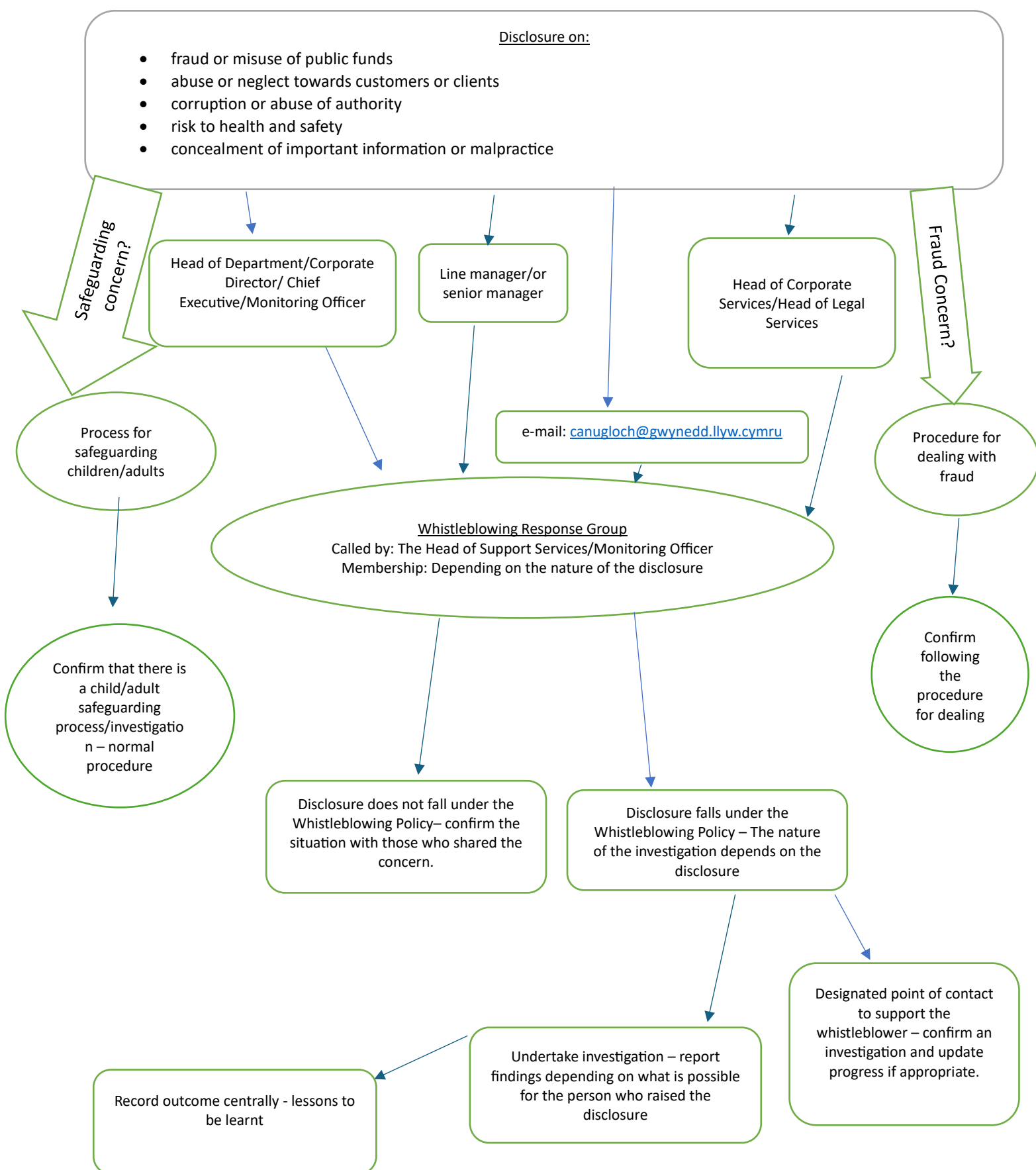
You should usually raise your concern with your contract or project manager. Otherwise, you may contact the Chief Finance Officer or the Audit Manager.

The Public

You should usually use the Council's complaints process. You may also contact the Council to ask for the contact details of the Chief Finance Officer or the Audit Manager and then contact them directly.

If you do not feel comfortable informing the Council of your concern, you may refer it to the relevant external body. If you have made a complaint to us and are dissatisfied with our response, you may refer your complaint to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

Whistleblowing Process



Asesiad Effaith Cyfansawdd

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 numerous pieces of legislation.

- **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, 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 taken on any material change (i.e. affecting people with a protected characteristic).

- **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.

Assessment: Whistleblowing Policy and associated Arrangements

Author: Eurig Huw Williams (GC)

Job Title: Human Resources Service Manager

Date: 8/1/2026

Version: January 2026 Version

STAGE I - 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?

The aim of the policy is to ensure that robust arrangements are in place to enable staff, contractors and suppliers on Council premises to report concerns they have about malpractice, inappropriate behaviour or illegal activity within the Council, and to provide guidance on how

the Council will respond to such concerns. The review of the policy has focused on creating robust arrangements that meet the Council's statutory duties and protect employees under the relevant legislation.

3. Who are the main advisory groups (stakeholders)?

The policy applies to all Council staff, contractors, and suppliers on Council premises. The policy also refers to the further specific arrangement in place to enable elected members to share concerns. A group of officers were consulted to include the areas of legal, human resources, and finance, the trade unions on behalf of Council staff, as well as the Crime Response Board.

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	Carmarthenshire
Reviewing the whistleblowing policy and associated arrangements is a specific task within the Council's Crime Response Plan. A group of officers were consulted to include the areas of legal, human resources, and	2025/26	The Crime Response Plan stems from the events leading up to the conclusions of the recent Practice Review report, which highlighted the need to strengthen

finance, the trade unions on behalf of Council staff, as well as the Crime Response Board.		whistleblowing arrangements among staff, including school staff.
Internal Audit Report	2024/25	The audit noted that more work needed to be done to raise awareness of the arrangements.

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 specific evidence or information regarding the feature in relation to whistleblowing.	The policy and associated arrangements offer different avenues for people to contact Council officers to share concerns, and it is expected that this will have a positive impact. Those routes include the option to contact a range of officers, as well as a confidential email address. In addition, people will be able to contact a whistleblowing charity that is independent of the Council.
Disability	No specific evidence or information regarding the feature in relation to the whistleblowing.	There is a need to ensure that everyone has the confidence to be able to share information about concerns, and one way to do that is to ensure that there are several different approaches available, which meet everyone's equality needs. There are different channels and methods of communication in place to enable people to do so (more information is in the

		policy), and not everyone is required for example to share concerns in writing. This is expected to have a positive impact.
Gender	No specific evidence or information regarding the feature in relation to whistleblowing.	There is a need to be aware of the sensitivity of issues, and the different methods available to staff to share concerns are a positive step in giving people the confidence that they can share information in all sorts of circumstances. For example, it is recognised that members of staff would not wish to share a concern with a line manager of a different gender and that there are therefore different options for different situations.
Age	No specific evidence or information regarding the feature in relation to whistleblowing.	A positive impact is possible by ensuring that there are a number of different pathways available for people to share concerns.
Religion and belief	No specific evidence or information regarding the feature.	Women of certain religions may find it difficult to talk to some managers about whistleblowing issues, especially from the point of view of personal matters. A positive impact is possible by ensuring that there are a number of different pathways available for people to share concerns.
Sexual Orientation	No specific evidence or information regarding the feature.	Some people might feel uncomfortable trying to talk about certain issues with some people e.g. in circumstances of harassment. The policy is expected to have a positive impact.
Gender reassignment	No specific evidence or information regarding the feature.	We need to be aware of the possibility that people might feel uncomfortable and vulnerable when discussing very personal issues with others, for

		example with a line manager directly. The policy could have a potential positive impact by ensuring that there are a number of different avenues available for people to share concerns.
Marriage and Civil Partnership	No specific evidence or information regarding the feature.	A positive impact is possible by ensuring that there are a number of different pathways available for people to share concerns. This is expected to have a positive impact.
Pregnancy and Maternity	Women in particular may feel uncomfortable and vulnerable when raising concerns with others e.g. if there are allegations of sexual harassment.	A positive impact is possible by ensuring that there are a number of different pathways available for people to share concerns.
Skip to content _ Skip to footer	We are already ensuring that it is possible for people to share concerns through Welsh.	It will be possible for people to share concerns through different channels under the policy and its arrangements, entirely through the Welsh language if desired.
Socio-Economic Considerations	Nothing to add.	Nothing to add.
Those who serve or have served in the armed forces, together with their families	No evidence identified.	A positive impact is possible by ensuring that there are a number of different pathways available for people to share concerns.
Skip to footer	The policy can be used to ensure that human rights are respected and protected e.g. to report degrading treatment, the right to freedom of thought, belief and religion, and the right to protection from discrimination.	A positive impact is possible by ensuring that there are a number of different pathways available for people to share concerns. The policy relates specifically to providing assurance that information about concerns can be shared without tolerating victimisation then resulting from having done so.

Other	The policy relates specifically to providing assurances to people that unlawful behaviour, malpractice or unlawful behaviour can be reported within the Council, including matters relating to safeguarding.	A positive impact is possible by ensuring that there are a number of different pathways available for people to share concerns. The policy and its arrangements, as well as the upcoming awareness raising and training programme, will strengthen the knowledge of all those working for the Council about the importance of whistleblowing, and contribute towards providing assurance and confidence that the Council's ability to respond is improving. The work of raising awareness will ensure that there are user-friendly versions of the policy and guidance being created.
--------------	--	---

6. Are there any data or information gaps and if so, what are these and how are they intended to be addressed?

There is not enough data in relation to possible whistleblowing issues. This element will be strengthened through adopting of the policy, by gathering information on specific cases that will be reported under the policy arrangements. Any information gathering processes on such sensitive issues will meet the necessary requirements in terms of information management.

7. When considering other key decisions affecting these groups, is there a incremental effect (cumulative effect)?

The purpose of the policy is to strengthen the rights of all those who may find that they need to share concerns, and to ensure that they have the confidence to share information without victimisation.

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 whole purpose of the policy is to put arrangements in place that improve people's faith and confidence in whistleblowing methods, and increase people's confidence in how such issues are handled. Whistleblowing is specifically about ensuring that people who share concerns with the Council do not suffer any persecution for having done so. All of this is compatible with the Public Sector Equality Duty and seeks to give everyone equal opportunities to share information in a way that they are comfortable with.

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)

A positive impact is possible by ensuring that there are a number of different pathways available for people to share concerns.

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 policy ensures that Welsh speakers can submit concerns in their chosen language.

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 policy is about ensuring that everyone's concerns are respected and taken seriously, and that the Council behaves responsibly at all times.

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:

Not applicable

Partnership:

Not applicable

STEP 4 - Dealing with Negative or Unlawful Impact and Strengthening the Policy or Practice

I3. In considering proportionality, does the policy or practice cause a significant positive or negative impact or create unequal outcomes?

Significant Positive Impact:

A positive impact in terms of strengthening the Council's whistleblowing arrangements, and building the confidence of the taxpayer in how the Council will respond to concerns.

Significant Negative Impact:

None have been identified.

I4. 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

NO

15. Will any of the negative impacts identified count as unlawful but unavoidable discrimination (e.g. reduction of funding)?

N/A

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?

No comment at this time, but the policy will be monitored from its adoption.

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?

No comment at this time but the policy will be monitored from its adoption.

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?

No comment at this time but the policy will be monitored from its adoption.

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	Timeline		Add to Service Plan
Within the relevant legislative frameworks, gather information on ringing cases.	2026 /27	Yearly	Head of Corporate Services and Head of Legal Services	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		
Review the implementation of the policy.	Yearly	Head of Corporate Support Services and Head of Corporate Services	No

CYNGOR GWYNEDD - Report to Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet

Title of Item:	Revenue Budget 2025/26 – End of November 2025 Review
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Huw Wyn Jones, Cabinet Member - Finance
Relevant officer:	Ffion Madog Evans, Assistant Head of Finance Department - Accountancy and Pensions
Date of meeting:	20 January 2026

Summary

- Six council departments are overspending, with ongoing overspending in the areas of home care and residential care, out-of-county children's placements, Derwen service, post-16 and waste.
- Increase in the projected overspend for council departments, with forecasts showing departments overspending by £6.5 million by the end of the financial year in the November Review, compared with projections of £6.3 million at the end of August.
- The council's overall financial position has improved since the August Review, which had forecast a budget shortfall of £2.5 million, but this has reduced to a £2.3 million shortfall in the November Review.
- Receipt of a grant from the Welsh Government, a reduction in general capital costs, and a favourable position on a number of corporate budgets are helping to alleviate the overall financial situation for the Council.

1. Decision sought

That the Cabinet:

- 1.1 Approve additional financial support above the contractual payment to Cwmni Byw'n Iach to be funded from the transformation fund, delegating the right to the Cabinet Member for Economy in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, the Chief Executive and the Head of Finance to agree on the amount of the final financial support above the contractual payment with Byw'n Iach at the end of the financial year. Based on the current review, it is estimated that the value of the support will be £295k.
- 1.2 Approve a transfer of £3.365 million of underspend on corporate budgets to the Council's Financial Strategy Support Fund, to be used at the end of the financial year to fund the overspend faced by the departments.
- 1.3 Approve the financial virements as outlined in **Appendix 3** following a review of the 2024/25 Council Tax Premium, with a transfer of £2.089 million from the Financial Strategy Support Fund to the Council Tax Premium Fund.

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

- 2.1** The purpose of this report seeks to provide a trajectory of the revenue position by the end of the financial year. Therefore, the amounts noted below is an estimate of what we are projecting by March 2026, and they are not amounts that represent the current overspend position.
- 2.2** It is the Cabinet's responsibility to take action, as necessary, to secure appropriate control over the Council's budgets (e.g. approval of significant virements or supplementary budgets).

3. Introduction and Rationale

Background / Introduction

- 3.1** This report presents the end of November review of the Council's revenue budget for 2025/26, and a summary of the situation per Department is outlined in **Appendix 1**. The current projections suggest that six of the departments will have budget deficits by the end of the year. The main deficit is anticipated in:
- Adults, Health and Well-being Department - Residential Homes and Domiciliary Care
 - Children and Supporting Families Department – out-of-county placements, Derwen and Post-16
 - Environment Department - Waste
 - Highways, Engineering and YGC Department - highways and municipal
 - Housing and Property Department - Homelessness
- 3.2** Below, and in **Appendix 2**, further details are provided relating to the main issues and headings where a budget deficit is projected, as well as specific recommendations, where appropriate.

4. Rationale and justification for recommending the decision

The Savings Situation

- 4.1** In the 2025/26 Budget report to the Full Council on 6 March 2025, it was reported that £3.5 million worth of savings were profiled for the 2025/26 budget. The budgets have been reduced by this amount; therefore, the situation is reported upon after considering the savings.
- 4.2** In recent years, we have reported on risks in achieving savings. In terms of the remaining schemes, there are risks to the delivery of some of the schemes.

- 4.3** The latest situation in terms of savings is that almost £47 million, namely 93% of the amended savings schemes since 2015, have now been realised.

5. Council Departments

5.1 Adults, Health and Well-being Department

There is a mixed situation for the 2025/26 budget, with over £3 million in additional permanent funding allocated to the Department, whilst the budget at the same time was reduced by cuts of over £1m this year, as well as £500k of historical savings removed from the budget but not realised to date (total savings of £1.5m). Latest projections suggest that if there are no changes in the actions during the year, there will be a financial deficit of £3.06m by the end of the financial year.

The demand for residential care services increased, with 46 additional residents in private homes, partly due to staffing challenges at the Council's in-house residential homes, which has led to a reduction in the beds available, leading to substantial cost increases. There has been an unexpected and unusual increase in the number (14 since November 2024), of individuals requiring residential care due to mental health issues, and this adds to the demand.

The domiciliary care provision is costing more than the budget, and this shows the additional cost of the effort made to provide care in areas where a service is not readily available. The in-house domiciliary care service saw additional costs due to an increase in sickness rates. The Department is committed to reduce these costs, and the subsequent overspend, during this year.

5.2 Children and Supporting Families Department

An increase was seen in the Department's budget for 2025/26 of £2.175 million. There has been an increase in the number of individuals needing specialist care outside the county and that care is costly. There has been an increase in the provision of care for children with disabilities in the county through the services of Derwen and Hafan y Sêr. It is anticipated that there will be a budget deficit of around £1.8 million by the end of the financial year if there is no change in what is provided during the year.

5.3 Education Department

An underspend of (£15k) is forecast by the Education Department. Following substantial overspend on school transport over the last few years, the field received an additional budget allocation of £896k on a permanent basis and a further £939k for the year only, to address the pressures in the field of school buses and taxis. There has been an

improvement in the field of transport and, therefore, it is possible to reduce the one-off contribution to £587k based on the latest projections.

5.4 Byw'n lach

Over the past few years, Cwmni Byw'n lach has received financial support from the Council above the contractual payment in the delivery contract, which was £550k in 2022/23, £308k in 2023/24 and £281k in 2024/25, to enable them to maintain their services. It is projected that the demand for financial support will continue in 2025/26 with the required amount being £295k by the end of the year.

5.5 Highways, Engineering and YGC Department

A budget deficit of £492k is anticipated by the Department by the end of the year. A reduction was seen in the work being commissioned by external agencies which is having a negative impact on the income of the highways services. The department is prudent when attempting to project the spending arising when responding to storms and inclement weather. Spending on the inclement weather response is a part of the Department's annual operations, and despite the efforts made to cope with the spending by means of programmed work, over the last 3 years, the associated costs have been above the budget. In the Municipal service, there is a combination of factors, including additional pressure on the staff budgets of street cleaning and cleaning public toilets. While income losses are issues for land maintenance and public toilets. Savings not realised contribute to the overspend position.

5.6 The Environment Department

A budget deficit of around £685K is forecast by the end of the year, with the annual trend of overspending in the waste field continuing and is responsible for £617k of the departmental overspend. The Department has many plans in progress to address this overspending. At one time, the overspend was £1.4m, therefore, a lot has been achieved over the past two years. In order to achieve the last step over the next year, there will be a need to complete a restructure of the waste Service, followed by further operational changes. Savings not realised contribute to the department's overspend position.

£3.7m of new income was received which derives from a levy on packaging for producers and retailers, to promote recycling by the companies who create this waste. For this year, we will need to use the first proportion of this income to address any deficit in the waste service's revenue budget before transferring the rest to a fund for the time being.

On 16 December 2025, the Cabinet approved funding of £1.5 million from the Financial Strategy Support Fund to fund the costs stemming from securing and demolishing the Corbett Arms Hotel building in Tywyn. The Grade II listed building has been causing concern to Cyngor Gwynedd and the local community for years as it is in a structurally dangerous condition, which has meant that the Council has had to act to protect and safeguard the public.

5.7 Housing and Property Department

The trend of significant pressure on the emergency accommodation service continues, with expenditure in the field forecast to be £6.6 million this year, compared to £6 million last year. The reported financial situation takes into account an additional budget of £3m allocated from the council tax premium and also a one-off additional budget of £859k allocated as part of the bids procedure to assist with the increasing pressures. It is anticipated that the department as a whole will overspend by £248k, which is a combination of higher costs for moving and storing the personal property of households who receive emergency accommodation, and prices per night for emergency accommodation continue to be high with some providers.

5.8 Corporate

An underspend of £4.2 million on corporate headings as a result of added tax yield and prudent projections when setting the 2025/26 budget. A reduction in overall capital costs following the repayment of a historical loan and as there was no need for external borrowing. The situation is also favourable following the receipt of an additional grant from the Welsh Government towards public sector wage costs, higher interest projections as well as the release of bid funds.

5.9 Funds

Appendix 3 outlines a review of funds. Following the end of the 2024/25 financial year, a review was carried out of council tax income and the premium deriving from the tax on second homes and empty properties for 2024/25. The result is that £2.089 million relevant to Council Tax Premium is to be transferred from the Financial Strategy Support Fund to the Council Tax Premium Fund. £1.761 million of this amount is inflation-related and £328k for the remainder which applies to the 2024/25 Premium.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1** A spending position of £2.3 million more than the budget is projected in order to continue to meet the increasing demand for services for the rest of the year, based on the information that we currently have. The figure is based on a £6.5 million budget deficit by the departments, with the impact mitigated by a likely £4.2 million underspend on corporate budgets, of which £3.4 million is available to assist with the financial position of the rest of the council.

7. Next steps and timetable

- 7.1** A report outlining the situation at the end of the financial year will be presented to Cabinet in May 2026.

8. Observations of the Statutory Officers

8.1 Chief Finance Officer

I have worked with the Cabinet Member to prepare this report and I confirm the content.

8.2 Monitoring Officer

No comments to add in terms of propriety.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Summary of departmental budgets' net positions

Appendix 2 - Details of budgets and the significant variances

Appendix 3 - Review of Funds

Revenue Budget 2025/26 - Summary of the position per Department

	End of November Review				<i>Estimated August Review Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26</i> £ '000
	2025/26 Proposed Budget	Gross Estimated Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26	Recommended Adjustments	Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Adults, Health and Well-being	84,292	3,062	0	3,062	3,133
Children and Families	26,554	1,856	0	1,856	1,561
Business Service and Care Commissioning	3,163	(144)	0	(144)	(93)
Education	125,369	(15)	0	(15)	(20)
Economy and Community	6,449	346	(295)	51	77
Highways, Engineering and YGC	19,096	492	0	492	522
Environment	18,980	685	0	685	740
Housing and Property	12,400	248	0	248	167
Corporate Management Team and Legal	2,950	(14)	0	(14)	(21)
Corporate Support	8,513	(6)	0	(6)	(6)
Finance (and Information Technology)	9,346	(13)	0	(13)	(8)
Corporate Budgets (Differences only)	*	(4,236)	3,365	(871)	0
Totals (net)	326,458	2,261	3,070	5,331	6,052

REVENUE BUDGET 2025/26- END OF NOVEMBER REVIEW

Adults, Health and Well-being Department	2025/26 Proposed Budget	2025/26 Estimated Position	Estimated Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26	Use of Other Sources or Other Adjustments Recommended	Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26	Estimated August Review Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26
Area:-	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<u>Adults Services</u>						
Management	598	563	(35)		(35)	(62)
Learning Disabilities Services	31,281	31,480	199		199	189
Mental Health Services	6,076	6,683	607		607	560
Older People's Services						
Residential and Nursing - Homes	24,516	25,456	940		940	912
Domiciliary Care	11,700	12,974	1,274		1,274	1,558
Physical Disabilities Services	3,653	2,583	(1,070)		(1,070)	(1,072)
Direct Payments	2,194	2,122	(72)		(72)	(183)
Others	3,058	3,267	209		209	90
	45,121	46,402	1,281	0	1,281	1,305
<u>Adults Services Total</u>	83,076	85,128	2,052	0	2,052	1,992
<u>Provider Services (shows net budget)</u>						
Residential Care	68	979	911		911	1,047
Community Care	1,147	1,240	93		93	104
Others	1	7	6		6	(10)
<u>Provider Services Total</u>	1,216	2,226	1,010	0	1,010	1,141
<u>Adults, Health and Well-being Total</u>	84,292	87,354	3,062	0	3,062	3,133

Adults, Health and Well-being

Over £3.1 million in additional permanent funding was allocated to the Department for the 2025/26 budget onwards. The latest projections suggest that if no operational changes are made during this year, then the budget deficit will be £3.06m by the end of the financial year.

Department Management - staff turnover and underspend on the legal budget, one-off costs reducing the underspend reported.

Learning Disability - the service received an additional budget allocation of £400k in 2025/26, the new savings schemes to the value of £735k are not being realised and therefore lead to an overspend. There is pressure on day services, support plans and on the residential service at the Council's homes. The work of reviewing care packages continues and is bearing fruit.

Mental Health - £177k of additional funding has been allocated to this field for 2025/26, a budget deficit of £731k is projected for the residential and nursing element following an unexpected and unusual increase in the numbers, with 11 new cases during this financial year (14 since November 2024). The support plans and supported accommodation are underspending and so reduce the overspend reported.

Older People - £1.5 million in additional permanent funding was allocated to the Department for 2025/26, with £1.2 million of it allocated to Domiciliary Care. Nevertheless, an overspend of £1.3 million is projected by the end of the year. In residential and nursing, the demand for residential services increased, with 46 additional residents in private homes, partly due to staffing challenges at in-house residential homes, which has led to a reduction in the beds available, leading to substantial cost increases. In Domiciliary Care, the costs are £1.3 million above the budget as a result of the additional costs of the efforts to provide domiciliary care in areas where a service is not readily available. In the physical disabilities field, the reduced demand for domiciliary care continues. In 'Others', increasing pressures and savings schemes are yet to be realised.

Provider Services - staff overspend in residential care including £606k of an overspend on the use of agency staff. An additional budget of £1 million has been permanently invested in domiciliary care in 2025/26 and therefore there is a reduction in the overspend reported this year; nevertheless, staff costs are above the budget, with high levels of sickness and rates of non-contact hours.

Savings - in terms of the situation of realising savings for the department, although progress has been seen in realising savings, savings to the value of £1.5 million are yet to be realised.

REVENUE BUDGET 2025/26- END OF NOVEMBER REVIEW						
Children and Families Department	2025/26 Proposed Budget	2025/26 Estimated Position	Estimated Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26	Use of Other Sources or Other Adjustments Recommended	Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26	Estimated August Review Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26
Area:-	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Management	708	797	89		89	117
Operational	3,076	3,427	351		351	375
Placements						
Out-of-County Placements	6,984	7,667	683		683	409
Small Group Homes	142	171	29		29	12
Fostering through an Agency	1,755	1,484	(271)		(271)	(232)
Fostering - Internal	3,119	3,244	125		125	18
Support Services and Others	2,212	2,403	191		191	218
	14,212	14,969	757	0	757	425
Post-16	1,779	1,983	204		204	229
Derwen Service	3,662	4,195	533		533	515
Youth Justice	276	271	(5)		(5)	(5)
Early Years	158	(16)	(174)		(174)	(171)
Workforce Development Unit	312	312	0		0	0
Others	2,371	2,472	101		101	76
Children and Families Total	26,554	28,410	1,856	0	1,856	1,561

Children and Families

£2.175 million of additional permanent funding was allocated to the Department for the 2025/26 budget. Nevertheless, it is projected that the department's budgetary deficit will be £1.86 million by the end of the financial year.

Management - one-off additional staffing costs.

Operational - although a permanent additional resource to the value of £365k has been allocated to the field for 2025/26 onwards, the overspend trend continues as a result of substantial pressure on support plan support as well as field worker staffing above the budget.

Placements - although an increase has been seen in the average number of out-of-county placements again this year to 36.6 (34.3 in 2024/25, 32.5 in 2023/24, 25.7 in 2022/23), four exceptional cases in non-registered placements have already ended this year, with a further two which will have come to an end by the end of the financial year. Seven new placements were seen since the beginning of the year. £216k is the average cost of the placements.

The average numbers of Agency Fostering and In-house Fostering are consistent with the numbers for 2024/25, with only four in-house fostering cases since the last review. It was seen that the income from the Home Office has reduced for unaccompanied asylum seekers (without parents/guardians) who are receiving a service. In the support service and others, there is increasing pressure on the budget of the support workers and on the North Wales Adoption Service.

Small Group Homes - the homes are currently being established in Gwynedd with one home now operational, and the second by the end of the financial year and the third next year. This in-house provision means that children can be placed in-house instead of with out-of-county external providers. The Council received grants to establish the homes as well as a contribution towards the costs of running the homes this year.

Post-16 - additional pressures on the service including the over 18s asylum seeker element as the Home Office's contribution is not sufficient to cover the costs. Staffing above the social worker budget also contributes to the overspending.

Derwen - to respond to the overspending trend, Derwen received an additional permanent resource allocation of £1 million for the 2025/26 budget. Nevertheless, the projected overspend is £533k, with pressures on support plan workers and specialist support.

Early Years - staff turnover and increasing grants available to fund the core spending led to an underspend.

Others - many factors including one-off additional costs, overspending on specialist services fees and on the out-of-hours service.

REVENUE BUDGET 2025/26- END OF NOVEMBER REVIEW

Business and Care Commissioning Service	2025/26 Proposed Budget	2025/26 Estimated Position	Estimated Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26	Use of Other Sources or Other Adjustments Recommended	Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26	Estimated August Review Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26
Area:-	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Support and Commissioning	1,328	1,246	(82)		(82)	0
Income and Finance	1,556	1,518	(38)		(38)	(64)
Preventative Services	279	255	(24)		(24)	(29)
<u>Business and Care Commissioning Service Total</u>	3,163	3,019	(144)	0	(144)	(93)

Business and Care Commissioning Service

Support and Commissioning - saving as a result of a joint decision on a north Wales level to reduce the contribution level to the Regional Partnership Board. In addition, the use of various grants against costs and therefore improve the financial projections.

Income and Finance - underspend on staff costs and as a result of a grant receipt towards staff time associated with the work to implement care case software across north Wales. For a period, two care information systems will run concurrently.

Preventative Service - receipt of an additional grant for preventive services which means there is an underspend at the end of the financial year.

REVENUE BUDGET 2025/26- END OF NOVEMBER REVIEW

Education Department	2025/26 Proposed Budget	2025/26 Estimated Position	Estimated Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26	Use of Other Sources or Other Adjustments Recommended	Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26	Estimated August Review Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26
Area:-	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Leadership and Management	2,524	2,578	54		54	48
Devolved Schools	105,240	105,240	0		0	0
Gwasanaethau Ansawdd Ysgolion	(2,237)	(2,283)	(46)		(46)	(21)
Infrastructure and Support Services						
Transportation	8,328	8,328	0		0	0
Ancillary Services	1,108	1,035	(73)		(73)	(87)
Others	3,906	3,974	68		68	60
	13,342	13,337	(5)	0	(5)	(27)
Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion	5,487	5,471	(16)		(16)	(28)
Youth Service	1,013	1,011	(2)		(2)	8
<u>Education Total</u>	125,369	125,354	(15)	0	(15)	(20)

Education

Leadership and Management - one-off spend on implementing a new information management system for schools and consultant fees.

Schools Quality Service - transitional period for the new service with vacant posts, income receipts and additional grants, but there is substantial pressure on the immersion system budget.

Transport - following substantial overspending in the field over the past years, a budget of £896k was allocated on a permanent basis and a further £939k for the year only to address the pressures in the field of school buses and taxis. Based on the latest projections, the one-off contribution can be cut to £587k, therefore we report on a balanced financial position.

The transport field continues to be the subject of a strategic review to try to control the increase in the expenditure, so that it is possible to reduce overspending and take advantage of opportunities for efficiencies.

Infrastructure and Support Services - Ancillary Service - projection of a higher income and lower costs for catering after receiving a grant receipt for primary school free school meals. Overspend on staff costs due to sickness are issues in school cleaning and caretaking. The care element of the breakfast clubs also continues to overspend by £97k as a result of higher staff costs and a lack of income.

Infrastructure and Support Services - Others - one-off costs being reduced by underspending on other budgets.

Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion - a mixed picture which is a combination of staff turnover and grant receipts but there is pressure on other various headings. The circumstances relating to one specific centre has ended and is responsible for an overspend of £50k.

REVENUE BUDGET 2025/26- END OF NOVEMBER REVIEW

Economy and Community Department	2025/26 Proposed Budget	2025/26 Estimated Position	Estimated Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26	Use of Other Sources or Other Adjustments Recommended	Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26	Estimated August Review Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26
Area:-	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Management	410	407	(3)		(3)	(4)
Community Regeneration and Support Programmes	653	651	(2)		(2)	0
Maritime and Country Parks	(128)	(93)	35		35	26
Byw'n Iach and Other Leisure Contracts	2,293	2,679	386	(295)	91	114
Economic Development Programmes	(63)	(63)	0		0	0
Marketing and Events	269	269	0		0	0
Gwynedd Libraries	1,864	1,829	(35)		(35)	(25)
Gwynedd Museums, Arts and Archives	1,102	1,116	14		14	15
Use of the Department's Underspend Fund	49	0	(49)		(49)	(49)
<u>Economy and Community Total</u>	6,449	6,795	346	(295)	51	77

Economy and Community

Management - grant receipt leading to an underspend on the core budget.

Maritime and Country Parks - a mixed picture which includes spending above the budget of £63k in Doc Fictoria, Caernarfon, income deficit of £58k from Beaches and a one-off spend on Parc Padarn whilst Parc Glynllifon underspends (£25k) as a result of exceeding income and less spending on several headings. Better income projections and staff underspend meaning that Hafan, Pwllheli is underspending (£76k).

Byw'n lach and Other Leisure Contracts - transfer of the leisure provision to Byw'n lach in April 2019, but the responsibility for the property running costs remain with the Council. Over the past few years, the company has received annual financial support from the Council which was £550k in 2022/23 and £308k in 2023/24, and £281k in 2024/25, which was above the contractual payment in the delivery contract, to enable them to maintain their services. It is projected that the demand for financial support continues this year, and the required amount is £295k by the end of the year.

Furthermore, an overspend of £91k on the Economy and Community Department budget to run leisure facilities.

Gwynedd Libraries - following a transitional period of restructuring the service, every post has now been filled. Income receipts are higher as banks make regular use of space in Caernarfon Library.

Gwynedd Museums, Arts and Archives - overspending mainly because staffing costs exceed the budget and lack of income is an issue in Storiol £12k and Lloyd George Museum £12k. Less spending on several budget headings in other museums reduced the overspend.

It is recommended that the Cabinet approves additional financial support for Byw'n lach if the overspend continues at the end of the financial year, with the existing projections estimating support to the value of £295k.

REVENUE BUDGET 2025/26- END OF NOVEMBER REVIEW

Highways, Engineering and YGC Department (including Trunk roads)	2025/26 Proposed Budget	2025/26 Estimated Position	Estimated Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26	Use of Other Sources or Other Adjustments Recommended	Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26	Estimated August Review Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26
Area:-	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<u>Services:</u>						
Highways (including Trunk roads)	12,255	12,475	220		220	188
Engineering	488	460	(28)		(28)	(31)
Municipal	6,149	6,530	381		381	445
Gwynedd Consultancy	204	123	(81)		(81)	(80)
<u>Highways, Engineering and YGC Total</u>	19,096	19,588	492	0	492	522

Highways, Engineering and YGC (including Trunk roads)

Highways Services - although an increase was seen in realising savings in this area, savings to the value of £250k remain to be achieved in the County Roads field. Provision has been made for winter maintenance costs, which have been high in previous years. Furthermore, a reduction in the income from external agencies on contracts.

Engineering Services - underspend on various headings as well as a higher income receipts.

Municipal Services - a mixed picture which is a combination of factors, including the need to realise savings to the value of £117k. Pressures also on the budgets of street cleaning and public toilet cleaning staff. Income losses are issues for land maintenance and public toilets. Following recent work in the Crematorium, a reduction was seen in the associated income projections. Underspend on Street Enforcement and on Tidy Teams, which reduces the overspend reported.

Gwynedd Consultancy - projected performance over the income from external organisations such as other councils and the Welsh Government in the area of roads and engineering as well as vacancies and staff turnover.

Savings - the value of the financial savings not realised is £462k and so contributes to the overspend position reported. Although there has been some slippage with the delivery, the department will implement definitive steps over the next 12 months to achieve a proportion of the savings.

REVENUE BUDGET 2025/26- END OF NOVEMBER REVIEW

Environment Department	2025/26 Proposed Budget	2025/26 Estimated Position	Estimated Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26	Use of Other Sources or Other Adjustments Recommended	Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26	Estimated August Review Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26
Area:-	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Management	783	941	158		158	161
Planning and Building Control Service	745	744	(1)		(1)	67
Street Care and Transport Services						
Network Management (Transportation)	349	(13)	(362)		(362)	(374)
Parking and Parking Enforcement	(2,614)	(2,401)	213		213	206
Integrated Transport	2,313	2,401	88		88	70
	48	(13)	(61)	0	(61)	(98)
Markets	8	8	0		0	(1)
Countryside and Access	772	780	8		8	7
Public Protection	1,938	1,902	(36)		(36)	(58)
Waste	14,686	15,303	617		617	662
Environment Total	18,980	19,665	685	0	685	740
<u>Income / Grant received in 2025/26 to be put into Funds</u>						
Parc Adfer Refinance Gain Share		(187)	(187)	187	0	
Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging		(3,713)	(3,713)	3,713	0	
Total	0	(3,900)	(3,900)	3,900	0	

Environment

Department Management - a delay in realising savings schemes to the value of £150k as well as an overspend on vehicle costs.

Planning and Building Control Service - although income deficit is an issue in Land Charges and Development Control, the planning fee income projections are now more favourable but continue to be longer than the target. Staff turnover and vacant posts assist the underspend on staff costs.

Projected costs to the value of £1.5 million relating to a dangerous building, namely the Corbett Arms Hotel, Tywyn, which is a Grade II listed building, which has been cause of concern for Cyngor Gwynedd and the local community for years as it is in a dangerous structural condition and has meant that the Council has had to act to protect and safeguard the public. On 16 December 2025, the Cabinet approved funding of £1.5 million from a financial strategy fund to fund the costs as the Department cannot cope with such levels of unexpected spending from their budget.

Network Management (Transportation) - exceeding the streetworks fees income, as well as vacant posts and underspend on many of the budget's headings.

Parking and Parking Enforcement - after parking fees were increased in April 2025, the parking income projections are better than the deficit of £826k reported in 2024/25 but continues to be £321k lower than the target. An underspend on staff and other budgets improves the situation.

Integrated Transport -the grants received for this area do not meet all the increasing costs of contracts. Projected underspend on staff costs and other budgets reduces the reported overspend.

Public Protection - vacant posts and less expenditure on many of the budget headings, including on vehicle costs. Projected to exceed income in trading standards but income down in the field of taxi licensing, licences and environmental protection.

Waste - although an additional budget of £400k has been allocated for 2025/26 onwards, several factors are responsible for the overspend of £617k projected. The work of restructuring and introducing changes to the field continue, with several steps associated with the process, with some of the steps slipping to 2026/27 and therefore several savings schemes slip as a result of the restructuring challenges. Overspend on waste collection and recycling, on disposal sites and on running the recycling centres. The income projections from the sale of materials has improved and therefore reduces the overspend on waste treatment and transfer sites.

Recycling Target 2024/25 - after Cyngor Gwynedd achieved a 65.3% rate for recycling in 2024/25 which is below the Welsh Government's 70% recycling target, this means that the Council is facing a £612k fine subject to an assessment against various criteria from the Government. We believe that the risk of forcing the fine on us is low and therefore we have not included this sum in the end of year projections.

Reclaiming the Shared Returns of Parc Adfer - One-off saving to all councils from the returns of re-funding Parc Adfer. The contribution has been placed in a fund, with the first call on it to be used to fund the overspending in the waste field.

Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging material - new income receipt for councils which derives from a levy on packaging for producers and retailers, to promote recycling. The first proportion of this income will have to be used to address any deficit from the waste service and the rest will be placed in a fund to prioritise.

Savings - savings to the value of £940k are not being realised by the department and are therefore contributing to the overspend position.

REVENUE BUDGET 2025/26- END OF NOVEMBER REVIEW

Housing and Property Department	2025/26 Proposed Budget	2025/26 Estimated Position	Estimated Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26	Use of Other Sources or Other Adjustments Recommended	Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26	Estimated August Review Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26
Area:-	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Management	785	593	(192)		(192)	(136)
Housing Services						
Homelessness	6,791	7,322	531		531	463
Private Sector Housing	485	455	(30)		(30)	(66)
Others	446	349	(97)		(97)	(99)
	7,722	8,126	404	0	404	298
Property Services						
Property	3,882	3,893	11		11	(6)
Caretaking, Catering and Cleaning	11	36	25		25	11
	3,893	3,929	36	0	36	5
<u>Housing and Property Total</u>	12,400	12,648	248	0	248	167

Housing and Property

Management - underspending on services and supplies and on staffing costs.

Homelessness - the trend of significant pressure on the emergency accommodation service continues, with expenditure on the field forecast to be £6.6 million this year, compared to £6 million last year. An additional budget of £3m was allocated from council tax premium to emergency accommodation as well as an additional one-off budget allocated as part of the bids system and further to this to assist with the additional pressure. A combination of higher costs for moving and storing the personal property of households who receive emergency accommodation, and prices per night for emergency accommodation continue to be high with some providers. In addition to this, substantial progress was seen in the costs of private housing leasing.

Private Sector Housing - staff turnover and underspend on supplies and services. Reduction in the underspend reported since the August Review as there are costs associated with extending the National Empty Homes Scheme.

Housing Services, Others - underspend on staff costs and on property budgets as well as a grant receipt.

Property Services - underspend on staffing costs and travelling costs but pressure on the services and supplies budget in Property whilst lack of income is a problem in Pest Control.

Caretaking, Catering and Cleaning - income losses as a result of losing a cleaning contract and an overspend on the costs of services and supplies.

REVENUE BUDGET 2025/26- END OF NOVEMBER REVIEW

Central Departments	2025/26 Proposed Budget	2025/26 Estimated Position	Estimated Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26	Use of Other Sources or Other Adjustments Recommended	Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26	Estimated August Review Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26
Area:-	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Corporate Management Team and Legal	2,950	2,936	(14)		(14)	(21)
Finance (and Information Technology)	9,346	9,333	(13)		(13)	(8)
Corporate Services	8,513	8,507	(6)		(6)	(6)
Central Departments Total	20,809	20,776	(33)	0	(33)	(35)

Central Departments

Corporate Management Team and Legal - exceeding income in various fields and a vacant post for part of the year responsible for the projected underspend. Various one-off costs will also be funded within the financial position.

Finance (and Information Technology) - staff turnover and attracting additional income assisting the department to cope with the substantial increase in the costs of processing income from the customers and residents of Gwynedd. It is also seen that there are pressures in terms of software costs and on various department systems become more apparent.

Corporate Services - underspend on staff costs and exceeding income in several areas including Translation, Customer Contact, Democracy and Human Resources and Health and Safety Advisory Service. The latest projections suggest that the Printroom will be overspending £35k by the end of the year.

REVENUE BUDGET 2025/26- END OF NOVEMBER REVIEW						
Corporate (Reflects variances only)	2025/26 Proposed Budget	2025/26 Estimated Position	Estimated Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26	Use of Other Sources or Other Adjustments Recommended	Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26	Estimated August Review Over / (Under) Spend 2025/26
Area:-	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Council Tax	*	*	(871)		(871)	0
Council Tax Reductions	*	*	412	(412)	0	0
Capital Costs	*	*	(1,612)	1,612	0	0
Interest	*	*	(631)	631	0	0
Savings Provision	*	*	0	0	0	0
Budgets / Bids Returned	*	*	(924)	924	0	0
Welsh Government grant towards salary costs	*	*	(602)	602	0	0
Others	*	*	(8)	8	0	0
<u>Corporate Total</u>	*	*	(4,236)	3,365	(871)	0

Corporate

Council Tax - additional council tax returns as a result of prudent projections when setting the 2025/26 budget. We saw 459 properties transfer from non-domestic rates to council tax up to the end of November (692 in 2024/25, 381 in 2023/24). However, contrary to this picture, the Valuer's Office allowed 163 properties to transfer from council tax to non-domestic rates (189 in 2024/25, 193 in 2023/24, 452 in 2022/23). In terms of the premium, up to the end of November, a reduction of 18 was seen in the number of premium second homes since the beginning of the year, which is contrary to the 387 seen last year. In 2025/26, £6 million in council tax premium has been earmarked for the Housing Strategy, and a further £3 million for the Homelessness field.

As noted in **Appendix 3**, following a recent review of the Council Tax Premium allocation for 2024/25, a similar review of the 2025/26 position is sustained after the end of the current financial year, so that the tax can be allocated appropriately.

Council Tax Reductions - following a campaign to target different groups to increase the number of applications, an increase was seen in the number who claim the reduction in Gwynedd over the past 15 months compared with the trend in previous years, therefore the spending is above the budget.

Capital Costs - a combination of factors create the underspend, including the favourable impact of the early repayment of a historical loan to the value of £16 million, which was not supposed to mature until 2078. In addition, a reduction in general capital costs as there was no need for external borrowing, therefore avoiding the associated costs.

Interest - projections that the interest received will exceed the expected target.

Savings Provision - following the inability of some departments to realise savings in certain areas, corporate provision has been made so that it is available to eliminate problematic savings and bridge the realisation of savings.

Budgets / Bids Returned - following a review of the council tax premium as noted in **Appendix 3**, it is considered appropriate that permanent bids to the value of £893k to the Homelessness field are now being funded from the premium, so that Council monies can be released. A bid that was not fully used this year was also returned.

Welsh Government grant towards salary costs - a grant receipt during the year towards the additional costs of public sector salaries, the grant will come into the settlement from the Welsh Government on a permanent basis from 2026/27 onwards.

It is recommended that £3.365 million is transferred to the Council's Financial Strategy Reserve, to be used at the end of the financial year to fund the overspend faced by the departments.

Following a reserve review exercise detailed in **Appendix 3**, that a transfer relating to the 2024/25 Council Tax Premium to the value of £2.089 million would be made from the Council's Financial Strategy Support Fund to the Council Tax Premium Fund, namely:

- £1.761 million relevant to the inflation of 2024/25, 2023/24 and 2022/23
- £328k for the remainder from the Council Tax Premium 2024/25.

Review of Reserves

Following a review of the reserves, it is recommended that the following transfers, relating to the council tax premium, should be implemented:

Fund	Sum to be transferred £'000
Move from:	
The Council's Financial Strategy Support Fund	(2,089)
Move to:	
Council Tax Premium Fund	2,089
Total	0

Additional allocation of Council Tax Premium for 2024/25

During 2024/25, it became apparent that the impacts of the changes on the thresholds of self-catering housing lettings (increase from 70 to 182 days) led to the property moving between tax classifications (non-domestic to domestic). This has affected the projected income expected to be collected through the premium.

The underspend on council tax for 2024/25 has been placed in the Council's Financial Strategy Support Fund during 2024/25 and when closing the accounts for the financial year. Therefore, it is now timely to carry out further review of council tax income and the premium deriving from the tax on second homes and empty properties for 2024/25.

The total value of council tax bills as well as the income received for the different types of accounts have been considered.

1. Background

The premium came into force in Gwynedd in 2018/19 at a rate of 50%, the rate was increased to 100% in 2021/22 and then to 150% from 2023/24 onwards, for the second home element only.

2 Inflation

£6 million annually – not increased with inflation - has been allocated towards the Housing Action Plan since 2021/22. £3 million has been allocated to the homelessness field since 2023/24, but this amount has been receiving inflation every year.

Adding inflation to the £6 million to correspond with the council tax increase rates would be as follows:

Table A: Inflation based on Council Tax increases since 2022/23.

	2021/22 £	2022/23 £	2023/24 £	2024/25 £
Premium Fund				
Sum to Fund	6,000,000	6,000,000	6,177,000	6,482,760
Council Tax Inflation %		2.95%	4.95%	9.54%
Council Tax Inflation £		177,000	305,760	618,460
Total	6,000,000	6,177,000	6,482,760	7,101,220
Value of Inflation (accumulative)		177,000	482,760	1,101,220

Therefore, the value of the £6 million increased to £7,101,220 for 2024/25, which is an increase of **£1,101,220**.

In addition to the above, to ensure that the appropriate inflation has also been allocated for 2022/23 and 2023/24, it is suggested that one-off amounts will be allocated for the two previous years, namely:

2022/23 - £177,000

2023/24 - £482,760

Total - £659,760

Therefore, a total inflation of £1,760,980, considering all aspects.

3 Remaining sum to be allocated

After considering the current liabilities and allocating inflation of an additional £1,760,980 to the £6m towards the Housing Action Plan, funding bids to the value of £893,150 to the Homelessness field already approved to be funded from basic revenue would release revenue funding to support setting the budget for 2026/27 and offer some protection for council tax.

It would leave a remainder of £328,400, with its use to be considered by the Cabinet in January 2026.

Table B: Income from the Premium and Liabilities

	£
Premium Tax collected	12,582,600
Current Liabilities	
£6 million	6,000,000
£3 million + inflation	3,207,230
Funding Taxation Posts	53,190
Funding Housing Posts	155,570
New Accountancy post	55,550
New Taxation Posts	128,530
Total Liabilities	9,600,070
<i>Remainder after current commitments</i>	<i>2,982,530</i>
<i>2024/25 Inflation</i>	<i>1,101,220</i>
<i>2023/24 Inflation</i>	<i>482,760</i>
<i>2022/23 Inflation</i>	<i>177,000</i>
<i>Total Inflation</i>	<i>1,760,980</i>
Remainder after allocating inflation	1,221,550
Permanent Bids already allocated to the field, not currently being funded from the Premium	
Homelessness Service	57,560
Temporary Accommodation	308,880
Temporary Accommodation	412,150
Increase the Capacity of the Housing Options Homelessness Unit	114,560
	893,150
Remainder to transfer to the Council Tax Premium Fund	328,400

4 Recommendation

Transfer £2,089,380, namely:

- £1,760,980 relevant to inflation
- £328,400 namely the remainder from the 2024/25 Premium

from the Council's Financial Strategy Support Fund to the Council Tax Premium Fund.

The use of the additional resource is being considered by the Cabinet.

CYNGOR GWYNEDD – Report to Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet

Item Title:	Capital Programme 2025/26 – End of November Review (30 November 2025 position)
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Huw Wyn Jones, Finance Cabinet Member
Relevant Officer:	Ffion Madog Evans, Assistant Head of Finance – Accountancy and Pensions
Meeting Date:	20 January 2026

1. Decision Sought:

- To accept the report on the end of November review (30 November 2025 position) of the capital programme.
- Approve the revision to the Capital Budget, approved on 6 March 2025 and revised on 11 November 2025, from the programme's financing perspective (as shown in part 3.2.3 of the report), that is:
 - a decrease of £7,544,000 in the use of borrowing
 - an increase of £2,660,000 in the use of grants and contributions
 - an increase of £103,000 in the use of revenue contributions
 - a decrease of £2,387,000 in the use of the capital reserve
 - an increase of £6,364,000 in the use of renewal and other reserves.

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

It is the Cabinet's responsibility to act, as necessary, to secure appropriate control over the Council's budgets. It is necessary to ensure appropriate financing arrangements for the Council's plans to spend on capital. The Cabinet has the authority to adapt the capital programme. Approval is sought for the proposed programme (part 3.2.2) and financing (part 3.2.3).

These are recommended steps to ensure definite sources of funding for the 2025/26 – 2027/28 capital schemes.

3. Introduction and Rationale

3.1 Background/ Introduction

This technical report is presented as part of the 2025/26 budget review. The main purpose of the report is to present the revised capital programme and to approve the relevant financing sources. There is a summary in parts 3.2.2 and 3.2.3 of the report (the rationale and justification for recommending the decision) as follows:

- Part 3.2.1: Main Findings
- Part 3.2.2: Analysis by Department of the £152.136m capital programme for the 3 years 2025/26 – 2027/28.
- Part 3.2.3: The sources of finance for the net decrease of approximately £0.804m since the last review.
- Part 3.2.4: Detail of additional grants since the last review.
- Part 3.2.5: Analysis of the capital prudential indicators.

Incorporating funding via grant is a point of order for the Cabinet, but it is also necessary to deal with situations where there has been a change in expenditure profiles between years and the value of capital receipts and contributions.

These are technical issues regarding the financing of schemes and relevant implications and debates have already been addressed when the individual schemes were adopted.

3.2 Rationale of, and introduction to, the recommended decision

3.2.1 Main Findings

The main findings that arise from the revised position are:

- Clear plans are in place to invest approximately £93.7m in 2025/26 on capital projects, with £48.2m (51%) of it being financed by attracting specific grants.
- An additional £6m of proposed expenditure has been re-profiled from 2025/26 to 2026/27 and 2027/28, but no loss of funding was caused to the Council where schemes have slipped.

3.2.2 Capital Programme 2025/26 to 2027/28

See below the revised capital programme as at the end of November 2025, with the proposed revised position for the subsequent years:

DEPARTMENT	END OF NOVEMBER REVIEW				Increase/(Decrease) since the Last Review £000
	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	Total £000	
Education	16,391	8,218	3,450	28,059	89
Environment	8,301	4,315	479	13,095	593
Corporate Support	-	-	-	-	-
Finance	1,196	737	1,248	3,181	80
Economy and Community	26,608	8,796	2,396	37,800	1,627
Housing and Property	21,549	5,375	4,103	31,027	(9,441)
Adults, Health and Wellbeing	2,769	2,700	-	5,469	69
Children and Supporting Families	2,877	764	700	4,341	146
Highways, Engineering and Consultancy	14,041	8,413	5,710	28,164	6,328
Corporate	-	500	500	1,000	(295)
TOTAL	93,732	39,818	18,586	152,136	(804)

3.2.3 Changes to the Sources of Finance

The budget for the three-year programme shows a decrease of £0.804m since the last review. The proposed sources of financing for this are noted below:

SOURCE OF FINANCE	END OF NOVEMBER REVIEW				Increase/(Decrease) since the Last Review £000
	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	Total £000	
Supported Borrowing	4,070	4,070	4,070	12,210	-
Other Borrowing	9,930	4,760	-	14,690	(7,544)
Grants and Contributions	53,282	11,680	4,871	69,833	2,660
Capital Receipts	160	-	-	160	-
Departmental & Corporate Revenue	1,288	-	-	1,288	103
Capital Fund	3,872	11,800	4,350	20,022	(2,387)
Renewals & Other Funds	21,130	7,508	5,295	33,933	6,364
TOTAL	93,732	39,818	18,586	152,136	(804)

3.2.4 Additional Grants

Since the last review, the Council succeeded in attracting additional grants totalling £2.991m, the largest of which are listed below. Several additional adjustments bring the total movement to £2.660m (see Appendix 1 for more information):

- £1.000m Grant from the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) towards Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for packaging schemes
- £0.559m Transitional Accommodation Capital Programme (TACP) Grant from the Welsh Government
- £0.289m A grant from the Welsh Government's Brilliant Basics Fund towards the Enjoyment of Our Coast scheme

- £0.280m Grant from the Sports Council towards synthetic pitches
- £0.176m Grant towards the conservation of historic buildings from the Welsh Government
- £0.165m National Grid grant towards works at Parc Padarn

3.2.5 Capital Prudential Indicators

The CIPFA Prudential Code notes the need to report these Prudential Indicators (see Appendix 4 for more information).

3.3 Next Steps

To implement the recommendations to finance the programme.

4. Comments by Statutory Officers

4.1 Principal Finance Officer

I have collaborated with the Cabinet Member in the preparation of this report and I confirm the content.

4.2 Monitoring Officer

No observations to add in relation to propriety.

Appendices List:

Appendix 1 – Details of Main Changes

Appendix 2 – Details of Budget Reprofileing

Appendix 3 – Capital Expenditure First 8 months 2025/26

Appendix 4 – Capital Prudential Indicators 2025/26

Background Documents List:

2025/2026 Budgets: [Annual budgets](#)

Capital Strategy 2025/26 : Full Council 06/03/25 : [Item 10 - Capital Strategy 2025-26 including Investment and Borrowing Strategies.pdf](#)

Details of Main Changes

See below the relevant schemes that have caused the main changes to the sources of finance since the last review:

	2025/26 £'000	2026/27- 2027/28 £'000
Other Borrowing		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further adjustment towards the Foster Care House (<i>Children and Supporting Families Department</i>) 	19	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welsh Government Local Government Borrowing Initiative (LGBI) - Road Deterioration Prevention scheme (<i>Highways, Engineering and Consultancy Department</i>). 	4,702	3,135
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-profiling the Buy to Let element of the Housing Strategy to a period beyond this three-year Capital Programme to a period of more favourable economic circumstances (<i>Housing and Property Department</i>). 	(12,520)	(2,880)
Grants and Contributions		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food Partnership capital grant from the Welsh Government (<i>Economy and Community Department</i>). 	51	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grant towards the conservation of historic buildings from the Welsh Government (<i>Economy and Community Department</i>). 		176
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adjustment to the grant from the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund (<i>Economy and Community Department</i>). 		21
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grant from the Sports Council towards synthetic pitches (<i>Economy and Community Department</i>). 		280
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A grant from the Welsh Government's Brilliant Basics Fund towards the Enjoyment of Our Coast scheme (<i>Economy and Community Department</i>). 	289	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Grid grant towards works at Parc Padarn (<i>Economy and Community Department</i>). 		165

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grant from the Welsh Government's Marine and Fisheries Division towards fishing groins (<i>Economy and Community Department</i>). 	67
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sport Wales and Sports Association Wales grant towards swimming pools in the county (<i>Economy and Community Department</i>). 	125
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Housing with Care Fund (HCF) grant for children's homes from the Welsh Government (<i>Children and Supporting Families Department</i>). 	102
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health and Social Care Integration and Rebalancing Capital Fund Grant (IRCF) from Welsh Government (<i>Children and Supporting Families Department</i>). 	16
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Wales Play Opportunities Grant (<i>Children and Supporting Families Department</i>). 	10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Integrated Fund (RIF) – additional grant from Welsh Government towards adapting establishments as well as facilitating joint working arrangements with other agencies (<i>Adults, Health and Wellbeing Department</i>). 	36
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adjustment of Welsh Government grant treatment towards the Barmouth Viaduct Gardens scheme (<i>Highways, Engineering and Consultancy Department</i>). 	(339)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning legislation contribution towards the car park at Y Gelli and Pendalar schools (<i>Environment Department</i>). 	20
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grant from the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) towards Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for packaging schemes (<i>Environment Department</i>). 	1,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transitional Accommodation Capital Programme (TACP) Grant from the Welsh Government (<i>Housing and Property Department</i>). 	559
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning legislation contribution towards a specific house (<i>Housing and Property Department</i>). 	74

Departmental and Corporate Revenue		
• Adjustment to the revenue contributions towards several schemes (<i>Education; Economy and Community; Highways, Engineering and Consultancy; Environment Departments</i>).	52	
• Departmental contributions towards computer equipment (<i>Finance Department</i>).	51	
Capital Fund		
• Modifications to various Asset Management Scheme schemes where profiles have been adjusted past the three years of the Capital Programme or grants and loan claims have been received and resources have been released for future apportionment (<i>Education; Highways, Engineering and Consultancy; Environment; Corporate Departments</i>).	(1,626)	(761)
Renewals and Other Funds		
• Vehicle and Equipment Renewals from departmental reserves (<i>Highways, Engineering and Consultancy; Environment; Finance Departments</i>).	541	
• Adjustment to match/additional funding contributions towards various schemes (<i>Economy and Community Department</i>).	361	
• Contribution towards countryside and car park schemes (<i>Environment Department</i>).	142	
• Adjustment to the contribution from the Council Tax Premium Fund towards the Housing Strategy schemes (<i>Housing and Property Department</i>).	5,319	

Details of Budget Reprofileing

See below the main schemes that have been reprofiled since the original budget:

	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 - 2027/28 £'000
Schools' Schemes (Sustainable Communities for Learning and Others) (<i>Education Department</i>)	(4,507)	4,507
Economic Stimulus Schemes and Industrial Units (<i>Economy and Community Department</i>)	(1,529)	1,529
Levelling Up Fund (<i>Economy and Community Department</i>)	(3,174)	3,174
Maritime, Country Parks and Leisure schemes (<i>Economy and Community Department</i>)	(1,272)	1,272
Children's Establishments (<i>Children and Supporting Families Department</i>)	(764)	764
Provision to Joint-fund Care Projects (<i>Adults, Health and Wellbeing Department</i>)	(1,200)	1,200
Road and Municipal schemes (<i>Highways, Engineering and Consultancy Department</i>)	(191)	191
Vehicle and Equipment Renewals (<i>Highways, Engineering and Consultancy; Environment; Housing and Property Departments</i>)	(2,782)	2,782
Transport schemes and Urban Improvements (<i>Environment Department</i>)	(309)	309
Car Parks (<i>Environment Department</i>)	(44)	44
Specialist Environment Department IT Systems (<i>Environment Department</i>)	(48)	48
Waste and Recycling Schemes (<i>Environment Department</i>)	(1,478)	1,478
Housing Strategy schemes (<i>Housing and Property Department</i>)	(160)	160
Housing Grants and Other Schemes (<i>Housing and Property Department</i>)	(947)	947

Smallholdings' Schemes (<i>Housing and Property Department</i>)	(50)	50
IT equipment renewals (<i>Finance Department</i>)	(14)	14

Note:

The above reprofiling will not result in any loss in grant.

There are a variety of valid reasons behind the reprofiling in many cases, but the delay prior to implementing these schemes can mean that the services must cope for longer with current assets which have not been improved.

Capital Expenditure First 8 Months 2025/26

SUMMARY	CAPITAL PROGRAMME FULL YEAR (reviewed November) 2025/26 £'000	ACTUAL EXPENDITURE FOR THE 8 MONTHS TO 30/11/2025 £'000
Education	16,391	7,266
Environment	8,301	1,224
Corporate Support	-	-
Finance (and Information Technology)	1,196	625
Economy and Community	26,608	6,424
Housing and Property	21,549	12,869
Adults, Health and Wellbeing	2,769	1,337
Children and Supporting Families	2,877	1,646
Highways, Engineering and Consultancy	14,041	4,031
Corporate	-	-
TOTAL	93,732	35,422

Note:

The percentage spent this year (37.79%) is higher than the position this time last year (amount spent in 5 months in 2024/25 was 33%), and higher than two years ago (27% in 2023/24).

APPENDIX 4

Capital Prudential Indicators 2025/26

The Council measures and manages its capital expenditure and borrowing with references to the following indicators.

It is now a requirement of the CIPFA Prudential Code that these are reported on a regular basis.

The latest position and information are reflected here.

Capital Expenditure

The Council has undertaken and is planning capital expenditure as summarised below.

	2024/25 Actual £m	2025/26 Forecast £m	2026/27 Budget £m	2027/28 Budget £m
General Fund Services	85.0	94.1	40.2	18.9
Leasing General Fund	5.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
TOTAL	90.3	94.1	40.2	18.9

The main General Fund capital projects in 2025/26 y include (see the review reports for reprofiling details as applicable):

- Sustainable Communities for Learning Schemes - £12.4m
- Levelling Up Fund Schemes - £11.0m
- Housing Schemes/Strategy - £7.5m
- Departmental Vehicles - £6.9m
- Adults' Homes/ Centres - £4.5m
- Property Schemes - £3.9m

Capital Financing Requirement

The Council's cumulative outstanding amount of debt finance is measured by the capital financing requirement (CFR). This increases with new debt-financed capital expenditure and reduces with Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) and capital receipts used to replace debt.

	31.3.2025 Actual £m	31.3.2026 Forecast £m	31.3.2027 Budget £m	31.3.2028 Budget £m
General Fund Services	179.9	187.4	189.8	187.2

Gross Debt and the Capital Financing Requirement

Statutory guidance is that debt should remain below the capital financing requirement, except in the short-term. The Council has complied and expects to continue to comply with this requirement in the medium term as is shown below.

	31.3.2025 Actual £m	31.3.2026 Forecast £m	31.3.2027 Budget £m	31.3.2028 Budget £m	Debt at 30.11.2025 £m
Debt (including Private Finance Initiative (PFI) and leases)	100.1	79.2	73.8	71.8	82.7
Capital Financing Requirement	179.9	187.4	189.8	187.2	

Debt and the Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary

The Council is legally obliged to set an affordable borrowing limit (also termed the authorised limit for external debt) each year. In line with statutory guidance, a lower “operational boundary” is also set as a warning level should debt approach the limit.

	Maximum Debt 2025/26 £m	Debt at 30.11.2025 £m	2025/26 Authorised Limit £m	2025/26 Operational Boundary £m	Complied?
Borrowing	94.1	76.7			
Private Finance Initiative (PFI) and Finance Leases	6.0	6.0			
Total Debt	100.1	82.7	200	190	Yes

Since the operational boundary is a management tool for in-year monitoring it is not significant if the boundary is breached on occasions due to variations in cash flow, and this is not counted as a compliance failure.

Proportion of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream

Although capital expenditure is not charged directly to the revenue budget, interest payable on loans and Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) are charged to revenue. The net annual charge is known as financing costs; this is compared to the net revenue stream i.e. the amount funded from Council Tax, National Non-Domestic Rates and general government grants.

	2024/25 Actual	2025/26 Forecast	2026/27 Budget	2027/28 Budget
Financing Costs (£m)	8.5	10.7	10.7	10.8
Proportion of Net Revenue Stream (%)	2.5%	3.0%	3.0%	2.9%

Treasury Management Indicators

These indicators (Liability Benchmark, Maturity Structure of Borrowing, Long-Term Treasury Management Investments) are reported separately as part of the Treasury Management Report for the period under review.

CYNGOR GWYNEDD –Report to Cyngor Gwynedd’s Cabinet

Subject:	Savings Overview: Progress Report on Realising Savings Schemes
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Huw Wyn Jones, Cabinet Member for Finance
Contact officer:	Ffion Madog Evans, Assistant Head of Finance - Accounting and Pensions
Date:	20 January 2026

1. The decision sought

- 1.1 To accept the information in the report and to note the progress towards realising the savings schemes for 2025/26 and previous years.

2. The reason why it is necessary that the Cabinet makes the decision

- 2.1 Realising the individual schemes is the responsibility of relevant members of the Cabinet, who challenge the performance of the departments including the progress of the savings schemes. It is the responsibility of the Cabinet Member for Finance to keep an overview of the whole picture.

3. Introduction and Rationale

Background / Introduction

- 3.1 This report provides an overview of the Council's savings' situation for 2025/26 and previous years following a review of the situation at the end of November 2025.
- 3.2 In the 2025/26 Budget report to the Full Council on 6 March 2025, it was reported that savings of £3.5 million were profiled for the 2025/26 budget. Savings to the value of £100k was approved by the Cabinet on 11 February 2025, while £3.4 million are savings schemes approved in previous years, but relevant to 2025/26.

4. Rationale and justification for recommending the decision

The Council has financial planning arrangements in place which have already identified significant efficiency savings over recent years to minimise service cuts to the residents of Gwynedd.

5. Historical Departmental Savings Schemes 2015/16 – 2025/26

- 5.1 **Appendix 1** summarises each department's achievement against their savings target of **£34.4m** for the period 2015/16 – 2025/26 based on the November 2025 review. **It can be reported that £33.8m worth, or 98% of these schemes have been realised**, but the risk of realising some of the savings' schemes remains.
- 5.2 Three schemes from the Adults, Health and Wellbeing Department, with a total value of £398k and one scheme worth £20k from the Economy and Community Department face risks to deliver. See part 8 of the report for further details.
- 5.3 Five remaining schemes worth £172k have slipped but the departments do not foresee a problem realising them.

6. Departmental Savings Schemes 2023/24 – 2025/26

- 6.1 **Appendix 2** summarises each department's achievement against the savings target for the period 2023/24 – 2025/26, **which totals over £15m** based on the November 2025 review. **It can be reported that over £13m, or 81% of these schemes have already been realised, with a further £389k or 3% on track to deliver fully and in a timely manner.**
- 6.2 There are significant risks to the realisation of two schemes worth £71k in the areas of Older People's Homes, and Health and Wellbeing in the Adults, Health and Well-being Department and the department is looking at how they can deliver them.
- 6.3 It is currently anticipated that there are some risks of realising £2m of savings schemes which include three schemes from the Education Department (£66k), five schemes from the Environment Department (£828k), four from the Adults, Health and Wellbeing Department (£685k), two from the Highways and Engineering Department (£321k) and one scheme from the Housing and Property Department (£95k).
- 6.4 There is a slippage on one scheme worth £71k that was profiled to be realised in 2023/24 and some delay in realising schemes worth £305k relevant to 2024/25, but the departments do not anticipate problems to realise them. There is a delay on two schemes relevant to 2025/26 worth £120k.
- 6.5 A further eleven schemes totalling £389k are on track to deliver fully and in a timely manner.

7. Departmental Savings Schemes 2026/27 onwards

- 7.1** A Medium-Term Financial Plan has already been submitted to Cabinet on 16 September 2025 which considers the financial gap for 2026/27 and the intention to respond to the financial situation facing us as a Council to set a balanced budget in 2026/27.
- 7.2** Following the announcement of the draft financial settlement on 24 November 2025 followed by the further announcement on 9 December on the budget agreement between the Welsh Government and Plaid Cymru, the outlook is now less critical than originally anticipated. Although Gwynedd ranks lowest of the 22 Councils, the announcement of a floor of 4.1% means that there is no need to rush to implement savings for 2026/27, but savings for subsequent years will need to continue to be identified which are likely to be much more challenging. The savings will be subject to a report shortly.
- 7.3** Current savings from 2026/27 onwards, worth £681k per Department, are listed in **Appendix 3**, it is currently premature to report on the status of these schemes.

8. Savings realisation review

- 8.1** The income target of the Neuadd Dwyfor scheme by the Economy and Community Department, has been reduced from £100k to £20k on a temporary basis for 2025/26 and 2026/27, to allow time to identify opportunities to implement. A sum of £80k a year for a period of two years will be bridged from the Council's Savings Provision.
- 8.2** A savings scheme related to 2025/26 in the Customer Contact area by the Corporate Services Department was deleted in the last review. The value of that saving was £25k.

9. Conclusion

- 9.1** It can be reported that a total of almost £47 million of savings have been realised since 2015/16, which is 93% of the required £50 million over the period. Realising the savings has inevitably been challenging and I am grateful to all the departments and Cabinet Members for ensuring this success.
- 9.2** The table below summarises the latest position of the savings schemes since April 2015 with 93% of all schemes realised.

Table 1: Summary of the status of all savings schemes since April 2015

Status of Savings	Portal	£m	%
Have realised	1	46.5	93
On track to achieve savings in full and on time	2	0.4	1
Slippage/Delay, but moving forward	3	0.6	1
Some risks to achieve - slip or fail	4	2.0	4
Significant risks to realise in full or partially	5	0.5	1
Total savings		50.0	100

9.3 I therefore ask the Cabinet to note the achievement outlined in this report towards realising the savings schemes.

10. Next steps and timetable

10.1 Implement the recommendations stated in this report and submit a follow-up report to the Cabinet following the final position at the end of the 2025/26 financial year.

11. View of the Statutory Officers

11.1 Head of Finance

I have collaborated with the Cabinet Member in the preparation of this report and I confirm the content.

11.2 Monitoring Officer

No observations to add in relation to propriety.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Overview of Historical Savings Schemes 2015/16 - 2025/26 per Department

Appendix 2 - Overview of Savings Schemes 2023/24 - 2025/26 per Department

Appendix 3 - Overview of Savings Schemes 2026/27 onwards per Department

OVERVIEW OF HISTORICAL SAVINGS SCHEMES FOR 2015/16 TO 2025/26 PER DEPARTMENT

TABLE 1
SCHEMES THAT HAVE REALISED

Department	Total Savings 2015/16 to 2025/26 £	Schemes that have realised £	Percentage of schemes that have realised
Education	1,659,740	1,659,740	100%
Schools	4,331,620	4,331,620	100%
Environment	2,972,463	2,959,963	99.6%
Corporate Services	2,569,218	2,569,218	100%
Finance	1,881,636	1,881,636	100%
Economy and Community	2,916,422	2,851,422	98%
Adults, Health and Well-being	6,794,981	6,317,451	93%
Children and Supporting Families	2,318,908	2,318,908	100%
Highways, Engineering and Gwynedd Consultancy	6,531,580	6,496,580	99%
Corporate Management Team and Legal	403,240	403,240	100%
Housing and Property	843,230	843,230	100%
Sub-total	33,223,038	32,633,008	98%
Managerial Savings	1,200,360	1,200,360	100%
TOTAL	34,423,398	33,833,368	98%

TABLE 2
SCHEMES YET TO BE REALISED

Adran	2019/20 £	2020/21 £	2021/22 £	2022/23 £	2023/24 £	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	Total £
Environment				12,500				12,500
Economy and Community		45,000					20,000	65,000
Adults, Health and Well-being	215,600	49,360			12,570		200,000	477,530
Highways, Engineering and Gwynedd Consultancy		8,750	26,250					35,000
TOTAL	215,600	103,110	26,250	12,500	12,570	0	220,000	590,030

Department	Head of Finance's comments
Environment (1 scheme)	A £12.5k balance slippage on one scheme which is <i>To provide electric car charging points in car parks</i> (£50k).
Economy and Community (2 schemes)	There has been a delay on the scheme <i>To establish parking fees on Dinas Dinlle beach and to increase launch fees across Gwynedd beaches from £10 to £15</i> (£45k), it is intended that permanent arrangements to raise parking fees will become operational during 2026/27. Due to the risk of not being able to implement the savings of the Neuadd Dwyfor scheme, it was decided to reduce the income target from £100k to £20k for 2025/26 and 2026/27, in order to give time to identify opportunities to implement.
Adults, Health and Well-being (5 schemes)	There are significant risks of achieving savings of £200k on the <i>Development plan for 3 other Extra Care Housing projects in Gwynedd (Pwllheli Area, Ffestiniog, South Meirionnydd)</i> scheme, £186k on the <i>Integration and transformation of Older People's Services</i> scheme and £13k on the <i>Review the operating arrangements within the Adults Department</i> scheme. There has been a slippage on 2 schemes namely <i>Restructuring the Business Service by reducing support for teams within the Department and the Children's Department</i> (£49k) and <i>Increasing income and reducing other costs</i> which have a balance of £30k but the Department does not anticipate problems realising them.
Highways, Engineering and Gwynedd Consultancy (1 scheme)	The Barmouth Bridge scheme - not paying Network Rail for the right of way over the bridge (£35k) has slipped but the department is still in discussions with Network Rail.

OVERVIEW OF NEW SAVINGS SCHEMES FROM 2023/24 TO 2025/26 PER DEPARTMENT

Department	Total of new savings from 2023/24 to 2025/26		Realised Schemes		Schemes on track to be completed on time		Schemes slipping and schemes with some risks of achieving the savings		Head of Finance's comments
	£ - number		£ - number		£ - number		£ - number		
Education	1,456,510	34	1,390,770	31	-		65,740	3	The department anticipates some risks of realising the savings of 3 schemes (2 profiled in 2024/25) namely <i>Transfer of Maesgeirchen Youth Center to Maes NI Community Hub</i> (£25k), <i>Cut 25% of the Key Stage 4 Behaviour hubs' budget</i> (£18k) and <i>Delete one level 3 assistant post in the Inclusion Team</i> (£23k).
Schools	1,966,100	1	1,966,100	1	-		-		The one scheme for the period has been achieved.
Environment	2,147,380	36	1,219,380	30 *	50,000	1	878,000	5	The department anticipates some risks of realising the savings of 5 schemes worth a total of £828k including <i>Rationalisation of departmental support arrangements</i> (£150k), <i>savings in Waste services</i> (£200k) and <i>Commercial Waste services</i> (£240k), <i>Parking and Streetworks - Extending Parking Enforcement Hours in Council Short Stay Car Parks</i> (£78k) and <i>Parking and Streetworks - Adjustment to Band 2 Long Stay Fee Structure</i> (£160k). There is a slippage on 1 scheme worth £50k but it is moving forward and 1 scheme is on track to deliver in a timely manner.
Corporate Services	711,410	25	558,410	21	153,000	4	-		There are 4 schemes on track to realise in a timely manner.
Finance	977,640	22	757,030	17	90,000	2	130,610	3	There has been a slippage on 3 schemes namely 2 schemes to restructure the Income Unit worth a total of £59k and 1 scheme to restructure the Information Technology Service worth £72k. There are 2 further schemes on track to materialise in a timely manner.
Economy and Community	648,780	41	623,780	40	25,000	1	-		Cwmni Byw'n Iach has 1 scheme on track to deliver in a timely manner.
Adults, Health and Well-being	2,498,770	27	1,482,850	18	50,680	2 *	965,240	7 *	The Department anticipates significant risks to realise savings of 2 schemes namely <i>Homes for Older People: looking at arrangements for preparing second choice meals in care homes</i> (£50k) and <i>Health and Wellbeing: reducing the hours of a Well-being Officer</i> (£20k). In addition there are some risks to the realisation of 4 schemes (1 of these in part) worth a total of £685k which includes 1 scheme in the <i>Residential Homes</i> field (partial £50k) and 3 schemes in the <i>Learning Disabilities</i> field (total of £635k). There was a slippage from 2024/25 on 3 schemes (1 of these in part) worth a total of £110k and a delay on 1 scheme worth £100k in 2025/26. There are 2 schemes worth a total of £51k on track to be realised in a timely manner.

Department	Total of new savings from 2023/24 to 2025/26		Realised Schemes		Schemes on track to be completed on time		Schemes slipping and schemes with some risks of achieving the savings		Head of Finance's comments
Children and Supporting Families	308,140	8	308,140	8	-		-		The schemes for the period have all been achieved.
Highways, Engineering and Consultancy	1,558,940	22	1,131,940	18	-		427,000	4	The department anticipates risks of realising 2 scheme namely <i>Restructuring the Highways Service (£250k)</i> and <i>Reducing resources by combining the Ground Maintenance Service with the Street Scene service scheme (£71k)</i> . There was a slippage from 2024/25 relating to 2 schemes namely <i>Improving the efficiency/rationalisation of highway depot sites (£60k)</i> and <i>Changing the upland/frequency/vertical cutting order and the time between the growing season (£46k)</i> .
Corporate Management Team and Legal	161,190	8	161,190	8	-		-		The schemes for the period have all been achieved.
Housing and Property	780,350	14	664,850	12	20,000	1	95,500	1	There are some risks of delivering £95.5k of savings on the <i>Reducing our office space due to new ways of working</i> scheme, and 1 scheme on track to realise in a timely manner.
Managerial Savings	2,400,000	1	2,400,000	1	-		-		The one scheme for the period has been achieved.
TOTAL	15,615,210	239	12,664,440	205	388,680	11	2,562,090	23	In financial terms (£), 81% of the new 2023/24 to 2025/26 savings schemes have already been realised and a further 3% are on track to be delivered on time by the end of the financial year.

** schemes with different status splits in the years they have been profiled*

OVERVIEW OF SAVINGS SCHEMES 2026/27 ONWARDS PER DEPARTMENT

Department	2026/27	2027/28	Total 2026/27 and 2027/28 Savings	
	£	£	£ - number	
Education	98,500	98,500	197,000	1
Environment	200,000	-	200,000	1
Corporate Services	50,000	-	50,000	1
Adults, Health and Well-being	143,090	-	143,090	2
Highways, Engineering and Consultancy	91,000	-	91,000	1
TOTAL	582,590	98,500	681,090	6