



Complete Agenda

Democratic Services
Council Offices
CAERNARFON
Gwynedd
LL55 1SH



Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.

This document is also available in Welsh.

Meeting

COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date and Time

10.30 am, THURSDAY, 1ST OCTOBER, 2026

This meeting will be webcast

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

NOTE: a briefing session will be held for members at 10:00am

Location

Siambr Hywel Dda, Swyddfeydd y Cyngor Caernarfon

And virtually via Zoom

Contact Point

Rhodri Jones

01286 679556

rhodrijones1@gwynedd.llyw.cymru

COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEMBERSHIP (18)

Plaid Cymru (12)

Councillors

Annwen Hughes
Arwyn Herald Roberts
(Sedd Wag)
Dafydd Davies

Elwyn Edwards
Linda Morgan
Beca Roberts
Berwyn Parry Jones

Delyth Lloyd Griffiths
Edgar Wyn Owen
Jina Gwyrfai
Elfed Williams

Independent (5)

Councillors

Wendy Cleaver
Peter Thomas
(Sedd Wag)

Elfed Powell Roberts
Gruffydd Williams

Gwynedd First (1)

Councillor Stephen Churchman

Ex-officio Members

Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council

A G E N D A

1. APOLOGIES

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

To receive any declaration of personal interest.

3. URGENT ITEMS

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

4. MINUTES

4 - 13

The Chairman shall propose that the minutes of the meeting of this Committee, held on 11 June 2026 be signed as a true record.

5. CLIMATE AND NATURE EMERGENCY PLAN ANNUAL REPORT 2025/26

14 - 50

To scrutinise the Climate and Nature Emergency Plan Annual Report 2025/26.

6. HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE - INSTALLATION OF ROAD MARKINGS

51 - 73

To review current arrangements.

7. EMERGENCY ROAD CLOSURES

74 - 84

Ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place for the management and co-ordination of road closures in urgent and emergency circumstances.

8. COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD PROGRAMME 2026/27

85 - 87

To present the Committee's draft work programme for 2026/27 for adoption.

9. PERFORMANCE CHALLENGE MEETINGS

88 - 90

To nominate representatives to attend performance challenge meetings.

COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE, 11 JUNE 2026

Present:

COUNCILLORS:

Elwyn Edwards, Beca Roberts, Berwyn Parry Jones, Delyth Lloyd Griffiths, Edgar Wyn Owen, Jina Gwyrfai, Elfed Williams, Arwyn Herald Roberts, Dafydd Davies, Wendy Cleaver, Elfed Powell Roberts, Gruffydd Williams, Robert Glyn Daniels, Peter Thomas and Stephen Churchman.

Officers present:

Bethan Adams (Scrutiny Adviser), Rhodri Jones (Democracy Services Officer) and Catrin Thomas (Corporate Director).

Present for Item 7:

Councillor Craig ab Iago (Cabinet Member for the Environment), Dafydd Williams (Head of Environment Department), Iwan Evans (Head of Legal Services) and Gareth Jones (Assistant Head of Environment Department).

Present for Item 8:

Councillor Craig ab Iago (Cabinet Member for the Environment), Dafydd Williams (Head of Environment Department) and Gareth Jones, Roland Thomas and Gerwyn Jones (Assistant Heads)

Present for Item 9:

Councillor June Jones (Cabinet Member for Highways, Engineering and YGC), Steffan Jones (Head of Highways, Engineering and YGC Department) and Meirion Williams, Emlyn Jones (Assistant Heads of Department) and Nia Wyn Vaughan (Senior Projects Officer).

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Resolved to elect Councillor Elfed Powell Roberts as Chair of the Committee for the year 2026/27.

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

Resolved to elect Councillor Beca Roberts as Vice-Chair of the Committee for the year 2026/27.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Linda Morgan and Annwen Hughes.

4. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received.

5. URGENT ITEMS

None to note.

6. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 19 March 2026, as a true record.

7. ARTICLE 4 DIRECTION

The report was presented by the Cabinet Member for the Environment, Head of Department for Environment, Head of Legal Services and Assistant Head of Environment Department.

The Assistant Head explained that there were concerns about the high number of second homes and short-term holiday lets that existed in Gwynedd, and that Cyngor Gwynedd's Cabinet had submitted a report detailing research in this area, to the Welsh Government in 2020. It was elaborated that that report called for measures to address those concerns, such as changes to the planning system to manage second homes and short-term holiday lets.

It was reported that the Welsh Government, in response, had introduced changes to the planning system in 2022 which created three new planning use classes. It was noted that these defined 'main home', 'second home' and 'short-term holiday let'. It was added that this gave rights to switch from one class of use to another without the need for planning permission. However, it was explained that local authorities could go through a process to introduce an Article 4 Direction for areas where there was evidence that the area was negatively affected by a high number of second homes and short-term holiday lets. They confirmed that an Article 4 Direction was a planning tool that had been used for several years to manage different types of development such as building alterations in conservation areas or to control the use of houses in multiple occupation in England.

It was emphasised that an Article 4 direction had not been used to try to manage second homes and short-term holiday lets.

It was confirmed that Cyngor Gwynedd was the first local authority to conduct the process of introducing an Article 4 Direction to try and gain better control of second homes and short-term holiday lets. It was emphasised that the Council was aware of the risks associated with introducing the direction and had ensured that this was recorded on the Department's risk register. It was reported that there were measures in place to manage the risks as far as reasonably possible, throughout the process.

The Head of Legal Services reminded the members that a decision was made in June 2023, to conduct the process of establishing an Article 4 direction over a two-year period. He explained that this decision had been made to ensure that it was advertised for over 12 months, to avoid compensation challenges. He reported that the direction came into force in 2024.

He specified that the legal challenge presented related primarily to the public consultation that was carried out, not to the process of introducing the direction.

It was explained that the successful legal challenge indicated that a report had misdirected the Cabinet as they came to a decision on the matter, because of the issue of material change in the report. It was added that the non-inclusion of this material change within the documentation made it incomplete and appeared misleading. It was pointed out that material change was a fundamental element of the planning area and therefore the report would not be misleading if the appropriate audience understood the area of work. It was noted that the Court considered that the Cabinet did not understand the area of work, unlike the members of the Planning Committee, although some members of the Cabinet did have experience of attending that committee as Members.

It was stressed that there had been no deliberate or malicious misleading as part of the process.

The officers drew attention to Section 31 of the Senior Courts Act which considers whether if the court came to a different conclusion, would that make a difference. It was noted that the Court had to be confident that it was 'highly likely' that the decision would have been the same in order to proceed with introducing the direction. It was explained that the Court had indicated that this case was only 'likely' to have led to the same decision, and as such it was ruled that the direction was no longer effective.

It was confirmed that the Council had submitted an application to appeal this decision, but that application had been refused.

During the discussion, the following observations were made:-

Clarity was sought in relation to the definitions of a number of relevant terms such as the difference between 'change of use' and 'material change of use'. Members also wanted a further explanation on how the reports submitted to Cabinet had materially misled the Members, in the judge's opinion. In addition, they asked if there were any differences in the documentation of this meeting compared to the documentation submitted to the Cabinet when they had made their decision.

In response to a query on the misleading nature of the report, the Head of Legal Services emphasised that the report submitted to the Cabinet used statutory wording and was a sincere attempt to present information to the Cabinet, at its meeting on 13 June 2023. He explained that the report was described as 'misleading' because the Court highlighted the need for a higher level of explanation of the information for Cabinet members. He reminded everyone that the report submitted to the Cabinet was a response to the public consultation on the matter, where over 3,000 responses had been received, with the aim of presenting a fair reflection of the content of those responses. The Assistant Head elaborated that it was not reasonably predictable to expect a legal challenge to the process based on the use of the wording "material change of use", as the reports had used the same wording as the statute and Planning Policy Wales. It was detailed that arrangements had been put in place to ensure that reports were reviewed by experienced planners, the Legal Department and barristers before they were published. It was highlighted that all documentation of the Cabinet meetings on 13 June 2023 and 16 July 2024 remained in the public domain and that they had previously been approved by the Communities Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting on 9 March 2023 and 16 May 2024.

Specific data was requested about the financial cost of introducing the process and responding to the legal challenge. Similarly, it was questioned why officers had decided to appeal the decision given that their documentation was flawed. A request was made to receive a summary of the failures that had led to the legal challenge and asked if any review or disciplinary processes were underway.

In response, the Assistant Head of Department explained that the legal costs for defending this legal challenge were in the region of £60,000. It was emphasised that the money spent to date was not considered to be a waste of taxpayers' money because it was a sound investment for the future, it had allowed the Council to develop the expertise of its officers and it had provided significant assistance to other authorities that were considering or undergoing the process of introducing an Article 4 direction. It was acknowledged that lessons had been learned. The Head of Legal Services added that the Council's arrangements required him as the Monitoring Officer, and the Head of Finance to assess the propriety of reports presented to the Cabinet and to the Full Council, emphasising that this legal challenge was the first time that a legal challenge had been brought following this

procedure. It was emphasised that the decision to defend a legal case was made carefully and on a very tight timescale. He elaborated that they weighed things up seriously to ensure that a strong defence was developed. It was also noted that barristers for defending a legal challenge were carefully selected to ensure they had certain skills and experience, such as a King's Counsel (KC), and that any advice received was subject to detailed assessment.

It was enquired whether the Council had altered its arrangements in any way following this legal challenge. In response, the Head of Legal Services confirmed that lessons had been learned following this process. He said that one of those lessons was the need to ensure that all reports submitted were complete, by ensuring that there are no gaps in the information presented. It was emphasised that this lesson had been learned across the Council and not just for this topic.

In response to an enquiry, the Head of Legal Services explained that witnesses had not been called during the legal challenge due to the nature of the case.

He noted that because the use classes introduced by the Welsh Government were new, there was no precedent for introducing an Article 4 direction for the use proposed by Cyngor Gwynedd. In response to the comments, the Assistant Head confirmed that the three new classes of use developed by the Welsh Government in 2022 remained in force, and owners can change the use class of their property without the need for a planning application. It was noted that there was no legal definition of material change of use and that this was a matter of fact and degree to be considered on a case-by-case basis, taking into account issues such as frequency and scale of use. Nonetheless, it was acknowledged that a change of use class could not be prevented at present as the Article 4 direction was not in operation.

In response to a question regarding the Council's Local Development Plan, the Assistant Head of Department explained that the introduction of the classes which enabled local authorities to issue an Article 4 direction was likely a tool used by the Welsh Government to allow for a rapid response. It was pointed out that introducing new primary legislation to introduce the concept of requiring a planning application to change a property's class of use would be a slow process with the risk that it would not receive sufficient support at a national level as the number of second homes and short-term holiday lets and their impact varied greatly across Wales. Reference was made to the Council's new Local Development Plan, stating that this process would give consideration to introducing planning policies relating to second homes and short-term holiday lets in line with the requirements of Planning Policy Wales. It was highlighted that losing properties that are a primary residence to be converted into short-term holiday lets or second homes cannot be prevented because it was not regulated. However, conditions could be imposed on dwellings that were part of new developments so that they could only be primary residences.

A member asked what input was received from the residents of Gwynedd as the Council considered introducing the direction. In response to the query, the Assistant Head of Environment Department specified that extensive public engagement had been carried out as part of the process. He noted that this included engaging with all households within the Gwynedd planning authority area, engaging on social media and in the press and installing notices on sites. It was explained that officers had considered all responses received. It was explained that the responses had not been grouped into those comments that supported or opposed the introduction of the direction. However, it was explained that officers had given detailed consideration to all points of view and data presented.

The Head of Legal Services reiterated that this legal challenge had contended the introduction of an Article 4 direction in Gwynedd on four grounds. It was pointed out that three complex grounds for the challenge had been dismissed as grounds of appeal by the

courts, with only one ground succeeding. The Assistant Head of Department highlighted that the fact that the direction was intended to affect the entire planning area of Gwynedd, had not been challenged. It was confirmed that should the Council decide to attempt to reintroduce the direction, it was likely to do so with the entire area in mind again. It was confirmed that specific communities could be looked at within the new Local Development Plan. In response to these comments, the Members considered that it would be sensible to obtain additional external legal advice on the necessary terminology definitions in the field to ensure that no legal challenges could be made in the future.

Comments were received from Members that any future attempt to reintroduce the direction in Gwynedd should be marketed differently to gain more support. It was detailed that the work to date had led to several successes and that making residents aware of this would be very effective for any future attempt. Support was expressed for reintroducing the direction in future as it was an effective tool for the department and protected the communities of Gwynedd. The Department was asked if it planned to reintroduce the direction and what the next steps were.

In response, the Cabinet Member explained that there was a desire to reintroduce the direction again in the future. However, he noted that there were no definite plans at present as the term of this Council was approaching its end. The Assistant Head of Department elaborated that the work that had been completed as part of the process so far could be reused when the process was recommenced. It was considered that there was an adequate budget to complete the process if it were to be reintroduced. It was reported that there was grant funding of £402,330 from the Welsh Government to successfully prepare and implement the Article 4 direction, with Cyngor Gwynedd contributing match funding of £400,000. It was confirmed that £465,654.53 had been spent to date (on staffing, administration and legal matters) and that £336,675.37 remained in the fund if the direction was to be reintroduced.

Thanks were received from Councillor Edgar Wyn Owen, former Chair of Eryri National Park Authority, for the support and guidance the Authority had received from Cyngor Gwynedd throughout the process of introducing the Article 4 direction for the authority. In response to an enquiry about the success of Eryri National Park Authority in introducing an Article 4 direction, the Assistant Head of Department explained that there was no difference in their process compared to the Gwynedd arrangements. It was highlighted that since the timeline for the Park ran behind that of the Council, they had been able to draw on the information received during the legal challenge against the process in Gwynedd, ensuring that their reports were amended to ensure that there was a specific reference to material change of use. It was added that a legal challenge had not been lodged against the Park Authority within the specified deadline.

In response to an enquiry, the Assistant Head of Department acknowledged that the guidance had not been in place in Gwynedd for long enough to be able to measure its impact. It was highlighted that some data was available and would be assessed but it was difficult to know at present whether there was any impact because of the direction or whether it was due to other measures that were in place to address second homes and short-term holiday lets.

At the end of the discussion, Councillor Berwyn Parry Jones, (a former Cabinet member who was involved in the Cabinet's decision to approve the Article 4 direction at its June 2023 meeting), confirmed that he had been aware of 'material change of use' and was aware of the relevant information before reaching a decision.

The members thanked the officers for the report.

Resolved:

1. To accept the report, noting the observations made during the discussion.
2. To recommend to the Cabinet Member for Environment that detailed consideration needs to be given to 'material change of use' and the need to receive external legal advice when considering the next steps.

8. PERFORMANCE REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

The report was presented by the Cabinet Member for the Environment, the Head of Environment Department and Assistant Heads of Department.

The Members were reminded that the Department led on several projects in the Council Plan 2023-28, namely;

- A Homely Gwynedd
 - Managing second homes and short-term holiday lets
- A Green Gwynedd
 - New Local Development Plan
 - Waste and Recycling
 - Active Travel
 - Public Transport

They referred to several of the Department's projects as well as performance measures. Comments and questions from the Members were welcomed.

During the discussion, the following observations were made by the Members:-

The Planning Service

It was acknowledged that planning service officers had been under pressure recently, and they thanked them for their work and were pleased that the service was taking advantage of the opportunities in the Council's *Cynllun Yfory*. In response to the comments, the Department confirmed that they had taken advantage of the Council's *Cynllun Yfory* to appoint members of staff and train them to become qualified. It was noted that a Planning Policy Trainee post would possibly be offered soon. It was confirmed that the service planned its workforce effectively and while recognising staff turnover, new officers were being appointed to carry out the work.

It was concerned that the Council was at risk of losing expertise among planning officers. In response to the comments, it was acknowledged that some expertise was lost when officers left their roles, but the Members were assured that use of the *Cynllun Yfory* and effective workforce planning ensured that there was no significant risk of losing expertise.

Planning Enforcement

In response to an enquiry on Planning Enforcement rates, the Assistant Head explained that officers responded to complaints on enforcement issues when appropriate. He explained that situations arose where individuals were unhappy with the officers' views and statutory arrangements were in place to ensure that they can appeal if they wish. It was highlighted that it was challenging to reduce the number of enforcement calls received due to staffing issues, but they were confident that this issue could be addressed as the numbers of qualified staff increased.

New Local Development Plan

In response to an enquiry, the Assistant Head of Department confirmed that the timetable for introducing a New Local Development Plan was on time, but the current priority was to support staff.

Active Travel

In response to a request for data about active travel plans and use in rural areas of the County, the Head of Department confirmed that the information could be shared outside this meeting.

Waste and Recycling

Consideration was given to whether there were plans in place to collect soft plastics to increase the percentage of waste recycled in Gwynedd. In response to the enquiry, the Assistant Head of Department confirmed that arrangements were in place for collecting soft plastics as part of the routes from April 2027 onwards. It was elaborated that the Council was currently working with the Vale of Glamorgan Council to explore good practice, as they had already implemented this service. It was noted that incorporating collections of this type could involve significant costs due to the need to include new schemes as well as the costs of processing the waste. It was emphasised that the service must ensure that the work of collecting the soft plastics was effective, as there was a chance that supermarkets would cease the service once the Council took responsibility for it. It was reported that the processes in place in the Vale of Glamorgan were very effective, and that they were the ones preferred by the Department. However, it was emphasised that soft plastics only made up around 1% of all waste in Gwynedd and would not affect recycling targets significantly.

Officers were asked if they believed that recycling 70% of the County's waste was an achievable target. In response to the enquiry on recycling rates, the Cabinet Member confirmed that there was no pressure to meet the Welsh Government's target of recycling 70% of the County's waste. He elaborated that new technology was being developed continually that would assist the Department in meeting these targets in the future, such as a recycling vending machine that dispenses money to consumers for using it. He assured the committee that he believed that 100% of all waste in the County should be recycled and that they planned to increase the amount of waste being recycled to try to reach that target as far as possible.

In response to a further enquiry about the officers' views on whether the Welsh Government's target of recycling 70% of the County's total waste was realistic given that there had not been a large increase in the County's recycling rates to meet the target, the Assistant Head of Department explained that all Welsh Local Authorities measured their success against this target differently. It was also noted that Gwynedd's rates against this target varied annually such as through garden waste rates, which were included within the figures along with waste from households, businesses, street bins and recycling centres. It was highlighted that a Waste Strategy was currently being developed in order to plan how the Department would address this, confirming that it would be presented to the Cabinet in July.

They agreed with the Members' comments that pressure should be put on companies, with the Welsh Government's support, to ensure that all types of product packaging can be recycled.

In response to a request for additional information about data relating to staff sickness in the Recycling Service, the Assistant Head of Department confirmed that he would share it outside the meeting. However, it was explained that the Department was working to reduce workforce sickness rates and had taken steps such as reducing recycling depot numbers within the County, so that the workforce could be planned more effectively if sickness was an issue. It was explained that this decision had been made because staff sickness rates

varied from area to area in the County, and reducing depot numbers allowed for easier workforce planning.

RESOLVED

To accept the report, noting the observations made during the discussion.

9. PERFORMANCE REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS, ENGINEERING AND YGC

The report was presented by the Cabinet Member for Highways, Engineering and YGC, along with the Head and Assistant Head of the Highways, Engineering and YGC Department.

The Members were reminded that the Department was highly visible within the County as it delivered frontline services. They were proud that Gwynedd Consultancy (YGC) operated very effectively and brought income to the Council whilst also assisting other departments in developing plans.

It was reported that the Department led on several projects in the Council Plan 2023-28, namely;

- Gwynedd Yfory
 - Extending opportunities for play and socialising for the county's children and young people
- A Green Gwynedd
 - Acting on flood risks
 - Clean and Tidy Communities

They drew attention to the Department's financial savings targets, noting that several of the targets had been met but there was more work to be done. They were confident that those targets would be met within the current financial year.

During the discussion, the following observations were made by the Members:-

Highway Maintenance – Condition of Roads

Sadness was expressed regarding a recent fatal incident in the Barmouth area. In response to the comments, it was acknowledged that lessons needed to be learned from that incident, where emergency services were unable to reach the area in time, with traffic and highway maintenance issues adding to the challenge. It was confirmed that a review of the incident and arrangements had already taken place and that another meeting would be held shortly, where local elected Members would be able to contribute to the discussion.

In response to an enquiry, it was acknowledged that the numbers of class A, B and C roads reporting red (generally poor and likely to require proposed maintenance works soon) were on the rise. However, the Head of Department stressed that it was not a concerning situation at present and confirmed that road condition rates in Gwynedd were among the highest in Wales. It was highlighted that keeping the percentage of roads reporting red below 8% was considered acceptable, and he reported that 4.2% of class A roads, 5.2% of class B roads and 13.2% of class C roads were currently reporting in poor condition. It was recognised that some work was needed to reduce these rates for class C roads, and he explained that they were usually rural roads, highlighting that a high percentage of roads in Gwynedd fell into this category.

It was explained that dedicated scanners were used to inspect the roads every year, or every two years if the roads were of a good standard. It was reported that the Department had received an investment of £2.8 million from the LGBI (Local Government Borrowing Initiative) to develop this arrangement and it was a great tool for the Department in effectively identifying work programmes, as the roads requiring the most work could be prioritised.

The officers were thanked for their work, and there were several comments of satisfactory road condition in Gwynedd.

The Fleet Service

Members referred to the Welsh Government's unrealistic target of making 100% of fleet vehicles green by 2030. In response to the comments, the Head of Department confirmed that good progress had been made within the fleet service, with a high percentage of cars and small vans now being green vehicles. However, it was reported that it was not possible to replace heavy and mechanical vehicles for green ones at present because the technology was not sufficiently developed. It was explained that it would be ineffective to replace them at present due to challenges around charging and efficiency. It was reported that several fleet vehicles were now electric or hybrid and consideration was being given to hydrogen vehicles for heavy and mechanical vehicles. Nevertheless, it was acknowledged that it was unlikely that the target set by the Welsh Government would be met on time.

Concerns were raised that the national grid would not be able to cope with the electricity demand due to the increase in the use of electric vehicles nationally. In response to a further enquiry, it was confirmed that work was underway to ensure that an adequate supply of charging points was delivered across the County, and the Department was in frequent contact with electricity supply companies to ensure they are added to the grid.

Ardal Ni Tidying-up Team

Several positive comments were received about the team and the effective work they carried out within the Department.

Grass Cutting and Road Verges

In response to an enquiry, the Head of Department explained that the work of cutting grass and road verges was undertaken internally in any area contained within 30mph limits. It was elaborated that an external contractor was appointed by tender for any other area within the County. It was noted that there were arrangements in place to ensure that the grass was collected shortly after it had been cut, acknowledging that the Department did receive comments that this did not always take place effectively. It was emphasised that the Department held meetings with the contractor on a weekly basis and any concerns that were raised could be addressed at those meetings.

Comments were received that litter could be seen on road verges when the grass had been mowed, and they wondered whether there was a solution for collecting this litter promptly. In response to the query, the Head of Department stated that they needed to change people's behaviour to ensure that they did not throw waste out of their vehicles. He explained that the litter could not be collected before cutting the grass, but there were arrangements in place to ensure that the Street Scene Service collected it shortly afterwards.

Playgrounds

Information was requested on the process of refurbishing playgrounds and how the Department assessed the demand as well as what equipment was needed within the settings. In response, the Head of Department confirmed that a grant had been received for the refurbishment of 29 playgrounds across the County, and he hoped that more grant funds would be allocated in the future. It was explained that there were no definite

arrangements for determining where those funds would be used, but an officer carried out monthly inspections of the 120 playgrounds in Gwynedd. It was added that these reviews led to a programme of work that specified what needed to be adapted or upgraded in future. The Cabinet Member reiterated that Community Councils could purchase equipment for the playgrounds in co-operation with the Department if they wished.

Savings Schemes

In response to an enquiry, the Head of Department explained that work was being done to ensure that any overspend was alleviated effectively while services continued. It was confirmed that this was a priority for the Council and noted that reviews were carried out regularly to consider their effectiveness. It was explained that this would allow services to be reintroduced in a more effective manner into the future such as Street Inspection and Cleaning and Grounds Maintenance, rather than introducing cuts.

Sickness Rates

Additional data was requested on the reasons why sickness rates were increasing and on any specific reasons why members of staff were off work. In response to the enquiry, the Head of Department confirmed that they were comparable to what was seen in other Council departments. He confirmed that support arrangements were in place for all members of staff who were ill, especially those staff members who were off work long-term. It was emphasised that the Department's sickness rates were not currently causing a visible change to services.

RESOLVED

To accept the report, noting the observations made during the discussion.

The meeting commenced at 10:30am and concluded at 1:35pm

CHAIR

MEETING	Communities Scrutiny Committee
DATE	1 October 2026
TITLE	Climate and Nature Emergency Plan Annual Report 2025/26
REASON TO SCRUTINISE	The Council Plan 2023-28 - A Green Gwynedd
AUTHOR	Dylan Owen, Statutory Director of Social Services
CABINET MEMBER	Cllr Craig ab Iago, Cabinet Member for Environment

1. Why it needs scrutiny?

- 1.1 The Climate and Nature Emergency Plan 2022/23-2029/30 is one of the projects under the Green Gwynedd heading of Cyngor Gwynedd's 2023-2028 Plan.
- 1.2 Much of the work described in this annual report has already been scrutinised by the Climate and Nature Board and through the Council's internal performance challenge arrangements, but the annual report brings all the information together for the first time.
- 1.3 The scrutiny of this annual report will provide members of the Committee with assurances that arrangements are in place and that sufficient progress is being made in delivering the Climate and Nature Emergency Plan 2022/23 - 2029/30.
- 1.4 The Committee has an opportunity to check whether or not the Report is accurate and balanced. It can also propose any amendments or corrections, all before the Report goes to a meeting of the Council's Cabinet for adoption.
- 1.5 This Committee can also propose any ideas for further future action based on the information in the Annual Report.
- 1.6 According to Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, public authorities operating in Wales have a duty to maintain and improve biodiversity and to promote the strength of ecosystems. We report on progress against the 'Section 6 duty' within the Climate and Nature Emergency Plan Annual Report 2025/26.

2. What exactly needs scrutiny?

- 2.1 The progress made in delivering the Plan.
- 2.2 What is the progress in relation to the ambition of the Plan - 'Cyngor Gwynedd will be net-zero carbon and ecologically positive by 2030'?
- 2.3 What are the next steps?

3. Summary of the Key Matters

- 3.1 The Climate and Nature Emergency Plan Annual Report 2025/26 in Appendix 1 seeks to provide an accurate and balanced picture of the progress made during the year to realise the [Climate-and-Nature-Emergency-Plan.pdf](#) (CNEP).
- 3.2 The Report sets out the levels of carbon emissions and absorption for which Cyngor Gwynedd was responsible, calculated on the basis of data submitted to the Welsh Government's Energy Service. Based on this data we know what the 'gap to net zero' is and therefore how much more work is ahead of us if we are to meet our target.
- 3.3 The Annual Report also provides evidence on how Cyngor Gwynedd has been implementing Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. The relevant information is in chapter 3 and then at the end of every chapter from 6 to 12.

4. Background / Context

- 4.1 The Council adopted the [Climate-and-Nature-Emergency-Plan-ORIGINAL.pdf](#) following a meeting of the Cabinet on 8 March 2022. "Responding to the climate change crisis" is also one of the Council's 8 Improvement Priorities within The Cyngor Gwynedd Plan 2023-28.
- 4.2 During 2025/26 the Council reviewed the CNEP to ensure that it was accurate and up to date, and a public consultation was held. The results of the consultation can be seen [here](#).
- 4.3 Following public and internal consultations with elected members and staff, the CNEP was amended and a new version was adopted by the Cabinet on 7 July 2026. The new plan (Version 2) can be seen [here](#).
- 4.4 This Annual Report measures the progress made against the original plan, which came into effect in April 2022, rather than against 'Version 2', which has been operational since summer 2026.
- 4.5 The Climate and Nature Emergency Plan outlines how we as a Council will adapt our way of working and delivering services in order to reduce our carbon emissions and increase carbon absorption capacity. It offers examples of projects we will be pursuing, their outline costs and the timeline for their completion.
- 4.6 We have published annual reports on the CNEP since 2022/23, and the previous annual reports can be seen [here](#).
- 4.7 This is also the fourth year that we, like most other public organisations in Wales, have submitted data on our carbon emission and absorption levels to the Welsh Government Energy Service. Clear guidance is set on what data needs to be collected, ensuring accuracy and consistency between organisations.

- 4.8 We measure our carbon emissions across the following categories: buildings and energy; street lighting; fleet and equipment; business travel; staff commuting; home working; waste; and procurement of goods and services. We also measure carbon absorption levels on land owned by the Council.
- 4.9 Cyngor Gwynedd's carbon data for 2025/26 was submitted to the Welsh Government by 14 September, and the information in the Annual Report is based on what was submitted. It is too early for us to receive feedback from the Government, but the information was accurate to the best of our ability.

Main Matters

- 4.10 Chapter 5 of the Annual Report provides information on the levels of carbon emissions and absorption for which the Council was responsible, and on the all-important figure of the remaining gap to reach net zero.
- 4.11 The carbon emissions from our procurement processes are currently based solely on spending, and this can create a misleading picture of the true impact of our spending on the climate. Simply put, the more we spend the bigger the emissions. For this reason, we present two sets of data in each chapter, namely 'including procurement' and 'excluding procurement'
- 4.12 Cyngor Gwynedd's total carbon emissions in 2025/26, **including** procurement, had fallen by 8% since the 2019/20 baseline year and by 11% since 2024/25.
- 4.13 Cyngor Gwynedd's total carbon emissions in 2025/26, **not** including procurement, had fallen by 39% since the 2019/20 baseline year and by 6% since 2024/25.
- 4.14 Looking at our carbon emission and absorption data together, **without** considering procurement data, our **gap to net zero** is 37% lower in 2025/26 compared with 2019/20 and 7% lower than in 2024/25.
- 4.15 The percentage of carbon emissions decreased in every category except commuting, and we consider that the increase in this category is due to a staff survey being held to collect more accurate data than was available in previous years.

5 Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016

- 5.1 According to Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, public authorities operating in Wales have a duty to maintain and improve biodiversity and to promote the strength of ecosystems.
- 5.2 The Welsh Government published a national biodiversity strategy, the 'Nature Recovery Action Plan' in 2015 which outlined the commitment to reverse biodiversity loss in Wales, and it contains 6 objectives for action. To comply with the

Section 6 duty, public authorities must publish their own plan based on the Welsh Government's plan, and then the progress needs to be reported.

- 5.3 Cyngor Gwynedd has been updating our own Nature Recovery Plan during 2025/26 to comply with the requirements of the Act, but in the meantime we are reporting on our progress against the 6 objectives of the national Nature Recovery Action Plan through the Climate and Nature Annual Report. The information can be found in chapter 3 and at the end of chapters 5 to 11.

7. Consultation

- 7.1 After receiving comments from the Communities Scrutiny Committee, the report will be considered by the Council's Cabinet before a final version is published on the Council's website.

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

- 8.1 Have you **included** residents / service users? If not, when and how do you intend to consult with them?
- 8.2 The final Annual Report will be published on the Council's website after receiving the Cabinet's seal of approval and we will share information about it with all Council members, and with the residents of Gwynedd and the general public.
- 8.3 Have you considered **collaboration**?
- 8.4 Chapters 11 and 12 of the Annual Report cover the work carried out in part by the Gwynedd Nature Partnership, namely a consortium of local organisations led by the Council. A number of other projects in CNEP are carried out in partnership with others, such as active travel projects in collaboration with Public Service Board partners.
- 8.5 What has been done or will be done to **prevent** problems arising or worsening in the future?
- 8.6 One of the basic principles of CNEP is to try to prevent further increases in the average temperature of the planet and to limit global warming to "well below 2°C" in accordance with the United Nations Paris Agreement. Each of the plan's projects seek to stabilise or even reverse the probability that the current situation will lead to further problems in the future.
- 8.7 How have you considered the **long-term** and what will people's needs be in coming years?

- 8.8 As noted above, the basis of the CNEP is to seek to prevent global warming problems from getting worse in the future, and while the Council has its own target of net zero carbon by 2030 the Welsh Government has set a target for the whole of Wales to be net zero by 2050. The CNEP therefore also takes into account that changing the habits of Gwynedd's residents and businesses will be long-term work beyond 2030.
- 8.9 The Annual Report highlights that the CNEP itself states that further work is needed to incorporate projects that will help residents, businesses and communities to respond to climate change that is already changing our landscape, such as the impact of flooding and extreme weather. Work is currently underway to review the CNEP and make any necessary amendments so it is very likely that we will see additional projects in the future that will focus on helping Gwynedd residents to adapt to the different needs over a long period of time.
- 8.10 To ensure **integration** have you considered the possible impact on other public bodies?
- 8.11 A large number of the CNEP projects are planned or implemented in conjunction with other public bodies or with the voluntary sector and communities. See 8.4.
- 8.12 A number of local public bodies including Cyngor Gwynedd are members of the Public Services Board and one of the three Well-being Objectives in the Gwynedd and Anglesey Well-being Plan 2023-2028 is 'We want to work together to support our services and communities to move towards Net Zero Carbon'. There is ongoing collaboration with other local authorities across north Wales, the Welsh Local Government Association, the Welsh Government's Energy Service, Transport for Wales which has resulted in joint planning and commissioning. A number of CNEP projects are also dependent on successful collaboration with other partners, such as our biodiversity and land use projects in conjunction with the Gwynedd Nature Partnership.

9. Impact on Equality Characteristics, the Welsh Language and the Socio-Economic Duty

- 9.1 The impact of [Equality Characteristics, the Welsh Language and the Socio-Economic Duties](#) on the Climate and Nature Emergency Plan were assessed when it was adopted at a meeting of the Cabinet on 8 March 2022. This assessment is directly relevant to the Annual Report on the CNEP.

10. Next Steps

- 10.1 Following the discussion at the Communities Scrutiny Committee any comments the Committee has on the Annual Report will be submitted to the Cabinet's attention.

10.2 If the Cabinet approves the report we will publicise it and encourage the residents of Gwynedd to take advantage of the opportunities to reduce their personal carbon emissions as well as help the Council meet our own net zero target.

11. Background Information

[Climate-and-Nature-Emergency-Plan.pdf](#)

12. Appendices

Appendix 1 - Climate and Nature Emergency Plan Annual Report 2025/26

- 1. Foreword of the Cabinet Member for the Environment**
- 2. Measuring in order to reach the aim**
- 3. Carbon Emissions and Absorption 2025/26**
- 4. The Gap to Net Zero**
- 5. Section 6 - Maintaining and Enhancing Biodiversity**
- 6. Buildings and Energy**
- 7. Movement and Transport**
- 8. Waste**
- 9. Governance**
- 10. Procurement**
- 11. Land Use**
- 12. Biodiversity**

Foreword of the Cabinet Member for the Environment

[to follow after the Climate and Nature Board meeting]

Measuring in order to reach the aim

This annual report presents the Cyngor Gwynedd emissions and absorption accounts of Cyngor Gwynedd for the year 1 April - 31 March 2025/26 and provides an update on the work done to implement the Council's Climate and Nature Emergency Plan.

By taking an objective view of the work done in 2025/26, and the results of that in terms of carbon emissions and absorption, we would be better placed to measure the best way forward to reach our goal to be a net zero and ecologically-positive council.

Carbon Emissions and Absorption 2025/26

Like most other public organisations in Wales, Cyngor Gwynedd calculates carbon emissions, following the Welsh Government's guidance, and then presents the results to the government annually.

The carbon emissions are being compared with the Council's baseline years, namely 2019/20 and the previous reporting year, 2024/25, whilst providing an explanation for any variances.

By measuring the carbon emissions and absorption data every year, we will have evidence to see where we are along the journey to be a net zero and ecologically-friendly council.

Carbon Emissions

The total Cyngor Gwynedd carbon emissions in 2025/26 **EXCLUDING** procurement emissions was 20,061,200 kgCO₂e. This is a reduction of 39% since the 2019/20 baseline year, and a 6% reduction since 2024/25.

The total Cyngor Gwynedd carbon emissions in 2025/26 **INCLUDING** procurement emissions was 67,364,600 kgCO₂e. This is a reduction of 8% since the 2019/20 baseline year, and a 11% reduction since 2024/25.

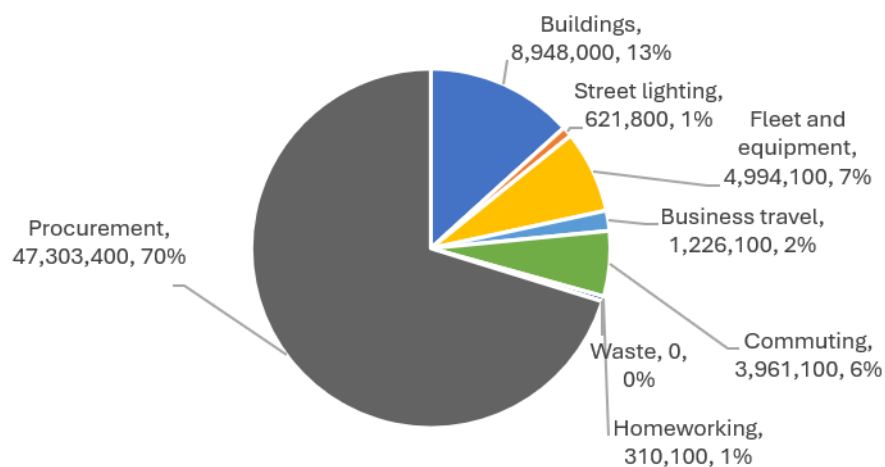
The first chart below shows our carbon emissions over 8 headings and includes procurement emissions (purchasing goods and services).

The methodology of measuring carbon emissions resulting from our procurement processes is imperfect because it is based on the amount of money we spend. The more we spend the greater the emissions.

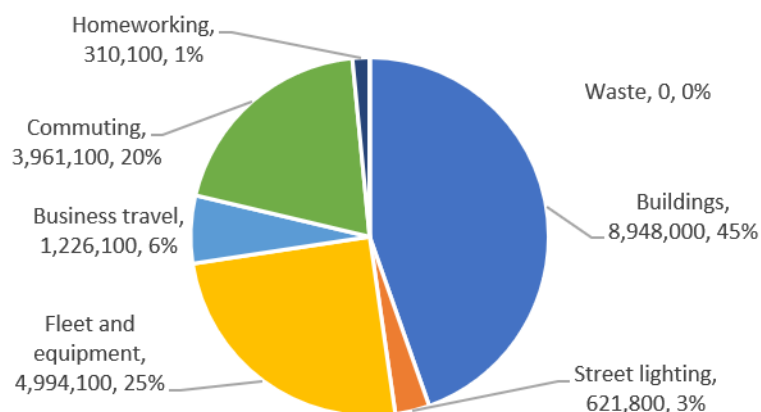
As the procurement data can create an imperfect picture, the second chart opposite presents data for the remaining 7 headings after procurement is disregarded.

More information about why emissions increase or reduce are to be found in the subsequent chapters.

Carbon Emissions kgCO2e including procurement 2025/26



Carbon Emissions kgCO2e excluding procurement 2025/26



Carbon Absorption

The amount of carbon dioxide being absorbed and stored by the Council's land assets helps to offset a proportion of the Council's carbon emissions, and close some of the gap to net zero.

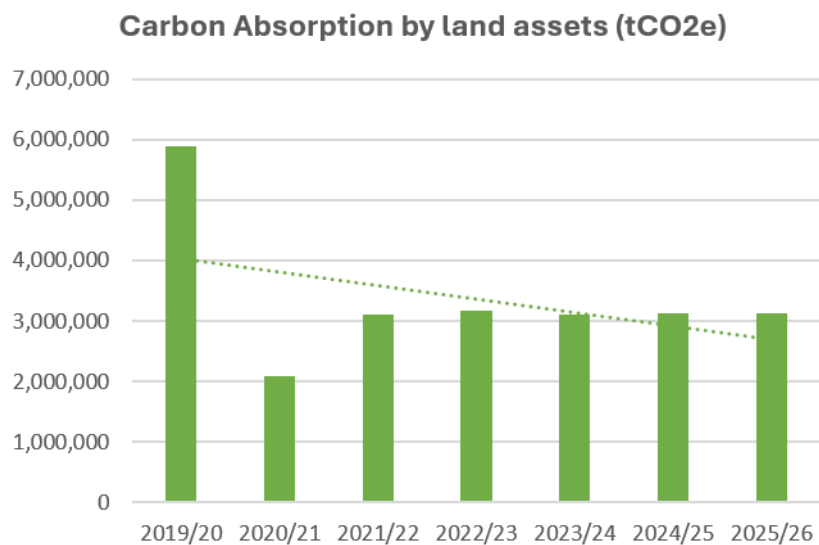
However, calculating the estimated carbon absorption rate is challenging because you would need a very deep level of detail about sites, and thus far there is no clear guidance in the Welsh Government guidance on how best to gather the correct data.

Meanwhile, we are using data being collected through OS maps and the Council's asset management system. We had a problem with using this technology in 2025/26; therefore,

we have used the data for 2024/25 as we are confident that there has not been a great deal of change in land use or land purchasing and selling from one year to another.

More information on what the Council has done during the year to improve the quality of lands and their ability to absorb carbon can be seen in the Land Use and Biodiversity chapters.

Lands owned by Cyngor Gwynedd have absorbed 3,123,254 kgCO₂e of carbon during 2025/26.



The Gap to Net Zero

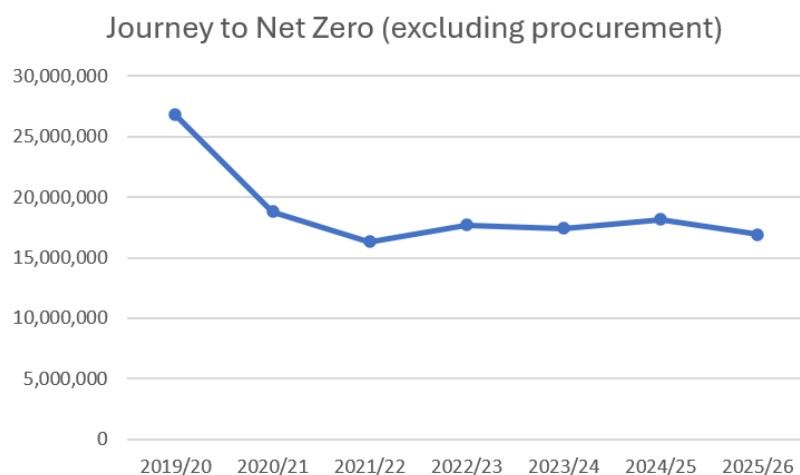
Our gap to net zero (**excluding** procurement) in 2025/26 was 16,937,946 kgCO₂e. This is a reduction of 37% since the 2019/20 baseline year, and a 7% reduction since 2024/25.

Our gap to net zero (**including** procurement) in 2025/26 was 64,241,346 kgCO₂e. This is a reduction of 5% since the 2019/20 baseline year, and an 12% reduction since 2024/25.



In simple terms, the gap to net zero is the amount of CO₂e that we need to remove in order to reach our ambition of being a net zero and ecologically-positive council. The gap is calculated by deducting the total value of the carbon being absorbed from the total of the carbon being emitted.

The Climate and Nature Emergency Plan, and this annual report, shows that Cyngor Gwynedd is attempting to close the gap from both sides at the same time, and acknowledges the equal importance of reducing emissions and increasing absorption levels.



Section 6 - Maintaining and Enhancing Biodiversity

The aim of the Cyngor Gwynedd Climate and Nature Emergency Plan is to be a net zero and **ecologically-positive** council. One route to take to reach that aim is to ensure that we implement 'Section 6'.

According to Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, public authorities operating in Wales have a duty to "seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity" and to "promote the strength of ecosystems".

In practical terms, this means that public bodies, including local authorities, must consider biodiversity and nature in all aspects of their work, not just in environmental projects.

The Welsh Government published a national biodiversity strategy, namely the 'Nature Recovery Action Plan' in 2015 which outlined the commitment to reversing biodiversity loss in Wales, and the objectives for action. It contains 6 objectives for nature recovery in Wales:

- **Objective 1:** Engage and support participation and understanding to embed biodiversity throughout decision-making at all levels
- **Objective 2:** Protect species and habitats of paramount importance and improve their management
- **Objective 3:** Increase the resilience of our natural environment by restoring degraded habitats and creating new habitats
- **Objective 4:** Address key pressures on species and habitats
- **Objective 5:** Improve our evidence, understanding and monitoring
- **Objective 6:** Implement a governance framework and support to achieve the objectives

In order for Cyngor Gwynedd to meet the 'Section 6' requirements, we need to prove how we have contributed to each of the 6 objectives above.

At the end of each section of this annual report, you will find a description of how the work that has been undertaken contributes to the realisation of one or more of the above 6 objectives, which in turn comply with Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

Here is a summary of the link between the Climate and Nature Emergency Plan projects and the Objectives of Section 6:

Climate and		Objective 1	Objective 2	Objective 3	Objective 4	Objective 5	Objective 6
Buildings and Energy							

Movement and Transport						
Waste						
Governance						
Procurement						
Land Use						
Ecology						

Buildings and Energy

The carbon emissions deriving from **buildings and energy** in 2025/26 is 45% of the total (excluding procurement), which is a 23% reduction since 2019/20 and a 10% reduction since 2024/25.

The carbon emissions deriving from **street lighting** in 2025/26 is 3% of the total (excluding procurement), which is a 44% reduction since 2019/20 and a 13% reduction since 2024/25.

Refurbishing buildings to save energy

Three sites have seen improvements made to the buildings' fabric in 2025/26, namely Hafod Mawddach care home, Ysgol Llanbedrog and Byw'n Iach Penllyn (Bala). Substantial alteration work was done in order to stop energy waste, and in turn this will save money and carbon. This work is also necessary in order to prepare the site for the installation of heat pumps. This was all possible due to the Low Carbon Heating Grant contribution from the Welsh Government. More information on Ysgol Llanbedrog can be found below.

Electrification of heating systems

After upgrading the sites of Hafod Mawddach, Ysgol Llanbedrog and Byw'n Iach Penllyn, they were then ready for us to install heat pumps. As it is not possible to close the sites whilst the work is being done, patience is required when scheduling the work, but we look forward to seeing the results of the end of the project in 2026.

In 2025/26, heat pumps were also installed in 3 new sites: Ysgol Ein Harglwyddes (Bangor), Ysgol Felinwnda and Ysgol Maesincla Language Unit (Caernarfon). 11 sites are now heated by further heat pumps.

Installation of PV solar panels to save energy and costs

Solar panels were installed on 6 new sites, and further panels were added on another 9 sites in 2025/26, producing 973.25 kW of clean energy every year.

This brings the total number of Cyngor Gwynedd sites that generate their own electricity to 64. 50 of these are schools and 6 are care or nursing homes.

We can see the results in full during 2026/27, but all PV installations are expected to save energy purchasing costs of £34,495 per year, as well as annual carbon savings of 128.7tCO₂e.

Solar Panels, and more...

A very exciting project completed during the year was the installation of a solar canopy on Ysgol Hafod Lon in Penrhyndeudraeth, as part of a local smart energy system. More information on this work can be seen below.

Thanks to a grant from Ynni Cymru, local smart energy systems were installed at the Byw'n Iach Plas Silyn (Penygroes) and Plas Ffrancon (Bethesda) leisure centres. Solar panels have been installed to power the buildings, with the remaining electricity being stored in batteries. In turn, these will power a community charging hub.

LED Lighting Scheme

LED bulbs use much less electricity than the other 'long-life' lightbulbs, and therefore, there is a big financial benefit in electricity cost savings and resulting carbon savings benefits.

LED lighting was installed on 8 sites during 2025/26, and from the existing data, we have been saving at least 29,513 kWh of electricity in a year, which leads to a saving of £6,492.86 in annual costs.

Street lighting, signage and traffic

64 new sites were added to the Gwynedd street lighting network in 2025/26 (e.g. new housing estates, highways). Nevertheless, we are still seeing a reduction in energy use and 13% of a reduction in carbon emissions since the previous year because we are continuing with the LED lighting renovation programme. The carbon reduction since the 2019/20 baseline year is 44%.

Energy advice on fuel poverty

The Council's Energy Team supports residents with energy costs, and information on energy efficiency in the home and information on tariffs. Over 100 drop-in sessions were held to provide advice and information for residents, and many of these were in collaboration with local community organisations.

ECO4 is a national initiative aimed at helping low-income households improve their home energy efficiency and reduce bills and carbon. 1,140 homes in Gwynedd received an ECO4 grant, and increased their EPC score, reducing bills.

Unfortunately, the ECO4 initiative will end in December 2026, but in reality, the applications to the initiative have dropped substantially since December 2025. We are expecting an announcement from the Welsh Government on what is coming next under the Warm Homes scheme.

Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP)

The Welsh Government commissioned a programme for all local authorities in Wales to develop a Local Area Energy Plan to contribute to these national targets to reach net zero.

The Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet adopted our Local Area Energy Plan in September 2025, and its intention is to look at the most efficient and cost-effective methods of de-carbonising a complete energy system for Gwynedd by 2050.

Added benefit

All of the above work has led to spending with several local contractors, with 4 companies that are local to Gwynedd. Not only has this kept the pound in the local economy; it has also upgraded the skills of the workforce, strengthening their situations in the future.

Success story - Ysgol Llanbedrog

The school's pupils and staff are now learning and working in a much more successful environment. This low carbon heating project has refurbished the heating system and retrofitted improvements to the school's Victorian building fabric and its extensions. The project commenced in 2024 following the Council's success when securing several grants through the Welsh Government's Low Carbon Heating Grant Programme. The project is expected to complete in October 2026.

The work has included installing an air source heat pump (*ASHP*), internal and external insulation, triple glazing windows and a mechanical ventilation system that regains heat (*MVHR*). Together, these measures have created a comprehensive retrofit project that improves the building's energy performance, reduces carbon emissions, and provides a more comfortable and sustainable environment for the pupils and staff of Ysgol Llanbedrog.

Success story - Ysgol Hafod Lon

A new local smart energy system was developed on the school's site in 2025/26, and the electricity generated will not only save energy costs for the school, but it will also power the charging point for a new electric mini bus that transports the pupils to the school and back home.

139kW solar systems were installed on the site - a combination of solar panels on the roof and 147 panels on a 120kW solar canopy that supplies electricity to the school building, mini bus charging point, and a 215kW battery.

At peak times of solar generation in the summer, it was estimated that the school is 50% self-sufficient as a result of the project. There are substantial savings as a result of the project in terms of importing less energy from the grid, financial savings as a result of reduced electricity bills (estimated at £19,941 per annum), and carbon savings (estimate of 24tCO₂e per annum).



The work being described above will all contribute towards realising the **Projects of the Climate and Nature Emergency Plan** -

1. Aim for long-term benefits when planning construction or building renovations.
2. Save 5% of carbon emissions from buildings by bringing them up to the CIBSE 'good practice' standard.
3. De-carbonise the Council's energy supply.
4. Increase our carbon 'credit' by installing solar farms to generate energy that the Council could use or sell.
5. Reduce our carbon emissions by expanding our use of PV to create renewable energy.
6. Use *Passivhaus* low carbon construction methods in developing our innovative housing pilot scheme.

7. Offer advice and information to Gwynedd residents about the benefits and opportunities of using low carbon building methods when building homes and low carbon heating/energy systems to maintain a home.
8. Improve the fabric of Council-owned buildings to make them as energy efficient as possible.
9. Electrification of building heating systems to reduce carbon emissions.
10. Install EC (electronically commutated) ventilation fans in buildings to reduce the energy needed to run them compared to normal fans.
11. Set individual room heating regulations to reduce the energy required to heat a building.
12. Upgrade specialist lighting in leisure centres to reduce energy consumption.
13. Upgrade streetlights and traffic signs to use less energy.
14. Prevent the over-development of fossil fuel energy schemes.
15. Maximise the benefits that come from implementing our energy and heating policies.
16. Equipment used within Council buildings to be as energy efficient as possible.
17. Improve the energy infrastructure in Gwynedd and north Wales to maintain low carbon energy and transport systems.

Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016

The above work contributes to the objectives below:

Objective 2: Protecting species and habitats of paramount importance and improving their management

Objective 3: Increasing the resilience of our natural environment by restoring degraded habitats and creating new habitats

Objective 5: Improving our evidence, understanding and monitoring

Movement and Transport

The carbon emissions deriving from the council **fleet** in 2025/26 is 25% of the total (excluding procurement), which is a 3% reduction since 2019/20 and a 4% reduction since 2024/25.

The carbon emissions deriving from the **staff commute** in 2025/26 is 20% of the total (excluding procurement), which is a 30% reduction since 2019/20 and a 6% reduction since 2024/25.

The carbon emissions deriving from **business travel** in 2025/26 is 6% of the total (excluding procurement), which is a 37% reduction since 2019/20 and a 4% reduction since 2024/25.

Green Fleet Plan

Since adopting our Green Fleet Plan 2023-29 in January 2023, our policy is to buy new electric vehicles (EV) where possible as the current fleet of petrol and diesel cars reach the end of their lifespan.

The Council owns 82 cars or small electric vans and 9 hybrid, and 6 electric equipment (*loading shovels, street cleaning machines*), namely 40% of all cars and vans we own.



We have succeeded to save energy costs and carbon emissions during the year as we saw a 6.1% reduction on fuel use (petrol and diesel) between 2024/25 and 2025/26. This was due

to the transfer to an electric fleet and favourable weather, which meant fewer gritting trips during the winter.

66% of all of our fleet's carbon emissions derive from our HGV vehicles, and that because we are continuing to use diesel lorries. We should also bear in mind that these HGV lorries are waste collection and delivery vehicles, and road gritting vehicles, therefore the carbon emissions associated with waste collection and delivery for processing is recorded under 'fleet' carbon emissions instead of 'waste'.

Electric Car Charging Points

Fleet - by the end of 2025/26, the Council had 58 charging points in 12 locations across the county in order to keep our fleet of electric vehicles on the road.

Public - by the end of 2025/26, the Council has installed and manages 48 charging points in 12 locations and 12 additional charging points in 4 Council-owned sites in collaboration with Transport for Wales.

Success story - Green Fleet Plan

The Energy Service (Welsh Government) reported that Cyngor Gwynedd has the second highest number of green vehicles in its fleet compared with other rural councils in Wales.

Active Travel

Bangor - The work of creating the multi-use path for cyclists and pedestrians between Ysbyty Gwynedd and Treborth was completed. The plan also includes the installation of a new crossing in front of Ysgol y Faenol, Penrhosgarnedd, Bangor.

Mynytho - Walking paths and crossings were created for Ysgol Foel Gron, as well as an improved footpath and crossing to connect with the shop and post office.

There are several other projects commenced in 2025/26 that are continuing into 2026/27 and 2027/28 -

- Walking and cycling paths from Chwillog to Afonwen, and Tywyn to Aberdyfi.
- Feasibility and design work on a series of other plans, including travel routes: Llanberis-Caernarfon, Llanystumdwy-Cricieth, Bethel-Caernarfon.

Cyngor Gwynedd is responsible for managing and maintaining the coast path in the county. We installed path use monitoring devices in 8 locations along the coast path, and the 3 sites with the highest use of the 8 were - Dinas Dinlle, Llanbedrog, Penrhyn Bangor.

Success story - Lôn Las Ogwen

The work of building the new Pont Sarnau bridge, has created a safer and more accessible path for everyone who wishes to walk, cycle or scoot along Lôn Las in this part of Dyffryn Ogwen, improving the connection with paths to reach Llyn Ogwen and the Zip World attraction.

The improvements include installing a subway for cattle so that the path does not need to be closed occasionally, which will help farmers and path users alike.

Success story - Schools' active travel

The Schools Transport Pack was prepared as part of the efforts to improve safety around schools and encourage more sustainable travel across the county. The pack has been developed to provide clear and practical information for headteachers, school staff and parents, as well as useful resources to promote active travel and reduce traffic congestion around schools, which in turn will improve the quality of the air breathed in by our children.

The pack has been developed by Cyngor Gwynedd and has been funded by the Welsh Government with support from Transport for Wales.



Public transport

During 2025/26, the Council piloted and monitored the Sherpa'r Wyddfa services, the G23 between Barmouth and Porthmadog and the Fflecsi in south Meirionnydd - and increase of 6.6% was seen in the number of journeys compared to the previous year.

Across the county's bus services, we saw an increase of 14.7% in bus journeys in 2025/26 compared with 2024/25.

A 4% reduction in journeys from those paying for a ticket, but a 36% increase in journeys with a free bus pass. 60% of journeys were made with paid tickets, and 40% with a free travel pass.

Improvements totalling £500,000 were completed to bus stops in 3 locations in Arfon, 3 in Dwyfor and 3 in Meirionnydd.

Staff Commute

The data that we have been gathering for 2025/26 is slightly different to previous years as we have been conducting a staff commute questionnaire. As the sample collected was not representative enough, the final data is a combination of an analysis of the questionnaire and of data based on the 2021 Census.

Business Travel

One significant change made in 2025/26 was changing our arrangements to measure the carbon emissions deriving from business journeys much more accurately than previous years.

Staff and councillors use public transport or private cars to make necessary journeys for their work, and we are now able to connect with the DVLA's data systems to receive an accurate measure of the vehicle engine's carbon emissions.

Therefore, it is encouraging that the emissions are reducing, particularly since several journeys are made on public transport or personal electric vehicles.

The work being described above will all contribute towards realising the **Projects of the Climate and Nature Emergency Plan** -

1. Move away from using fossil fuel vehicles towards a fleet of ULEV vehicles (cars and vans).
2. Install electric vehicle charging points for Council vehicles.
3. Have low carbon or zero carbon fuel options for the Council's heavy fleet.
4. Install electric vehicle charging points for Gwynedd residents.
5. Reduce business travel.
6. Reduce carbon emissions through staff commuting habits.

7. Encourage active travel among staff – in the interests of health and well-being and to reduce carbon emissions.
8. Encourage active travel among residents and visitors to Gwynedd to improve physical and mental well-being and reduce carbon emissions of short car journeys.
9. Reduce carbon emissions and parking problems in areas that are popular with visitors.
10. Increase opportunities for community organisations to access EV or ULEV vehicles or use low carbon technology.

Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016

The above work contributes to the objectives below:

Objective 2: Protecting species and habitats of paramount importance and improving their management

Objective 3: Increasing the resilience of our natural environment by restoring degraded habitats and creating new habitats

Objective 5: Improving our evidence, understanding and monitoring

Waste

Carbon emissions from Council waste in 2025/26 are 0% of the total (excluding procurement) which is a 100% reduction from 2019/20 and consistent with the 2024/25 figure.

The Welsh Government changed the methodology of calculating the waste carbon emissions in 2024/25. Now, all waste treatment methods, except for landfill (e.g. recycling, incineration, anaerobic digestion, etc.) give us a figure of zero. All residual waste from Gwynedd residents and businesses is treated on the Parc Adfer site in Deeside, where it is incinerated to generate energy, therefore no waste is taken to landfill.

It should be borne in mind that the figure for **processing** waste is 0%, as the carbon emissions of **collecting** waste and **delivering** it for processing is counted under the fleet carbon emissions - see the chapter on 'Movement and Transport'.

Although a proportion of the waste we recycle has increased from 55% to 65% over the past decade, the progress has stopped. The Gwynedd recycling percentage in 2025/26 is 65.1% compared with 65.3% in 2024/25. Therefore, it will be some challenge for us to meet the Welsh Government's target for recycling, reusing and composting 70% of our waste.

Waste and Recycling Strategy 2025-2030

2025/26 was a year of developing, and consulting with Gwynedd's public, on the new strategy. It was adopted in its final form by the Cabinet in July 2026.

The strategy places emphasis on increasing recycling, improving services, maintaining the current infrastructure and investing in the infrastructure of the future.

Changing recycling habits

Whilst the work of developing the new Waste and Recycling Strategy is progressing, the recycling service trialled new arrangements to increase the amount of waste being recycled and reduce how much is sent for processing at Parc Adfer:

- hessian sack trial piloted on 3 routes in the Arfon area
- opening black bin bags at the recycling centres in order to move waste that would have been disposed of, and placing the material in the recycling skips instead
- campaign to raise awareness amongst residents

Street cleanliness and waste

The Tidying Team is offering a street maintenance and cleaning service, and service to clear any fly tipping. Here are some of the results:

- 31% reduction in fly tipping between 2024/25 and 2025/26
- Keep Wales Tidy is monitoring cleanliness levels across local authorities, and the number of sites inspected in Gwynedd in 2025 which reached the acceptable level was 64.5% compared with 58.5% in the whole of Wales.

Reduce food waste

The Emergency Food Aid Fund is a grant aimed at supporting projects that provide food aid to people. During 2025/26, 41 community groups were supported through the fund, with £150,300 being allocated to support food banks, food pantries, supper clubs, and a lunch box provision.

Reduce paper use

During 2025/26, the new contract for printers across the Council's sites was commenced, and the new arrangements will substantially reduce paper use and will save energy.

The work being described above will all contribute towards realising the **Projects of the Climate and Nature Emergency Plan** -

1. Repair and modify equipment that would otherwise be disposed of and incinerated and sold.
2. Reduce the number of items arriving at waste incineration sites by encouraging people to repair and re-use.

3. Promote a circular economy in order to reduce the number of items being disposed of and reducing carbon emissions in the supply chain from the purchase of new goods.
4. Reduce food waste by supporting community projects seeking to re-distribute food that would otherwise be thrown away.
5. Reduce the amount of street waste that is disposed and increase the amount of street waste that is recycled.
6. Reduce paper use.

Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016

The above work contributes to the objectives below:

Objective 1: Engage and support participation and understanding to embed biodiversity throughout decision-making at all levels.

Objective 2: Protecting species and habitats of paramount importance and improving their management.

Objective 3: Increasing the resilience of our natural environment by restoring degraded habitats and creating new habitats.

Objective 4: Addressing key pressures on species and habitats.

Governance

No carbon emissions derive directly from the work in the Governance field.

Improving skills and knowledge

We continue to promote our Climate and Nature training e-module among staff and councillors as it explains why the Council needs to do work in these areas.

See the chapter on Biodiversity / Ecology for information on the tree protection training.

Workforce Development

Two new members of staff were appointed on professional trainee and apprentice contracts during the summer of 2025:

- Planning Ecologist Professional Trainee
- Energy Degree Apprentice

Policy Revision

2025/26 was a year of reviewing and recreating some of the main strategies that is leading the Council's climate and nature work. We consulted during the year on the Climate and Nature Emergency Plan and the Waste and Recycling Strategy, and they were accepted by the Cabinet early on in 2026/27.

The 2026-2031 Procurement Strategy was also accepted by the Council's Cabinet during the year, and it provides sound guidance on buying locally, gaining social value and reducing carbon.

Sharing information in order to change habits

It must be acknowledged that changing deeply embedded habits is one of the hardest tasks on our journey to net zero. Nevertheless, we have used our social media to share information and good news stories about how residents and businesses, as well as staff and councillors, reduce our carbon footprint.

We consulted widely with community initiatives, other public enterprises, and residents, when developing the Local Area Energy Plan, and work has commenced to discuss collaborating on future energy plans.

The work being described above will all contribute towards realising the **Projects of the Climate and Nature Emergency Plan** -

1. Elected members and staff who:
 - understand the implications of the impact of climate change

- make decisions based on information about the effects
 - act in the most positive manner possible towards mitigating the impact of climate change and being ecologically positive
2. Encourage staff to develop careers in areas that reduce the impact of climate change or are ecologically positive.
 3. Review current Council policies and strategies so that reducing carbon emissions or reducing the impact of climate change is a factor in reaching a decision.
 4. Share information publicly about the work the Council is doing to reduce carbon emissions to encourage others to change habits.
 5. Support communities to plan and deliver local solutions to local needs.

Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016

The above work contributes to the objectives below:

Objective 1: Engage and support participation and understanding to embed biodiversity throughout decision-making at all levels.

Objective 6: Implementing a governance framework and support for achieving the objectives.

Procurement

70% of the Council's carbon emissions during 2025/26 were from our procurement processes, which is a 16% increase from 2019/20 and a 14% reduction from 2024/25.

The method of measuring procurement carbon emissions, or the supply chain, is based on spending alone. Simply put, the higher the spending, the greater the emissions. The increasing cost of purchasing goods and services and inflation increases, therefore leads to an increase in carbon emissions under the 'procurement' heading.

Due to the problems of this methodology, we are introducing two sets of emissions data - with, and without, procurement data.

Improving our evidence

In an attempt to move away from the spending methodology only, we collaborated with our suppliers in 4 high-spend areas in order to obtain much more accurate information about their carbon emissions - food contracts for schools, school transport contracts, information technology equipment, printers.

The information was inputted in the 'Tier 2' section of the Welsh Government's data spreadsheet, and the results have shown that the emissions have reduced, compared when measuring based on spending.

Supporting suppliers

If we help our suppliers to decarbonise their way of working, this will help us better understand our supply chains' carbon emissions, as well as help the climate!

During 2025/26 the Council collaborated with Busnes Cymru and Adra to hold support sessions for the providers of the care and housing sector, and to help them create Carbon Management Plans.

The officers have held 'meet the buyer' events to highlight the expectations when awarding procurement contracts and reducing carbon emissions is one of those.

2026 - 2031 Procurement Strategy

The new strategy accepted by the Cabinet in January 2026 identifies seven priority fields, which include: Local benefits, zero carbon, value for money, social value, technology, governance arrangements and the Welsh language.

To assist with the implementation of the new strategy, we have been supporting officers within the Council which award contracts regularly to raise awareness and understanding of the objectives to buy local, gain social value and reduce carbon.

The work being described above will all contribute towards realising the **Projects of the Climate and Nature Emergency Plan** -

1. Providing market support, particularly to local providers, to be able to measure the impact of their operations on their carbon footprint.
2. Understanding and measuring carbon emissions when realising contracts in the procurement chain.

Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016

The above projects contribute to the objectives below:

Objective 5: Improving our evidence, understanding and monitoring.

Objective 6: Implementing a governance framework and support for achieving the objectives.

The above work contributes to these two Objectives, as receiving and monitoring Carbon Management Plans would give us evidence of how providers are going to protect biodiversity.

Land Use

We are currently using an estimated figure for the absorption levels of all council lands (including 'brownfield' sites built upon), whilst we check the accuracy of the data.

As no major changes have occurred between 2025/26 and the previous year, we are temporarily using the 2024/25 data.

All Council lands absorb 3,123,254 kgCO₂e net worth of carbon in 2024/25 and 2025/26. This is 47% less than the 2019/20 baseline year.

Offsetting the carbon absorbed against our carbon emissions contributes to reducing the gap to net zero.

Establish and develop tree nurseries

Extra care had to be given to three existing tree nurseries - at Plas Glyn y Weddw, Llanbedrog, Blaenau Ffestiniog and Tregarth - following the major storms in 2025/26, but we managed to undertake the necessary remedial works.

New species of gorse and Welsh apple trees, which are genetically unique, have been discovered, and seeds collected and replanted in the nurseries.

A new tree nursery has started being established at Parc Glynllifon near Caernarfon, at a new and exciting project jointly with the Adults Department in order to offer work and well-being opportunities for vulnerable adults.

Urban tree planting

We managed to attract a grant from the Welsh Local Government Association, to run a feasibility study to see what tree would be best to plant and in what locations in urban and coastal areas. This work should lead to creating a tree planting programme to help with flood risks and create an environment to help the well-being of residents.

Protecting woodlands

Through the work of the Gwynedd Nature Partnership, the Council was involved in the work of improving public access to the woodlands of Parc Meurig in Bethesda and Coed Doctor in Llanberis.

Four community orchards were planted at Cricieth, Y Ffôr, Carmel and Abererch, jointly with local organisations.

Measuring carbon in trees

The work of investigating what model better suits our woodlands - the drone can measure how much wood and dead wood exists in a woodland, and we also use the Ezytreev and Forest Research systems.

The ability to measure correctly will be important, not just to understand the value of tree carbon for the purposes of our journey to net zero, but also to understand the health of the trees in order to treat and protect them. This is essential as a part of the work of the team responsible for Ash Dieback.

Measuring carbon in our lands

We collaborated with DataMapWales and the WLGA on a national scheme to see whether it was possible to map the carbon value of lands, but unfortunately, the results of the project were not as we had hoped. Therefore, we are continuing to experiment with the best methods of measuring and keeping record.

Meanwhile, we are using data arising from OS maps, and the Welsh Government's carbon data collection methodology.

The work being described above will all contribute towards realising the **Projects of the Climate and Nature Emergency Plan** -

1. Identify the contribution of Council-owned trees to carbon absorption and storage and flood reduction.
2. Identify the contribution of Council-owned lands to carbon absorption and storage and flood reduction.
3. Establish tree nurseries to grow trees ready for planting.
4. Identify opportunities to plant trees as part of the National Forest for Wales initiative.
5. Controlling Ash Dieback Disease in trees and compensating for any carbon emissions as a result of felling trees.
6. Council-owned woods are protected to maximise their potential to absorb carbon and become habitats for nature.
7. Conserve agricultural land in Gwynedd and using it for a competent purpose and managing afforestation projects.

Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016

The proposed policy contributes to each of the six objectives.

Biodiversity / Ecology

Collaboration

The Gwynedd Nature Partnership is a collection of public and voluntary organisations and individuals who collaborate to protect and enhance nature in the county. Although Cyngor Gwynedd administers the partnership, it succeeds due to the level of successful collaboration.

During 2025/26 the Partnership collaborated with 5 town and community councils on work to improve quality and access to nature in the communities. The Council also collaborated, via the Partnership, with the North Wales Fire and Rescue Service to improve the quality and safety of land near Abersoch.

Support and spread the word

Information about the work of the Gwynedd Nature Partnership, Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau, Llŷn AONB and Council biodiversity teams are all shared via social media channels regularly, as well as in the Llygad Llŷn and O Dan y Don magazines.

Educational workshops have been held at Plas Glyn y Weddw and the Llwyn Isaf Wild Landfill sites.

The Council and the Partnership visited local shows and fairs to gain the interest of residents in the protection of nature.





Success story – ‘For Them’ (*Iddyn Nhw*)

One of the biggest successes of 2025/26, were our plans to plant and protect wildflower meadows, particularly on road verges. A target was set by the government to create a meadow across Wales, and now over 25% of all those meadows are in Gwynedd.

This project has proven that there is no need for huge lands to be able to make the biggest difference. Plots of land on road verges, which are often ignored or neglected, can be a valuable haven for insects and wildlife.

If grass and flowers are left to 'grow wild', please do not assume that the location is not being looked after. On the contrary! The photo shows a machine being used to cut the grass carefully at the end of the season in order to collect seeds to plant during the next season.



The work being described above will all contribute towards realising the **Projects of the Climate and Nature Emergency Plan** -

1. Identify the steps we need to take to protect nature's habitats and biodiversity into the future.
2. Identify our valuable species and habitats and what measures are needed to protect and restore them.
3. Increase the number of pollinators by conserving habitats or planting new habitats.
4. Support voluntary and community organisations and town and community councils that protect or enhance nature.
5. Nurturing and maintaining Gwynedd residents' interest in ecological issues so that they want to help conserve nature.
6. Protecting valuable habitats for nature.

Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016

The projects above contribute to each of the six objectives.

MEETING	Communities Scrutiny Committee
DATE	1 October, 2026
TITLE	Highway Maintenance – Installation of Road Markings
REASON FOR SCRUTINY	Review of arrangements
AUTHOR	Steffan Jones, Head of Highways, Engineering and YGC
CABINET MEMBER	Cllr. June Jones

1. Why does it need to be scrutinised?

This report is being submitted as the Highway Maintenance Service is reviewing arrangements for installing road markings.

2. What needs to be scrutinised?

The following points need to be scrutinised:

- Suitability of existing arrangements for the replacement of road markings
- The challenges affecting the department's ability to meet the highway management requirements outlined within the Highway Maintenance Manual
- The Department's intention to invest in machinery to enable the service to undertake a high percentage all road marking work in-house.

3. Summary and Key Issues

This report provides an overview of the current arrangements for maintaining and re-installing road markings in Gwynedd, as well as the challenges faced by the service in attempting to fulfil its statutory and operational responsibilities.

The Scrutiny Committee is requested to express its views, comments and recommendations on the proposals outlined in the report, including the proposed investment plans to strengthen the service's capacity and improve performance in maintaining road markings across Gwynedd.

4. Background / Context

4.1 Department's Responsibilities

The department has a responsibility to manage the maintenance of highway assets which include road signs and markings. This responsibility is highlighted within our Highways Maintenance Manual to ensure that risks to users are properly monitored and managed.

The types of defects and the levels of interference used are outlined within the manual. Within the list it will be seen that 'Mandatory signs/white lines which are missing, broken, eroded and/or faded.' fall within the responsibility of the Highways Maintenance service. Some of these defects may be a case of a lack of safety where the defect is required to be responded to by the end of the next working day.

See **Appendix A** for examples of the road markings that need to be maintained on our roads.

4.2 Current working arrangements

The service's work programme for the year for road marking works is shaped by a number of factors namely: -

- Safety Inspections by Road Inspector - Operating times will depend on road category
- Technical Survey Arrangements
- Complaints we receive from the public. There were 281 enquiries about Road Markings or Signs in 2025/26.
- Re installation of markings following tar and chip resurfacing works
- Requests from the Transport Team to reinstall disabled bays and single / double yellow lines.
- There are also requests to install new road markings from the Transport Team.

The work is split into small and major works. We are currently responding to small works through our internal Highways Maintenance teams e.g. re-laying lines on junctions and installing yellow lines in hard-to-reach locations. Our work is organised through our in-house workforce who are trained to carry out the work of hand laying road markings. Presently we only have one kit, and it has to meet the requirements of the whole county.

Major work falls within the category of requiring a bespoke vehicle to be completed. We don't currently have these vehicles and are therefore dependent on external contractors through a framework contract. There are only two contractors on the framework to undertake this type of work and due to distance/workload reasons there have been difficulties in programming this necessary work within a reasonable time. These companies operate across North Wales and are commissioned by the North and Mid Wales Trunk Road Agency (NMWTRA) and other Local Authorities, so we are competing for their service.

The weather could also be a factor in organising this type of work and adds to the challenge of programming work.

Within the highway maintenance budget an amount of £132,000 has been earmarked for road marking works for 2026/27.

To sum up - the reliance on external contractors causes delays to the work programme which means that we do not always meet the thresholds of our Highways Asset Support Plan. This can also affect the ability of the road and street enforcement service to manage

parking. There are also risks arising from not acting on time through 3rd party insurance claims arising from safety deficiencies.

4.4 Steps to improve the service

Step 1

For major works, we are already in discussions with the external contractors in order to improve their response to our requests for timely service.

Step 2

To date, we have invested in training more of our in-house workforce to install road markings by hand. We have already taken the decision to invest in additional equipment so that it can operate on a North and South basis. This will ensure a better response and remove the need to move the equipment from one end of the county to the other.

Step 3

Develop a business plan for investing in a bespoke vehicle and present an investment-to-save bid. Such an investment would be a positive step ensuring a significant improvement in order to

- respond in a timely manner to the work programme
- reduce the number of complaints
- ensure that we are able to respond in a timely manner to requests to reinstall double and single yellow lines
- keep the work within our internal workforce seeing less reliance on external contractors
- create the opportunity to attract income from NMWTRA (which has already shown support)
- create the opportunity to attract work from neighbouring local authorities such as Anglesey and Conwy.

These steps will ensure that we make the best use of all financial resources that are in line with the principle of an Efficient Gwynedd in the Council's Plan. It will improve the service to the residents of Gwynedd by being able to respond more quickly to deficiencies and thereby we will put the needs of the people of Gwynedd at the centre.

4.5 Monitoring the Impact of the Changes

To ensure that we monitor this new way of working, we will create a performance measure which will be monitored according to the Challenge and Support Performance procedure. It will be possible to measure the number of complaints we receive for road markings and look at our response time to defects resulting from faulty road marks.

5. Consultation

This matter has arisen from concerns raised by the public and councillors. Our in-house staff are aware of the service's intention to move away from being completely dependent on external contractors for road line laying works.

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

This legislation places a duty on local authorities to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales.

6.1 Have you included residents'/service users? If not, when and how do you intend to consult them?

We have considered the enquiries/complaints we have received from the public about road markings. Collaborative meetings with the Environment Department have taken place and have also highlighted a problem. A Highway Maintenance Service Review is underway, and staff have had the opportunity to note their comments about the service where there was support for completing more of the work in-house.

6.2 Have you considered collaborating?

Consideration has been given to working together by offering the new service to the Trunk Road Agency and neighbouring Local Authorities. NMWTRA has already shown support for the idea, and they would consider commissioning us to complete work on their behalf.

6.3 What has been done or will be done to prevent problems from rising or worsening in the future?

The service will continuously monitor their work programmes, and a performance management measure will be added in order to measure that the number of complaints we receive about road markings is decreasing.

6.4 How have you considered the long-term and what will people's needs be in years to come?

Long-term demand for the service is anticipated to remain similar to what it currently is.

6.5 To ensure that integration, have you considered the potential impact on other public bodies?

As noted, this investment would be to provide opportunities for the Council to be able to work collaboratively with neighbouring Local Authorities and NMWTRA. This in turn will create an opportunity to attract additional income for the Council.

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

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Council to give due consideration to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equal opportunities and foster good relationships between different communities.

The Department has already completed an impact assessment. See **Appendix B**

8. Next Steps

- To accept the comments and recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee on the current arrangements for maintaining and re-installing road markings.
- We will proceed with the purchase of a second manual kit to increase service capacity and improve response times across the county.
- Continue to work with the existing contractors to try to improve the delivery schedules of road marking works where possible.
- Complete the business case for investing in a bespoke extruder vehicle, including an assessment of the costs, benefits, risks and potential income generation opportunities.
- Submit an Invest to Save bid to consider the proposed investment and the expected benefits to the service and the residents of Gwynedd.
- Develop performance monitoring arrangements to measure the success of any new arrangements
- Report back to the Scrutiny Committee on the progress of the scheme and the results of the new arrangements in due course.

Background information

- Well-managed Highways Infrastructure : A Code of Practice (2016)
- The Highways Act 1980

Appendices

Appendix A – Examples of Road Markings

Appendix B – Impact Assessment

Appendix A – Examples of the road markings that need to be maintained on our roads

Double yellow lines



White Lines





Faded lines





Appendix B

Composite Equality Assessment

This document assesses the impact that the policy, procedure, plan etc will have on the population of the county and operates on the basis of a number of laws.

- **The Equality Act 2010.** It places a duty on public organisations to pay due attention to the impact of any new policy, procedure, plan etc (or in adapting them) on people with protected characteristics. We are required to
 - eliminate 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 relevant change (i.e. which has an impact on 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 the Welsh language 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 have due regard to the impact of this proposal on those serving or having served in the Armed Forces, along with their families.

Highway Maintenance Service - Re-laying of road lines

Author: Nia Wyn Vaughan (PP/YGC)

Job Title: Senior Project Officer

Date: 18/08/2026

Version: Version 1

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

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

- New or revised policies, practices or procedures (involving a change in service provision or employment practices)

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

Looking at how a highway maintenance service provides the installation and re-installation of lines/markings on our roads. At present any major works that require a bespoke machine to complete the work will be provided by external contractors. This can create some barrier to

the service as there are only two companies providing this type of service to North Wales, so there is naturally competition for them. This can cause work programmes to slip or for safety defect targets to be missed.

The intention is therefore to create a business plan and apply for investment money to save in order to be able to purchase a bespoke machine and provide training to the workforce.

Objectives

- Reducing reliance on external contractors will give us more control over the completion of our work programmes
- Reduce the risk of 3rd party insurance claims
- Reduce complaints from the public
- Developing the skills of our workforce
- Attract income by offering the new service to neighbouring Local Authorities and the Trunk Road Agency

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

- Service staff
- Unions
- Elected Members
- The Public
- Trunk Road Agency
- Nearby Local Authorities

STEP 2 - Engagement Data and Impact Assessment

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

Somewhat

Details of engagement. Please note any consultation or engagement you have made or intend to do

Operation	Dates	Carmarthenshire
Receiving complaints about road markings from the public such as faded lines	Ongoing	Complaints will be addressed by the relevant Road Inspector and given appropriate attention

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	None identified	None identified
Disability	Clear road markings maintained in accordance with national standards contribute to improving road safety for all	Positive impact

	users, including people with physical, sensory and cognitive disabilities.	• Clear and well-maintained road markings improve safety for all road users, including disabled people who walk, cycle or drive. • Obvious crossing markings can help people with mobility impairments by clearly identifying safe crossing points. • Consistent and easy-to-understand road markings can assist people with learning disabilities, autism or cognitive impairments by making routes easier to follow. • Clear lane markings and road edges can help drivers with certain disabilities by improving road clarity.
Gender	None identified	None identified
Age	Clear, well-maintained and maintained road markings contribute to the safety of all age groups. They could be of particular benefit to children, young people learning to use the road network independently, and older people who may need more time or reassurance when crossing roads or navigating the traffic environment.	Positive impact Clear road markings will help improve safety and accessibility for children, young people, adults and older people alike, without putting any age group at a disadvantage.
Religion and belief	None identified	None identified
Sexual Orientation	None identified	None identified

Gender reassignment	None identified	None identified
Marriage and Civil Partnership	None identified	None identified
Pregnancy and Maternity	Clear and well-maintained road markings contribute to improving safety for all road users, including pregnant women and parents or carers travelling with prams, pushchairs or young children. Obvious crossings and road markings can help improve confidence and safety when crossing roads, especially for those who may move slower due to pregnancy or toddler responsibilities.	Positive Impact Clear and visible road markings will help improve safety and facilitate travel for parents and carers who use prams or travel with young children.
Skip to content _ Skip to footer	None identified	None identified
Socio-Economic Considerations	Clear and well-maintained road markings contribute to a safer and more efficient transport network, benefiting residents, businesses and visitors alike. There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have a disproportionately negative impact on individuals or communities facing socio-economic disadvantage. Rather, improvements to road safety and traffic organisation can help people access employment, education, public services and community facilities more safely.	Positive impact Clear road markings will contribute to improved safety and accessibility for all road users, without creating additional barriers for individuals or communities experiencing socio-economic disadvantage.

	Any temporary disruption during the works will be minimised through proper traffic management and planning.	
Those who serve or have served in the armed forces, together with their families	None identified	None identified
Skip to footer	None identified	None identified
Other	None identified	None identified

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

None identified

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

None 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 relations and wider community cohesion) as covered by the three aims of the General Duty in the Equality Act 2010?

The scheme fully complies with public sector equality duties, promotes equal opportunities, and fosters positive relationships between different groups of consumers and the wider community.

The scheme complies with equality duties because it provides equal access for all.

Through ongoing engagement with stakeholders and including their needs in the plan, the plan promotes equal opportunities and fosters positive relationships between different groups.

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 is about closing inequality gaps rather than just improving outcomes for all)

None identified

10. How does the proposal show implementation in line with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011), to ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than 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 proposal is not expected to have an adverse impact on the Welsh language or on opportunities for people to use Welsh. Road markings are a standard element of the highway network and contribute to safety and clarity for all road users.

Where any words or messages are used on the road, they will comply with the Welsh Language Standards and the Council's policies in relation to the Welsh language, ensuring that the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than English.

There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will reduce opportunities to use the Welsh language or have a negative impact on Welsh speakers or Welsh-speaking communities.

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 seven national well-being goals including creating a More Equal Wales?

The plan complements the seven national aims. It creates a more equal Wales by providing equal access to services, regardless of their physical ability, economic status or language skills.

PHASE 3 - Procurement and Partnerships

12. Will this policy or practice be carried out wholly or partly 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 at this time

Partnership:

Not applicable at this time

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 significant positive or negative impact or create unequal outcomes?

Significant Positive Impact:

There is an opportunity here to develop the skills of our staff which will enable us to offer a better service to the residents of Gwynedd. There is also an opportunity to generate income by offering the service to neighbouring Local Authorities and the Trunk Road Agency.

Significant Negative Impact:

No evidence of a significant negative impact has been demonstrated as a result of the policy or practice. The scheme supports equal opportunities, accessible access and community inclusion, ensuring that different groups can access the same services, minimising any impact of socio-economic disadvantage and promoting equality and a more inclusive community. The impact of the scheme is considered to be inclusive and positive, without creating unequal outcomes on any group of users.

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 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

Please note the reason for saying so and the justification for continuing

Not applicable

16. What other measures or changes could be included in order to strengthen or change the policy/practice to demonstrate that due attention has been given to promote equal opportunities; to help eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation and to foster good relationships and wider community cohesion; as addressed in the General Duty of the Equality Act 2010?

Nothing identified at this point

17. 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 reduce unequal outcomes as a result of socio-economic disadvantage?

None identified

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?

None identified

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, 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 EqlA process is an ongoing one and does not end when the policy/practice and the EqlA 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	Lead Responsibility	Add to Service Plan
Consideration of impact assessment	Ongoing	Ongoing	Nia Vaughan	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
Creating a measure in our Performance Management and Support arrangements	Quarterly	Nia Vaughan	Yes

MEETING	Communities Scrutiny Committee
DATE	1 October 2026
TITLE	Emergency Road Closures
REASON FOR SCRUTINY	Ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place for the management and co-ordination of road closures in urgent and emergency circumstances.
AUTHOR	Ceri Hughes Thomas, Parking and Street Works Manager Gerwyn Jones, Assistant Head of Department for Environment
CABINET MEMBER	Councillor Craig Ab iago

1. Why does it need to be scrutinized?

Road closures associated with urgent and emergency works are a cause of public concern, and it is important that roles, responsibilities and communication arrangements are clearly understood.

2. What exactly needs to be scrutinized?

The effectiveness of the Council's arrangements for coordinating, monitoring and communicating urgent and emergency works.

3. Summary and Key Issues

The report outlines the responsibilities of statutory undertakers and the Council, the distinction between urgent and emergency works, road closure arrangements, communication arrangements and lessons for the future.

4. Background / Context

4.1. INTRODUCTION

- 4.1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide background information and clarification on the way in which street works are managed and coordinated across Gwynedd on the county highway network?. These activities operate within a national legislative framework, principally the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 and the Traffic Management Act 2004, together with relevant national codes of practice and guidance. This framework establishes the rights and responsibilities of statutory undertakers and defines the Council's role in coordinating and monitoring activities across the highway network.
- 4.1.2 Although this report refers to street works in general, its primary focus is on the arrangements relating to road closures and traffic restrictions associated with urgent and emergency works. Due to their nature and the limited notice typically available, these situations often have the most direct impact on road users, local communities and public services.
- 4.1.3 Urgent and emergency works present unique challenges, as action is often required at short notice and the exact nature of the problem, together with the full extent of the work required, is not always clear to statutory undertakers (for example, utility companies) at the outset. In many cases, the location of a defect or the extent of the repair required cannot be confirmed until excavation works

have commenced. As the works progress, new information may emerge that requires changes to the working method or traffic management arrangements in order to maintain safety and complete the works effectively.

- 4.1.4 As a result, traffic management arrangements, the duration of works and diversion routes may change as the works progress. This may mean that traffic management measures need to be upgraded, access arrangements revised or road closures extended in order to maintain the safety of both the workforce and road users.
- 4.1.5 Road closures associated with urgent and emergency works often cause concern and frustration for residents, businesses and road users. However, in many cases these arrangements are necessary to protect the public, make a site safe or restore an essential service as quickly as possible.
- 4.1.6 This report explains the Council's role in coordinating, monitoring and, where appropriate, challenging arrangements, as well as the responsibilities of statutory undertakers, including water, gas, electricity and telecommunications companies, when carrying out works on the public highway.
- 4.1.7 The aim of this report is to provide a clear understanding of the challenges associated with managing urgent and emergency works, the balance that must be struck between safety and disruption, and the steps taken by the Council to minimise the impact on local communities and the highway network as far as is reasonably practicable.

4.2 OVERVIEW OF STREETWORKS

- 4.2.1 Street works refer to works carried out on, above or below the public highway by statutory undertakers and other bodies responsible for the provision and maintenance of essential services.
- 4.2.2 These works may include the installation, maintenance, repair or renewal of infrastructure associated with services such as electricity, gas, water, sewerage and telecommunications.
- 4.2.3 Many street works are planned in advance and coordinated by the Council's Street Works Service in order to minimise disruption to road users and local communities. However, some works may arise unexpectedly as a result of infrastructure failures or damage, such as a burst water main, a power outage, an accident, or damage to utility apparatus that could pose a risk to public safety.
- 4.2.4 In such circumstances, the undertaker may need to take urgent action to protect the public, prevent further damage to infrastructure or restore an essential service as quickly as possible.

4.3 OVERVIEW OF THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COUNCIL AND STATUTORY UNDERTAKERS

- 4.3.1 It is important to understand the distinction between the role of the Council and that of statutory undertakers, such as water, gas, electricity and telecommunications companies.
- 4.3.2 These undertakers have statutory rights to install, maintain, repair and renew their apparatus within the public highway. As a result, the Council cannot prevent such works from being undertaken, nor can it require undertakers to obtain permission from the Council before commencing works.

4.3.3 This is particularly relevant in relation to urgent and emergency works. Where a defect or issue affects an essential service, an undertaker may need to commence works at short notice in order to protect the public or restore the service as quickly as possible.

4.3.4 The undertaker is responsible for ensuring that works are carried out safely and that appropriate traffic management arrangements are in place throughout the duration of the works. Undertakers are also responsible for minimising disruption to road users wherever reasonably practicable. In practice, most undertakers work in partnership with specialist traffic management contractors who possess the necessary expertise and qualifications to assess risks and design suitable traffic management arrangements. These arrangements may range from temporary signage and traffic signals to full road closures, depending on the nature, location and associated risks of the works being undertaken.

4.3.5 Whilst the Council cannot prevent statutory works from being carried out, it has an important role in coordinating and monitoring activities across the county highway network, including the sharing of information and communication with stakeholders. The Council monitors compliance with the relevant legislative and operational requirements, undertakes inspections of works sites and may take action where required standards are not met.

As part of the coordination process, the Council also works closely with undertakers to plan works in advance in order to minimise disruption across the network. This may include requesting that planned works are rescheduled to avoid conflicts with other activities in the same area, reduce impacts on local events, or take advantage of quieter periods when traffic flows are lower. In some cases, the Council may also ask undertakers to consider alternative working hours, such as evening or overnight working, or other arrangements to minimise disruption to road users and local communities.

4.3.6 Undertakers also have a duty to cooperate with the Council by providing information regarding their works and submitting the necessary notices as early as possible.

4.3.7 In simple terms, responsibility for planning, managing and delivering works safely rests with the undertaker, whilst the Council's role is focused on coordinating and monitoring activities, ensuring compliance with relevant requirements, and communicating updates to elected members, stakeholders and the wider public.

4.4 FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE ROLE OF THE COUNCIL

4.4.1 Cyngor Gwynedd acts as the Highway Authority and is responsible for coordinating street works and using the powers available to minimise disruption to road users, residents and businesses as far as is reasonably practicable.

It is important to note that Gwynedd Council is only responsible for county and local roads. The trunk roads within Gwynedd, namely the **A55, A5, A487, A470 and A494**, are managed separately by the Welsh Government.

4.4.2 As part of its coordinating role, the Council works with statutory undertakers to identify opportunities to minimise the impact of works on local communities. This includes considering whether a full road closure is necessary or whether alternative traffic management arrangements could be implemented.

- 4.4.3 The Council will challenge the need for a full road closure and request that the undertaker review its proposals in order to reduce the duration of the works. This may include asking contractors to extend working hours, deploy additional resources on site, or undertake works during weekends in order to minimise disruption to the public, particularly in traffic-sensitive locations.
- 4.4.4 However, an appropriate balance must be maintained between minimising disruption and protecting the safety of those working on the highway. It is the responsibility of the undertaker to assess the risks associated with the works and design the necessary traffic management arrangements to protect its workforce, road users and the wider public. Safety should not be compromised in order to reduce inconvenience. Nevertheless, undertakers are expected to justify the arrangements they propose and demonstrate that they are proportionate to the nature and scale of the works.
- 4.4.5 It is also important to recognise that the full extent of some works is not always known until excavation has commenced. In many cases, it is difficult to determine the precise location or extent of a defect within underground apparatus until investigative works have begun. As a result, circumstances may change as works progress. For example, works initially expected to be confined to the edge of the carriageway may extend towards the centre of the road, meaning that the original traffic management arrangements are no longer suitable. In such circumstances, traffic management measures may need to be upgraded from temporary traffic signals to a full road closure in order to maintain appropriate safety standards for both the workforce and road users.
- 4.4.6 Whilst such changes can understandably cause frustration, they often reflect new information that emerges during the course of the works. In these situations, the Council works closely with the undertaker to ensure that any additional restrictions are proportionate to the risks involved and that disruption is kept to a minimum for as short a period as possible.
- 4.4.7 Although resources are limited, with three Street Works Inspectors covering the whole of Gwynedd, every effort is made to monitor works across the network. Given the size of the county and the number of active sites at any one time, it is not possible for inspectors to be present at every location. Priority is therefore given to works that have the greatest impact on the public, particularly urgent and emergency works that result in the closure of key routes or cause significant disruption to the highway network.
- 4.4.8 The presence of inspectors at such sites enables the Council to monitor progress, challenge arrangements where necessary and ensure that accurate and up-to-date information is available. This is particularly important in supporting the Street Works Coordinators, who regularly receive enquiries from elected members, town and community councils, emergency services and members of the public regarding the status and progress of street works across the county.
- 4.4.9 Whilst the Council does not have the power to prevent statutory works, or urgent and emergency works undertaken in accordance with the legal rights of statutory undertakers, it nevertheless has an important role in providing constructive challenge, coordinating activities and seeking to ensure that the impact of works on the highway network and local communities is minimised as far as reasonably practicable.

4.5 URGENT AND EMERGENCY WORKS

- 4.5.1 It is important to distinguish between urgent and emergency works, as each is treated differently under street works legislation.
- 4.5.2 Emergency works are works that must commence immediately due to a serious risk to people or property, or to prevent a significant interruption to an essential service. Examples include a burst water main, a gas leak, a dangerous electrical cable, or circumstances where a significant number of customers are without an essential service. This can be particularly important where vulnerable individuals are affected, such as older people, individuals with medical conditions, or customers registered on a Priority Services Register who depend on a continuous supply of water, gas or electricity. In such cases, the need to restore the service as quickly as possible is a key factor in determining that the works constitute emergency works.
- 4.5.3 Urgent works, on the other hand, are works that require prompt attention but do not meet the threshold of an immediate emergency. For example, the identification of a defect in apparatus that could result in a service failure if left unattended may be classified as urgent works. In such cases, the undertaker will normally provide the Council with short notice before works commence, although the level of immediate response required is not generally the same as in an emergency situation.
- 4.5.4 In practice, both types of work can have a significant impact on the highway network and local communities. However, emergency works often provide less opportunity for advance planning, consultation on traffic management arrangements, or prior notification to the public. As a result, decisions frequently need to be made and implemented at very short notice.
- 4.5.5 The Council works with undertakers in both circumstances to minimise disruption to road users as far as is reasonably practicable. However, where an emergency situation affects public safety or the continuity of an essential service, priority must be given to resolving the issue and ensuring safety before considerations of convenience or disruption to the highway network can be addressed.

4.6 URGENT, EMERGENCY WORKS AND ROAD CLOSURES

- 4.6.1 Planned works provide an opportunity for the Council and the undertaker to discuss arrangements in advance, consider the potential impact on the highway network and provide information to the public before works commence.
- 4.6.2 Where planned works require a road closure, a formal statutory process is followed. This includes prior consultation with relevant stakeholders such as the emergency services, public transport operators, education transport providers, waste collection services, local members, town and community councils, and others who may be affected by the works. This process allows comments to be considered and advance notice to be provided to the public.
- 4.6.3 Where a road closure is required as part of urgent or emergency works, the same formal consultation process that applies to planned works cannot be undertaken in advance. The priority is to protect public safety and restore essential services as quickly as possible. Nevertheless, once the Council becomes aware of the situation, every effort is made to inform relevant stakeholders at the earliest opportunity and provide information regarding the works, diversion routes and anticipated progress.

- 4.6.4 During such situations, the Council works closely with the undertaker to monitor progress, challenge arrangements where appropriate and seek to minimise the impact on local communities. However, responsibility for determining the method of working, assessing risks and providing appropriate traffic management arrangements rests with the undertaker.
- 4.6.5 For this reason, urgent and emergency works can present particular challenges for the Council, road users and local communities. Whilst every effort is made to provide timely information and minimise disruption, circumstances can change rapidly as works progress and additional information becomes available. In such cases, a balance must be struck between restoring an essential service or protecting public safety as quickly as possible, and minimising the impact on the community and the highway network.
- 4.6.6 Any works carried out on the highway, including urgent and emergency works, must comply with the *Safety at Street Works and Road Works Code of Practice* and the relevant requirements of Chapter 8 of the *Traffic Signs Manual*. Responsibility for compliance rests with the undertaker and its traffic management contractor. The Council's role includes inspecting sites, monitoring compliance, challenging arrangements where appropriate and taking action where there is evidence that required standards are not being met.
- 4.6.7 Where an urgent or emergency situation arises, it is the responsibility of the statutory undertaker to assess the circumstances, evaluate the risks to the public and workforce, and determine the most appropriate method of working. When considering whether a road closure is required, factors such as the nature of the defect, the location of the works, carriageway width, visibility, safety considerations, alternative traffic management options and the need to restore essential services as quickly as possible are taken into account.
- 4.6.8 Urgent and emergency works can arise at any time and in any location. In some circumstances, this may affect traffic-sensitive routes or communities where alternative routes are limited. As a result, traffic management arrangements may be required that have a significant impact on road users, including diversion routes that are longer than would normally be desirable.

In such circumstances, undertakers and their contractors are expected to give full consideration to the impact of the works on local communities, road users and local services. However, any arrangements implemented must first and foremost ensure the safety of the public, road users and the workforce on site.

As part of its coordinating role, the Council will discuss and challenge proposed arrangements where appropriate to ensure that the impact on communities and the highway network is minimised as far as reasonably practicable.

Recent experience has highlighted the practical challenges that can arise in such circumstances. For example, during an emergency incident near Barmouth where electricity supplies to properties needed to be restored as quickly as possible, traffic management arrangements had to be introduced on a network that was already affected by other works in the area. Once the Council was notified of the situation, experienced officers attended the site to monitor progress, discuss arrangements with the undertaker and seek to ensure that up-to-date information was shared with

stakeholders as soon as practicable. As is often the case during emergency situations, the circumstances evolved as further information became available, creating challenges in providing timely and consistent updates.

- 4.6.9 Where it is safe and reasonably practicable to do so, access to properties, businesses and community facilities should be maintained. Consideration should also be given to pedestrians, disabled users, vulnerable individuals and the emergency services.

4.7 COMMUNICATION AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

- 4.7.1 Where road closures or traffic restrictions are required, it is important that the arrangements are as clear, safe and effective as possible.
- 4.7.2 This includes ensuring that signs are positioned in appropriate locations, are easy to understand, and that diversion routes, where applicable, are clearly signed to assist road users in planning their journeys.
- 4.7.3 However, traffic management involves much more than the provision of signage alone. Consideration must be given to the needs of residents, local businesses, pedestrians, cyclists, vulnerable individuals, emergency services, and public and education transport providers. Where safe and reasonably practicable, efforts should also be made to maintain access to properties, businesses, schools and community facilities.
- 4.7.4 Responsibility for providing, maintaining and amending traffic management arrangements associated with the works rests with the undertaker.
- 4.7.5 Whilst the Council is not responsible for designing traffic management arrangements, it has an important role in reviewing and challenging them where appropriate. For example, the Council may request that signage is repositioned, information is made clearer, or diversion routes are amended to better reflect local circumstances. This can be particularly important in rural areas and communities where access to services and properties depends upon a limited number of routes.
- 4.7.6 Diversion routes can sometimes appear lengthy. This is because consideration must be given to both the safety and suitability of alternative roads to accommodate additional traffic. In most cases, traffic is diverted along routes of a similar standard to the road that has been closed. Whilst local residents may be aware of shorter alternatives, official diversion routes must be suitable for all road users, including heavy goods vehicles and motorists unfamiliar with the area.
- 4.7.7 The Council also works closely with undertakers to ensure that up-to-date information is shared with relevant stakeholders, including emergency services, public transport operators, schools, waste collection services, local members, and town and community councils.
- 4.7.8 Where traffic management arrangements change, it is important that both onsite signage and information provided to the public are updated as quickly as possible. However, this can be particularly challenging during urgent and emergency works, where circumstances may change from day to day, or even hour to hour.

4.7.9 As noted previously, works may begin with relatively straightforward traffic management arrangements but, as excavation progresses, it may become apparent that the defect is more extensive or complex than originally anticipated. In such circumstances, traffic management arrangements may need to be revised, diversion routes amended, or the duration of a road closure extended. This can create challenges in ensuring that all stakeholders, including local members and the public, receive the latest information at the earliest opportunity.

Fortunately, modern technology and communication channels provide greater opportunities than ever before to share information quickly. The Council and statutory undertakers utilise social media, websites and other communication platforms to provide regular updates on the progress of works, changes to traffic management arrangements and anticipated timescales.

4.7.10 Effective communication between the undertaker, the Council and key stakeholders is therefore a fundamental element of the management of street works. Whilst the undertaker is responsible for traffic management arrangements, the Council uses its local knowledge and coordinating role to help ensure that arrangements and information provided to the public are clear, appropriate and proportionate. The aim is to minimise disruption to local communities whilst maintaining high standards of safety for both the workforce and road users.

However, achieving this can be challenging during urgent and emergency situations where circumstances develop rapidly. As new information becomes available, programme dates, traffic management arrangements and anticipated completion dates may need to be revised. In the past, this has occasionally resulted in different messages being issued at different stages of a scheme, leading to confusion or uncertainty amongst stakeholders and members of the public.

The Council and statutory undertakers recognise this challenge and continue to work collaboratively to improve communication and information-sharing arrangements. This includes strengthening the flow of information between works sites and office-based teams, making greater use of digital communication channels, and seeking to provide consistent and timely updates throughout the duration of works. Whilst it may not always be possible to avoid changes in rapidly evolving situations, the aim is to ensure that the public receives the most accurate and up-to-date information available at any given time.

4.8 CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

4.8.1 Experience gained over a number of years has demonstrated that urgent and emergency works can place significant pressure on the normal arrangements for traffic management, communication and the coordination of activities across the highway network.

4.8.2 Whilst many of these challenges are unavoidable due to the nature of the works, each incident provides an opportunity to review existing arrangements and identify areas for improvement. This is particularly relevant where incidents result in prolonged road closures or have a significant impact on local communities.

4.8.3 It is important to recognise that no urgent or emergency incident is ever likely to be managed perfectly. Decisions often need to be made quickly, based on incomplete information and within

circumstances that can change rapidly as works progress. In such situations, challenges relating to traffic management, communication and meeting public expectations are inevitable.

- 4.8.4 It is also important to acknowledge that the Council operates within limited resources and with a relatively small team. Despite this, every effort is made to attend and monitor sites that have the greatest impact on the highway network, particularly where urgent or emergency works result in the closure of key routes or significant disruption to local communities.
- 4.8.5 Local Members often play an important role in highlighting local impacts, sharing information with communities and identifying practical issues that may not be immediately apparent to organisations operating across a wider geographical area.
- 4.8.6 It must also be recognised that officers cannot be present everywhere at the same time. Should multiple urgent or emergency incidents occur simultaneously across Gwynedd, the Council must prioritise those locations that pose the greatest risk to public safety or have the most significant impact on the highway network.
- 4.8.7 Previous experience has also highlighted the importance of clear, timely and consistent communication. During major incidents, information can change rapidly as further details emerge. This can occasionally result in different messages being communicated at different times by different organisations or stakeholders. Whilst this often reflects the evolving nature of the situation rather than any error, it can lead to confusion and frustration amongst members of the public. Consequently, the Council continues to work with its partners to strengthen communication arrangements, improve information sharing and ensure that messages are as accurate, consistent and up to date as possible.
- 4.8.8 Whilst it will never be possible to eliminate all disruption or avoid every challenge associated with urgent and emergency works, the aim is to learn from each incident and continually improve. By working closely with statutory undertakers, public service providers, local members and communities, the Council seeks to ensure that future incidents are managed as effectively as possible, balancing the needs of local communities with the need to protect public safety and restore essential services.
- 4.8.9 The timing of urgent and emergency incidents can also influence the speed of response and the availability of information. Where incidents occur outside normal working hours, during weekends or over public holidays, it may take longer to gather information and engage with relevant stakeholders. Nevertheless, every effort is made to provide updates and support as quickly as reasonably practicable.

4.9 CONCLUSION

- 4.9.1 Street works are an essential part of maintaining and improving the services upon which residents, businesses and public organisations rely on a daily basis. Whilst these works are necessary, some disruption is inevitable from time to time, particularly where urgent or emergency works require traffic restrictions or road closures to be introduced at short notice.

- 4.9.2 This report has highlighted that statutory undertakers have specific legal rights to carry out works within the public highway. However, they also have responsibilities to plan and undertake those works safely, provide appropriate traffic management arrangements and work collaboratively with the Council and other relevant stakeholders.
- 4.9.3 Whilst the Council cannot prevent statutory works from being undertaken, it plays an important role in coordinating activities, monitoring sites, challenging arrangements where appropriate and seeking to minimise the impact on local communities and road users.
- 4.9.4 It is also important to recognise that urgent and emergency situations are rarely straightforward. Decisions often need to be made quickly, based on incomplete information and within circumstances that can change significantly as works progress. As a result, no such incident is likely to be managed perfectly, and challenges relating to communication, traffic management and public expectations are, despite best efforts, sometimes unavoidable.
- 4.9.5 Despite these challenges, the Council continues to make every effort, within the resources available, to fulfil its coordination and monitoring responsibilities effectively. This includes working closely with statutory undertakers, emergency services, public transport providers, local members, town and community councils, and other stakeholders to ensure that information is shared effectively and that the impact of street works is minimised wherever reasonably practicable.
- 4.9.6 Experience gained from urgent and emergency situations has provided valuable lessons and opportunities to review existing arrangements. By building upon those experiences, strengthening communication processes and continuing to work closely with partners, the Council can further improve the management of similar incidents in the future.
- 4.9.7 Ultimately, the aim is to strike an appropriate balance between the following equally important objectives:
- protecting public safety and maintaining essential services,
 - minimising the impact on local communities, businesses and road users.

Although this balance is not always easy to achieve, it remains central to the Council's approach to managing street works across Gwynedd. Whilst every decision may not satisfy all parties, the Council will continue to use the powers, local knowledge and resources available to it to ensure that urgent and emergency works are managed as safely, effectively and proportionately as possible.

5. Consultation

The report has been prepared by the Environment Department taking into account recent operational experiences and ongoing discussions with statutory undertakers and relevant stakeholders.

6. Well-being of Future Generations Act

The arrangements promote collaboration, prevent problems where possible, and ensure that the needs of communities and road users are taken into account in decision-making.

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

The report recognises the need to consider vulnerable people, access to services and the communication of information bilingually.

8. Next Steps

Consider the comments of the Scrutiny Committee and continue to strengthen communication, co-ordination and monitoring arrangements in relation to urgent and emergency work.

MEETING	COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE	1 October 2026
TITLE	Communities Scrutiny Committee Forward Programme 2026/27
PURPOSE OF THE REPORT	To present the Committee's draft work programme for 2026/27 for adoption
AUTHOR	Bethan Adams, Scrutiny Advisor

1. All Council members, co-opted members, Cabinet Members, Heads of Department and the public were given the opportunity to propose potential items for scrutiny during 2026/27.
2. At the Committee's annual workshop on 19 May 2026, the potential items for scrutiny during 2026/27 were considered.
3. Information about the potential items was provided in advance to the committee members. The list of items included:
 - items that had been proposed at the Chair and Vice-chair's liaison meetings with the relevant Heads of Department and Cabinet Members.
 - scrutinised items that required follow-up.
 - an item suggested as a possible item by a member of the committee.
4. Items were prioritised at the meeting, keeping in mind the purpose of scrutiny in Gwynedd, namely to:

CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS DRIVING IMPROVEMENT IN SERVICES FOR THE PEOPLE OF GWYNEDD

This will be done constructively by:

- Investigating concerns about the quality of our services
- Acting as a Critical Friend, ensuring that appropriate attention is given to the citizen's voice
- Identifying good practice and weaknesses
- Holding the Cabinet and its members to account
- Reviewing or scrutinising decisions or actions that are not the responsibility of the Cabinet

5. Members were asked to consider the following factors when prioritising items:
 - ❖ *Does the matter affect the residents of Gwynedd?*
 - ❖ *Can scrutiny make a difference / have an influence? (people / service / performance)*
 - ❖ *Is it timely to scrutinise the matter?*
 - ❖ *Is the matter a priority for the Council?*
 - ❖ *Are we clear about what we are trying to improve?*
6. A maximum of three items per meeting were prioritised to ensure that matters receive due attention and that scrutiny can add value.
7. At the committee's informal meeting on 9 July 2026, consideration was given to adjustments as to when it would be timely to scrutinise items alongside a request from a committee member to scrutinise 'Emergency Road Closures' and to consider noting the 'Bereavement Service' as a reserve item.
8. The timing adjustments and the addition of the items to the draft forward work programme were agreed. See attached as an appendix to the report, the Committee's draft work programme.
9. The scrutiny forward programme is a live programme which will be reviewed regularly over the year to ensure that the proper matters are addressed. Consideration will be given to prioritising matters that arise during the year, e.g. matters arising from performance scrutiny and items on the Cabinet's forward programme.
10. **The Communities Scrutiny Committee is asked to adopt the work programme for 2026/27.**

COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE DRAFT FORWARD PROGRAMME 2026/27

Date	Items	Reason for scrutiny
11/6/26	• Article 4	Council Plan 2023-28 – A Homely Gwynedd
	• Environment Performance Report	Scrutiny of the performance of Council departments
	• Highways, Engineering and Gwynedd Consultancy Performance Report	Scrutiny of the performance of Council departments
1/10/26	• Climate and Nature Emergency Plan: Annual Report 2025/26	The Council Plan 2023-28 - A Green Gwynedd
	• Maintaining Highways – Laying Road Markings	Review of arrangements
	• Emergency Road Closures	Assurance that appropriate arrangements are in place
19/11/26	• New Local Development Plan - Strategic Options, Vision and Objectives	Role to scrutinise the Local Development Plan / Council Plan 2023-28 - A Green Gwynedd
	• Environment Performance Report	Scrutiny of the performance of Council departments
	• Highways, Engineering and Gwynedd Consultancy Performance Report	Scrutiny of the performance of Council departments
28/1/27	• Streetscene Service	Follow-up / Council Plan 2023-28 - A Green Gwynedd
	• Public Toilets	Follow-up to the scrutiny in the 20 March 2025 meeting
	• Introduction of public electric vehicle charging points	The Council Plan 2023-28 - A Green Gwynedd
18/3/27	• Annual Update by the Gwynedd and Anglesey Community Safety Partnership	The Committee's role as a Crime and Disorder Committee
	• Progress Report of the Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board	The Committee's role to scrutinise the Public Services Board's work
	• Noise control, pollution and statutory nuisance	Assurance regarding the arrangements

Reserve Item - Bereavement Service

Possible items for 2027/28 or when timely - New Local Development Plan – Preferred Strategy, Public Transport

MEETING	COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE	1 October 2026
TITLE	Performance Challenge Meetings
PURPOSE OF THE REPORT	To nominate representatives to attend performance challenge meetings
AUTHOR	Bethan Adams, Scrutiny Advisor

1. Internal performance challenge meetings are held four times a year, in accordance with Council departments' area of work. Updates on the priority projects included in the Council Plan are considered, as well as day-to-day performance measures and the risk register.
2. Following calls from the Scrutiny Forum and members of the scrutiny committees, there is an intention to pilot inviting two representatives from each scrutiny committee to attend the performance challenge meetings of one department. Representatives will be expected to report back formally to their committee or informal meeting on what was discussed at the meeting.
3. The areas of work relevant to this Committee are Environment and Highways, Engineering and YGC. These are the dates set by the departments for the next performance challenge meetings.

Work Areas	When
Environment	5 October 2026
Highways, Engineering and YGC	12 October 2026

4. The Scrutiny Forum's recommendation is that the committee's representatives attend the performance challenge meetings of the Environment Department.
5. Members will be expected to attend the meeting, listen to the discussion and report back to committee members (see appendix 1) at either the formal or informal meeting.
6. **The Communities Scrutiny Committee is requested to nominate two members to represent the Committee at the performance challenge meetings of the Environment Department.**

MATTERS ARISING REGARDING THE XXXXX DEPARTMENT'S PERFORMANCE BY SCRUTINY MEMBERS

Following the xxxx Department's performance challenge meeting, on xxxxx, please note your impressions of the department's performance below. Identifying what the department does as a whole should be avoided, focus on the department's performance.

COUNCIL PLAN - Priority Projects
Has significant progress been made with a priority project?
Is there a priority project that is causing concern due to a lack of progress?

PERFORMANCE – Performance Measures
What was good?
What was causing concern?

Is there a field that needs further scrutiny? What needs to be scrutinised and why?