
THE CABINET 15/09/26

Present-

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

Also present-

Dafydd Gibbard (Chief Executive), Dylan Owen (Corporate Director), Iwan Evans (Monitoring Officer), Dewi Morgan (Head of Finance), Bethan Williams (Mantell Gwynedd), Mari Wynne Jones (Head of Adults, Health and Well-being Department), Gwern ap Rhisiart (Head of Education Department), Dafydd Gwynne (Strategic Partnerships Manager, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board), Professor Sally Holland (Chair of the Response Plan Programme Board), Lowri Cadwaladr Roberts (Assistant Head of Housing and Property Department), Debbie Jones (Assistant Head of Education Services), Gerwyn Jones (Assistant Head of Environment Department), Cllr Geraint Wyn Parry (Vice Chair of the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee), Cllr Dafydd Davies (Clynnog Ward Local Member), Cllr Peter Thomas (Llanllyfni Ward Local Member), Catrin Love (Assistant Head of Corporate Services Department), Joanne Parry (Customer Care and Registration Manager), Sioned Owen (Senior Early Years Service Manager), Gwen Roberts (Democracy Services Officer).

1. APOLOGIES

The Council Leader thanked everyone who had been working tirelessly in our communities during the busy summer. She highlighted that it was International Democracy Day and the importance of being open, accountable, and transparent in making decisions on behalf of the people of Gwynedd was recognised.

No apologies were received.

It was noted that Cllr Dilwyn Morgan and Cllr Craig ab Iago had to leave the meeting early as they had other meetings to attend.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

Councillor Paul Rowlinson declared an interest in relation to Item 6. The member did not consider it to be a prejudicial interest and did not withdraw from the meeting.

Councillor Paul Rowlinson declared an interest in relation to Item 10, and the Member left the meeting.

Declarations of interest were received from Councillors Nia Jeffreys and June Jones in relation to Item 11. They did not consider it to be a prejudicial interest and did not leave the meeting.

3. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent matters.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

There were no matters arising from overview and scrutiny.

The Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the scrutiny committees who attended Cabinet meetings were thanked for reporting back on the committees' recommendations to the items that had been scrutinised.

5. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7 JULY

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 July 2026 were accepted as a true record.

6. COMPACT: CYNGOR GWYNEDD AND THIRD SECTOR COLLABORATION AGREEMENT

The report was submitted by Cllr Dilwyn Morgan.

DECISION

To approve and adopt the Compact: Cyngor Gwynedd and Third Sector Collaboration Agreement as a strategic framework for the relationship between the Council and Third Sector organisations in Gwynedd.

DISCUSSION

The importance of the relationship between the Council and Third Sector organisations was highlighted, and the sector was thanked for its contribution to the wellbeing of the people of the County.

It was explained that the Compact was a piece of work that has been undertaken by the Council in close partnership with Mantell Gwynedd for some time now.

It was explained that the Compact demonstrated how the Council intended to work collaboratively with the Third Sector to seek to ensure that the Council's duties were met and fulfilled with excellence.

It was noted that extensive consultation had been carried out in relation to the Compact, and part of that consultation had been carried out with Mantell Gwynedd. The value of working with the Third Sector was recognised so as not to duplicate services, and as they were often closer to communities, and

therefore able to deliver services in a manner that had awareness of the principles and values of those communities.

The Chief Officer of Mantell Gwynedd was welcomed to the meeting.

It was pointed out that a considerable amount of time had passed since the last time the Compact was reviewed. Although this was an initial document, it was confirmed that an action plan would be in place and its impact would also be measured. It was revealed that the landscape had changed in Wales with new legislation now in force, and as a result, the relationship between the Council and the Third Sector needed to be looked at in a slightly different way.

Pride was expressed that there was now a good working arrangement between the Sector and the Council. The officer elaborated on the significant consultation conducted on the document for a period of more than a year, with input from the various networks in the Sector and several opportunities to provide feedback.

Details provided of the broad Third Sector in Gwynedd, emphasising the need and appetite to work with partners to ensure prosperity. It was noted that the document demonstrated the trust between the two sectors in the County, and those individuals who had been very supportive of the Sector in the attempt to get to this point of having Compact in place were thanked. Mention was made of the dependence between the Council and Third Sector organisations to be able to provide all the effective services. Along with the action plan, it was highlighted that the Third Sector Liaison Group would drive the work forward.

It was emphasised that the wellbeing of the people of Gwynedd was at the heart of this Compact.

In addition, the Care Scrutiny Committee was thanked for its work in scrutinising the item.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- The importance of the Third Sector to the economy was also mentioned, and pride was taken in how both sectors were now working well together. It was noted that measuring the value of work was possible and it was ongoing through collaboration with Mantell Gwynedd. It was explained that measuring the success of the Compact was challenging, but it was intended to resume those meetings with the Third Sector and ask for their feedback. The Council's shift from being a commissioner to being a collaborative partner was mentioned, but that there needed to be a way to measure that change. It was added that established principles could be used to measure the social value of the Compact as well.
- The decision on the name of the Compact was called into question following feedback from the consultation. In response, it was confirmed that the feedback had been considered but that Compact was the term used by the Welsh Government, the UK Government and other Councils, therefore it had been decided to keep the name.
- It was agreed that community organisations were closer to the grassroots and therefore could perhaps provide a service in a less formal manner. Reference was also made to the flexibility of Third Sector organisations.
- It was asked who would represent the Council on the Third Sector Liaison Group in terms of officers and councillors. It was noted that

officers and senior officers from various Council departments would be part of the Group, but that it would be a good idea to look at those items that were on meeting agendas and invite the relevant officers to those items. In terms of Councillors, it was suggested that it would be a good idea for the relevant Cabinet members to attend, but that they were open to any recommendations from Cabinet in this regard.

- In response to a question about whether social enterprises were part of this Compact, it was stated that any organisation that seeks to benefit the local community on a not-for-profit basis was part of what was considered to be the Third Sector.
- There was appreciation for a strong Third Sector in Gwynedd, and the Council's commitment to the Compact and to the Action Plan to follow was assured.

7. ADOPT CYNGOR GWYNEDD'S ACTION PLAN FOR THE PREVENTION OF SUICIDE AND SELF-HARM 2026-2028

The report was submitted by Cllr Nia Jeffreys.

DECISION

To approve Cyngor Gwynedd's Action Plan for the Prevention of Suicide and Self-harm, which outlines the activities that will be carried out across Council departments as part of a corporate approach to support the objectives of the Welsh Government's Suicide Prevention and Self-harm (Appendix 1).

DISCUSSION

A warning was given that this was a sensitive subject to discuss, and attention was drawn to the support that was available from several charities and organisations in the County.

It was reported that World Suicide Prevention Day had been held last week, and that September was widely recognised as Suicide Awareness and Prevention Month. It was highlighted that suicide was everyone's responsibility; organisations, communities, and individuals. The importance of being willing to discuss the topic openly in our communities was emphasised.

It was stated that the report stemmed from the Council's work in response to the Welsh Government's Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention Strategy. A Notice of Motion, which called on the Council to declare support for the Strategy and establish an Action Plan for Cyngor Gwynedd, had been passed at the Full Council meeting in December 2025.

Pride was taken in the fact that a lot of good work was already happening across the Council's services, in our schools and across our partnerships, and it was said that this Plan would bring that work together, strengthening awareness, training, and early intervention. The actions were detailed and it was confirmed that the work would build on the support already available at schools,

strengthening early identification of concerns and ensuring that children and young people can access the appropriate support.

The officers, partners, and councillors were thanked for their contribution to the Plan's development.

Sadness was expressed that suicide rates had increased over the past few years, and therefore the importance of broad collaboration was emphasised to raise awareness and ensure that people were aware of where to turn for help or if they had concerns for another person.

It was intended to hold awareness sessions to increase awareness among people across the County, as well as the Council's workforce, and to promote specific training for the workforce. The officer expanded on this noting the intention to promote wider training as well, such as Domestic Violence training, and to be alert to the specific impact this could have on individuals.

The need to embed this understanding and promote wellbeing across the education system was also mentioned. It was confirmed that the Education Department was alert to the risks in this area and was increasing the support and training for the designated persons in schools. This Strategy was thought to be a step in the right direction and to ensure that it was at the forefront of our minds. In cases where such an incident has occurred, it has been noted that the Department had reflected on the support arrangements for children and young people at schools, as well as staff and headteachers. The importance of this work was emphasised.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- The Strategy was welcomed and there was agreement on the importance of raising society's awareness of these issues.
- Sadness was expressed that one of the charities working in this area had to close as a result of its financial situation. The importance of these charities and the work of the third sector in this area was mentioned.
- It was confirmed that the work would be submitted to the Scrutiny Committee and would form part of the Strategic Safeguarding Panel's work. It was highlighted that Cabinet would also be asked to review the Plan in due course.
- The Council's commitment to taking action was highlighted.

8. NORTH WALES REGIONAL ANCHOR CHARTER

The report was submitted by Cllr Dilwyn Morgan.

DECISION

- To note the content of the North Wales Regional Anchor Charter, approved by the Regional Partnership Board on 8 May 2026.

- To note the cross-referencing work completed between the commitments of the Charter and the priorities of the 2023-28 Cyngor Gwynedd Plan and the Council's day-to-day work.
- To acknowledge that the Council's existing work already makes a substantial contribution towards achieving the objectives of the Charter, and that there is an opportunity to strengthen these contributions in accordance with the Council Plan priorities.
- To note the opportunity to share the learning from the cross-referencing process, as well as examples of noteworthy practice, with other partners across the region as a part of the Council's commitment to the Wellbeing, Prevention and Anchor Framework approved by the Regional Partnership Board on 8 May 2026.

DISCUSSION

It was explained that the Charter was based on the belief that the area's large public institutions could use their influence to create economic and social benefit for local communities. It was elaborated that the Charter was led by the Regional Partnership Board, as part of the wider work of the Regional Wellbeing, Prevention and Anchor Framework. It was explained that the purpose of the report was to highlight how the Council's day to day work was already contributing to the objectives of the Charter. It was suggested that there might be an opportunity to look at what the Council could do to encourage staff to do more in their communities as well.

It was stated that the Regional Partnership Board had already adopted the Charter. Attention was drawn to the completed self-assessment of the Council's work against the items contained in the Charter, and it was highlighted that a large proportion of the scores were consistent, but that one area was low. Details of this were provided noting that several organisations were giving their staff time to go volunteering, and it was suggested that this was something to consider going forward. It was reported that there was a desire to use this information and discussion to enable this to feed into strategic considerations going forward.

The Strategic Partnerships Manager of Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board was welcomed to the meeting. Life expectancy was highlighted as one of the indicators considered by the Public Health Team when assessing population health and explained that this indicator was declining in North Wales. It was said that there was a difference in this indicator between people who are most and least deprived in our communities. While there were several factors at play here, it had been identified that wider indicators such as education, jobs with a fair wages, secure homes and safe communities, had the greatest influence on health and wellbeing and were therefore at the heart of this work. It was revealed that this Council was the first in north Wales to go through the process of self-assessment, adding that much of the work contained in the Charter was already being carried out within the Council. The officer went on to urge the Council to look at how these aspects could be further strengthened, and to consider what opportunities there were to share good practice outside the organisation.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- It was recognised that the Council's score in encouraging and enabling staff to participate in community and voluntary activity was lower than the other scores in the self-assessment, and it was suggested that this may be something the Council could consider going forward. It was reiterated that encouraging staff to volunteer could contribute to the Council's attempt to strengthen provisions and contribute positively to our communities.

9. QUARTERLY REPORT - CHAIR OF THE RESPONSE PLAN PROGRAMME BOARD (JULY 2026)

The report was submitted by Cllr Nia Jeffreys.

DECISION

To accept the report which is the fourth quarterly report from the Chair of the Response Plan Programme Board.

DISCUSSION

It was stated that the intention by re-submitting the Report to this meeting was to receive a presentation from the Chair of the Response Plan Programme Board, and the Chair was welcomed to the meeting.

It was explained that this was the fourth quarterly report by the Chair of the Board, to update Cabinet on the work of the Response Plan Programme Board.

The opportunity was taken to acknowledge the courage of the victims and survivors, reiterating that they were at the forefront of everyone's minds when discussing this topic.

It was confirmed that the Board had met again since July, noting the Board's high attendance and engagement, as well as the high quality of the written materials. It was highlighted that progress had been reported in all areas, with all reports being subject to discussion and scrutiny by independent observers and the Cabinet members who were part of the Board. It was emphasised that the members of the Board kept the victims at the forefront of their mind, and the need to make real changes to practice to regain the trust of children and young people in Gwynedd was reiterated.

The progress that has been made at Ysgol Friars was recognised and this could be seen in the recent Estyn report. The progress made in relation to the Child's Voice Strategy was reported, with particular reference to the development of the Youth Forum. In addition, it was stated that progress has been made in trying to ensure that safeguarding training was available in different formats to meet the needs of staff. Pride was expressed that further Focus Group discussions with different stakeholder groups had been planned, and that the work on restrictive

practices was becoming more established following the receipt of an independent audit of the policies. It was revealed that the Government had re-established the Ministerial Assurance Group as well. The need to focus on measuring impact and ensuring that changes were incorporated going forward was identified.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- The Chair of the Board was thanked for her ongoing work, and it was welcomed that all of the Board's documents were now public so that the public could see the work that was in progress. The need to measure the impact of this work in due course was emphasised, and it was asked how the Council intended to do this. In response, it was explained that the Council was in the process of carrying out the work and trying to embed this change. It was mentioned that the impact of the work could not be measured immediately, but that it was now possible to proceed to look at the impact. It was mentioned that there would be an opportunity to listen to and obtain the views of stakeholders through focus groups, and to give people the opportunity to express confidence in the Council's arrangements.
It was mentioned that the Chair of the Board met with officials outside meetings of the Board to provide input on the ongoing work that was underway in this area. The importance of measuring impact was also noted, and the importance of implementing long-term measures so that their impact could be measured. The opportunities for comparing the impact of this work with other local authorities through national children's surveys were discussed.
- In response to a question as to whether there were any further support or resources that the Board required from Cabinet to maintain the momentum of the work, it was confirmed that the Board was running smoothly and the quality of the reports and support provided to members was commended. Reference was made to the investment required for this work, and the Council's desire to provide these necessary resources was recognised.
- Pride was expressed that the Cabinet had secured permanent funding for this area. It was hoped that other local authorities would be able to prioritise this work as well.

10. LEASE OF THE FORMER YSGOL CWM Y GLO SITE TO MENTER FACHWEN

The report was submitted by Cllr Nia Jeffreys.

DECISION

To authorise the Assistant Head of Housing and Property Department;

- (a) to lease the site of the former Ysgol Cwm y Glo directly to Menter Fachwen at nominal rent in accordance with the General Disposal Consent (Wales) 2003.
- (b) subject to Menter Fachwen securing funding and planning permission for a multi-purpose community hub to agree on the terms and conditions of the tenancy and complete the lease.

DISCUSSION

The report was presented detailing Menter Fachwen's plans for the re-use of the former Ysgol Cwm y Glo site for the benefit of the local community.

They went on to discuss the vision of Menter Fachwen, which includes a wide range of community activities and services, training and skills development opportunities, circular economy initiatives, as well as provision that will support health, wellbeing and social inclusion.

The decision sought had changed to what was noted in the report and the amended decision was reported for clarity.

The background of the report was provided explaining that the Council had received an expression of interest in the site from Menter Fachwen, in accordance with the Schools Post-use Policy. Reference was made to the fact that this would enable Menter to expand its existing provision. It was explained that they would not have the income available to pay open market rent for the site, hence the application was for a lease for nominal rent. Cabinet was asked to satisfy itself that the economic, social and environmental benefits that would be realised from granting the lease outweighed the financial loss.

It was highlighted that the development did not currently have full funding or planning permission, but Menter Fachwen's ability to apply for significant grant funding was contingent upon receiving the Council's commitment to provide the lease. It was assured that Menter would be required to provide confirmation of funding and planning permission to realise the Hwb before the Council granted a lease.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- The development was welcomed expressing pride that the site of the former school would be used for wider benefit.

11. ADOPTION OF AN EDUCATION TRANSPORT POLICY TO BE OPERATIONAL SEPTEMBER 2027 ONWARDS

The report was submitted by Cllr Dewi Jones.

DECISION

Subject to considering the content of the Report and the Appendices, as well as the results of the consultations and engagement, to decide on adopting a new Education Transport Policy that will be operational on 1 September 2027.

To delegate authority to the Cabinet Member for Education, in consultation with the Head of Education Department, to keep the Policy under review within the national statutory framework and make operational and editorial changes

according to the need, subject to any matters that are subject to requiring consultation to be referred to the Cabinet.

DISCUSSION

It was recognised that it was timely to review and update the Education Transport Policy. Reference was made to the extensive consultation carried out in relation to the Policy, noting that adjustments had been made as a result of this consultation.

Details were provided of the Empty Seats Scheme, explaining that empty seats had been offered to learners who were not entitled to free transport if there was availability on transport, charging for that seat. Following further clarity from the Welsh Government, it was confirmed that there was now a more robust basis for continuing to offer the Empty Seats Scheme, although some risks remained.

It was explained that the Policy contained more context on the Dual Residence and Faith Schools elements. It was added that the Post-16 Transport element had also been synchronised for greater clarity. It was noted that the Policy in questioned proposed to provide post-16 transportation to the nearest catchment/suitable school, as well as to the nearest suitable college site providing that course. It was highlighted that it provided more detail on some sections and there were no major changes to the Policy.

The Vice Chair of the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee was welcomed to the meeting. The Cabinet Member was thanked for his work and went on to explain the recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee. Pride was expressed that particular attention had been given to the Empty Seats Scheme following the Committee's recommendations, and that consideration had been given to the Committee's other recommendations.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- In response to a question about the main benefits of the Transport Policy, it was explained that the Empty Seats Scheme has been re-included in the Policy, facilitating the ability of families who were not eligible for transport in accordance with the statutory requirements to be able to take advantage of these empty seats. It was mentioned that guidance suggested the need to promote the provision for Faith Schools, explaining that this was an addition to the Policy. It was also hoped that the further clarity in the Policy in relation to Dual Residency would facilitate the arrangements of families to take their children to school. It was reiterated that further clarity was also seen in reference to Post-16 Transport. It was confirmed that this Policy would come into force in September 2027, should it be adopted.
- Reference was made to the need to communicate this change, and it was stated that there was information on the Council's website about all these elements and it was intended to use social media to reach young people as well. Sessions had been held with Grŵp Llandrillo Menai learners as part of the public consultation to get their views on the change. It was intended to engage on transport with young people on a regular basis to seek their views as well as share information

about the provision with the young people.

- It was noted that the Department had rejected the recommendation of the Scrutiny Committee to designate parishes rather than distance in terms of transport to Faith Schools following discussion with a representative of the Catholic Church. It was confirmed that the provision of distance-based transport would not have an impact on those receiving the transport, and that it was also consistent with the rest of the Education Transport Policy.

12. YSGOL NEBO - OBJECTION REPORT

The report was submitted by Cllr Dewi Jones

DECISION

To consider the Objection Report, the summary of the statutory objections received during the objection period, and the responses given to those objections, and having done that, finally confirm the proposal given through statutory notice to close Ysgol Nebo on 31 December 2026 and provide space for learners at Ysgol Llanllyfni from 1 January 2027 onwards, in accordance with Section 53 of the Schools Standards and Organisation Act (Wales) 2013 and the requirements of the School Organisation Code (011/2018).

DISCUSSION

The item in question was recognised as extremely difficult, and the special role of rural schools within their communities was mentioned. It was stressed that this proposal did not result from any failure in the quality of education at the School.

The change in the county's demography was explained which meant that there were now fewer primary age children in Gwynedd compared to 10 years ago. This was elaborated on noting that this challenge was prevalent across the country, with a decline in birth rates and wider economic and social factors playing a role here. Reference was made to the Council's duty to plan strategically for the needs of future generations.

The entire community of Ysgol Nebo was thanked for their contributions over the years.

The Local Member for the Clynog Ward was welcomed to the meeting.

He understood what had led to the introduction of this item, recognising the low numbers of pupils in the school and the high cost per pupil. He expressed sadness at the fact that the pupils at Ysgol Nebo were making good progress in these small classes, and it was believed that the school should be developed as a provision to support children who needed additional support. If the proposal was accepted, it was hoped that the Council would have a plan for those children who needed provision like this, and the pressure on the existing services in this area was acknowledged. There was also concern about the increase in the

numbers receiving education at home. The importance of that personal contact between the Education department and the school community was mentioned in going through this process. References were also made to O.P. Huws' contributions to the school. Everyone who had been involved with the school over the years was thanked.

Tributes were paid to the staff and the school community, and the dignity with which the department and the school had worked together through the process was noted. The authority's responsibility to review the school estate and to ensure best value for money was detailed. The processes that must be followed were mentioned, confirming that these processes would be reviewed. Once a final decision was made, it would be ensured that the department worked with the human resources team to support staff and support the children through individual plans. It was noted that the well-being and sustainability of education for the children and young people was the priority.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- In response to a question about the impact of the closure of the School on the Welsh language in the community, it was confirmed that impact assessments on the Welsh language had been drawn up for the proposal and that they considered any new evidence that had emerged throughout the process. It was recognised that there was a potential linguistic impact on the community and educationally but went on to note that the Welsh language was strong in the alternative school and that the alternative school was encouraged to expand its activities to include the Nebo community.
- The need to rationalise the school estate was noted in order to be able to try to assist the children of the County to reach their full potential. Reference was made to provisions available at other schools to support the children, and the combination of trying to ensure fairness and consistency in provision within the County's schools and the experiences the children had.
- Referring to the number of children who were home educated and the support available to children with different needs, it was recognised that the current provision may not reach the mark on all occasions. It was noted that national discussions were underway around this fragile system and the need for funding, for example. The responsibility to build a fair system across the County, and for the future, was also mentioned.

13. YSGOL BALADEULYN - OBJECTION REPORT

The report was submitted by Cllr Dewi Jones.

DECISION

To consider the Objection Report, the summary of the statutory objections

received during the objection period, and the responses given to those objections, and having done that, finally confirm the proposal given through statutory notice to close Ysgol Baladeulyn on 31 December 2026 and provide space for learners at Ysgol Talysarn from 1 January 2027 onwards, in accordance with Section 53 of the Schools Standards and Organisation Act (Wales) 2013 and the requirements of the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code (011/2018).

DISCUSSION

Attention was drawn to the fact that Ysgol Baladeulyn had served the area for many years, and therefore this discussion was a difficult one. It was highlighted that this proposal was not the result of any failure or a reflection of the quality of education offered to the pupils.

Reference was made to the change in demography in the County, the reduction in the number of primary age children now in our communities, and the impact of this on the school estate. The social and economic factors that had contributed to this change in demography were also mentioned, and therefore the need to respond to the reality of the situation and recognise the challenges faced by a school serving so few children.

There was sympathy for the school community, and the school staff were thanked.

The Local Member for the Llanllyfni Ward was welcomed to the meeting.

It was emphasised that the school was an integral part of the community and that the closure of the school would have a far-reaching impact. It was highlighted that the petition to keep the school had been signed by 500 people, and it was reiterated that the number of pupils at the school did not reflect the value of the school to the rural community. There was concern that this would lead to fewer young families moving to the area, and this could have an impact on the Welsh language in the community. It was suggested that federating with Ysgol Talysarn to create an ALN department would be the best option and emphasised the need to consider the long-term impact of the proposal on the community.

Tributes were paid to the children, staff and the school community, and they were thanked for the dignified discussions that took place throughout the process. It was confirmed that the previous report had shown the possible options, and that consideration had been given to federating Ysgol Baladeulyn with another school however, the model would not be suitable in this instance neither would it address the main challenges here in terms of the number of children. It was highlighted that the priority was to try to ensure the best education for the children, which meant that difficult decisions needed to be made at times in order to be able to move the sector forward.

The impact assessment carried out was detailed recognising a likely impact on the Welsh language and the community. Mitigation measures such as encouraging the community of Talysarn to expand its activity to include the community of Nantlle in any activities were identified. The robustness of the Welsh language at Ysgol Talysarn would also be ensured and the school would be able to offer the same educational and social experiences through the medium of Welsh.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- A question was asked about the capacity of Ysgol Talysarn in the event of the closure of Ysgol Baladeulyn. In response, it was highlighted that an assessment had been completed as part of the process and that the Department was confident that there was adequate capacity at Ysgol Talysarn for those children living in the existing catchment area of Ysgol Baladeulyn. It was added that the usual admissions procedure would be followed in respect of any applications from outside the catchment area.
- A question was asked about the support provided to the pupils of Ysgol Baladeulyn. Assurances were given that the department planned for the needs of each child ensuring that suitable provision was available for them. It was reiterated that the voice of the child and the voice of the parents would be included in these discussions and that steps would be taken to ensure a smooth transition for the children.
- The community of Nantlle was thanked noting that everyone had handled the process with respect. It was explained that the County's school estate was now different due to the reduced number of children in Gwynedd. The need to reimagine how education was offered in the County was suggested.

14. COMPLAINTS AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENT REPORT QUARTER 1 2025/26

The report was submitted by Cllr Llio Elenid Owen.

DECISION

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

DISCUSSION

Members were reminded that the ownership for responding to complaints sat within the individual Departments, but that the administration of the complaints procedure had now transferred to the Customer Contact team, with the exception of Social Services and Schools which had separate complaints arrangements.

It was highlighted that 69 Valid Formal Complaints and 49 Ombudsman Complaints had been received during the reporting period, which was an increase from the same period last year. It had been identified that the average number of days taken to respond to a complaint in the 25/26 period had been 18.3 days, which was also an increase from the previous year. It was mentioned that the main category of complaints received in this period was lack of response or action, with most complaints going to the Environment department or the Finance department.

Reference was made to the intention to undertake an internal review of how the

Council responds to complaints using the Ombudsman's good practice as a basis for staff training and adapting digital systems, in conjunction with new Customer Care training for managers. Pride was expressed that the Success Wall was continuously growing and that this was a factor in raising staff morale.

It was reiterated that further work was underway in relation to the way in which the public engaged with the Council, and the general enquiries that would also be made. It was added that the Council's website had also been updated to assist with this work.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- It was emphasised that complaints were valuable to the Council in trying to improve services. Further clarity was sought in relation to the figures of complaints to the Ombudsman. In response, it was explained that a settlement was when there was an agreement between the Council and the complainant on a resolution to a complaint or the way forward.
- Examples were provided of improvement in some departments' complaint figures compared to previous years, and the collaboration and communication that took place between the departments and the team.
- Reference was made to the Ombudsman's Annual Report, explaining that it would include a table in which the Council's performance could be compared with other authorities.

15. FINANCIAL BID TO DEVELOP CLIMATE AND NATURE WORK IN CYNGOR GWYNEDD 2026/27 - 2029/30

The report was submitted by Cllr Craig ab Iago.

DECISION

That the Cabinet approves the request for funding to fund the costs of maintaining posts and implementing projects within the Climate and Nature Emergency Plan:

Employment costs until March 2030 - £416,383

Project costs - £7,275,160

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted stating that the Cabinet Member for Environment had had to leave the meeting in order to attend another meeting.

Reference was made to the Council's climate emergency declaration and the

need for urgent action, and it was explained that specific plans to address those works were at hand.

An inconsistency in the report was corrected, stating that the Welsh version of the report contained the correct figures for the decision sought.

It was warned that the sources of funding were yet to be confirmed in relation to some of the projects. The list of projects was discussed detailing the sources of funding recommended by the Finance Department. With some of the projects, it was highlighted that borrowing through the Salix system was the recommended source of funding but there was a need to apply for it.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- It was explained that the risk register together with wider evidence highlighted that the cost of not taking action in this area would be much higher than the investments contained in the report in question. It was confirmed that some of the projects would save money as well as reduce carbon emissions, and the contributions of some of the projects to moving towards net zero and saving money in the long term were detailed. In addition, the benefits of using Salix as a source of funding for some projects were recognised.
- Reference was made to the '*National Emergency Briefing*' film, and it was asked if there was anything arising from the film that we could implement. In response, it was explained that the film looked at what the government could do centrally to change policies. The idea for the Cabinet to write to the British Government in relation to the wider screening of this vital film was supported.

16. EXPANDING THE FLYING START PROGRAMME

The report was submitted by Cllr Menna Trenholme.

DECISION

To agree to expand the Flying Start Grant Programme within the Children and Communities Grant, extending the full plan to a new area, namely the Pwllheli area, due to the reduction of eligible children in the current programme.

DISCUSSION

It was highlighted this was a report with good news, with the intention of expanding the programme to the Pwllheli area.

The content of the programme was explained, and it was mentioned that the programme had already been successfully implemented in seven communities in Gwynedd. This was expanded upon noting that capacity and grant funding were available to extend the program because of a reduction in the number of eligible children in the existing areas.

It was confirmed that this would allow approximately 91 additional children to

access this Scheme.

Although the Programme had already expanded to include more areas, it was recognised that there was a reduction in the number of births in those areas and therefore the Programme was not meeting the target set by the Welsh Government. The significant investment per child, and the need to increase the number of children receiving support from the Programme were discussed. It was confirmed that an analysis of the data had identified there was currently a need for the provision in the area in question.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- The intention to expand the Programme was welcomed.

17. CABINET FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The item was presented noting that the forward programme had been included for information.

The meeting commenced at 1:00pm and concluded at 4:55pm.

CHAIRMAN