



Complete Agenda

Democracy Service
Swyddfa'r Cyngor
CAERNARFON
Gwynedd
LL55 1SH



Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.

This document is also available in Welsh.

Meeting

EDUCATION AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date and Time

10.30 am, TUESDAY, 14TH JULY, 2026

(NOTE: A BRIEFING SESSION WILL BE HELD FOR MEMBERS AT 10.00AM)

Location

Siambr Dafydd Orwig, Council Offices, Caernarfon and virtually on Zoom

*** NOTE***

This meeting will be webcast

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

Contact Point

Jasmine Jones

01286 679667

jasminejones@gwynedd.llyw.cymru

EDUCATION AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEMBERSHIP (18)

Plaid Cymru (12)

Councillors

[vacant seat]
Dawn Lynne Jones
Olaf Cai Larsen
Huw Rowlands
Rhys Tudur
Sian Williams

Jina Gwyrfai
Gareth Tudor Jones
Gwynfor Owen
Dyfrig Siencyn
Elin Walker Jones
Geraint Wyn Parry

Independent (6)

Councillors

Elwyn Jones
Beth Lawton
John Pughe Roberts

Gwilym Jones
Dewi Owen
Richard Glyn Roberts

Ex-officio Members

Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council

Other Invited Members

CO-OPTED MEMBERS:

With a vote on education matters only

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

Without a Vote

Elise Poulter	NEU
Gwilym Jones	NASUWT

A G E N D A

1. APOLOGIES

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

To receive any declarations of personal interest.

3. URGENT BUSINESS

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

4. FINANCE PERFORMANCE REPORT

5 - 42

For Committee Members to scrutinise performance matters within the Department.

5. SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS IN SCHOOLS SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION REPORT

43 - 128

To consider the contents of the Report and to make comments, ask any relevant questions, propose any amendments, and approve the Report.

6. TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION

129 - 240

To receive an update on the work and consider its impact.

7. EDUCATION AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD PROGRAMME 2026/27

241 - 244

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

MEETING	Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee
DATE	14 July 2026
TITLE	Cabinet Member for Finance Performance Report
REASON FOR SCRUTINY	Provides an opportunity for Members to discuss and scrutinise the Department's performance measures and improvement priorities.
AUTHOR	Dewi Morgan, Head of Finance Department
CABINET MEMBER	Councillor Huw Wyn Jones, Cabinet Member for Finance

1. Why does this need to be scrutinised?

So that Members of the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee can be satisfied that I, as the Cabinet Member for Finance, have a firm grip on performance matters within the Department.

2. Background / Context

The purpose of this report is to update you on what has been achieved in the areas for which I am responsible as Cabinet Member for Finance. This includes outlining the latest position on the commitments within the Council Plan, as well as the day-to-day work of the Department for the year up to the end of March 2026.

We are working on the 2023-28 Council Plan, and here I report on the progress made up to the end of March 2026. It is noted that the Information Technology service has been transferred to the management of the Corporate Services Department since 1 April 2026, but since this report covers the 2025/26 performance, the digital services have been included in the Finance Department report. The transition has been a smooth one and I remain Cabinet Member for both Finance and Information Technology in 2026/27.

All issues under my responsibility have been the subject of discussion and scrutiny by me in performance challenge and support meetings, and I am satisfied with the performance of the Department.

3. Rationale and justification

3.1 Performance of Council Plan Projects

In 2025/26, the Finance Department led on two of the priorities within the Council Plan 2023–2028, namely:

- Managing the impact of national funding cuts
- Digital Plan

I am very pleased with the work achieved during 2025–2026, and progress against the milestones set for last year's priorities is outlined in Appendices 1a and 1b.

The need to deliver financial savings across the Council remains a priority in order to ensure medium-term budget balance and to keep Council Tax increases within reasonable limits. While the work of the Finance Department in this area is sound and effective, it remains a challenge to ensure successful implementation across all services.

The Digital Plan includes a number of projects aimed at improving the Council's operations and ensuring that we make the best possible use of available resources. Most of these projects are medium to long term, to be implemented over several financial years. As a result, most would not be expected to be fully implemented by the end of 2025/26. Overall, I am satisfied with the progress being made across these projects.

3.2 Day-to-day work of the Department

Appendices 2a and 2b outline the performance measures across the Department's services in 2025/26. The latest data shows generally robust performance, although a small number of areas continue to receive specific attention.

Overall, the performance of the majority of services is strong, with a number of measures showing excellent results. These include several mandatory training headings with compliance levels close to 100%, alongside core services operating promptly and effectively. Finance and Accounting arrangements continue to perform robustly, particularly in terms of setting budgets and closing accounts on time. At the same time, key support services such as Payroll and Pensions maintain a high standard of performance.

Digital (IT) services now sit within the Corporate Services structure and continue to make a significant contribution to the Council's wider priorities. The data shows a high level of demand, with over 15,000 requests recorded during the year. However, the vast majority are resolved within appropriate timescales, reflecting an efficient and reliable service that supports day-to-day operations.

Further strength can be seen in the quality and stability of services, with very high levels of user satisfaction, compliance with mandatory training, and robust digital infrastructure provision. This provides a strong foundation for the effective delivery of Council services.

During the period, a number of significant improvements were implemented to strengthen the digital offering and improve efficiency. These include modernising devices, upgrading systems, expanding digital working methods, and rationalising infrastructure. These steps have also contributed to achieving financial savings.

Despite this progress, some areas within the Finance Department remain a concern. In particular, the level of long-term debt supervised by the Income Service remains significant, and this is the only one of the Department's measures that remains in the red category. However, there are recent signs of improvement, with robust plans in place to further mitigate the risk.

Although the collection performance of Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates has improved, it remains below historical levels. Over the coming months, additional digital support is planned to assist the service in its day-to-day work, with the expectation that this will improve performance further.

From an Internal Audit perspective, the completion rate of the audit plan remains slightly below target. This can largely be attributed to the timing of certain reviews, and the position will continue to be monitored moving forward.

In the digital field, although the service is generally stable, a limited number of cyber incidents and service disruptions have been recorded. This highlights the need to continue strengthening resilience and security of the infrastructure.

All of the above matters are regularly monitored through Performance Challenge and Support arrangements, and the Department is in a strong position, with a clear focus on addressing the areas requiring attention to ensure continuous improvement.

External Auditor Reports (if applicable)

During the past year, two reports were received from External Auditors, and I would like to draw attention to them here in relation to the Department's performance.

The report ***Strategic Management of Balances and Reserves – Cyngor Gwynedd*** was published in September 2025.

It was submitted to the Governance and Audit Committee on 9 September 2025. The report included one recommendation: "*To ensure its reserves are used strategically, the Council should enhance its current arrangements by adopting a reserves strategy that includes criteria to determine when and how reserves should be established and prioritised, and a proportionate method to support the rationale behind the sums held in reserves at year-end.*"

The Committee approved management's response, which stated that by 31 March 2026 we will develop a reserves strategy that incorporates these matters as well as other relevant issues.

The "ISA260" report – ***Audit of Accounts Report*** – was published by Audit Wales in November 2025 and approved by the Governance and Audit Committee on 13 November. This report summarises the main findings of the Auditor General's audit of the Statement of Accounts 2024-25. An unqualified opinion was issued on the accounts and the report did not contain any recommendations.

4. Consultation

This report has been prepared based on information discussed at the most recent Performance Challenge and Support meetings for the Finance Department (19 May 2026) and the Information Technology Service (22 May 2026). The meetings were attended by the Head of Department, Assistant Heads, service managers, and the Cabinet Member, with the Chief Executive also present at the meeting relating to Information Technology.

Appendices

- Appendix 1a: Council Plan Finance Project Milestone Progress Reports
- Appendix 1b: Council Plan Information Technology Project Milestone Progress Reports
- Appendix 2a: Finance Department Performance Indicators
- Appendix 2b: Information Technology Performance Indicators

Efficient Gwynedd: Putting the residents of Gwynedd first by treating them fairly and ensuring that the Council performs well and effectively.

Department and Project	Overview	What we aim to achieve during the THIRD year 2025/26 (milestones)	Have the milestones been completed?	What has been achieved during the year and the impact (or likely impact) on the people of Gwynedd? (Including information or evidence to confirm this, e.g. measures or data.)
<p>Finance – Managing the impact of national financial cuts</p>	<p>The Council has already reduced its budgets to save over £43m since 2015/16, but due to the current economic situation, the funding the Council receives from Government is insufficient to deal with inflation and new spending pressures.</p> <p>We are facing significant financial cuts over the lifetime of this plan. We will strive to do everything we can to minimise the impact on the services provided to the people of Gwynedd, while accepting that it will not be possible to set a balanced budget without a wide range of savings/cuts and increasing Council Tax more than we would wish.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Monitor that savings and cuts totalling £3,463,390 for 2025/26, approved by the Full Council on 06/03/2025, together with any savings still to be realised from previous years, are prioritised by Departments for delivery during the financial year (Appendix 3 – Savings and Cuts). 2. Monitor that Departments prioritise the delivery of savings that have slipped from previous financial years. 3. The Chief Executive, Directors and Head of Finance to meet quarterly to review the status of delivery of all Council savings and cuts and to consider schemes that have slipped, in order to undertake an objective assessment of how realistic the expectation is for them to be 	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Savings totalling £46.5 million have been delivered since 2015/16. An update was reported to the Governance and Audit Committee on 15 January 2026 and to Cabinet on 20 January 2026. 2. During the year, performance was monitored and reported to Cabinet on 11 November 2025 and 20 January 2026, and to the Governance and Audit Committee on 9 October 2025 and 15 January 2026. 3. Due to other pressures and demands, meetings were not held in the first half of the year; however, a meeting to discuss savings was held in January 2026.

		<p>delivered.</p> <p>4. Report to Cabinet on 14 October 2025 and 20 January 2026, and to the Governance and Audit Committee on 9 October 2025 and 15 January 2026, on the status of delivery of all Council savings and cuts schemes.</p> <p>5. Work with the Chief Executive, Directors and Heads of Department on savings and cuts plans for 2025/26, focusing on efficiency and alternative ways of delivering services.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>4. Reporting to these meetings took place in line with the plan.</p> <p>5. Following the establishment of the Medium-Term Financial Plan Programme Board, the Finance Department, as part of the Board's work, is providing information on savings and cuts for 2025/26.</p>
--	--	---	-----------------------	---

2023-28 Cyngor Gwynedd Plan – Year 3 operations

Efficient Gwynedd: Putting the residents of Gwynedd first by treating them fairly and ensuring that the Council performs well and effectively.

Department and Project	Overview	What we aim to achieve during the THIRD year 2025/26 (milestones)	Have the milestones been completed?	What has been achieved during the year and the impact (or likely impact) on the people of Gwynedd? (Including information or evidence to confirm this, e.g. measures or data.)
Finance	Digital Plan	<p>The plans below are either self-financing from resources already available to the Council, or have received full support to be implemented over the next two years:</p> <p>These are the projects to be implemented in 2025/26:</p>		
		<p>CC3 - redesign the Council's corporate website</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree on a design • Develop and test the changes • Introduce the new design live 	Partial	The new pages of the website are being developed with the expectation that they will go live during July 2026. The new design will align with the Council's new design and be more accessible to users.
		<p>CC2 – improvements to the Council's phone provision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement exercise already completed and work has started on engineering solutions • Project manager in place • 'Voice Operations Lead' position to be filled in Q1 • Contact Centre solution to go live in Q1 • Everyone moved to the new provision by the end of Q2 	Yes	This workflow has been completed.

		<p>GCB1 – introducing Artificial Intelligence for discussion and regular activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solutions for analysing document and email content already submitted for the Department of Education • Copilot suitability assessment to be conducted during Q1 and Q2 before the technology can be fully deployed • Paper research on other opportunities to introduce AI solutions 	<p>Yes</p> <p>Partially</p> <p>Yet to start</p>	<p>Work on assessing the suitability of Co-Pilot has been completed and a work programme is being developed regarding the next steps.</p>
		<p>GSB5 – review of the organisation's management systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review has already been conducted and a business case for implementing a Payroll/Human Resources system will proceed in Q1 • Work to implement the new solution to start in Q3 and continue until the end of 2026/27 • Review of financial systems to continue 	<p>Yes</p>	<p>A new supplier (MHR - iTrent) has been selected and a contract put in place. The aim is to pay salaries through the new system in December 2026.</p>
		<p>GWYD2- service continuity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New cyber resilience officer added to the team in 2024/25 • Establish an incident response plan • Test the incident response plan • Set up cyber resilience and incident response groups in Q2 • Create an annual report on the resilience of our services 	<p>Partially</p>	<p>A cyber resilience officer has been added to the team.</p> <p>Work continues on establishing and testing an incident response plan.</p> <p>Following a discussion, it was decided to establish a single cyber resilience group to respond to an incident. The group will meet within the next few weeks.</p>
		<p>GSB7 – making the best use of the Microsoft365 platform</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a Copilot suitability assessment to measure infrastructure readiness and the health of our data/content to deploy artificial intelligence at scale 	<p>No</p>	<p>Work to start during 2026/27.</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of using the packages from a technical and information governance perspective • Administer use of the platform to reduce platform cost overheads • Engage the extended team to use the platform to its full potential • Analyse the impact of the exercise • Prepare a business case for ongoing support 		
		<p>GWYD1 – upgrading analogue lines to digital</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This task continues with significant progress made in 2024/25 • Prioritising the central resource to continue with work that has already been completed (Phase 1) to identify analogue connections that need upgrading • Moving the project to Phase 2, identifying which connections need to continue and arranging to switch off connections that are not needed • Identifying alternative technology for services that need to continue • Collaborating with departments so that they own the tasks and cost of migrating to the new provision 	Partially	<p>This workflow has been partially completed. Out of 600 lines, about 80 lines remain to be transferred or cancelled.</p> <p>This workflow will end in August.</p>
		<p>GWYD3 – Upgrade broadcasting provision in Council chambers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements to visual broadcasting provision in Dafydd Orwig and Hywel Dda Chambers • Introduce new video conference provision to a new seminar room at the Headquarters • Make minor adjustments to voice deficiencies in other meeting rooms • Introduce suitable video conference equipment for departmental meeting rooms 	Partially	<p>A draft bid for the introduction of new digital equipment in the Council Chambers is currently being prepared with a Project Board established. It is anticipated that it will be in a position to submit a final financial bid in September 2026. The installation of the new equipment is anticipated during 2027.</p>
		<p>GD2 – Data Charter</p>	Partially	<p>Data Charter drafted by the Subgroup. The final version will be launched and promoted to staff by</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data sub-group to create a data charter <p>GD4 – data reporting platform</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpret needs • Review available options • Procure a solution as a pilot • Measure the impact of the pilot and prepare a business case for expanding the provision <p>GD6 – performance reporting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data sub-group to collaborate with the Corporate Management Team to create recommendations to improve performance reporting 		<p>September 2026 to provide guidance on using data correctly, responsibly and consistently. There is a Data Maturity Framework and self-assessment for teams/individuals to align with the Charter.</p> <p>We have reviewed the options for a data reporting platform and reached a conclusion regarding the use of Power BI and other platforms within the Council and the associated software licensing situation. Guidance on this, along with detailed policies and procedures on the use of Power BI, will form part of the Data Charter. We will also publish some dashboards on the Council's new website before the end of 2026 after formalising arrangements to do this in a safe and accessible manner.</p> <p>Work has taken place in a number of Departments during the year to improve the use of data and dashboards when reporting performance. Further work will be carried out during 2026 to explore the possibilities for standardising and rationalising these arrangements across the Council.</p>
		<p>GWEI1 – introduce a digital account to every officer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold workshops to identify the needs • Assess the needs for each officer, casual workers and volunteers • Prepare a business case to attract financial support 	Yes	<p>Detailed mapping work of needs has taken place in every Department and the needs have been incorporated into a single budget bid. The bid has been divided into three parts with capital and revenue elements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New accounts

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment for workspaces without technology • Central Training Office resource to deliver a training programme for frontline staff. <p>The bid for equipment and tools has been approved. It does not appear that the bid for the Training Officer has been successful and therefore there is a need to revisit this intention as there is no other resource.</p>
		<p>GSB6 – internet of things</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPF funding application submitted to employ a temporary resource for a year to investigate solutions and create a range of business case analyses for its use • Prepare a business case for permanent resources • Collaborate with the Digital Board in Ambition North Wales to deliver the internet of things network in the north region (LoRaWAN) 	Partially	<p>The SPF funding application was successful. Equipment has been ordered and is currently being configured. It is hoped that the equipment can be installed in the coming months.</p> <p>There was no obvious case to prepare a business case for permanent resources.</p> <p>A grant funding application was submitted to the North Wales Ambition. The grant was approved; however, there has been a delay on the part of the North Wales Ambition Board in releasing the funds.</p>
		<p>GWE14 – promoting Cyngor Gwynedd as a digital employer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employing 'Digital Transformation Apprentices' 	Yes	<p>Attempt to appoint Digital Transformation Trainees has not been successful.</p>

Finance Department (Financial Services) Performance Measures Report

Period:

- **2025/2026 Financial Year**

Mandatory Training

Staff who have completed the Safeguarding training

100%

Mandatory Training

Staff who have completed the Domestic Abuse training

99.3%

Insurance and Risk Management Service

Number of Public Liability Claims with Compensation Paid – March 2026 (Insurer)

5

Insurance and Risk Management Service

Number of Public Liability Claims with Compensation Paid – March 2026 (Insurance Unit)

2

Benefits Service

Days to process a benefit application

16.80

Benefits Service

Days to process a change in circumstances notice

4.99

Payroll Service

Incidents that have resulted in further adjustments to salary.

January: 26
February: 26
March: 29
April : 15

Payroll Service

Statutory information on time

100%

Pension Service

Continue to calculate and pay retirement benefits promptly



Pension Service

My Pension Online – Increase in membership and visits



Average number of days to process local invoices to be paid

24

Internal Audit Service

Community councils audited

74

**Investment and Treasury
Management Service**

Pension Fund – asset value
increased to

£3.6bn

Finance and Accounting Service

End of year 2025/26 position
of departments finalised



Finance and Accounting Service

2026/27 Budget – Work
completed on the budget



Taxation Service

Current year's Non-Domestic
Rates collection rate

93.76%

Taxation Service

Council Tax collection rate for
the current year

93.10%

Payments Service

Average number of days to
process non-local invoices to
be paid

25

Internal Audit Service

Annual plan completed
(2025/26)

88%

**Investment and Treasury
Management Service**

Pension Fund - Pension Returns
below the benchmark

-0.2%

Income Service

Value of sundry debts > 6
months old

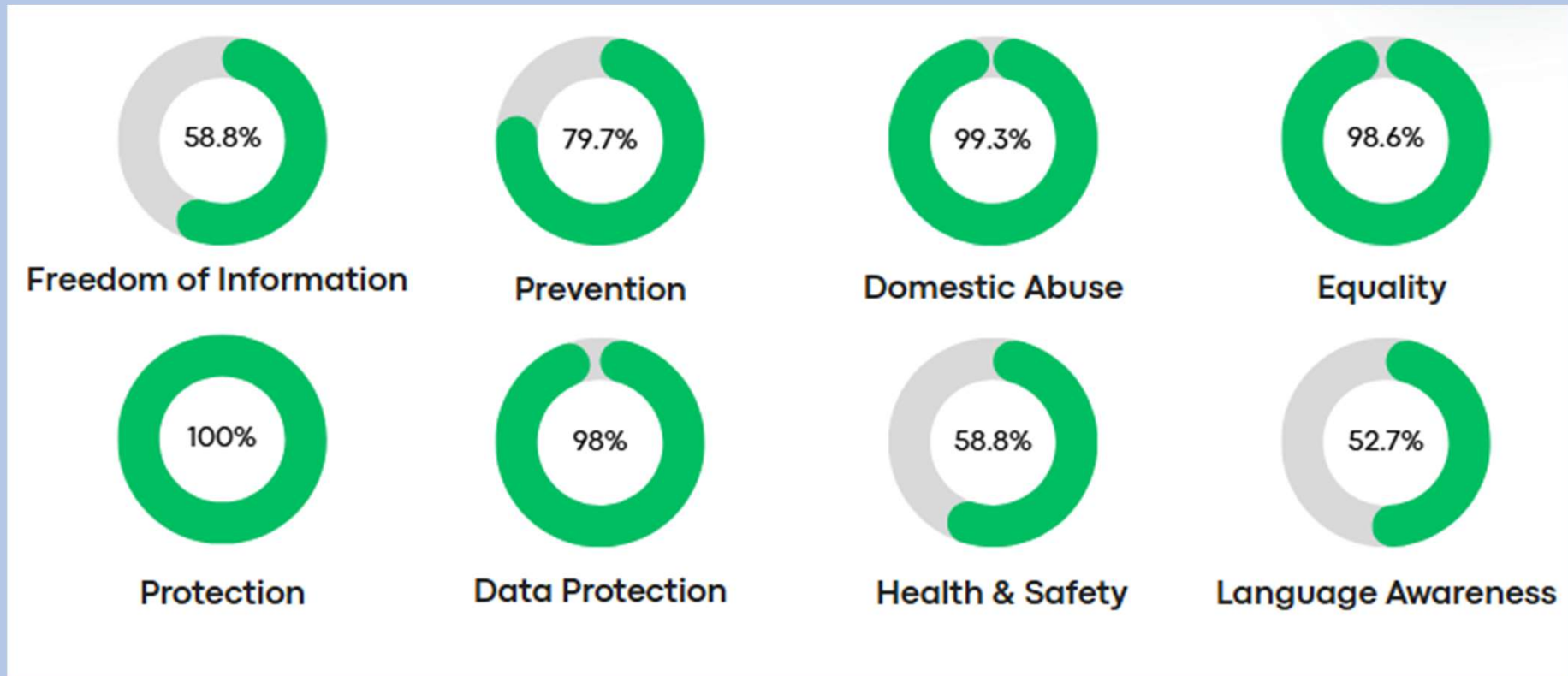
£1,927,815

Mandatory Training (Entire Department)

[Back to the dashboard](#)

Overview of performance:

The percentage of staff in the Department who have completed the mandatory training is shown below. According to the latest data, all members of the Services have completed Safeguarding training. We are currently unable to achieve 100% completion on the other training, due to one member of staff being on long-term absence. However, we will continue to strive to improve completion levels across all areas of training.



Benefits Service

Service Manager – Dylan Griffith

Purpose of service: To process Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction Scheme, Education Benefits (Free School Meals and Pupil Development Grant) and Discretionary Housing Payments applications promptly and accurately, in order to support the citizens of Gwynedd to pay their rents and Council Tax bills and to ensure that Gwynedd's children receive the appropriate support.

Overview of performance for financial year 2025/26 : The average time taken to process a new Housing Benefit/Council Tax Reduction application in 2025/26 was **16.80** days, compared to 17.68 days in 2024/25, which is an improvement in this measure. A slight deterioration was seen in the performance of the average time taken to process a notice of change in circumstances of Housing Benefit/Council Tax Reduction as it was **4.99** days in 2025/26, and 3.83 days in 2024/25.

We processed **2,248** new applications for Housing Benefit/Council Tax Reduction in 2025/26 to compare with 2,238 in 2024/25 as well as processing **22,332** notifications of changes in our customers' circumstances in 2025/26 to compare with 24,830 in 2024/25.

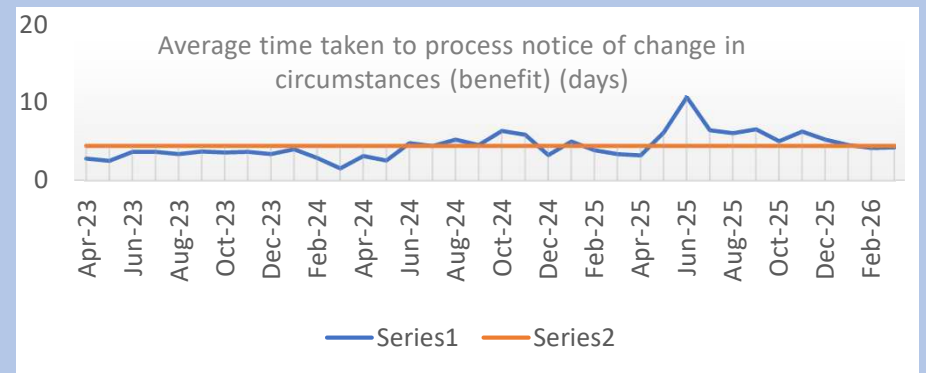
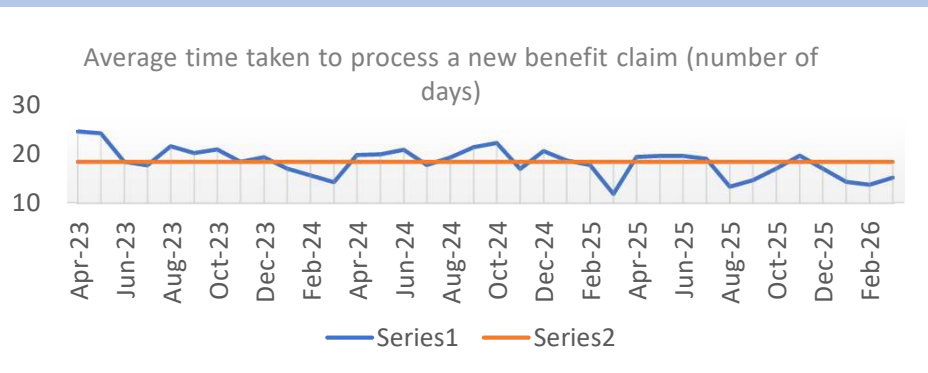
In addition to the above, the following data was received for processing through electronic information sharing arrangements with the Department for Pensions:

- ATLAS (Automated Transfer to Local Authority Systems) : **25,484** (27,582 in 2024/25)
- UCDS (Universal Credit Data Share) : **79,232** (65,586 in 2024/25)
- VEP (Verify Earnings and Pensions) : **245** (430 in 2024/25)

The service also checks applications for the DWP, through the Housing Benefit Accuracy Award (HBAA) scheme, to ensure that there are no mistakes or fraud in the workload.

During 2025/26 the following checks were processed: Full Claim Reviews (FCR) : **651** (575 in 2024/25) Housing Benefit Data Matching (HBMS) : **91** (68 in 2024/25) Self Employed Reviews (SER) : **0** (9 in 2024/25)

[Back to the dashboard](#)



Benefits Service

Service Manager – Dylan Griffith

Financial value for Gwynedd residents for financial year 2025/26 :

Housing Benefit :

Currently **2,497** Gwynedd residents receive Housing Benefit with a financial value of **£16,648,417.41** paid during 2025/26.

Council Tax Reduction :

In addition, **8,467** Gwynedd residents receive a Council Tax Reduction award with a financial value of **£11,836,539** paid during 2025/26.

Discretionary Housing Payments :

Also, the Benefits service has assisted **1,392** families with a financial value of **£662,561.05** from the Discretionary Housing Payments Fund (DHP), which is additional help towards paying rent. Through this, we have been able to assist a significant number of Gwynedd tenants to stay in their current home or to move to a new property.

School Essentials Grant & Free School Meals :

The Benefits Service has processed a school uniform grant / school essentials grant with a monetary value of **£283,625** to **2,158** children, and has assessed the right to a free lunch for **3,046** Gwynedd children.

In addition to the work described above, the role of the Benefit Assessors in identifying the needs of residents beyond their benefit claims has strengthened the link with the Supporting People project which is carried out across the Council. Through this work, arrangements are in place that allow the Benefit Assessors to refer benefit seekers to further assistance available from the Council.

Payroll Service

Service Manager – Martin Morris

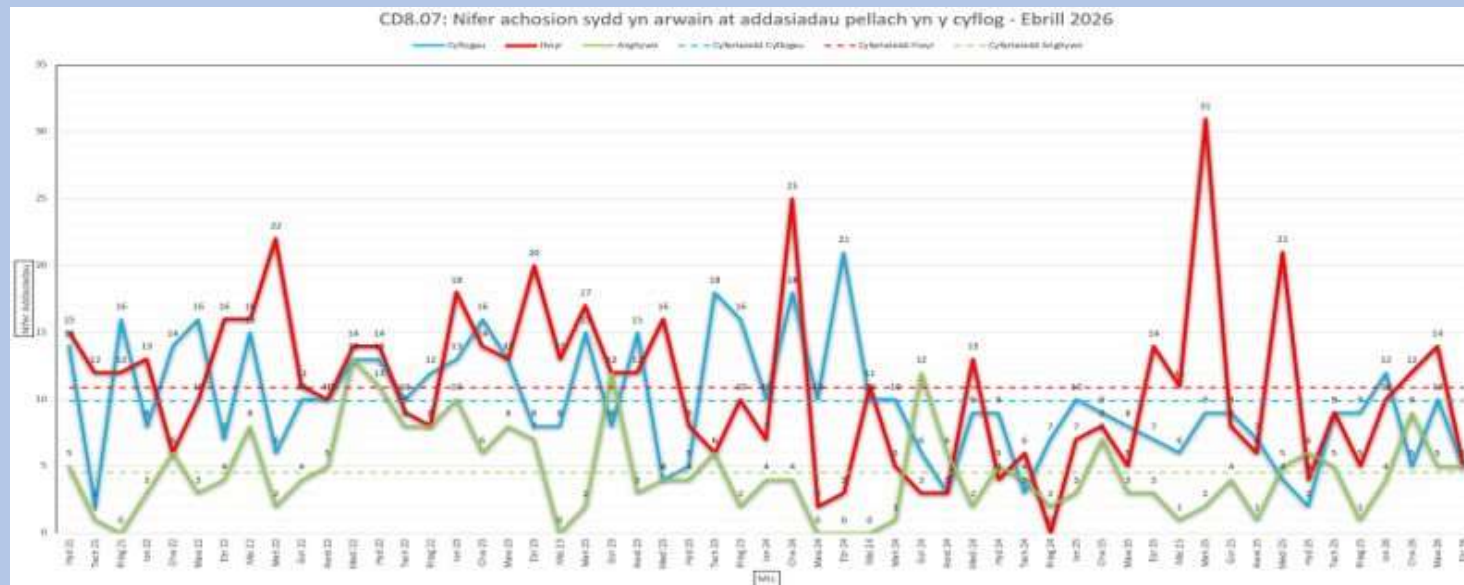
Purpose of service: To pay staff accurately and on time, and also to keep proper accounts for the payment of external bodies such as HMRC.

Overview of performance:

Around 60 items were received as part of the January payroll but relate to earlier periods, with 115 similar items received as part of the February payroll, 263 as part of the March payroll and 84 as part of the April payroll. (Note that the figure is higher in March due to work carried out by us at the end of each financial year to identify casual jobs that have not been paid for over a year in order to close them on the system).

During the year 2025/26, 79,867 payroll payments were made to Council employees. A total of 280 additional adjustments (0.35%) were made during the year with 89 of these (0.11%) due to errors by Payroll itself, 145 due to late information (0.18%), and 46 resulting from incorrect information (0.06%).

Statutory year-end reconciliation work, for the purposes of reporting to the income tax office, was completed on 16 April (deadline for reporting on the 22nd of the month).



Back to the dashboard

Insurance and Risk Management Service

Service Manager – Gwyn Varney

Service purpose: To support Council departments in assessing the threats and opportunities they may face in providing their services and prioritising their activities on the basis of the assessment. Protect the interests of taxpayers by ensuring appropriate insurance arrangements and handling claims.

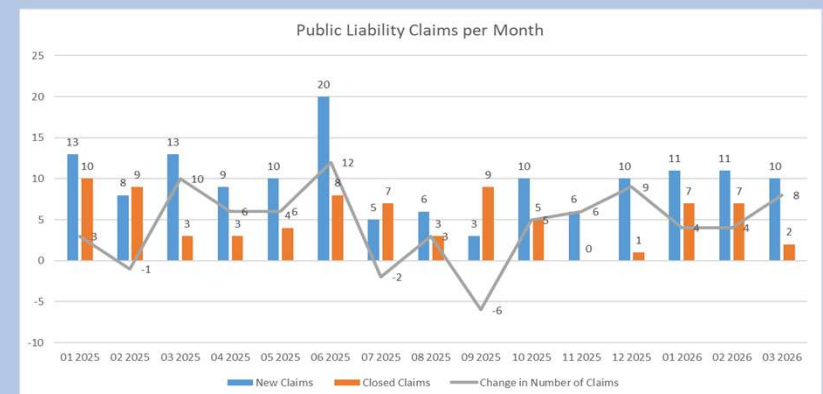
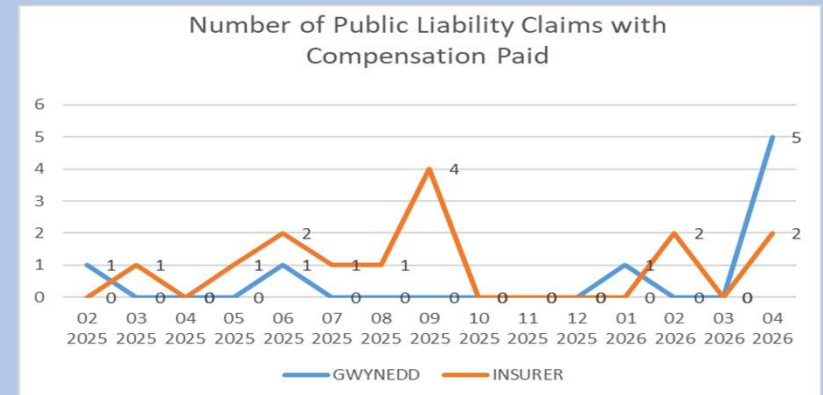
Overview of performance:

As the case has been for some time now, issues remain very challenging. Some of the latest key challenges include:

- The complexity of claims continues to increase. This means more work, time and attention required by the Insurance Unit in order to be able to make an informed liability decision. Examples of this include flood/water claims, recovery from water loss at Cae Top school, Highway repair/maintenance reports
- What is required as information from our brokers and insurers has increased, which means more research and enquiry by the Insurance Unit
- Developments and changes in what the Council is doing means further and ongoing challenges for this service in terms of reporting and ensuring that further measures are in place – e.g. Trunk Roads site insurance Ysgol Newydd Bontnewydd
- More challenges on liability decisions which means more attention to existing claims

Despite these challenges, some successes can be noted, such as:

- Being able to make and act on liability decisions very quickly once sufficient information to enable this to happen has reached the Unit
- Continuing to maintain strong working relationships
- Dealing with many challenging and difficult cases professionally and appropriately



[Back to the dashboard](#)

Income Service

Service Manager – Stephen Williams

Service purpose: To process miscellaneous income and collect the Council's debts promptly and efficiently in order to maximise income, while considering the needs of departments and acting sensitively to the financial circumstances of debtors.

Overview of performance:

Income Unit collection performance as at the end of March 2026.

Value of sundry debt outstanding > 6 months old.

The total has decreased since the previous meeting to monitor performance in December 2025. The balance as at the end of March 2026 was £1,927,815 which represents a decrease of £197,507. The two highest categories of debt are in respect of Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board which totals £327K and invoices in respect of home and residential care which total £1,022K. If the Health Board debts are disregarded then the total outstanding decreases to £1,600,974.

As is customary the intention is to target those debts not belonging to the Health Board in order to further decrease the debts.

Monthly rate of Sundry Debt Collection.

See the attached chart for the 2025/2026 figures.

During 2025/2026 40897 invoices with a value of £76,191,203 were raised and as at the 27/04/2026 3346 invoices valued at £7,698,185 remained payable meaning that £68,493,008 (89%) were cleared by the 27/04/2026.

The comprehensive review of the situation regarding outstanding debt and the Unit's processes continues and areas identified to automate day to day procedures are being developed by the Information Technology Unit. The review is being performed with the assistance of Ffordd Gwynedd Consultants and an action plan of the Unit's procedures has been created and followed.

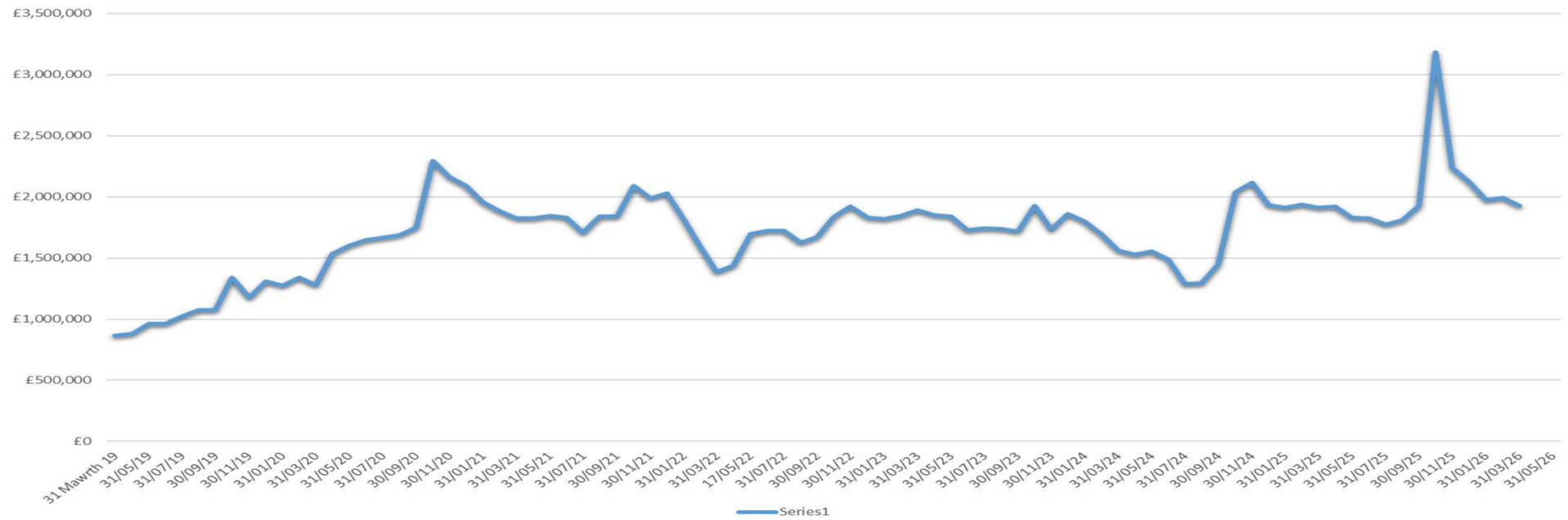
Owing to the problems previously reported with the "Call-Secure" payments system the option to upgrade to "Call-Secure Plus-Voice Recognition" continues to be considered and when a quote is obtained a decision on the way forward will be made. As previously stated the system was introduced as it is necessary for the Council's receipt of card payments to conform with P.C.I.D.S.S. requirements where the primary change being the customer entering their card details into their phone rather than verbally quoting them to a staff member. Unfortunately the process tends to cause difficulty to some classes of customer.

[Back to the dashboard](#)

Income Service

Service Manager – Stephen Williams

Value of Sundry Debts Aged > 6 Months as at 31 March 2026



[Back to the dashboard](#)

Rate of Monthly Sundry Debt Collection



[Back to the dashboard](#)

Pension Service

Service Manager – Meirion Jones

Purpose of the service: To administer the Local Government Pension Scheme on behalf of over 40 employers, including Cyngor Gwynedd, Isle of Anglesey County Council, Conwy County Borough Council in order to calculate and pay pensions promptly and accurately.

Overview of performance:

Measures	February 2026	March 2025	Average 2024/25	Average 2025/26
The average number of working days taken to send a letter informing the value of retirement benefits - estimate.	1.2	0.9	0.88 (2618 cases)	1.1 (2502 achos)
The average number of working days taken to send a letter informing the value of retirement benefits – true value.	0.4	0.7	0.74 (1001 cases)	0.8 (973 achos)
The average number of working days taken to complete dependents' calculations and payments following the death of a member of the scheme.	6.3	5	4.02 (419 cases)	Not available*

My Pension Online:

The 'My Pension Online' system continues to be very popular, with a large number of members visiting the site on a daily basis. Since the system was upgraded in April 2024, all members must re-register for the new site. The graph shows that around 8,500 have registered on the system in recent months. We have had very positive feedback to the new site, with members enjoying the new additions to the system e.g. a personal video statement and a retirement planner.

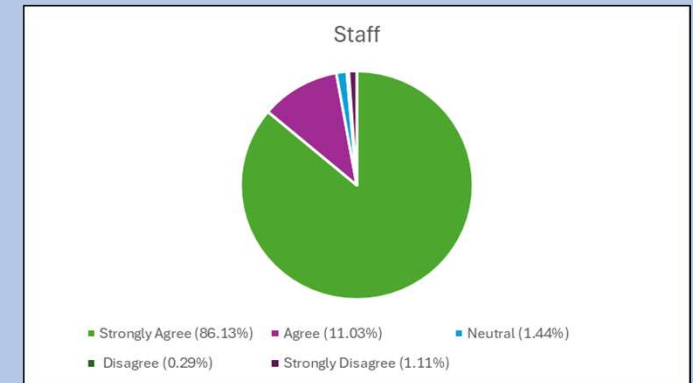
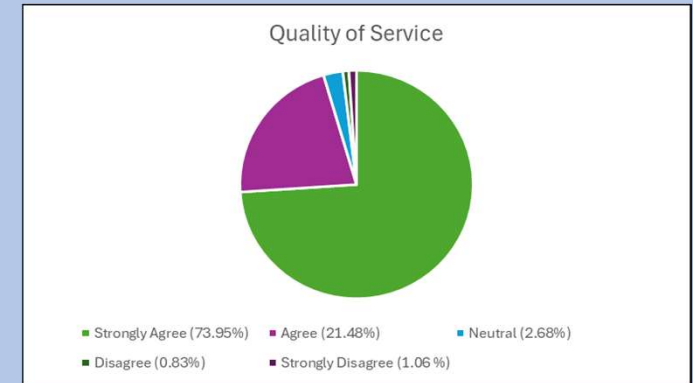


*The way of reporting this element of work has changed during the year, therefore a comparison with 2024/25 is not possible



Member Satisfaction Survey:

The Member Satisfaction Survey is sent at the end of each process - e.g. retirements and refund payments - in order to gather members' views on the quality of the service. The survey asks whether the processing time was acceptable, whether the information was clear and easy to understand, and about their experience of interacting with staff, e.g. whether they were polite, prompt and knowledgeable. Here is a summary of the 2025/26 results (89 responses):



[Back to the dashboard](#)

Investment and Treasury Management Service

Service Manager – Delyth Wyn Jones-Thomas

- **Purpose of the service:** Maximise the return on investment of the Pension Fund, and maintain proper accounts; Invest the Council's cash flow safely, with interest acceptable; Long-term loan management.
- **Overview of performance:**

Gwynedd Pension Fund- Changes are underway to the arrangements of the English and Welsh Local Government Pension Scheme, and the Gwynedd Pension Fund is working with the Wales Pension Partnership to implement these developments. There has been a delay in the formalisation of the legislation by the Government and hence the formal date of launch and move to the new investment company has been delayed.

The Fund has recently agreed on a new long-term strategic asset allocation, establishing a new allocation to natural capital and gilts. The Fund reduced its overweight position to listed equities, reinvesting gains in hedged assets. The Fund completed a transition from BlackRock's Low Carbon index tracking equity allocation to a new climate-aware solution.



Quarterly Performance (up to 31st December 2025)

The Fund returned 2.5% over the quarter, equalling the benchmark return. Total assets shown in this report increased by £120m to £3.621bn as performance from listed global assets was positive over the quarter.

The Fund saw positive returns over a year and while the absolute returns provided were strong, the fund failed to meet its benchmark by 0.2%. Most funds in England and Wales failed to meet their benchmark over the year period due to the challenging benchmark set, but the Gwynedd Pension Fund's performance was better than the average during the year. Underperformance against the benchmark is not a cause for concern because the Fund is a long-term investor.

Council Treasury Management – A number of indicators are reported to the Governance and Audit Committee and the performance for the year to 31st March 2026 is as follows:

Indicator	compliant.	
Benchmark Commitments	✓	
Loan Maturity Structure	✓	
Fluidity Revelation	✓	
Security Disclaimer	✓	
Average Interest Rate	4.15%	

[Back to the dashboard](#)

Internal Audit Service

Service Manager – Luned F Jones

Purpose of the Service: To provide confidence to the citizen and the Council about the Council's control environment and governance arrangements by reporting independently and objectively to the Head of Finance and the Governance and Audit Committee.

Internal Audit strengthens the organisation's ability to create, protect, and sustain value by providing objective, independent, risk-based and objective assurance, advice, insight and foresight to the Governance and Audit Committee

Overview of performance:

49 pieces of work were included in the final modified audit plan 2025/2026. 43 of these assignments were completed by 31 March 2026, representing 88% of the plan. For the purposes of this measure an assignment may be counted as completed if a draft or final report or final memorandum has been released or if the assignment has been closed and no further time is expected to be spent on it. The performance ambition was 95%.

Defining, measuring and communicating the added value of the Internal Audit Service is a core challenge for the profession and for its stakeholders. This is key because the value of an Internal Audit cannot be fully attributed through the number of audits carried out, number of actions etc. It is vitally important to look at the picture in its entirety, taking into account the various services provided by an Internal Audit such as consultancy work, the provision of advice and the conduct of special audits.

[Back to the dashboard](#)

Taxation Service

Service Manager – E Bleddyn Jones

Service purpose: To collect taxes promptly and efficiently, seeking to be flexible and sympathetic to individuals' circumstances.

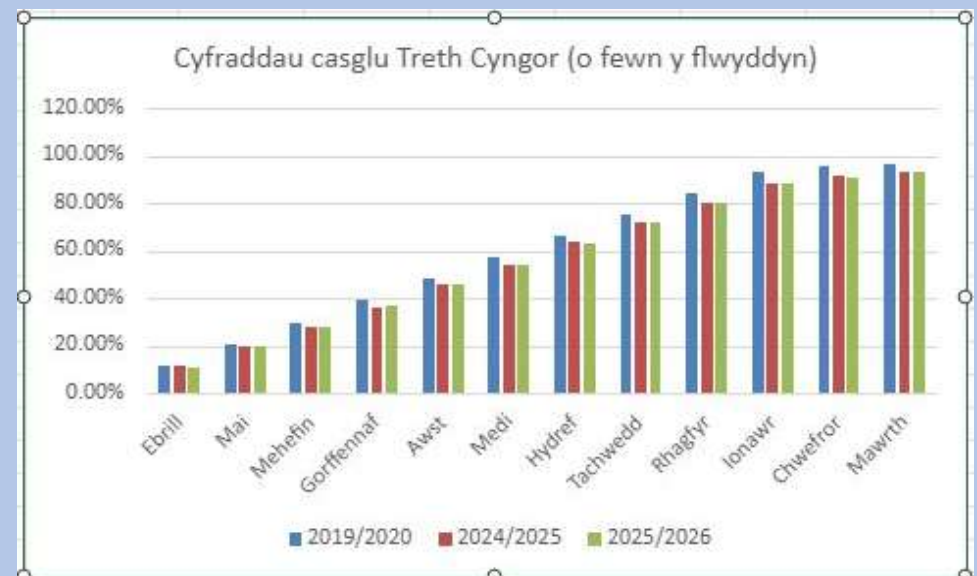
Overview of performance:

Council Tax

There was a slight increase in our collection rates for 2025/26, with 93.10% of council tax collected within the year, compared to 92.90% in 2024/25 and 96.78% in 2019/20. The 2025/26 collection rate was analysed further as follows; Council tax accounts with a second homes premium: 87.09%, Council tax accounts with an empty property premium: 80.38% and Council tax accounts without a premium: 95.36%. These figures show that the premium places additional pressure on the service and impacts collection rates. Despite this, we continued to have the lowest collection rate in Wales in 2025/26. Work is underway to address this through the adoption of new technology, with three initiatives planned over the next six months to automate 80% of the Department's services. The largest agreement is with Govtech, which will provide online forms that feed information directly into the Department's systems within less than 48 hours. This will free up staff to focus on the 20% of work that requires more detailed attention, enabling a more proactive approach to debt collection and allowing staff to provide support and guidance to taxpayers. The second initiative is a taxpayer affordability profiling tool, provided by Ascendent Solutions. The third is an improved communication approach using text messaging and email, delivered by Telsolutions, which will enable more effective and timely contact with customers.

We are pleased to report that emails and correspondence are now under control. During the billing period, around 1,200 emails were awaiting response. This number is now reducing weekly (currently around 800), and the oldest email is less than 14 days old (higher volumes are expected at the end/start of the financial year). However, telephone demand has been more challenging, with a high number of taxpayers contacting us at the same time to discuss their new bills.

Council Tax Collection Rates (within the year)



Taxation Service

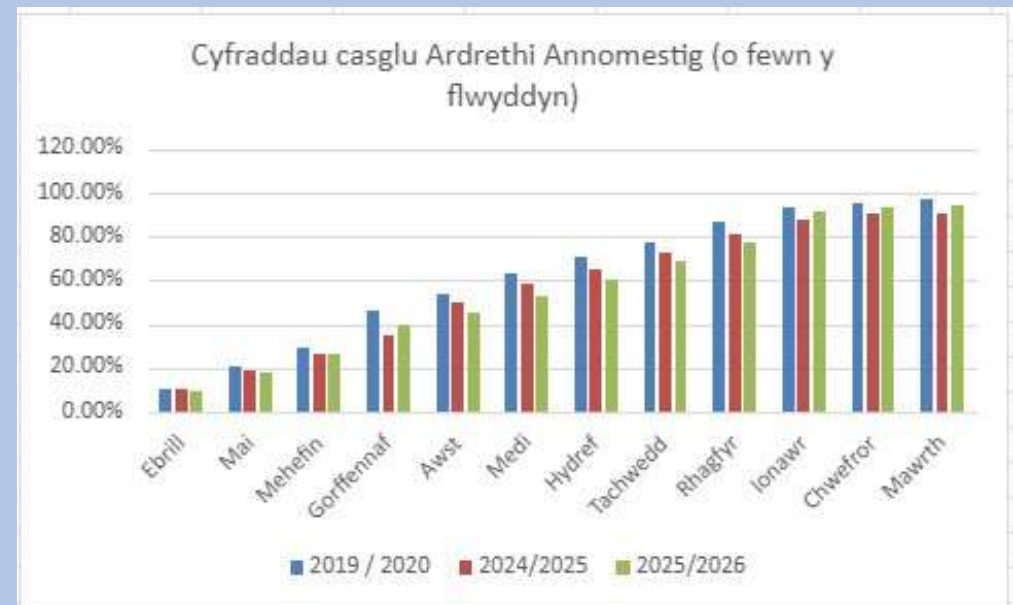
Non-domestic Rates

By the end of March 2026, the collection rate for Non-Domestic Rates (i.e. collected within year) was **93.76%**, compared to 90% in 2024/25. This is encouraging progress, although still below the 97% target set in 2019/20. Further work will be undertaken during 2026/27 to increase collection rates, including the transfer of individual cases to a collection agency.

This year is a revaluation year with a new rating list in place. There are also several changes to how bills are calculated, including; Three multipliers, Transitional relief, Reduced relief for 'food and drink providers' only, at a lower rate of 15% (40% last year). The Govtech project will also extend to Non-Domestic Rates, providing taxpayers with the option to submit information in a structured format, which will help streamline application processing and reduce waiting times.

Business Improvement Areas -The Bangor BID scheme has now come to an end. Hwb Caernarfon has voted in favour of a third term, resulting in 410 bills being issued to levy payers. I was invited to present to the Board and local businesses on the Council's work on 29 April.

Domestic Tax Collection Rates (within the year)



Finance and Accountancy Service

Assistant Head of Finance – Ffion Madog Evans

Purpose of service: To provide a finance and accounting service, and to assist and support services to be effective and efficient.

Performance Overview:

- The detailed work of closing the departments' accounts at the end of the year 2025/26 has taken place and reports have been completed on the end-of-year position with the reports on the revenue and capital side to be presented to the Cabinet on 19/05/26 and then to the Governance and Audit Committee on 21/05/26. The detailed work of completing the work on the Statements of Accounts to comply with all technical requirements is being completed by the Accountants.
- A detailed review of the Council's reserves was carried out during the process of closing the year end accounts, so that the work of harvesting funds could be completed.
- Regular initial meetings with Audit Wales to discuss the audit of the 2025/26 accounts are already taking place.
- The budget for 2026/27 has been completed and approved by the Full Council on 5/3/2026. Members' and Officers' Budget Books have been completed and circulated in a timely manner.
- The financial forecasts on revenue, savings, and capital have been reported during the year to the Governance and Audit Committee and to the Cabinet in November 2025 and in January 2026.
- The Accounts following audit for 2025/26 were completed in a timely manner with an unqualified opinion for the Gwynedd, GwE, and the Harbours accounts. The Auditor General for Wales signed our accounts in November 2025.

Yn ôl i'r dashfwrdd

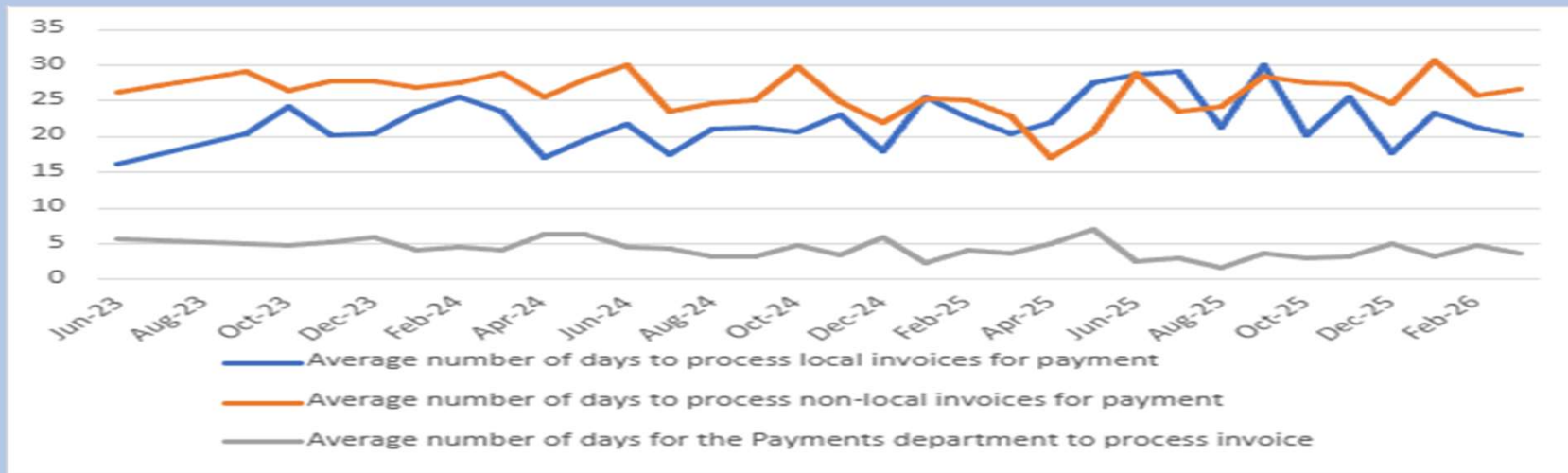
Payments Service

Assistant Head of Finance – Ffion M Evans; Service Manager – Rhodri Shorney

Purpose of service: Paying the Council's creditors accurately and in a timely manner.

Overview of Performance:

- In 2025/26, local invoices were processed for payment in an average of 23.9 days, while the non-local invoices took 25.4 days, within these days, the Payments Unit took 3.8 days to process the invoices, which is an improvement from the 6.5 days on average in 23/24 and earlier. The Payments Unit consists of 7 members of staff.
- 85% of local invoices were paid within 30 days, with the rate for paying the non-local invoices being 81%.
- Since November 2025, 100% of payments have been paid through BACS. The campaign to move more from cheques to BACS has completed allowing us to move away completely from paying with cheques.
- Work has been underway over the past few months to try to modernise and improve efficiency and promote more departments to drive information electronically in order to reduce duplication, which in turn will mean that those specific invoices can be processed faster.
- As part of our contribution towards the priority project of Cynllun y Cyngor Gwynedd Llewyrchus, we are not monitoring our performance according to each company's payment terms. Since we started recording this figure, 78% of our invoices have been paid within the industry standard payment terms of 7, 14 or 28 days. This figure is expected to improve over time.



Yn ôl i'r dashfwrdd

Finance Department (Digital Services) Performance Measures Report

Period:

- **2025/26 Financial Year**

Mandatory Training

Staff who have completed the Safeguarding training

100%

Mandatory Training

Staff who have completed the Domestic Abuse training

99.3%

IT Dept 2025/26

Number of incidents recorded by the IT ServiceDesk

15189

IT Dept 2025/26

Total number of incidents resolved

15136

IT Dept2025/26

Incidents resolved within a week

84%

IT Dept 2025/26

Incidents resolved with 1day

64%

IT Servicedek (1st line) 2025/26

Incidents resolved within 1 day

73%

IT Dept (all) 2025/26

Satisfaction: A very happy or happy percentage. *Suggest a questionnaire to ALL IT users.*

100%

IT
(Infrastructure)

Number of cyber incidents

1

IT
(Infrastructure)

Number of serious service interruptions

1

IT
(Infrastructure)
Core Network Availability
(April'25-March-26)

100%

IT (Development)

Number satisfied declared

100%

IT (Development)

Failure Demand (checks)

10%

IT (Digital Learning Service)

Customer Satisfaction

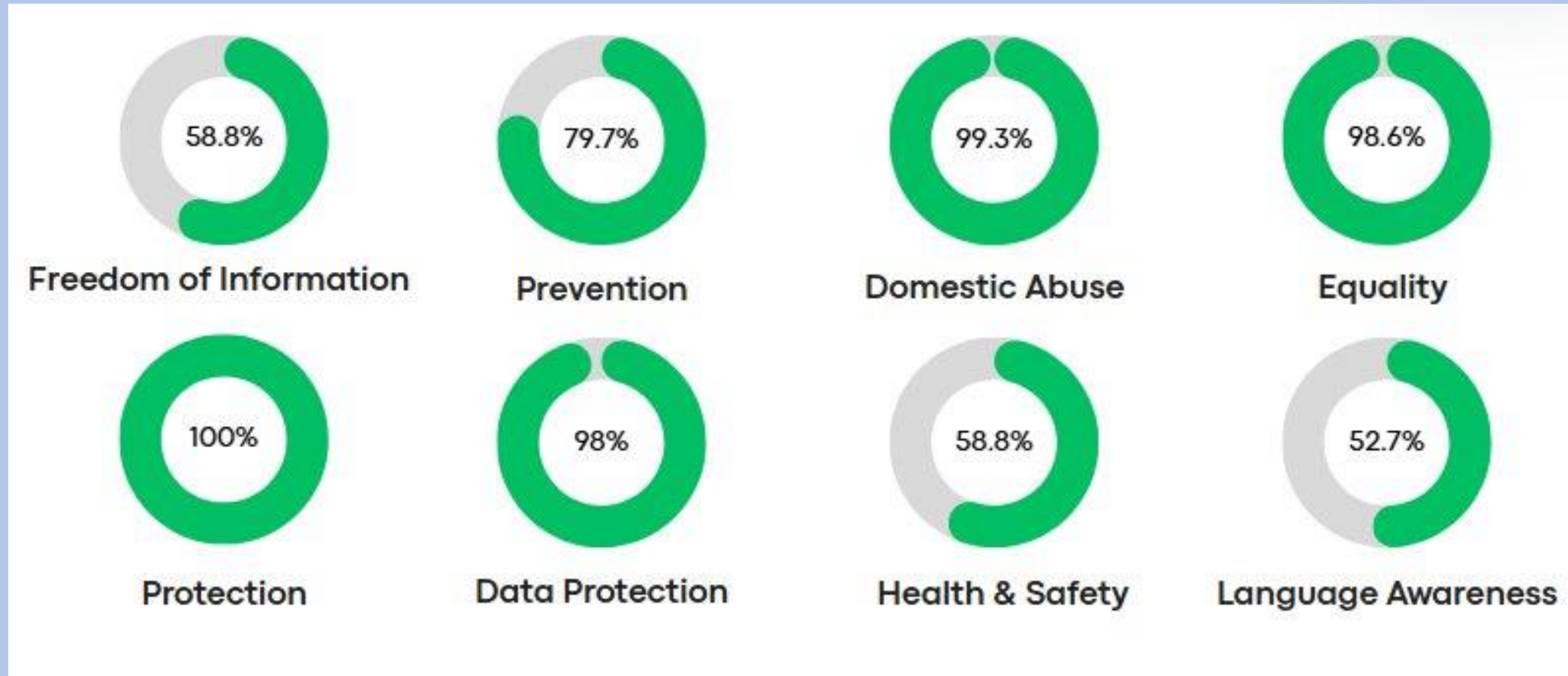


Mandatory Training

[Back to the dashboard](#)

Overview of performance:

Based on the latest data, 3 members of staff have not completed the Safeguarding training, and 5 have not completed the Domestic Abuse training. A personal message has been sent to all those who have not completed the Safeguarding and Domestic Abuse training demanding that the course be completed – some of the officers are new to the Council in recent weeks



IT Service – Support –

Service Manager – Bryn Goodman Jones

[Back to the dashboard](#)

Service purpose: To collaborate with our customers to offer, develop and evolve solutions in response to business needs.

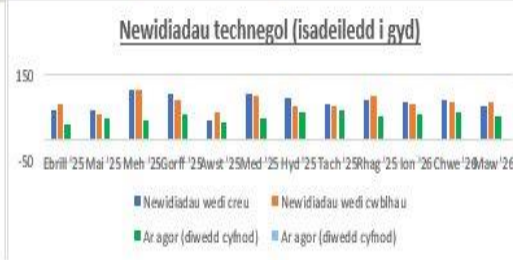
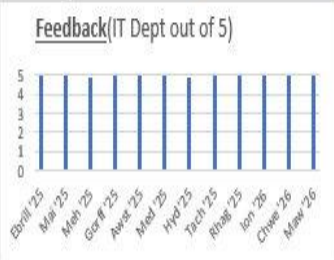
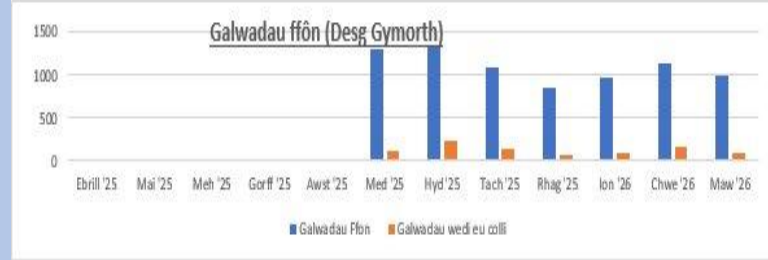
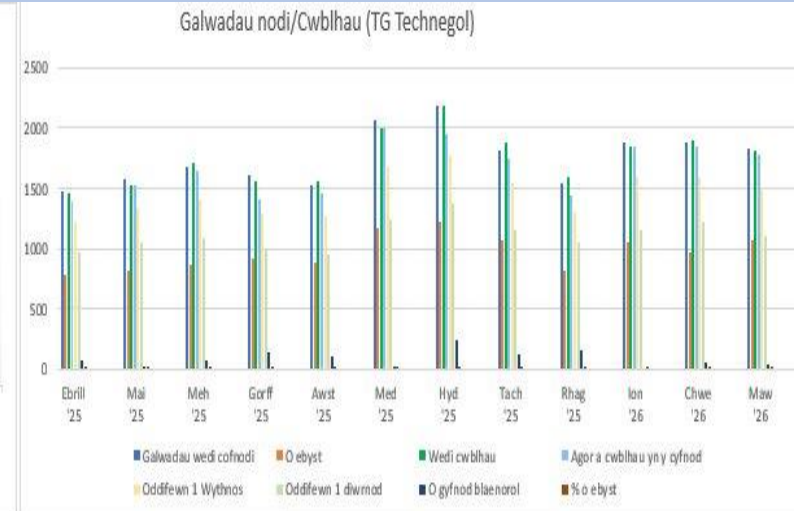
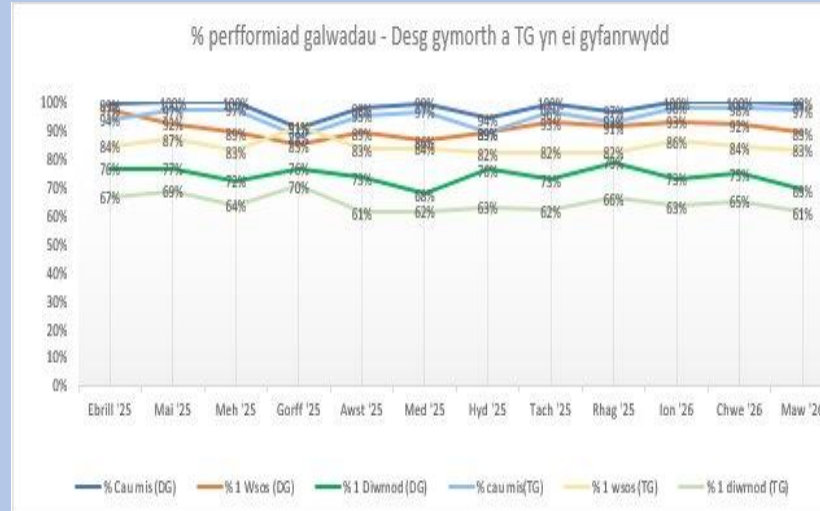
Performance Overview: 2025-2026

Phone Calls to the Helpdesk

- Phone calls received: - **8781**
- Percentage answered - **87%**

Requests for Technical Support

- Total support requests recorded: **15189**
- Total support requests via emails: **8527 (56%)**
- Total support requests *opened and closed* for period: **14406**
- **Support requests completed (all IT): 15136**
 - Completed within **1 week: 12700 (84%)**
 - Of the above completed in **24 hours: 9615 (64%)**
- **Support requests completed (Helpdesk only) 8934**
 - Completed within **1 week: 8238 (92%)**
 - Of the above completed in **24 hours: 6559 (73%)**
- **Technical Changes**
 - Number of technical changes created: **734**
 - Number of technical changes completed: **708**



Quick review of the year

A large number of changes, updates and new systems have been introduced.

Work to upgrade ALL Council Windows devices to the Windows 11 version before October has been successfully completed and on time. This ensured the security of the Council's digital systems. The work included replacing nearly 600 laptops/PCs and updating 2,000 devices remotely without staff having to return equipment to Council offices.

Offering Copilot Chat software to all Council employees. This provides a secure way to use AI to support staff in completing tasks more efficiently.

Expanding the use of Teams Rooms to facilitate internal and external virtual meetings. This supports remote meetings and saves officers' time.

Introducing more Microsoft 365 apps securely – this is work that will continue to expand into 2026–27.

Ongoing work to strengthen the security of our infrastructure.

Providing more ways for staff to securely connect to the Council's systems.

IT Service - Infrastructure

Service Manager – Gwyn Jones

Service purpose: To develop and support the Council's infrastructure to provide a resilient and secure platform to host the Council's information technology services.

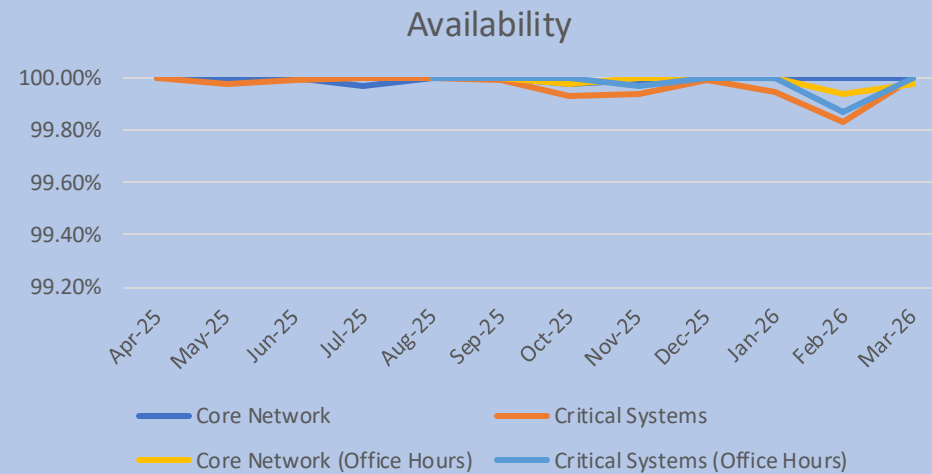
Performance Overview:

Period statistics

Statistics are recorded through the IT Help Desk. As a call is closed, all users who have logged that call are given the offer to leave feedback.

(Complex) Changes are a record of changes that can affect a system/server/network, and therefore several users. These are mostly entries from our internal users and do not include feedback.

📞 Incidents and Changes		🌐 Diogelwch (SOC / E-bost / AV)	
Total Incidents Logged	3,668	Attempts blocked by Firewall	888,902
Total Incidents Closed	3,615	Malicious Emails Blocked	1,056,167
Incidents open at the end of the period	107	AntiVirus Warnings (total)	344
Number of Feedback	82	SOC Incidents (Total)	42
Average Feedback Score (out of 5)	5.0	Cyber Incidents	1
Total of Complex Changes Logged	799		
Total of Complex Changes Closed	792		
Complex Changes open at the end of the period	33		



Updates

- Completed transfer to new telephony system. 3 Contact Centres/1719 Softphones/1539 Desk Phones now live (CC2)
- Analog to Digital Telephone Lines. Some transferred new telephone system. Payment machines transferred to network. Others cancelled with no usage or no longer required.
 - 98 lines left for departments to identify and transfer (out of 493). Around £190k p.a. saved. (On average £40 per month) (GWYD1)
- New IPAM (IP Address Management) system installed. Improved management and further securing internet access. (GWYD2)
- Improved electrical resilience in Caernarfon Data Centre (GWYD2)
- Migrating School Servers centrally. Internal environment built to migrate Schools' virtual servers still in use, saving renewal costs and improve central management and resilience.
- Cyber Incident – May 2025
- Network Outage – November 2025

IT Service - Development

Service Managers – Elfyn Evans, Rhodri Fretwell (April 2025 – March 2026)

Service purpose: To collaborate with our customers to offer, develop and evolve solutions in response to business needs.

Development - projects that enable the Council's services to operate more effectively and efficiently, as well as providing direct benefit to the people of Gwynedd.

Completed	Accepted	In progress	Waiting for comment
26	37	42	35

Satisfaction feedback – By reflecting on projects and listening to the feedback from our customers, we continue to learn and improve.

'Were you happy with the proposals, a solution on service in general that was received by the development unit?'

Happy	Happy, but room for improvement	Not happy
15	0	0

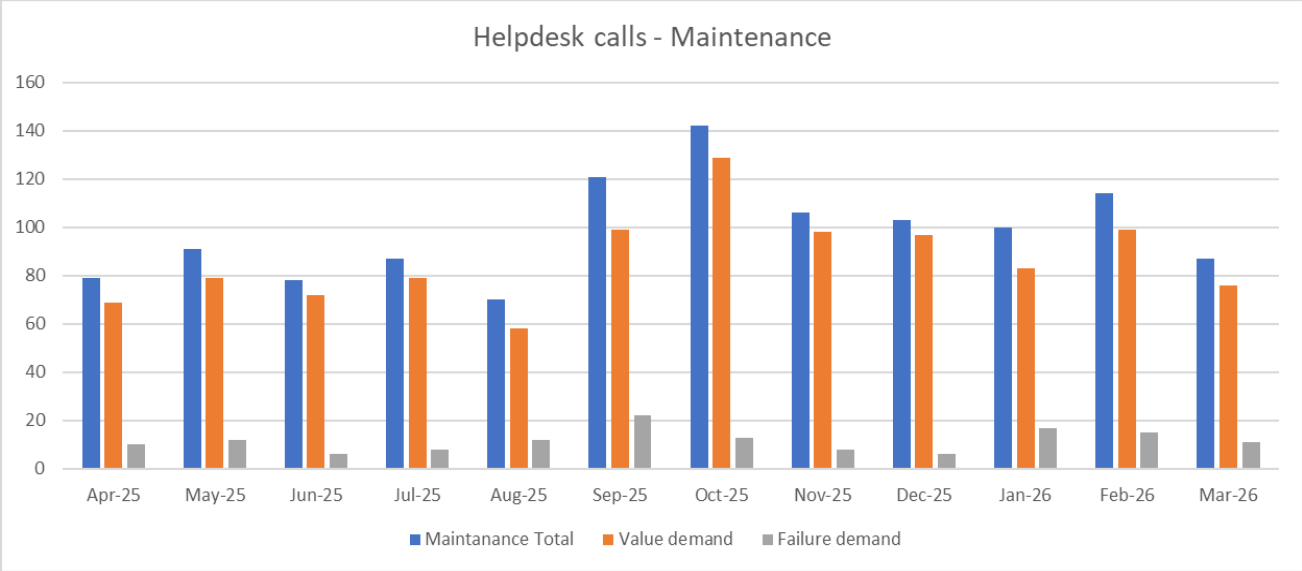
Opportunities to improve – None in this reporting period

Maintenance – responding to calls for support from our customers / maintaining our systems

- **Value demand (90%):** improvements to systems, as well as the provision of technical/expert support to users.
- **Failure demand (10%):** customers are struggling to achieve what they need to do or report defects in a system.
- **69 of the calls completed received 5* feedback**
- **1,366 Helpdesk requests during period 2025/26**

Projects of interest

- Establishing of the "Individual Development Plan" systems
- Supply of the "Fleet Asset Management" system for Conwy. Other authorities are also showing interest
- Funding from the Shared Prosperity Fund to deploy sensors, e.g. home care and Vaping monitoring in schools
- Artificial Intelligence – categorisation and automation of general enquiries
- Developments in mobile working



IT Service – Digital Learning Service

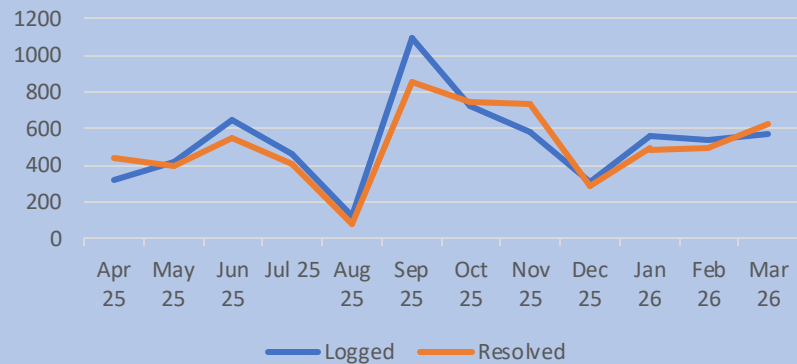
Service Manager: Gwenan Pritchard

Purpose: To lead, support and collaborate with our schools to deliver the highest quality digital teaching and ensure the best opportunities for Gwynedd's pupils.

Calls

	Apr 25	May 25	Jun 25	Jul 25	Aug 25	Sep 25	Oct 25	Nov 25	Dec 25	Jan 26	Feb 26	Mar 26
Logged	314	420	646	460	126	1091	719	578	305	563	537	571
Resolved	436	396	551	405	81	852	743	736	281	490	493	627

GDD Calls 2025/26



Projects

Implementing a new MIS system (Management Information System)

Upgraded to a newer version of remote management software

Engineered a new secure system for online examinations

Engineered a new system for MacOS management

Moved away from historic systems

Removal of out of support / end of life devices

Development and improvement of the central printing system

Regular meetings and working in partnership with Safeguarding Officers

Coordinated upgrades of the school dinner system

Developed a new asset management system

Devices GDD supports

Windows (Teachers)	1929
Windows (Students)	6511
Chromebooks	6818
Pads	3003



MEETING	EDUCATION AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE	14 July 2026
TITLE	Safeguarding Arrangements in Schools Scrutiny Investigation Report
MEMBERS OF THE INVESTIGATION	Councillors: Cai Larsen (Chair) Dawn Lynne Jones Gwynfor Owen Richard Glyn Roberts Co-opted Member: Sharon Roberts (Arfon Parent/Governors' Representative)
INVESTIGATION'S LEAD OFFICER	Bethan Adams, Scrutiny Advisor
CABINET MEMBER	Councillor Dewi Jones, Cabinet Member for Education

1. The Scrutiny Investigation was established on 13 February 2025 and the draft Final Report is submitted for the attention of Members.
2. Members of the Scrutiny Committee are asked to consider the contents of the Report and to make comments, ask any relevant questions, propose any amendments, and approve the Report.
3. The Cabinet Member is asked for his response to the main findings and recommendations and to confirm if he accepts the recommendations in principle and will convey the recommendations specific to schools and the Welsh Government for their attention.
4. If the investigation's report is approved, a decision will need to be reached on when to receive an update from the Cabinet Member for Education on implementation per recommendation.
5. The Chair of the investigation has been invited to a meeting of the Response Plan Board on 15 July 2026, in order to report on the discussion at this meeting and the Committee's decision. The Lead Officer of the scrutiny investigation will also attend the meeting.

Scrutiny Investigation Report into Safeguarding Arrangements in Schools

Investigation Members

Councillors:

Cai Larsen (Chair)

Dawn Lynne Jones

Gwynfor Owen

Richard Glyn Roberts

Co-opted Member:

Sharon Roberts (Parent/Governor Representative for Arfon)

Officers

Bethan Adams (Lead Officer)

Vera Jones (Supporting Officer)

Dylan Owen (Supporting Director)

External Consultant

E. D. Gareth Morgans

Date: July 2026



Mi allwch ddarllen y ddogfen yma yn Gymraeg hefyd. Ewch nôl i'r dudalen we, a chliciwch ar y botwm iaith ar dop y dudalen.



CONTENT

Foreword by the Chair	3
1. Recommendations	4
2. Introduction	7
3. Background	8
4. Meetings	9
5. School visits	15
6. Pupils' Voice	24
7. Evidence considered	27
8. Recommendations and Rationale	28
9. Conclusion	42
Acknowledgment	43
Appendices:	44
Appendix 1	Scrutiny Investigation Brief
Appendix 2	Safeguarding Roles/Responsibilities in Schools
Appendix 3	Schools Context Template
Appendix 4	Pre-visit questions
Appendix 5	Questions asked at the visits
Appendix 6	Checklist - Schools' Safeguarding Environment and Culture
Appendix 7	Presentation on the Pupils' Voice Work

FOREWORD BY THE CHAIR

Safeguarding children and young people is among the most important responsibilities of schools, local authorities and communities. Ensuring an effective safeguarding procedure is not just a matter of policy compliance, but a commitment to creating a culture where every child feels safe, listened to and knows who to turn to when they need help. As important as policies, procedures and training are, an open culture where people feel confident to raise concerns, where leaders listen and act, and where lessons are continually learned, is what makes those arrangements work effectively.

This investigation was carried out with a constructive spirit, with the intention of understanding how safeguarding arrangements operate in practice in Gwynedd and to identify opportunities to strengthen them. Throughout the work, we received evidence from officers, experts, headteachers, staff, governors and, most importantly, input from children and young people who attend our schools.

Much of what we saw was encouraging. We saw schools where pupils' well-being and safety are at the heart of day-to-day work, with dedicated staff and conscientious governors working tirelessly to create safe and supportive environments. That deserves to be recognised and praised.

At the same time, the investigation showed that there were opportunities to further strengthen arrangements. The recommendations in the report focus on areas such as training, information sharing, supporting governors, listening to pupils' voice and ensuring that concerns are recorded and considered in a way that enables risk patterns to be identified before harm occurs.

I am particularly pleased that the voice of children and young people has played an important role in this work. Their perspectives have reminded us that trust, approachable adults and clear communication are the foundations of effective safeguarding.

I would like to sincerely thank my colleagues on the investigation, the officers who supported us, the external consultant, the schools and all the individuals who contributed evidence and time to this work. Without their cooperation and willingness to share their experiences, the investigation would not have been possible.

I hope that the report will make a positive contribution to strengthening safeguarding arrangements in Gwynedd and help ensure that all children and young people are able to learn and develop in an environment where they feel safe, respected and heard.

**Councillor Cai Larsen,
Chair of the Investigation**

1. Recommendations

Staff and Governor Training

1. That training at the appropriate level should be held annually for all staff and governors and that the number of staff in schools completing the higher level training should be increased.
2. That the Education Department adapt its training slides to include one specific slide at the start of the training which includes specific contact phone numbers and email addresses so that staff can print them and keep them safe.
3. The safeguarding training should be even clearer, in that staff should refer any concern to the Designated Safeguarding Person or Deputy Safeguarding Person immediately and not investigate or make the decision for themselves whether the matter reaches the threshold. Staff should be reminded of this continually.
4. The Education Department should ensure that all Governing bodies are aware of the specific action to be taken when there is a safeguarding complaint against the Headteacher and the support available to them, ensuring appropriate and adequate support for the Governors in such cases.

Pupils' Understanding

5. That there is a need to continue to develop age and ability appropriate safeguarding education that reflects current issues affecting children and young people.
6. All schools should formalise the arrangements of sending a regular questionnaire to pupils to ask them whether they know where and to whom to turn in a safeguarding case.
7. Schools should communicate clearly, and in an age and ability appropriate manner, with pupils about confidentiality, safeguarding processes, referral routes, follow-up support and access to specialist well-being services.

Support for pupils

8. Schools should continue to invest in safe well-being spaces that pupils can use flexibly and without stigma, alongside visible pastoral support that promotes emotional well-being and early intervention.
9. Schools should continue to strengthen relationship-based safeguarding approaches, ensuring that all pupils have access to trusted adults who are visible, approachable and responsive to their needs
10. Schools should, where appropriate, continue to strengthen methods of peer support and provide clearer guidance around confidentiality, boundaries and when support from eligible adults is needed.

Pupils' Voice

11. Schools should strengthen mechanisms of listening to pupils' voice when developing and monitoring safeguarding arrangements through methods such as school councils, well-being groups, pupil surveys and regular consultation exercises.

Review of Safeguarding Arrangements

12. Schools and the Education Department should continue to undertake regular reviews of safeguarding arrangements in schools that include the voices of children and young people of all ages and abilities.
13. Schools and the Education Department should monitor any risk patterns and learn lessons as part of the regular safeguarding monitoring. It should be ensured that the lessons learned are shared across schools and relevant services.

Information Sharing, Recording of Safeguarding Matters and Systems

14. All schools in Gwynedd should be operating on the recording system (Bromcom) which is funded by the Education Department to record safeguarding matters about a child. It must be ensured that the information is fed into the system by default and that necessary information is shared easily and in a timely manner with relevant professional officers (including Social Services).

15. That one core electronic information form be developed, which extracts information from all systems in order to share necessary information between schools in a timely manner.
16. Call on the Welsh Government to fund a single system for all schools in Wales to ensure that information about safeguarding matters is passed on easily with children and young people as they move from school to school.
17. Call on the Welsh Government to develop a formal system to record and monitor patterns of suspicious behaviour, which do not meet the referral threshold, so that Social Services can consider an individual's suitability to work with children.

Increasing Parents' Understanding and include them in Safeguarding Arrangements

18. That the Education Department develop a consistent procedure regarding how schools can explain safeguarding processes to parents and how to include them in safeguarding arrangements.

Visibility of Safeguarding Information in schools

19. That all schools adapt their lanyards for staff, to include (on the back) the information necessary for contacting the Referrals Team and the telephone number of the Designated Safeguarding Person so that it is easy for staff to obtain the relevant telephone numbers immediately.
20. That all schools produce clear and age and ability appropriate posters, displaying photographs of the Designated Safeguarding Person and the Designated Safeguarding Governor, and place them in suitable places.
21. That schools create a dedicated space to display safeguarding information with input from pupils including placing a box where pupils can raise a concern.

School Governing Bodies and Accountability of School Headteachers

22. To recommend to the Welsh Government that there is a need to review the role of School Governing Bodies, and the line management (accountability) of School Headteachers.

See page 28 onwards for more information.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 The safeguarding arrangements in schools were scrutinised at the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee meeting on [18 July 2024](#). There was an informal discussion after the meeting as to the possibility of holding a Task and Finish Group or Scrutiny Investigation into the field. It was concluded that further discussion should take place at the Committee's informal meeting on 5 September 2024 where concern was expressed by members present about the implementation of the safeguarding arrangements within our schools.
- 2.2 At the Committee's informal meeting on 9 January 2025, a draft brief was considered for the scrutiny investigation. The members of the Committee welcomed the intention to carry out an investigation and to do so in a constructive manner, making beneficial recommendations based on evidence.
- 2.3 The Scrutiny Forum (a meeting of scrutiny chairs and vice-chairs), has a role to advise on the prioritisation of scrutiny investigations within the context of the resources available. At the meeting of the Forum on 29 January 2025, consideration was given to the draft brief and the investigation was prioritised.
- 2.4 The investigation brief was adopted at the meeting of the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee on [13 February 2025](#). After members were elected at the meeting, two members withdrew for various reasons. The members who have been undertaking the work of the investigation are:
- Councillors Cai Larsen (Chair), Dawn Lynne Jones, Gwynfor Owen and Richard Glyn Roberts.
 - Co-opted Member - Sharon Roberts (Parent/Governor Representative for Arfon)
- 2.5 The scrutiny investigation has been included in the Council's Response to Offending Plan. The Response Plan was adopted at the Cabinet meeting on 21 January 2025. The Response Plan is a live plan that is reviewed regularly. See more information about the Response Plan and the Child Practice Review report 'Our Bravery Brought Justice' on [the Council's website](#).
- 2.6 An updated investigation brief can be seen in **Appendix 1**.

3. Background

3.1 The statutory guidance "[Keeping learners safe](#)" (Welsh Government, March 2022) provides guidance to local authorities and school governing bodies on arrangements for safeguarding children under the Education Act 2002. The guidance relates directly to the safeguarding procedures and duties under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

3.2 The guidance states:

“Safeguarding is preventing and protecting children from abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm, and educating those around them to recognise the signs and dangers. Safeguarding and promoting the well-being of all children attending an education setting is defined for the purposes of this guidance as:

- protecting children from risk of abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm
- preventing impairment of children's health or development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to achieve the best outcomes.”¹

3.3 The guidance does not set out detailed procedures. It is noted that it:

“... aims to specify the outcomes that organisations need to secure to enable staff to meet the objective of keeping children safe from harm as well as what needs to be done, or put in place, to achieve this.”²

3.4 The guidance outlines and details responsibilities in relation to safeguarding arrangements in schools. In response to a request from members of the investigation, Gareth Morgans (External Consultant) produced a document outlining the responsibilities of different stakeholders in relation to the safeguarding of children and young people. The document assisted the members in undertaking the work of the investigation. The document can be viewed at **Appendix 2**.

¹Welsh Government, *Keeping learners safe* (March 2022) - <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2022-04/220401-keeping-learners-safe.pdf>, 3

²Welsh Government, *Keeping learners safe* (March 2022) - <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2022-04/220401-keeping-learners-safe.pdf>, 5

4. Meetings

- 4.1** The investigation looked at the Council's current arrangements in relation to safeguarding in schools and the arrangements in a sample of schools.
- 4.2** Four meetings of the Investigation were held between March 2025 and April 2025. At the first meeting, the members familiarised themselves with the brief and there was a discussion on how it could be ensured that pupils understood how to raise a concern and with whom to contact. Consideration was given to the different ways of hearing the pupils' voice, such as speaking directly with pupils, via a questionnaire, consider information from the quality check visits held by the Education Department and information from Estyn inspections. It was decided to consider the best course of action as the investigation proceeded.
- 4.3** A presentation was given on the legal context for safeguarding in schools by the Legal Services Manager.
- 4.4** It was intended to select schools to be included in the sample of schools that the members would visit at the first meeting. The following factors were considered when selecting schools to be included in the sample: schools of varying sizes, different areas and a mix of urban and rural schools, as well as consideration to the timing of their latest Estyn inspections.
- 4.5** During the discussion, the need to receive information about the number of referrals per pupil per school was highlighted, in order for members of the investigation to consider this factor as well when selecting schools, noting that examples of a high number and a low number of referrals were needed. It was concluded that members of the investigation would select the schools for the sample after receiving this information.
- 4.6** At the second meeting, a presentation was given by the Education Department's Safeguarding and Well-being Quality Lead on schools' safeguarding arrangements. The Head of Department as well as the Education Safeguarding and Well-being Officer were present also to respond to members' questions. An explanation was given of what support was available by the Education Department on safeguarding

arrangements in schools, elaborating on the training, annual questionnaire, Safeguarding Arrangements Audit and the resources available for the schools to raise awareness of the arrangements among staff and pupils. Following the meeting, examples were shared of posters to raise pupils' awareness of what they should do to raise a concern.

4.7 Officers from the Children and Supporting Families Department joined later in the meeting. The Assistant Head of Safeguarding and Quality and the Referrals Team Manager were present to discuss the collaboration between schools/Education Department and the Children and Supporting Families Department. It was noted that a lack of information and accuracy in referrals can be challenging for the Referrals Team, but discussions were being held with the Education Department to seek to identify and overcome these obstacles. It was explained that the restructuring within the Education Department means that the Safeguarding and Well-being Teams in the Education Department could advise officers from the schools before they referred matters to the Referrals Team in the Children and Supporting Families Department.

4.8 Consideration was given to the next steps and it was decided which schools to include in the sample. The following is a list of the schools it was decided to visit:

Primary (6)	Ysgol Garndolbenmaen, Llanllechid, Maenofferen, Nefyn, Rhiwlas, Tanygrisiau
Secondary (3)	Ysgol Glan y Môr, Tryfan, Tywyn
Special (1)	Ysgol Pendalar
All-through (1)	Ysgol Bro Idris (the main site, the Dinas Mawddwy site and the Llanelltyd site)

4.9 Gareth Morgans, an independent external expert in the field, was appointed to assist members of the investigation. He has extensive experience of safeguarding arrangements in schools and worked as Director of Education and Children's Services at Carmarthenshire County Council until his retirement. He was present at the third meeting and a representative of Estyn was invited to the meeting to give Estyn's view on the authority's arrangements. Members were given an opportunity to ask for more

information in order to have a better understanding of the Estyn inspection arrangements.

4.10 The External Consultant and the Estyn Assistant Director elaborated on good practice in terms of safeguarding arrangements at schools. The following themes were highlighted:

- Robust culture of safeguarding and pupil welfare
- Suitable training
- Safe learning spaces
- Vigilance and support for pupils
- Clear policies and procedures
- Response to wider threats
- Voice the opinion (of pupils and teachers)
- Effective self-evaluation

4.11 At the fourth meeting of the investigation, information about the safeguarding arrangements of the schools in the sample was considered. A report was submitted which included:

- a selection of information from the most recent Estyn report, as well as a link to the full report;
- information about the schools' Safeguarding Children Policy as well as notes from exceptions; and
- a summary of responses to the 2023/24 safeguarding annual questionnaire by the sample schools.

4.12 The need to have a context sheet for each school was highlighted so that members were aware of the relevant information before visiting the schools. See school context sheet template at **Appendix 3**.

4.13 A list of possible questions was presented by Gareth Morgans, the external consultant, emphasising that all of the information set out above was also an important key context to consider and remember before going on any school visit.

4.14 The need to maintain consistency for the questions to the different schools in the sample was confirmed, while acknowledging that the follow-up questions would vary

somewhat from school to school. The questions were discussed and following the comments the questions were summarised and refined.

- 4.15** It was decided to share some of the questions with the schools in advance. The questions shared in advance are at **Appendix 4**. With the questions asked at the visits at **Appendix 5**.
- 4.16** The need to create a school environment and culture checklist was identified. See at **Appendix 6** the checklist compiled by the external consultant to enable members to note comments when touring the schools and their impressions at the end of the visits.
- 4.17** A representation of the members of the investigation (minimum of two members) as well as the Lead or Support Officer visited the 11 schools in the sample during May – July 2025. See more information about the visits on page 15. The visits allowed members of the investigation to gather evidence directly from school staff and governors.
- 4.18** At the fifth meeting of the investigation, there was a discussion about members' initial impressions following visits to the schools.
- 4.19** The sixth meeting of the investigation was held in September, findings arising from the visits were discussed and possible recommendations were considered. In addition, attention was paid to the commissioning of a provider to complete the work of hearing pupils' voices. The steps taken to identify a potential provider were detailed and information was shared about options received from one provider to complete the work. It was reported that the provider could deliver the work in December 2025.
- 4.20** At the seventh meeting of the investigation, there was a discussion with officers from the Children and Supporting Families Department. The Acting Head of the Children's Department, Assistant Head of Safeguarding and Quality and a Referrals Officer were present. There was a discussion about issues that had arisen as a result of visits to the schools which the members of the investigation wished to question further.
- 4.21** It was reported at the meeting that the provider identified to carry out the work to hear the pupils' voice had been in touch stating that they considered the sample was

insufficient. Consideration was given to the next steps taking into account the context and brief of the investigation. It was agreed to contact the provider asking them to carry out the work in accordance with the original brief. A response was received from the provider that they could not carry out the work on this basis but that they were willing to discuss. As a result, it was decided to move on to look for another provider to carry out the work on the basis required in order to carry out the work of the investigation.

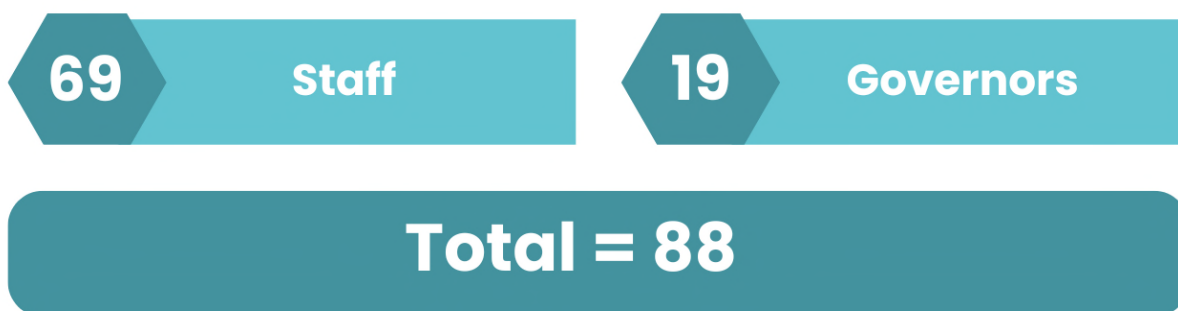
- 4.22** At the eighth meeting of the investigation, there was a conversation about human resources matters. The Head of Corporate Services and the Human Resources Advisory Team Leader were in attendance. They set the context for HR work in relation to schools. It was explained that matters that arise are the responsibility of the schools, but that the Human Resources Service is available to offer support and guidance. Members of the investigation had the opportunity to ask questions and discuss possible scenarios with the officers.
- 4.23** At the ninth meeting, members had a conversation with the Head of Education and the Quality Lead for Safeguarding and Well-being about the collaborative relationship between the Department and the Children and Supporting Families Department and about issues of assessing an individual's suitability to work with children.
- 4.24** Members considered possible recommendations arising from the investigation meetings keeping in mind the possible recommendations drawn up following the visits to the schools.
- 4.25** It was confirmed at the meeting that Dr Ceryl Teleri Davies had been appointed to complete the work of hearing pupils' voices, with the intention of completing the work by the end of May 2026.
- 4.26** The work was completed in line with the schedule and a presentation on the work was received on 8 June. Members of the Response Board were invited to attend in order to hear the findings and recommendations arising from the work. Appreciation of the presentation and the opportunity to attend were noted. A copy of the presentation is at **Appendix 7**. Details of this work are on page 24.

- 4.27** At the tenth meeting of the investigation, members of the investigation discussed all possible recommendations including those arising from the pupils' voice work. Possible modifications and changes to the recommendations were identified.
- 4.28** At the final meeting of the investigation, the final draft report of the investigation was discussed with the Cabinet Member for Education and the Head of Education as well as the Cabinet Member for Children and Supporting Families and the Head of Children and Supporting Families.

5. School Visits

- 5.1 A representation of the members of the investigation (minimum of two members) as well as the Lead Officer or Support Officer visited the 11 schools in the sample during May, June and July 2025.
- 5.2 The visits to each school lasted at least half a day with a visit to the All-through School involving a visit to the main site and two other sites.
- 5.3 Informal open conversations were held with Headteachers, Designated Safeguarding Persons (DPPs), Designated Safeguarding Deputies, Teachers, Support Staff as well as Chairs and Designated Safeguarding and Governors. The questions that formed the basis of the conversations can be found at **Appendix 5**.

- 5.4 During all the visits members talked with:



- 5.5 The number who took part by sector:



- 5.6 As well as holding conversations, members took note of the schools' environment and culture of safeguarding and noted comments on the checklist. At the end of the visits members discussed their impressions and a table was completed which was on the same sheet as the checklist. See document at **Appendix 6**.

5.7 The welcome received from the schools and the open discussions which gave members an insight into how safeguarding arrangements are implemented in practice in schools were greatly appreciated.

5.8 The main findings arising from the visits under specific themes were:

Safeguarding

- A procedure for reporting safeguarding matters seemed to be on the staff's fingertips at all levels and clear recording arrangements with constant communication about this in the schools.
- Safeguarding arrangements in a special school are extremely important, but communication with each pupil is a challenge due to the nature of the needs – often a 'concern' or incident is shown in the children's behaviour rather than a specific disclosure.
- Staff across schools are aware that smaller issues that arise need to be recorded and kept in mind as a pattern could become obvious which might potentially lead to a safeguarding matter.
- Staff know how to respond to a disclosure by a pupil. In one primary school, some members of staff were found to have a vague understanding of the arrangements with Social Services.
- Arrangements in some schools where staff record the concern and go to the DSP, phone call or email to note that they have recorded a concern. When the matter is serious/there is a risk to the child, the understanding is to approach the DSP or a member of the school's Safeguarding Team.
- Staff generally receive feedback following reporting a safeguarding concern. The feedback ranges from knowing that the concern is being dealt with, to knowing the action that has been taken in response, to getting confirmation of the outcome.
- Safeguarding matters are discussed at weekly staff meetings. Robust arrangements in secondary schools with the Safeguarding Team discussing

concerns (new and continuing) and putting in place a plan in terms of action to be taken in response to the concern.

Matters under the safeguarding threshold

- More matters below the threshold are regularly arising in schools. These matters take up the time of the school/Headteacher as they need to be responded to (can be a challenge in small schools).
- Many employees/agencies are involved with welfare needs. It was noted that more joined up thinking is needed as the provision at present is fragmented.
- Frustration has been noted by 2 primary schools and 1 secondary school that the school receives guidance to speak to parents about matters below the threshold. It was noted that it is difficult when a parent does not want to know about the matter and that it can affect the relationship with the school.
- It was noted at one secondary school that it was easier for the school to make contact with the parents because the relationship already existed. It worked well with non-safeguarding matters.

Systems

- 9 schools had an electronic system to record concerns, 1 primary school had an electronic system and paper forms (scanning the forms into the system) and 1 primary school had a paper filing system.
- 8 schools use MyConcern including a secondary school that uses it and the Provision Map system as well. One secondary school uses Microsoft Forms and the other secondary school uses ClassChart and the 'Meetings Log' in the Provision Map system (both systems speak to each other).
- Different recording and tracking systems in schools can lead to shortcomings when sharing information easily about pupils/individuals moving from school to school.

Observations were noted in the secondary schools and the all-through school relating to pupils transferring from another school or council area. It was noted that the information was slow in reaching schools.

Reference was also made to the efficiency of transferring information from primary to secondary school. It was noted that due to different systems it was not possible to transfer the information automatically.

In addition, concerns were raised about securing information about children who remained pupils in a school in Gwynedd but had had to flee temporarily for their safety to another council. Getting up-to-date information about them was a challenge.

Training

- Safeguarding training will take place on the 'In Service Training (INSET)' day in early September, with all school staff in attendance (including assistants and support staff) in 8 schools.
- Safeguarding training will take place on INSET day in early September, with all school educational staff in attendance, and separate training will be held for support staff at the other three schools. It was stated in one school that there is an intention to change this for September 2025.
- 2 schools have specifically stated that they are holding a refresher of the training/reminding staff on INSET days during the year.
- Good practice for schools with more than one site – 2 people at each site have received level 2 training and are qualified to deal with safeguarding matters.
- A Designated Safeguarding Governor who had completed the level 2 training stated that the opportunity to work through different scenarios as part of the training would be beneficial and would enhance the training.
- School arrangements for training supply staff vary.

Governors

- Governors take the responsibility for safeguarding seriously and generally regularly challenge the Headteacher about safeguarding matters (and site safety) ensuring that the Headteacher acts on their recommendations.

- Governors are an important part of safeguarding arrangements. Reviews policies annually and keeps in mind that the policies need to be practical and help the Headteacher/Staff to fulfil their role.
- Matters relating to safeguarding are mentioned at each full meeting of the governing body. Safeguarding is a specific item on the agenda for some and others not.
- The pressure and responsibility of the role of Governors – a feeling of being 'out of their depth' with the expectations and responsibilities, bearing in mind that they are lay people. Even harder when receiving a complaint/dealing with a matter, and not really knowing where to turn if the allegation is about the Headteacher.
- Members of the governing body who have a background in areas relating to safeguarding and/or education are helpful and provide reassurance to the school and other governors when discussing safeguarding matters.
- Similarly, staff who are governors speak from experience and feed information to the governing body.
- Examples of Designated Safeguarding Governors discussing safeguarding matters one-to-one with the Headteacher.

Staff

- All staff take the responsibility seriously and point out that they are there for the children and that they are of utmost important. Stated that they would report immediately on any concern. While acknowledging that if it involved another member of staff or the Headteacher it would not be easy but the matter would have to be raised.
- At one school, it was noted that staff would discuss among themselves if they were unsure whether or not to report a concern. Room to ensure that the safeguarding training is absolutely clear that the matter should be referred to the DSP if there is any concern.
- Staff sometimes do not differentiate as to when they would contact the Education Safeguarding Team or the Referrals Team.

- Appointments in the schools following the Education Department's guidance including carrying out DBS checks and recording them.

Parents

- Communication in relation to safeguarding matters varies from school to school.
- The secondary schools refer to a safeguarding questionnaire being sent to parents. An opportunity to note if their child feels safe at school, any concerns and if they are satisfied with how the school has responded to concerns.

Pupils

- Pupils are given regular opportunities e.g. through 'welfare Mondays', services, discussing healthy relationships including appropriate and inappropriate touching, reminders by teachers etc. so that they are aware of the need to report safeguarding matters and know where to turn.
- Other agencies such as NSPCC, Police come into the schools.
- Good practice – a school has sent a questionnaire to the pupils to ask them if they know where and to whom to turn in a safeguarding case.
- Posters set out who pupils can turn to but they are also made aware that they can go to other staff as well.

Attendance

- A process to check absences and attendance tracking arrangements in each school.

Visual/Building Matters

- Safeguarding posters have been seen at an accurate and appropriate level for the children with the language being simple and appropriate and including photos, and different posters for staff with more details in five primary schools and the special school. As for the special school, it is difficult to get posters that are suitable for every pupil.

- It was found that although safeguarding information is displayed in the schools, it is not on all occasions at the eye level of the youngest pupils.
- Information posters about the designated safeguarding persons, contact details of the Education Safeguarding Team and Referrals Team as well as the Chair of Governors in each school.
- All schools include photos of the school's designated safeguarding persons except for one school. The school had been including photos in the past but had been instructed to remove the photos from the poster. A recent template received from the Education Department with a place to put photos but decided not to.
- Examples of safeguarding walls in primary schools with input from pupils e.g. pupils created posters stating who can help them, information about rights, NSPCC information.
- Examples of boxes were seen such as 'worry monster' where pupils could write on a piece of paper their name and what is worrying them, talking boxes in class for pupils to give a note if they want to raise a concern/talk, a post box outside the Hafan "I would like my teacher to know".
- All schools except one primary school with sign-in and sign-out arrangements. Be it an electronic system or a paper system.
- Visitor badges are provided by most schools. One primary school does not provide them and one secondary school has arranged for visitors linked with the Council to use their official identification badges.
- Arrangement to control access through doors with the use of a 'fob' in most schools. One secondary school has strengthened its arrangements of access through reception by using a keypad to a 'fob' following an audit by an officer from the Education Safeguarding Team.
- Access for learners in secondary schools is not through reception, access through different doors which open at the start of the day and close before

being re-opened at the end of the day. An additional access gate to the site will be opened and closed in the same manner.

- The schools' environment in terms of site boundary security is standard with the schools needing to strengthen any weaknesses in the fencing around the site are aware of this and addressing the matter.
- Arrangements in place by the schools to check the condition of the site and address health and safety matters.

Contact with the Education Department

- All schools were aware that they can contact the Education Safeguarding Team for guidance on matters below the threshold, except for one primary school.
- Schools collaborate with Education Welfare Officers who provide support for families.
- One secondary school reported that support had improved following the establishment of the Education Safeguarding Team. It was also noted that there are more officers and that it is easier to get hold of them to receive advice and guidance.
- It was commented at one secondary school that the Safeguarding Team's visits were extremely beneficial.

Contact with the Children and Supporting Families Department

- Happy to ask for the help of the Referrals Team, feel better getting another opinion on the way forward. Working together, pick up the phone and they answer immediately. Usually the response is quite quick.
- Receive timely response from the Referrals Team. It was noted that it felt like a long time to wait when a safeguarding matter arises, the school prioritises the matter, but understands that the system is a decision within 24 hours. When the matter is a higher level concern, there was no instance of a

situation where a response had not been received before the schools' closing time.

- It was noted in some schools that there is room to improve communication about 'below the threshold' matters so that the school can support the pupil appropriately.
- Some examples of disagreement over the way forward between schools and the Children and Supporting Families Department. The schools consider that the support for the pupil/family needs to be continued for a longer period.
- Some schools feel they are starting to investigate safeguarding matters by having to go back to the family 3 to 4 times to ask further questions following guidance from Social Services.

6. Pupils' Voice

- 6.1** At the first meeting of the investigation, the need to consider how pupils' voice can be included in the work of the investigation was recognised.
- 6.2** During the subsequent discussions on how best to hear pupils' voices, the sensitivity of the situation and the need for professional officers to undertake this work were emphasised as they have the necessary training and qualifications and experience of carrying out participation work with children and young people on sensitive topics.
- 6.3** A provider was identified to complete the work and members of the investigation reached a conclusion on the best option to hear pupils' voices but unfortunately it was not possible to proceed to work with them as they felt it was necessary to go further than what had been agreed.
- 6.4** The schedule for conducting the pupils' voice work slipped as a result. The scrutiny investigation would undoubtedly have the greatest possible impact on improving safeguarding arrangements through undertaking rigorous and comprehensive work, making recommendations that have been formulated with due regard to the voice of pupils.
- 6.5** The process of appointing a provider was resumed and the investigation was fortunate to appoint a provider to complete the work within an extremely challenging timeframe.
- 6.6** The work on behalf of the investigation was completed by Dr Ceryl Teleri Davies, CTD Social Care and Research Consultancy Limited.
- 6.7** Focus groups were held in May 2026 with 57 children and young people from primary and secondary schools, including members of the Gwynedd Youth Forum.

Primary

4 Focus Groups - Years 3 to 6

26 pupils

Secondary

4 Focus Groups – Years 7 to 9

31 pupils

6.8 The purpose of the work was to examine pupils' understanding of safeguarding arrangements in schools, in particular:

- How children and young people would raise concerns;
- Who they would turn to for help or assistance;
- How they know who to contact within the school;
- Do they feel safe, and have someone listen to them and support them within the school environment.

6.9 Due to the timetable and commitments of the exam period, it was not possible to include the voices of pupils in years 10 – 13. It is recognised that it would have been extremely valuable to include them in this work but taking into account various factors, it was concluded that the report and recommendations of the scrutiny investigation should be published so that timely action can be taken.

6.10 The main overall findings of the work were:

Experience of safeguarding through relationships and school culture

Reliable adults and emotional safety are central themes

See that there is a strong link between welfare, fairness and belonging and feeling safe

Pupils appreciate staff who are approachable and who respond to emotions

6.11 8 recommendations stemmed from this work:

Recommendation 1 - Continue to strengthen relationship-based safeguarding practices

Strengthen relationship-based safeguarding and have trusted adults on hand.

Recommendation 2 - Improve clarity around safeguarding routes and access to support.

Improve communication regarding confidentiality, referral routes and follow-up support.

Recommendation 3 - Continue to strengthen welfare spaces and pastoral support

Maintain and develop the welfare spaces and the early emotional support available.

Recommendation 4 - Continue to develop age-appropriate safeguarding education

Provide education on safeguarding that is relevant to current matters, which is practical and involves discussion.

Recommendation 5 - Strengthen pupils' voice and involvement in safeguarding

Incorporate the pupils' voice into processes to review the safeguarding and improvement of schools.

Recommendation 6 - Review behaviour systems

Strengthen equity, consistency and communication within behavioural systems.

Recommendation 7 - Strengthen support around peer safeguarding

Provide clearer guidance on peer support, boundaries and asking for support.

Recommendation 8 - Regularly review safeguarding arrangements

Continue to carry out regular safeguarding reviews that include pupils' voice across all age groups.

6.12 All but one of the recommendations are incorporated into the recommendations of the scrutiny investigation, namely recommendation 6.

6.13 It was decided that while there is a relationship between behaviour and safeguarding, the recommendation for schools to review behavioural systems goes beyond the brief of the scrutiny investigation. It is believed that it is a matter for the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee to consider when scrutinising the item 'Attendance, behaviour and attainment of pupils in Gwynedd schools'.

6.14 A copy of the presentation on the pupils' voice work can be found at **Appendix 7**.

7. The evidence considered

7.1 The Scrutiny Investigation Group considered evidence:

- By receiving a **presentation by the Legal Services Manager on the legal context and a presentation by the Safeguarding and Well-being Quality Lead on safeguarding arrangements in schools.**
- By receiving **information about good practice** by experts in the field.
- By **addressing data, child protection policies and contextual information** along with **the Estyn inspection reports and a summary of responses to the 2023/24 annual safeguarding questionnaire** of the schools in the sample.
- By **receiving a written response** from the schools to questions sent in advance.
- **Visiting the 11 schools in the sample and holding conversations** with the following:

Headteachers, Designated Safeguarding Persons (DSPs), Designated Safeguarding Deputies, Teachers, Support Staff along with Chairs and Designated Safeguarding Governors.
- **Holding 11 meetings** of the investigation and discussion with officials from the Education, Children and Supporting Families and Corporate Services Departments.
- Commissioning a provider to complete **work to hear pupils' voices** and consider the findings and recommendations arising from the work.

8. Recommendations and Rationale

8.1 This part of the report contains the recommendations of the scrutiny investigation. All recommendations were given intensive consideration to ensure that they captured all the evidence gathered during the investigation.

8.2 Members of the investigation wish to highlight a principle which is of paramount importance and core to ensuring that there is an open and comprehensive safeguarding culture –

Acting on any safeguarding concern is a moral and legal responsibility on all individuals regardless of their role. Great consideration must be given to safeguarding at all times in any work and any development.

8.3 The recommendations are set under specific themes. They are not listed in order of priority. It is believed that the recommendations as a whole will lead to further strengthening safeguarding arrangements in schools.

8.4 Staff and Governor Training

Recommendation 1 - That training at the appropriate level should be held annually for all staff and governors and that the number of staff in schools completing the higher level training should be increased.

This recommendation applies to teaching staff, catering and cleaning staff, supply staff and Governors.

An example of good practice was seen in the all-through school where 2 people at each site are qualified to deal with matters following the completion of level 2 training. In addition, good practice was noted in relation to the intention of increasing the number in the secondary school Safeguarding Team and also giving consideration to year heads doing safeguarding training to the same level as the safeguarding team.

The resilience of safeguarding arrangements in schools would be strengthened as a result of more staff completing training at a higher level.

As part of the consideration of this recommendation, the need to strengthen safeguarding arrangements is highlighted to ensure that supply/casual teachers have received safeguarding training and are aware of safeguarding arrangements in each school. Good practice has been noted in some schools that the school (Headteacher) goes through the safeguarding procedure before the teacher goes on the classroom floor. Consideration should be given to whether the Education Department should be taking responsibility for ensuring that all/any supply teacher has received the appropriate training and has received a check from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

During a visit to one school, a request to have level 2 training updated for Governors more frequently was noted as this would assist in keeping the requirements at the forefront of their minds.

A Designated Safeguarding Governor who had completed the level 2 training stated that the opportunity to work through different scenarios as part of the training would be beneficial and would enhance the training.

It is welcomed that there are three specific areas of training on grooming), the matters of Part 5 of Safeguarding Procedures Wales (safeguarding allegations/concerns about practitioners and those in positions of trust), and whistleblowing arrangements for teachers and the Social Services workforce.

Members of the investigation are aware that the Human Resources Advisory Service is currently looking at designating specific safeguarding training levels for jobs following the guidance of Social Care Wales. This will ensure that staff are trained to the appropriate level on safeguarding. School staff are required to be involved in the work to ensure that an appropriate level of training is available to all members of staff.

Recommendation 2 - That the Education Department adapt its training slides to include one specific slide at the start of the training which includes specific contact phone numbers and email addresses so that staff can print them and keep them safe.

It is believed that highlighting important information on a single slide so that it is easily available to staff will enable them to act without delay. Names and telephone

numbers for contacting the Education Safeguarding and Well-being Team, the Referrals Team along with out of hours contact information should be included.

Recommendation 3 - The safeguarding training should be even clearer, in that staff should refer any concern to the Designated Safeguarding Person or Deputy Safeguarding Person immediately and not investigate or make the decision for themselves whether the matter reaches the threshold. Staff should be reminded of this continually.

During the investigation there were discussions about the need for the safeguarding training to include the necessary information in a clear and easy to understand manner.

At one school, it was noted that staff would discuss among themselves if they were unsure whether or not to report a concern. It needs to be ensured that the safeguarding training is absolutely clear that any matter should be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP) or the Deputy Safeguarding Person if there is any concern.

The training should also explain the action to be taken when the DSP is not available, when there is an immediate risk, when the DSP has not acted, or when the concern relates to the DSP, the Head or another member of staff.

Clearly highlighting in the safeguarding training that all members of staff should record and refer any concern to the Designated Safeguarding Person or Deputy Safeguarding Person immediately and not investigate or make the decision for themselves of whether a matter reaches the threshold, would result in decisive action. Staff should be reminded of this continually.

Recommendation 4 - The Education Department should ensure that all Governing bodies are aware of the specific action to be taken when there is a safeguarding complaint against the Headteacher and the support available to them, ensuring appropriate and adequate support for the Governors in such cases.

One matter that arose when discussing with Governors was the pressure and responsibility of the role of Governors. A feeling of being 'out of their depth' with the

expectations and responsibilities, bearing in mind that they are lay people, was noted. The situation is even more difficult when receiving a complaint/dealing with a safeguarding matter. Comments were noted that Governors did not really know where to turn if the allegation is about the Headteacher.

The evidence gathered from the visits shows that Governors are firm in the safeguarding arrangements but are mostly dependent on the Headteacher. Consideration should be given to the support available to Governors by the Council when a situation arises about a safeguarding complaint against the Headteacher. It is also essential that the Chairs of School Governing Bodies are aware that appropriate support is available to them in order to equip them to respond to such a situation.

8.4 Pupils' Understanding

Recommendation 5 - That there is a need to continue to develop age and ability appropriate safeguarding education that reflects current issues affecting children and young people.

Age and ability appropriate safeguarding education is essential to maximise pupils' understanding of safeguarding matters.

Schools should provide safeguarding education in conjunction with external agencies that reflect current issues affecting young people, including, online harm, relationships, vaping, peer pressure, emotional well-being, consent and healthy relationships.

In the pupils' voice focus groups, pupils particularly emphasised the importance of practical and discussion-based safeguarding education. Interactive methods, videos and discussion sessions seemed particularly effective.

Continuing to develop age and ability appropriate safeguarding education using interactive approaches would lead to improved pupils' understanding of safeguarding matters.

Recommendation 6 - All schools should formalise the arrangements of sending a regular questionnaire to pupils to ask them whether they know where and to whom to turn in a safeguarding case.

Formalising the arrangements for sending a questionnaire to pupils would be a means of checking pupils' understanding of where and to whom to turn in a safeguarding case.

It was noted at the all-through school visit that a questionnaire was sent to the pupils to ask them if they knew where and to whom to turn in a safeguarding case.

This arrangement should be formalised so that it is a regular method of ascertaining pupils' understanding of safeguarding arrangements.

Recommendation 7 – Schools should communicate clearly, and in an age and ability appropriate manner, with pupils about confidentiality, safeguarding processes, referral routes, follow-up support and access to specialist well-being services.

The pupils' voice work shows that while pupils generally understand where to get support, primary and secondary pupils described uncertainty about what happens after concerns were raised. Some pupils were also unsure about how to access certain services, including school nursing and counselling services.

Pupils were keen to have clearer information about confidentiality, referral routes for support and the follow-up support available.

The clarity should include clear explanations of safeguarding procedures, visual flowcharts, school services, posters and regular reminders to help pupils feel informed and have peace of mind when accessing support.

8.5 Support for pupils

Recommendation 8 – Schools should continue to invest in safe well-being spaces that pupils can use flexibly and without stigma, alongside visible pastoral support that promotes emotional well-being and early intervention.

Well-being spaces such as "Hafan" and "Noddfa" were seen as very positively by pupils and appeared to be important sources of preventative emotional support.

In the primary age focus groups, pupils regularly referred to trusted adults, teachers, the Hafan, posters, concerns boxes, sharing boxes and "worry monsters" as ways to raise concerns. Children appreciated these methods because they offered privacy,

choice and flexibility, especially for pupils who might feel embarrassed or anxious about speaking out. Many pupils explained that writing down concerns can feel easier because "not everyone has to know."

In the secondary age focus groups, pupils saw these spaces as preventative support rather than just crisis interventions. Young people repeatedly emphasised that each pupil may need emotional support at different times and concern was expressed that access to support should not be restricted or stigmatised.

Continuing to invest in the well-being spaces and pastoral support in schools will increase pupils' trust and their willingness to raise any concerns.

Recommendation 9 – Schools should continue to strengthen relationship-based safeguarding approaches, ensuring that all pupils have access to trusted adults who are visible, approachable and responsive to their needs

Across primary and secondary schools, pupils consistently valued approachable, caring and fair adults, sources of visual support and an environment where they felt they were being listened to, respected and included.

The findings of the pupils' voice work highlighted that children and young people experience safeguarding primarily through everyday relationships and interactions with adults.

Staff training should continue to reinforce the importance of relational support across all roles in the school, not just within designated safeguarding teams.

Continuing to strengthen relationship-based safeguarding approaches and ensuring that all pupils have access to trusted adults will strengthen pupils' sense of being able to talk openly with staff about anything that is troubling them. An open and inclusive culture is extremely important to ensure that safeguarding arrangements are implemented effectively.

Recommendation 10 - Schools should, where appropriate, continue to strengthen methods of peer support and provide clearer guidance around confidentiality, boundaries and when support from eligible adults is needed.

In the focus groups, pupils showed strong empathy and a willingness to support their peers, but some uncertainty remained about how to respond appropriately when friends disclosed concerns or worries.

Where appropriate, methods of peer support should continue to be strengthened. This could include peer mentoring, well-being ambassadors or structured discussions about appropriate support-seeking behaviours.

Clearer guidance should be provided around confidentiality, boundaries and when support from eligible adults is needed so that pupils are clear of the need to receive support from eligible adults in safeguarding cases.

8.6 Pupils' Voice

Recommendation 11 - Schools should strengthen mechanisms of listening to pupils' voice when developing and monitoring safeguarding arrangements through methods such as school councils, well-being groups, pupil surveys and regular consultation exercises.

It was seen from the focus groups that children and young people valued opportunities to influence the development of safeguarding arrangements.

Safeguarding should be an item to be discussed at School Council meetings and other meetings ensuring that the item is age and ability appropriate.

The use of various other methods such as pupil surveys and regular consultation exercises would also ensure that pupils' voice is at the heart of the development and strengthening of safeguarding arrangements in schools. Special attention should be paid to ensuring that pupils understand how their views contribute to change and improvement within schools.

8.7 Review of Safeguarding Arrangements

Recommendation 12 - Schools and the Education Department should continue to undertake regular reviews of safeguarding arrangements in schools that include the voices of children and young people of all ages and abilities.

Regular reviews of safeguarding arrangements that actively involve the voices of children and young people should be carried out as part of quality assurance and continuous service improvement arrangements.

Future reviews should include pupils from all age groups, including Years 10 -13, as their views were not included in the pupils' voice work due to exam commitments. This will strengthen understanding of safeguarding needs across the entire educational age range.

Alongside this, there is a need to develop a way to measure the impact of changes to systems and to measure and evaluate the safeguarding arrangements in a school. Schools referred to the Safeguarding Arrangements Audit which are carried out by the Education Safeguarding and Well-being Team. Appreciation of the audit was noted and it was considered to be extremely valuable in responding to the audit's findings in order to strengthen safeguarding arrangements in the schools. The need to review changes to safeguarding arrangements in schools is emphasised, learning lessons and adapting to further improve arrangements. Creating specific performance measures to enable progress to be made and the evaluation of arrangements would be a positive addition.

Recommendation 13 - Schools and the Education Department should monitor any risk patterns and learn lessons as part of the regular safeguarding monitoring. It should be ensured that the lessons learned are shared across schools and relevant services.

Each school's management teams, staff meetings and Governing body should be continually monitoring safeguarding and setting out a robust structure to be doing this (e.g. a specific item on a meeting agenda).

Members of the investigation heard about examples of good practice in the school visits. For example, safeguarding matters are discussed at weekly staff meetings. It was noted that there are robust arrangements in secondary schools with the Safeguarding Team discussing concerns (new and ongoing) and putting in place a plan in terms of action to be taken in response to the concern.

With regard to Governors, it was noted that matters relating to safeguarding were addressed at all full meetings of the governing body. Safeguarding is a specific item on the agenda for some and others not.

Safeguarding should be a specific item on the agendas of school management team meetings, staff meetings and governing body meetings regularly. Any risk patterns should be monitored and lessons learned.

Governors should receive information on trends, information on the number of Part 5 referrals, Safeguarding Procedures Wales (an individual's suitability to work with children) and information on the lessons learned.

Particular attention should be paid to identifying concerns that recur or appear minor on their own but which, together, can indicate a significant risk.

There is also a role for the Education Department to monitor patterns and learn lessons giving an overview and consider themes of matters arising in the schools. It should be ensured that the lessons learned are shared across schools and relevant services.

8.9 Information Sharing, Recording of Safeguarding Matters and Systems

Recommendation 14 - All schools in Gwynedd should be operating on the recording system (Bromcom) which is funded by the Education Department to record safeguarding matters about a child. It must be ensured that the information is fed into the system by default and that necessary information is shared easily and in a timely manner with relevant professional officers (including Social Services).

At the time of the visits to the sample schools, 9 schools had an electronic system to record concerns, 1 primary school had an electronic system and paper forms (scanning the forms into the system) and 1 primary school had a paper filing system.

8 schools used *MyConcern* including a high school that uses it and the system *Provision Map* as well. One high school uses Microsoft Forms and the other high school uses ClassChart and the 'Meetings Log' in the *Provision Map* system (the two systems talk to each other).

A single system that facilitates the easy sharing of information with relevant professionals would improve the efficiency of safeguarding arrangements. All schools in Gwynedd should be operating on the recording system (Bromcom) which is funded by the Education Department to record safeguarding matters about a child.

It is noted that it must be ensured that the information is fed into the system by default and that necessary information is shared easily and in a timely manner with relevant professional officers (including Social Services).

The importance of ensuring that the chronology of events is recorded, as well as the rationale for decisions, is emphasised.

Recommendation 15 - That one core electronic information form be developed, which extracts information from all systems in order to share necessary information between schools in a timely manner.

Observations were noted in the secondary schools and the all-through school relating to pupils transferring from another school or council area. It was noted that the information was slow in reaching schools. Reference was also made to the efficiency of transferring information from primary to secondary school. It was noted that due to different systems it was not possible to transfer the information automatically.

In addition, concerns were raised about securing information about children who remained pupils in a school in Gwynedd but had had to flee temporarily for their safety to another council. Getting up-to-date information about them was a challenge.

Given examples where a pupil moves from one county to another, including outside Wales as well. With the responsibility to secure information about a transferring individual/child falling on the school to ask other schools/councils for the information.

The Council should consult with neighbouring councils and come to an agreement on when and why information is shared. The discussions should include the North Wales counties as well as Ceredigion and Powys.

The work of the investigation highlights the importance of working together across borders to ensure robust safeguarding arrangements.

This recommendation is based on good practice from Ceredigion, where 1 electronic information form has been developed.

Recommendation 16 - Call on the Welsh Government to fund a single system for all schools in Wales to ensure that information about safeguarding matters is passed on easily with children and young people as they move from school to school.

Members of the investigation recognise that each individual school has a right to purchase a system of their choice. However, it is believed that the Welsh Government should be called upon to fund a single system for all schools in Wales.

Investing in the BromCom system across Wales would facilitate the transfer of information when children and young people move from school to school.

It is noted that the Northern Ireland Government has funded this system for all schools in Northern Ireland.

The use of a single system nationally would strengthen safeguarding arrangements in schools and ensure that information about safeguarding matters is easily transferred with children and young people as they move from school to school.

Recommendation 17 - Call on the Welsh Government to develop a formal system to record and monitor patterns of suspicious behaviour, which do not meet the referral threshold, so that Social Services can consider an individual's suitability to work with children.

Members of the investigation discussed with officers from the Children and Supporting Families Department in relation to a scenario where a complaint was made about the same individual (adult) repeatedly even though the case did not meet the threshold. It was explained that if there was a complaint about an individual in a position of trust, a record would be kept, with challenge taking place on all referrals reaching the Referrals Team before a decision is reached. If there is no further action or the employer was dealing with the matter, then a record would be made about the adult on the Wales Community Care Information System (WCCIS). Consideration could be given to whether a pattern arises at that time.

Formalising arrangements to record and monitor patterns of suspicious behaviour, which do not meet the referral threshold for monitoring patterns at a national level, so that Social Services can consider an individual's suitability to work with children,

would strengthen safeguarding arrangements and reduce risk. This would lead to consideration of an individual's suitability to work with children in a meaningful and informed way.

8.10 Increasing Parents' Understanding and include them in Safeguarding Arrangements

Recommendation 18 - That the Education Department develop a consistent procedure regarding how schools can explain safeguarding processes to parents and how to include them in safeguarding arrangements.

Developing a consistent procedure regarding how schools can explain safeguarding processes to parents and how to include them in safeguarding arrangements would be extremely valuable in ensuring that parents have faith in safeguarding arrangements in schools and feel part of the process.

During the visits to the schools it was found that communication in relation to safeguarding matters varied from school to school. Information included in the school handbook, school website, safeguarding policy, newsletters, e-mails, social media messages and informing of any additional support e.g. supporting families.

Schools and the Education Department should ensure that Safeguarding Policies and Complaints along with the school Handbook are on the schools' websites.

There is room to improve and develop communication with parents across the county. The secondary schools referred to a safeguarding questionnaire being sent to parents. It was an opportunity to note if their child feels safe at school, any concerns and if they are satisfied with how the school has responded to concerns.

One primary school reported inviting parents to the school once a year to discuss the importance of safeguarding matters e.g. internet safety etc. using up-to-date information e.g. using the film 'Adolescence'. This could be something for schools to consider doing if practical, depending on the size of the school.

One secondary school noted that they had identified that engaging with parents was something that may need to be developed. It was noted that it was intended to look at improving the school's website by putting more safeguarding information there

and putting a 'Report a problem' button for safeguarding matters as was already available for bullying.

There is a need to explain to parents how the safeguarding processes work and what the rights of children and parents are within those processes, conveying the message in a way that is easy to understand.

8.11 Visibility of Safeguarding Information in schools

Recommendation 19 - That all schools adapt their lanyards for staff, to include (on the back) the information necessary for contacting the Referrals Team and the telephone number of the Designated Safeguarding Person so that it is easy for staff to obtain the relevant telephone numbers immediately.

Examples from schools included the information necessary for contacting the Referrals Team and the Designated Safeguarding Person's telephone number on the back of staff and/or visitors' ID cards.

Doing this is good practice as it makes it easy for staff to get the relevant phone numbers straight away. It is recommended that all schools in Gwynedd adapt their lanyards for staff in the same way.

Recommendation 20 - That all schools produce clear and age and ability appropriate posters, displaying photographs of the Designated Safeguarding Person and the Designated Safeguarding Governor, and place them in suitable places.

During the visits, safeguarding posters were seen at an accurate and appropriate level for the children with the language being simple and appropriate and including photos, and different posters for staff with more details in five primary schools and the special school. As for the special school, members of the investigation recognise it is difficult to get posters that are suitable for every pupil.

It was found that although safeguarding information is displayed in the schools, it is not on all occasions at the eye level of the youngest pupils.

All schools included photos of the school's designated safeguarding persons except for one secondary school. The school had been including photos in the past but had been instructed to remove the photos from the poster. A recent template received from the Education Department with a place to put photos but decided not to.

Support from the Education Department for schools in producing clear posters suitable for age and ability would be beneficial. Posters should include the photos of the Designated Safeguarding Person and the Designated Safeguarding Governor, and that they are located in suitable places. It is emphasised that posters need to be child friendly and accessible and suitable for pupils with Additional Learning Needs.

Recommendation 21 - That schools create a dedicated space to display safeguarding information with input from pupils including placing a box where pupils can raise a concern.

Members of the investigation saw examples of safeguarding walls in primary schools with input from pupils e.g. pupils created posters stating who can help them, information about rights, NSPCC information.

Examples were seen of boxes such as '*worry monster*' where pupils could write on a piece of paper their name and what is worrying them, talking boxes in class for pupils to give a note if they want to raise a concern/talk, a post box outside the Hafan "I would like my teacher to know".

The pupils' voice work has shown that pupils value the use of boxes to raise concerns. A dedicated space to display safeguarding information and placing a box where pupils can raise a concern in each school would ensure that pupils get specific input and have the opportunity to state a concern on paper if they are not comfortable enough to raise the issue verbally.

8.12 School Governing Bodies and Accountability of School Headteachers

Recommendation 22 - To recommend to the Welsh Government that there is a need to review the role of School Governing Bodies, and the line management (accountability) of School Headteachers.

In October 2025, Lynne Neagle MP, Cabinet Secretary for Education, announced that the Welsh Government was undertaking a review of school governing bodies in Wales. A reference group representative of the schools sector was established to steer the review. The aim was to present the practical options arising from this work to Ministers within a year.³

Following the Senedd Election held on 7 May 2026, a new Government is in power. Given the evidence considered as part of the scrutiny investigation and the pressure and responsibility on lay governors, it is believed that the need to review the role of the Schools Governing Body needs to be emphasised. It is also recommended that the line management (accountability) of School Headteachers including the relationship with the Education Department needs to be considered in order to ensure greater consistency of action across schools.

9. Conclusion

- 9.1** Members of the investigation greatly appreciate the time, honesty and commitment shown by all those who gave evidence during the investigation. The open discussions with staff, governors, officers and experts, along with direct input from children and young people, were key to creating this report. The investigation benefited from discussions which showed the implementation of safeguarding arrangements in schools.
- 9.2** The investigation concluded that there is already a lot of good practice in Gwynedd schools, with staff and governors showing a strong commitment to children's safety and welfare. At the same time, opportunities were identified to further strengthen arrangements by improving consistency, sharing information, developing training, supporting governors and identifying risk patterns early on. Members of the investigation hope that the recommendations will contribute to building on the culture seen in the schools where all concerns are taken seriously, continually learning and that all children know where to turn for help in order to ensure the highest possible standards of safeguarding.

³Welsh Government, *Written Statement: Review of school governing bodies* (October 2025) - <https://www.gov.wales/written-statement-review-school-governing-bodies>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Members of the Scrutiny Investigation wish to thank the following who contributed evidence and provided valuable support to the investigation:

- Bethan Adams (Scrutiny Advisor, Lead Officer for the Investigation, Corporate Support Department)
- Vera Jones (Democracy and Language Manager, Investigation Support Officer, Corporate Services Department)
- Dylan Owen (Corporate Director, Supporting Director for the Investigation, Leadership Team)
- E D Gareth Morgans (External Advisor)
- Councillor Dewi Jones (Cabinet Member for Education)
- Gwern ap Rhisiart (Head of Education)
- Llion Williams (Safeguarding and Well-being Lead, Education Department)
- Bethan Helen Jones (Education Safeguarding and Well-being Officer, Education Department)
- Sharron Williams Carter (Head of Children and Supporting Families Department)
- Eiliw Haf Hughes (Assistant Head of Safeguarding and Quality, Children and Supporting Families Department)
- Suzanne Gwyn (Referrals Officer, Children and Supporting Families Department)
- Nia Grisdale (Legal Services Manager, Leadership Team)
- Tony Bate (Assistant Director, Estyn)
- Headteachers, Designated Safeguarding Persons (DSPs), Designated Safeguarding Deputies, Teachers, Support Staff along with Chairs and Designated Safeguarding Governors of the schools in the sample
- Dr Ceryl Teleri Davies, CTD Social Care and Research Consultancy Limited
- Daniel Llŷr Roberts (Engagement and Communications Co-ordinator, Youth Service, Education Department)
- The Primary and Secondary pupils and members of the Schools Youth Forum who took part in the focus groups.
- Ian Jones (Head of Corporate Services)
- Sandra Elizabeth Evans (Human Resources Advisory Team Leader)

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Scrutiny Investigation Brief

Appendix 2 – Safeguarding Roles/Responsibilities in Schools

Appendix 3 - Schools Context Template

Appendix 4 – Pre-visit questions

Appendix 5 – Questions asked at the visits

Appendix 6 – Checklist - Schools' Safeguarding Environment and Culture

Appendix 7 - Presentation on the Pupils' Voice Work

SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION'S BRIEF – SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS IN SCHOOLS

A	<p><u>What matter is being considered?</u></p> <p>The item 'Safeguarding Arrangements in Schools' was added as an additional item to the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee's annual work programme after the annual workshop at the request of scrutiny members.</p> <p>The arrangements were scrutinised at the Committee's meeting on 18 July 2024. There was an informal discussion after the meeting as to the possibility of holding a Task and Finish Group or Scrutiny Investigation into the field. It was concluded that further discussion should take place at the Committee's informal meeting on 5 September 2024 where concern was expressed by members present about the implementation of the safeguarding arrangements within our schools.</p> <p>The Cabinet has approved and adopted a 'Response to Offending Plan' at its meeting on 21 January 2025, which includes investigations and further work to ensure safeguarding arrangements, among other objectives. The response plan looks broadly at a number of different areas, and the scrutiny investigation – safeguarding arrangements in schools is included as one of the work streams in the Plan. The investigation will look at current safeguarding arrangements in schools.</p> <p>Additionally, following positive discussions between the Children's Commissioner, officers and Cabinet Members in November, and a further meeting between the Chief Executive and the Commissioner on the 9th of December, the Commissioner was invited to contribute to the Response Plan with an offer for her officials to be part of the process to monitor progress on the various work streams. This discussion continues with very positive dialogue.</p>
B	<p><u>Aim of the Investigation</u></p> <p>The main question to address is:</p> <p>'Are the safeguarding arrangements in the county's schools appropriate and implemented consistently?'</p> <p>It is intended to do this by asking the following key questions:</p> <p><u>Research and establish facts:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the requirements including guidance in newsletters and guidelines on 'safeguarding requirements' in schools? <i>(Legal Services)</i> • What are the safeguarding arrangements for schools in Gwynedd? <i>(Council's internal experts in safeguarding, Education Department regarding safeguarding policies)</i> • How does the collaboration between schools/the Education Department and the Children Department work? <i>(Internal council experts – Education Department and Children and Supporting Families Department + responses of questionnaire to schools)</i> • What are the findings/views of Estyn (the regulators in the field) on arrangements in Gwynedd schools? <i>(Authority's arrangements)</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there examples of good practice nationally, and what would top-quality safeguarding arrangements look like in schools? (i.e. how could good arrangements be ensured). • What do the schools say about their safeguarding arrangements and the support by the authority - are there specific themes? (<i>results of the annual questionnaire from schools</i>) <p><u>Sample of schools</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do the arrangements work in practice in the schools? <p>Focus on the following specific schools: 6 primary schools (of the 78) 3 secondary schools (of the 12) 1 all-through school (of the two) 1 special school (of the two)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the findings/views of Estyn (the regulators in the field) on arrangements in Gwynedd schools? (<i>the arrangements of the schools from the sample</i>) • What do the schools themselves say about their safeguarding arrangements? - (<i>schools' annual questionnaire on safeguarding</i>) <p><u>Visits:</u></p> <p>Talk to Governors (including the designated safeguarding Governor), Head and Staff (including the designated Safeguarding Officer) in each setting.</p>
C	<p><u>Background</u></p> <p>Background documentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wales Safeguarding Procedures 2020 - Supplementary guidance for inspecting Safeguarding by Estyn - Estyn Report 2023 - about the authority - Cyngor Gwynedd's Safeguarding Policy - Safeguarding Strategic Panel and Operational Safeguarding Group's Terms of Reference - Safeguarding Children in Gwynedd Schools Model Policy - Reports/Safeguarding Policies for schools visited - Latest reports from Estyn - Annual questionnaire 'schools safeguarding'
CH	<p><u>Gathering Evidence</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - External expert in the field - The Council's Internal Experts in the field <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Safeguarding officers (Statutory Director of Social Services, Head of Children and Supporting Families Department, Referral Team (Children Department), Assistant Head of Safeguarding and Quality - Children Department; Safeguarding and Wellbeing Quality Leader, Education Protection and Wellbeing Officer - Education Department) o Head of Education Department o Legal Services

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In 11 schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Governors (Responsible/designated governors for safeguarding) o Head o Staff member with designated safeguarding responsibility within the school o Staff 		
D	<u>Analysis</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Weigh up the evidence gathered from those interviewed - Consider research information and background information 		
DD	<u>Writing the Report</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Note main findings supported by evidence - Note the recommendations - Discuss and agree upon the draft Report with leaders of the work within the Council - Submit the Final Draft Report to the Scrutiny Committee for observations and endorsement - Publish the Final Report 		
E	<u>Action Plan</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cabinet/Cabinet Member/Education Department to produce an action plan in response to the recommendations - Invite the Cabinet Member for Education and officers to discuss the action plan jointly with the Scrutineers 		
F	<u>Track Progress</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An update to enable the scrutineers to assess progress. 		
FF	<u>TIMETABLE</u>		
	What	Lead	Date
1	Adopt the Brief	Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee	13 February 2025
2	The Investigation Members' First Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Context – Cabinet Member for Education, Head of Education Department, Corporate Director of Social Services and the Legal Service - Consider how to hear pupils' voices as part of the investigation 	Investigation Members and Lead Officer	10 March 2025
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meeting to consider safeguarding arrangements in schools and the Authority's arrangements - Select schools to include in the sample 	Investigation Members and Lead Officer	17 March 2025
4	Meeting to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Views of Estyn on the Authority's arrangements - Good practice - School responses to questions about safeguarding in the annual questionnaire from the Authority 	Investigation Members and Lead Officer	31 March 2025

5	Consider reports/information about the schools in the sample and formulate questions for them	Investigation Members and Lead Officer	7 April 2025
6	Visit the schools (11 schools)	Investigation Members and Lead Officer	May / June / July 2025
7	Meeting to discuss initial impressions following the visits	Investigation Members and Lead Officer	22 July 2025
8	A meeting to discuss the visits	Investigation Members and Lead Officer	10 September 2025
9	Discussion with officers from the Children and Supporting Families Department	Investigation Members and Lead Officer	28 November 2025
10	Discussion with officers from the Corporate Services Department	Investigation Members and Lead Officer	2 March 2026
11	Appoint provider to undertake pupils' voice work	Investigation Members and Lead Officer	April 2026
12	Discussion with officers from the Education Department	Investigation Members and Lead Officer	23 April 2026
13	Pupils' voice work presentation	Dr Ceryl Teleri Davies	8 June 2026
14	Meeting to consider pupils' voice work and draft recommendations	Investigation Members and Lead Officer	10 June 2026
15	Analysis and Draft Report	Investigation Members and Lead Officer	June 2026
16	Final Draft Report - Meeting to share the scrutiny investigation's final draft report with the Cabinet Member for Education and the Head of Education Department along with the Cabinet Member for Children and Supporting Families and the Head of Children and Supporting Families Department	Investigation Members Lead Officer Corporate Director	1 July 2026
17	Submission of the draft report to the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee	Chair of the investigation	14 July 2026

RESPONSIBILITIES OF VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS IN RELATION TO SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Summary

The key to effective safeguarding in a school is clear communication, defined responsibilities, and ongoing training for all staff. Each individual within the school community plays a role in identifying and reporting potential risks to children's safety and well-being, contributing to a safer environment for learners.

Safeguarding children and young people in schools is a priority, and there are various roles with specific responsibilities to ensure they are protected. These roles are influenced by national guidelines, such as the **Social Services and Well-being Act (Wales) 2014**, and local safeguarding procedures.

Below is a list of roles within a school environment, and their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding children and young people:

Role	Responsibilities
Headteacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall responsibility for the safety and well-being of all learners and staff. • Complete the necessary safeguarding training. • Maintain professional boundaries with learners, and avoid any situations that could lead to potential harm. • Ensure that safeguarding policies are in place and that staff receive training. • Promote a culture of safeguarding and inclusion throughout the school. • Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements. • Maintain confidentiality and support the safeguarding process. • Ensure appropriate recruitment and DBS checks for all staff. • Ensure that the curriculum includes education on safeguarding and raising awareness of safeguarding. • Ensure that all staff receive appropriate safeguarding training.
The Designated Safeguarding Person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead responsibility for safeguarding in the school. • Complete the necessary safeguarding training. • Ensure that the school's safeguarding policies are followed and that staff are trained. • Maintain professional boundaries with learners, and avoid any situations that could lead to potential harm. • Act as the main point of contact for safeguarding concerns. • Make referrals to external agencies such as Social Services as necessary and maintain records. • Maintain confidentiality and support the safeguarding process. • Keep accurate records of safeguarding concerns, actions and outcomes
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Person <i>(If one exists according to the School's Safeguarding Policy)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the Designated Safeguarding Person and take over their duties in their absence. • Complete the necessary safeguarding training. • Assist with managing safeguarding concerns and record-keeping. • Maintain confidentiality and support the safeguarding process. • Maintain professional boundaries with learners, and avoid any situations that could lead to potential harm.

Teaching Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the necessary safeguarding training. • Maintain professional boundaries with learners, and avoid any situations that could lead to potential harm. • Identify and report signs of safeguarding concerns, abuse, neglect, or harm. • Foster open and trusting relationships, where children feel comfortable sharing any concerns or experiences of abuse. • Create a safe environment for learners and students to disclose concerns. • Follow safeguarding procedures for reporting and responding to concerns. • Support vulnerable learners and ensure their well-being. • Maintain confidentiality and support the safeguarding process. • Follow the school's safeguarding policies and procedures at all times.
Support Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the necessary safeguarding training. • Maintain professional boundaries with learners, and avoid any situations that could lead to potential harm. • Foster open and trusting relationships, where children feel comfortable sharing any concerns or experiences of abuse. • Identify and report signs of safeguarding concerns, abuse, neglect, or harm. • Follow safeguarding procedures for reporting and responding to concerns • Support vulnerable learners and ensure their well-being. • Maintain confidentiality and support the safeguarding process. • Follow the school's safeguarding policies and procedures at all times.
Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the necessary safeguarding training. • Maintain professional boundaries with learners, and avoid any situations that could lead to potential harm. • Foster open and trusting relationships, where children feel comfortable sharing any concerns or experiences of abuse. • Support learners with special educational needs who may be vulnerable • Work with the Designated Safeguarding Person to ensure the safety of learners with additional needs • Promote inclusive safeguarding practices. • Maintain confidentiality and support the safeguarding process. • Follow the school's safeguarding policies and procedures at all times.
Governors/ Designated Safeguarding Governor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the necessary safeguarding training. • Ensure that the school has appropriate and robust safeguarding policies and procedures. • Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements. • Support the Headteacher to create and promote a culture of safeguarding. • Ensure that the school complies with all statutory safeguarding requirements, including recruitment and DBS checks. • Ensure that the Headteacher and safeguarding staff are supported in their responsibilities. • Maintain professional boundaries with learners, and avoid any situations that could lead to potential harm. • Follow the school's safeguarding policies and procedures at all times.

School Reception Staff / Administrative Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the necessary safeguarding training. • Maintain professional boundaries with learners, and avoid any situations that could lead to potential harm. • Ensure safeguarding protocols are followed for visitors and learners. • Report any concerns about student safety or well-being. • Maintain confidentiality and support the safeguarding process. • Follow the school's safeguarding policies and procedures at all times.
School Counsellor / Mental Health Practitioners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the necessary safeguarding training. • Maintain professional boundaries with learners, and avoid any situations that could lead to potential harm. • Provide emotional support to learners facing safeguarding issues. • Escalate concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Person while maintaining confidentiality. • Deliver workshops on mental health and well-being. • Follow the school's safeguarding policies and procedures at all times.
Caretakers / Site Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the necessary safeguarding training. • Maintain professional boundaries with learners, and avoid any situations that could lead to potential harm. • Ensure that the physical environment is safe. • Report any suspicious activity or safety concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Person. • Monitor the site for hazards or risks to learners. • Follow the school's safeguarding policies and procedures at all times.
Catering Staff, Lunch Staff, Breakfast Club Staff and After School Club Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the necessary safeguarding training. • Maintain professional boundaries with learners, and avoid any situations that could lead to potential harm. • Ensure student safety during extended care hours. • Be vigilant and report safeguarding concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Person • Follow the safeguarding policies and maintain a safe environment.
Supply Staff / Professionals <i>External (e.g., County Council Officers, Sports Coaches, Guest Speakers)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the necessary safeguarding training. • Maintain professional boundaries with learners, and avoid any situations that could lead to potential harm. • Follow safeguarding procedures and report any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Person • Maintain appropriate professional boundaries with learners. • Ensure they are familiar with the school's safeguarding policies • Follow the school's safeguarding policies and procedures at all times.
Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adhere to the school's safeguarding policies and report concerns. • Maintain appropriate professional boundaries with learners. • Complete the necessary safeguarding training. • Follow the school's safeguarding policies and procedures at all times.

Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report any signs of abuse, bullying, or neglect involving themselves or others to a trusted adult • Treat others with respect, honour personal boundaries, privacy, and promote healthy, safe relationships. • Ask for help if they feel unsafe, are distressed, or experience difficulties, and encourage peers to seek help • Adhere to school safeguarding policies and behave responsibly.
Parents/Carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that their home and environment are safe, and protect children from harm and abuse. • Be vigilant of signs of distress, bullying or behavioural changes, and address any problems promptly. • Educate their children about personal safety, boundaries and how to seek help if they feel unsafe, on-line and off-line. • Foster open and trusting relationships, where children feel comfortable sharing any concerns or experiences of abuse. • If they become aware of safeguarding issues, inform the relevant authorities or the school's safeguarding lead of those concerns to ensure that appropriate steps are taken. • Work with schools to support and reinforce safeguarding practices, attend meetings and support their child's well-being in the school environment.
The County Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that schools and education providers comply with safeguarding legislation, policies and procedures. • Oversee the development of draft safeguarding policies and their implementation across schools and educational settings. • Provide guidance and support to the Designated Safeguarding Persons in schools and other educational settings. • Ensure that all education staff receive appropriate safeguarding training which is updated regularly. • Work with local safeguarding boards, social services, and other agencies to address safeguarding concerns. • Monitor the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements in schools and ensure that any issues are dealt with appropriately. • Hold schools to account for their safeguarding practices and intervene where necessary to protect children and young people. • Promote a culture of safeguarding across all educational services, ensuring that children's safety and well-being are prioritised.

SCHOOL CONTEXT SHEET

Name and address of school	
School telephone number	
Name of Headteacher	
Name of the Chair of Governors	
Name of Safeguarding Governor	
Name of Designated Safeguarding Person(s)	

Number of learners	
Free School Meals percentage	
ALN Percentage	
Attendance	
Exclusions - 3 year data	include information about times where a pupil was suspended while awaiting a decision from an Appeal Panel
Number of teachers	
Number of support staff	

Relevant information from the latest Estyn report –
<p>Link to the report -</p>

PRE-VISIT QUESTIONS

SELF EVALUATION

How often do you undertake a Review/Self Evaluation of your Safeguarding systems?	
How often are safeguarding policies reviewed and updated?	
How do you ensure that safeguarding is a priority across all levels of leadership and governance?	
How does the school ensure that safeguarding remains a key focus in strategic planning and day-to-day operations?	

EXTERNAL CHECKS

Have there been any external checks in relation to your safeguarding processes and procedures and what were the results? Were there matters requiring further development?	
---	--

TRAINING AND UNDERSTANDING

<p>Can you describe how the school tracks and ensures that all staff have received the appropriate training in accordance with the All-Wales Safeguarding Procedures?</p>	
<p>Have other stakeholders e.g. governors, catering staff, received training at the appropriate level?</p>	
<p>How do you ensure that new staff understand the school's safeguarding procedures?</p>	

RAISING AWARENESS

<p>Are there age-appropriate curricular opportunities for learners in relation to safeguarding?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Is there work presented on personal safety, on-line safety, healthy relationships, mental health, rights and responsibilities and how to seek help if they experience harm?</i> ○ <i>How do you go about ensuring that learners' voices are part of the conversation about safeguarding?</i> ○ <i>Do you have plans/good practice in place that can be shared with others in relation to safeguarding?</i> 	
<p>What steps do you take to ensure that learners, staff and parents know how to report safeguarding concerns confidentially and without fear of repercussions?</p>	

SITE / SAFEGUARDING MATTERS

<p>Do you have an up-to-date risk assessment of the site and robust site safety arrangements that are understood and implemented by staff and learners?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Were any shortcomings found in your most recent assessment?</i> ○ <i>What has been done/needs to be done in response?</i> 	
<p>What arrangements do you have in place to ensure safety –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>during times when the breakfast club and after-school clubs are held?</i> ○ <i>when the community uses the site outside of core school hours?</i> 	

RECRUITING AND MANAGING STAFF

<p>Has the school adopted the Council's Human Resources Policies and procedures in relation to staff recruitment and management, including vetting procedures?</p>	
<p>How do you ensure that safe recruitment procedures are in place?</p>	

WORKING WITH OTHERS

<p>How do you work with other agencies in relation to child protection concerns? As a Headteacher, where could you go for support?</p>	
--	--

Questions - visits

Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP) or Second Designated Safeguarding Person if the Headteacher is the DSP

1. How robust is safeguarding in your school and how do you know?
 - What are your biggest strengths and concerns? Do you trust the system?
2. Have any issues emerged following your latest review?
 - What were they, and what have you done about those issues?
3. What are your arrangements for recording safeguarding concerns?
 - How do you monitor and ensure that record-keeping in relation to safeguarding issues is effective and of quality? (*Clear, accurate, and timely documentation of concerns, actions taken, and decisions made, ensuring confidentiality and accessibility*)
 - Where do you keep the information about safeguarding concerns?
4. Considering confidentiality, describe how the school successfully responded to a safeguarding incident
5. How do you remind learners of the safeguarding procedures and who to contact if they have any concerns?
6. How do you ensure that all members of staff understand what safeguarding is and how to raise a concern?
7. How do you engage with parents/guardians in terms of safeguarding and encourage them to be involved in safeguarding their children?
8. What are your views on the quality of Local Authority support, e.g. the Department of Education and Social Services support?
 - Are you confident that you are getting a timely and useful response?
9. Are there any aspects of safeguarding that could be improved?

Teaching Staff

1. How are staff/Are staff made aware of their safeguarding responsibilities?
 - How often do you get the opportunity to discuss issues?
2. What happens when a pupil is absent?
3. Can you talk me through what you would do if a learner made a disclosure?
 - What would happen in your school? Do you get any feedback?
 - Any support? Do you trust the system?
4. If you were concerned about the professional conduct of a staff member/Headteacher/Governor, what would be the best way to deal with it?
 - How confident would you be in doing this?
5. Are there any aspects of safeguarding that could be improved?

Ancillary staff

1. How are staff/Are staff made aware of their safeguarding responsibilities?
 - How often do you get the opportunity to discuss issues?
2. Can you talk me through what you would do if a learner made a disclosure?
 - What would happen in your school? Do you get any feedback?
 - Any support? Do you trust the system?
3. If you were concerned about the professional conduct of a staff member/Headteacher/Governor, what would be the best way of dealing with it?
 - How confident would you be in doing this?
4. Are there any aspects of safeguarding that could be improved?

Governors including the Chairperson and the Designated Safeguarding Governor

1. Can you explain the role of the Governing Body in reviewing and overseeing safeguarding practices in your school?
2. How often is safeguarding discussed at Governors' meetings?
 - How do you monitor and review safeguarding arrangements?
3. Have any issues emerged following your latest review?
 - What were they, and what have you done about those issues?
4. What is the Governor/School relationship? Give an example of how you challenge in terms of safeguarding.
5. How robust is safeguarding in your school and how do you know?
 - What are your biggest strengths and concerns?
 - Do you trust the system?
6. How, as Governors, do you ensure that safe recruitment procedures are in place?
7. What are your views on the quality of Local Authority support, e.g. the support from the Education Department and Social Services?
 - Are you confident that you are getting a timely and useful response?
8. Are there any aspects of safeguarding that could be improved?

Headteacher

1. How do you monitor attendance and absence?
 - Do you consider your response to be timely and appropriate?
2. How do you remind learners of the safeguarding procedures and who to contact should they have any concern?
3. How do you engage with parents/guardians in terms of safeguarding and encourage them to be involved in safeguarding their children?
4. How are staff made aware of their safeguarding responsibilities?
 - How often do you discuss safeguarding issues with staff?
5. How do you ensure that all members of staff understand what safeguarding is and how to raise a concern?
6. How robust is safeguarding in your school and how do you know?
 - What are your biggest strengths and concerns?
 - Do you trust the system?
7. Have any issues emerged following your latest review?
 - What were they, and what have you done about those issues?
8. What are your arrangements for recording safeguarding concerns?
 - How do you monitor and ensure that record-keeping in relation to safeguarding issues is effective and of quality? (*Clear, accurate, and timely documentation of concerns, actions taken, and decisions made, ensuring confidentiality and accessibility*)
 - Where do you keep the information about safeguarding concerns
9. Considering confidentiality, describe how the school successfully responded to a safeguarding incident
10. What are your views on the quality of Local Authority support, e.g. the support from the Education Department and Social Services?
 - Are you confident that you are getting a timely and useful response?
11. Are there any aspects of safeguarding that could be improved?

SAFEGUARDING ENVIRONMENT AND CULTURE

The general atmosphere of the school is also a good indicator of how safe people feel.

Consider the physical environment and protocols for visitors. These measures alone are not enough to justify the sense of security. You should consider how the ethos and atmosphere of the school demonstrate a culture of safeguarding and an appropriate level of care for all learners.

Area to consider	Evidence/Your comments
<p>Access Arrangements</p> <p><i>safe ways of arrival and exit, gates and doors that are secure and monitored.</i></p>	
<p>Visitor arrival and exit procedures</p> <p><i>Confirm that all visitors are required to log in and wear an identification badge.</i></p>	
<p>Adequate staff supervision</p> <p><i>Check that children are properly supervised during breaks, lunchtime, and other unsupervised times.</i></p>	
<p>Visible safeguarding information</p> <p><i>Check that safeguarding policies, procedures and links are easily accessible to staff and visitors.</i></p> <p><i>Identify the Designated Safeguarding Person and ensure that their contact details are visible and known.</i></p>	
<p>Physical Environment</p> <p><i>Well-maintained and clean facilities: Look for any signs of damage that could create hazards (e.g. loose floor tiles, broken fences).</i></p>	
<p>Secure boundaries</p> <p><i>Confirm that outdoor play areas are securely fenced and that children cannot leave the premises unsupervised.</i></p>	
<p>Emergency exits and procedures</p> <p><i>Check that emergency exits are clearly marked and accessible, and that fire alarms are in good working condition.</i></p>	
<p>Clear signage</p> <p><i>Ensure there is appropriate signage for evacuation routes, first aid locations, and safeguarding information.</i></p>	
<p>ANYTHING ELSE THAT IS RELEVANT</p>	<p>Page 103</p>

**MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED AT THE END/FOLLOWING THE VISIT IN
RELATION TO YOUR IMPRESSION OF THE ORGANISATION'S CULTURE**

<i>Area to consider</i>	<i>Evidence/Your comments</i>
<p>From the discussions/information presented to you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ are you assured that the Headteacher/Senior Management Team/Chair of Governors has a robust understanding of what SAFEGUARDING entails? and how to respond to any allegations/concerns from staff and learners? 	
<p>From your discussions with school staff, are you assured that <i>safeguarding is everyone's responsibility?</i></p>	
<p>From your discussions with school staff, are you confident that they have the skills to identify early signs of abuse, understand child protection protocols, and know how to respond to disclosures?</p> <p>Do staff refer to the Safeguarding Policies and Procedures?</p>	
<p>From the discussions/information presented to you, is the relationship between the school and the Council robust, open and is there effective communication between them?</p>	
<p>From the discussions are you assured that there are positive relationships between staff and between staff and learners in place in the school?</p>	
<p>Walking around the school, did you notice any issues of concern in relation to the building/site e.g. external doors open, entrances to the site open, toilets...</p>	
<p><i>ANYTHING ELSE THAT IS RELEVANT</i></p>	



Safeguarding Arrangements in Schools

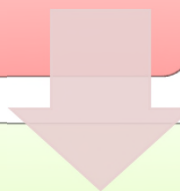
Pupil Voice Report

Dr Ceryl Teleri Davies


May 2026

Introduction

Independent evaluation commissioned to explore pupil voices on safeguarding arrangements in Gwynedd schools



Part of the wider Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee review and Cyngor Gwynedd safeguarding response plan



Report identifies key strengths, pupil experiences and areas for development in safeguarding awareness and pupil voice across schools

Purpose of the Evaluation

Explore	Explore pupils' understanding of safeguarding arrangements in schools
---------	---

Understand	Understand how children and young people raise concerns and access support
------------	--

Examine	Examine whether pupils feel safe, listened to and supported
---------	---

Support	Support Cyngor Gwynedd's wider safeguarding review
---------	--

Background

- Children and young people have a right to be involved in safeguarding discussions (UNCRC Article 12)
- Welsh legislation and guidance support pupil voice in safeguarding processes (Welsh Government, 2022)
- Effective safeguarding includes children feeling safe, listened to and able to access support (Estyn, 2022)
- Disclosure can be difficult due to fear, shame, confidentiality concerns and worries about not being believed (Cossar et al., 2013)
- Trusted adults and supportive relationships help children seek support (Abdul Latiff et al., 2023)
- Schools are key settings for identifying and responding to safeguarding concerns (Cossar et al., 2013)
- Emotional safety, privacy and clear communication strengthen access to support (Nohilly and Treacy, 2024)
- Limited research exists on how pupils experience safeguarding systems within schools
- Gathering pupil voice helps assess whether safeguarding arrangements are visible, accessible and supportive in practice

Methodology

Focus groups undertaken in May 2026

57 children and young people participated

Primary pupils: Years 3–6

Secondary pupils: Years 7–9 and Gwynedd Youth Forum

Welsh language, age-appropriate and ethically informed discussions

Key Findings: Overall

Safeguarding experienced through relationships and school culture

Trusted adults and emotional safety were central themes

Wellbeing, fairness and belonging strongly linked to feeling safe

Pupils valued approachable and emotionally responsive staff

Primary School: Key Themes



Primary School Findings

Strong awareness of safety, wellbeing and support pathways

Trusted adults and pastoral support highly valued

Worry boxes and visual safeguarding information seen positively

Strong awareness of online safety and bullying

Peer support and empathy evident across groups

Primary School Strengths

Visible pastoral support and trusted adults

Accessible safeguarding communication

Strong emotional wellbeing awareness

Preventative education from schools and police

Multiple routes to access support

Primary School: Areas to Develop

- Provide clearer explanations about what happens after a concern is shared
- Strengthen pupil understanding of confidentiality and follow-up support
- Continue developing awareness of how to access specialist services and support
- Maintain consistent communication about safeguarding processes across the school
- Continue strengthening online safety education as pupils become older
- Further support pupils to understand how adults respond to safeguarding concerns
- Continue promoting accessible and inclusive safeguarding information for all pupils
- Maintain ongoing opportunities for pupil voice and feedback on wellbeing and safeguarding arrangements

Secondary School: Key Themes

4.1 Relationships and Emotional Safety

Safeguarding experienced primarily through trusted relationships, emotional safety and supportive staff

4.2 Trusted Adults and Visibility of Support

Importance of choice, approachable staff and visible support systems across school

4.3 Emotional Wellbeing and Safeguarding

Strong links between safeguarding, emotional wellbeing, stress and mental health support

4.4 Behaviour Systems and Fairness

Fairness, consistency and clear communication within behaviour systems affected emotional safety and trust

4.5 External Safeguarding Education

Pupils valued practical, realistic and discussion-based safeguarding education

4.6 Vaping, Toilets and Peer Behaviours

Concerns around vaping, peer pressure, unsafe spaces and the importance of peer support and participation

4.7 Overall Summary

Safeguarding understood as a relational, emotional and whole-school culture issue rather than procedures alone

Secondary School Findings

Safeguarding linked closely to emotional wellbeing



Wellbeing spaces such as Hafan and Noddfa highly valued



Pupils valued fairness, consistency and restorative communication



Questions raised around confidentiality and follow-up support



Behaviour systems impacted emotional safety

Secondary School Challenges

Concerns about inconsistent behaviour systems

Vaping and feeling unsafe in toilets

Uncertainty around referral processes

Need for clearer communication after disclosures

Some safeguarding education viewed as inconsistent

Secondary School: Strengths

- Strong relationships between pupils and trusted adults
- Pupils felt emotionally supported, listened to and respected
- Wellbeing spaces such as “Hafan” and “Noddfa” viewed very positively
- Good visibility of safeguarding support, posters and trusted staff
- Strong awareness of emotional wellbeing and mental health support
- Pupils valued practical and discussion-based safeguarding education
- Positive pupil awareness of online safety, relationships and peer pressure
- Strong peer support, empathy and encouragement to seek help
- Opportunities for pupil voice and participation valued by young people
- Safeguarding experienced as part of a wider culture of care, wellbeing and emotional safety

What Pupils Said

“If you keep it in,
the backpack gets
heavier and
heavier.”

“People help you
when things are
difficult.”

“Negatives don’t
help.”

“You can write it
on paper if you
don’t want to say
it.”

Key Strengths

Visible pastoral support

Trusted staff

Wellbeing spaces

Preventative safeguarding education

Peer support

Summary

Primary pupils focused more on practical safety and trusted relationships

Secondary pupils showed greater awareness of fairness, behaviour systems, consistency and school culture

Older pupils wanted greater clarity around confidentiality, referral pathways and follow-up support

Findings highlight the importance of relational and emotionally informed safeguarding approaches

Effective safeguarding depends on support being visible, accessible, fair and responsive to children and young people's wellbeing needs

Conclusion

Safeguarding is experienced as relational and holistic

Children value trusted relationships and emotional safety

Visible support systems increase confidence in accessing support

Fairness, belonging and wellbeing are key safeguarding themes

Strengths and Limitations

Rich qualitative insight from pupil voice

Broad age range across educational settings

Small qualitative sample limits generalisability

No Year 10–13 participants due to exam pressures

Recommendations

7.1 Continue to strengthen relational informed safeguarding practice

Strengthen relationship-based safeguarding and access to trusted adults

7.2 Improve clarity around safeguarding pathways and access to support

Improve communication around confidentiality, referral pathways and follow-up support

7.3 Continue to strengthen wellbeing spaces and pastoral support

Maintain and develop accessible wellbeing spaces and early emotional support

7.4 Continue developing age-appropriate safeguarding education

Deliver practical, discussion-based safeguarding education on current issues

7.5 Strengthen pupil voice and participation in safeguarding development

Embed pupil voice within safeguarding review and school improvement processes

7.6 Review behaviour systems

Strengthen fairness, consistency and communication within behaviour systems

7.7 Strengthen support around peer safeguarding

Provide clearer guidance around peer support, boundaries and help-seeking

7.8 Regularly review safeguarding arrangements

Continue regular safeguarding reviews that actively include pupil voice across all age groups

Thank You

- Thank you to all children and young people who participated
- Thanks to participating schools and Gwynedd Youth Forum
- Questions/reflections

References

- Abdul Latiff, L., Tajik, E., Ibrahim, N., Abubakar, A. and Ali, S.S.S. (2023) 'Barriers and facilitators to child disclosure of abuse in institutional settings: A systematic review', *Child Abuse Review*, 32(4), pp. 1–17.
- Cossar, J., Brandon, M., Bailey, S., Belderson, P., Biggart, L. and Sharpe, D. (2013) 'It takes a lot to build trust': Recognition and telling: Developing earlier routes to help for children and young people. London: Office of the Children's Commissioner.
- Estyn (2022) *Inspection framework guidance: Safeguarding and child protection*. Cardiff: Estyn.
- Nohilly, M. and Treacy, D. (2024) 'School climate, emotional safety and help-seeking behaviours in educational safeguarding contexts', *Children and Youth Services Review*, 158, 107409.
- Welsh Government (2022) *Keeping learners safe: The role of local authorities, governing bodies and proprietors of independent schools under the Education Act 2002*. Cardiff: Welsh Government.

MEETING	Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee
DATE	14th July 2026
TITLE	Town Centre Regeneration
REASON FOR SCRUTINY	Follow-up report / Cyngor Gwynedd Plan 2023-28 – A Prosperous Gwynedd
AUTHOR	Esyllt Rhys Jones, Regeneration Programme Service Manager Llŷr B Jones, Assistant Head of Economy and Community
CABINET MEMBER	Councillor R. Medwyn Hughes

1. Why does it need to be scrutinised?

- 1.1 One of the priority plans of the Council's Plan 2023-28 is 'Regenerating Communities and Town Centres'. A component of the plan is the preparation of town/city centre action plans for individual towns.
- 1.2 During the Committee's meeting on [8th June 2023](#) the initial steps to prepare a project plan, the arrangements for the preparation of Town Centre Plans and the basis for prioritising the regeneration of Gwynedd's town centres were scrutinised. The previous report also sets context and highlights challenges and changes facing town centres and is included as Appendix 1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the work that has been carried out since then.
- 1.3 Progress scrutiny will be an opportunity for the Committee to receive an update on the work and consider its impact.

2. What exactly needs to be scrutinised?

2.1. The Scrutiny Committee is specifically asked to scrutinise the following:

- What has been achieved?
- Who has been involved in the development of the plans?
- What is the impact of the plans?
- What has been learnt from the implementation of the plans?

3. Overview of town centre regeneration activity

- 3.1 Town centres and high street areas have faced challenges and a period of change over the past few years. These changes are due to reasons such as online shopping, changes in social patterns, the development of shopping centres on the outskirts of towns, business rates and high rents. The situation has intensified since the Covid period, and this has meant that we have to look closely at how to regenerate our town centres.

- 3.2 With all the change underway it is a real challenge to repurpose town centres and to develop and implement interventions with the intention of trying to make them vibrant, attractive centres and nice places to live, work and spend time in.
- 3.3 For this report, a wide range of activities have been incorporated into the central regeneration work, including:
- Preparing and developing town centre schemes / local regeneration schemes
 - Develop and implement Gwynedd Council's town centre projects supporting and providing grants to external organisations and groups that contribute to the regeneration of a town centre or local community
 - Co-ordinating empty property interventions in town centres
- 3.4 An outline of these will be given in the next parts of the report.
- 3.5 The report focuses on activities being carried out by the Regeneration Programmes Service within the Economy and Community Department. The Service consists of a small team, including a manager and three permanent regeneration officers. The Service is highly dependent on securing grants for the development and implementation of projects, including temporary project officers.

4. Preparing and developing town centre plans ('Placemaking Plans')

- 4.1 As the second largest county in Wales, Gwynedd inevitably has many towns of different nature, function and size. The definition of a town can be interpreted in several ways. The Gwynedd and Anglesey Joint Local Development Plan 2011-2026 and the Snowdonia Local Development Plan 2016 - 2031 offer the following framework:

Sub-Regional Retail Centre	Bangor
Urban Retail Centre	Caernarfon, Porthmadog, Pwllheli
Local Retail Centre	Abersoch, Barmouth, Bethesda, Blaenau Ffestiniog, Criccieth, Llanberis, Nefyn, Penrhyndeudraeth, Penygroes, Tywyn
<i>Local Service Centre *</i>	<i>Dolgellau, Y Bala</i>
<i>Service Settlement *</i>	<i>Aberdyfi, Harlech</i>

** Snowdonia Local Development Plan 2016 - 2031*

- 4.2 Based on the above classification, a programme of work was developed for the development of Town Centre Plans (or 'Placemaking Plans') for the main towns. Copies of these plans can be found on the Council's website : [Town Centre Placemaking Plans](#) and include:
- Bangor Placemaking Plan (August 2023)
 - Caernarfon Town Centre : Placemaking Plan (August 2023)
 - Porthmadog Placemaking Plan (February 2024)
 - Pwllheli Placemaking Plan (June 2024)
 - Bala Town Centre Placemaking Plan (June 2024)
 - Dolgellau Placemaking Plan

- 4.3 The main purpose of these plans is to create a vision for how a place should develop, improve and function for the people who live, work and visit there. It helps ensure that future development is focused on creating high-quality, sustainable, attractive and inclusive places rather than just providing buildings or infrastructure.
- 4.4 In preparing the Placemaking Plans, it is worth noting :
- Financial support was received from Welsh Government through its Transforming Towns programme
 - The Design Commission for Wales guidelines were followed in drawing up the plans
 - The process of drawing up the Town Centre Plans was inclusive – including a series of engagement and consultation sessions with stakeholders, Members and Council Departments.
- 4.5 In addition, as part of the Gwynedd Regeneration Framework, local regeneration plans have been developed for each of the 13 local regeneration areas throughout the County. The Town Centre Plans focus on specific areas and are incorporated into the area regeneration plans.
- 4.6 Consistent with one of the key principles of the Regeneration Framework, the town centre plans also recognise the role, importance and participation of local businesses, groups, and organisations in the regeneration of town centres.
- 4.7 The approach to collaboration varies from town to town but the Regeneration Programme Service role includes co-ordinating and supporting a conduit for the regeneration of the town. Multi-agency regeneration partnerships exist in Bangor and Caernarfon, and there are regular meetings to develop and report on the progress of regeneration plans, to identify new opportunities and to reflect on the impact of schemes.
- 4.8 The development of regeneration organisations in Pwllheli, Porthmadog, Dolgellau and Bala are currently being developed and supported, with positive progress being made across all towns.
- 4.9 The Action Plans associated with the Placemaking Plans are central to the discussions of the regeneration organisations. They are living documents that are owned by the local organisations and are regularly reviewed. They are also a strategic basis for applying for funding opportunities to realise schemes where there is evidence that they are a local priority.
- 4.10 Following the completion of a Placemaking Plan for individual towns there is then an emphasis on developing and implementing programmes or projects that have been identified within the plans.

5. Development and Implementation of Town Centre Regeneration Projects

- 5.1 Normally, the Service’s ability to implement town centre regeneration projects will be dependent on securing external grants. The Service may also use external grants to establish funds and offer third-party grants.
- 5.2 Since 2022/3, the Service has secured grants worth £31.8m for the development and implementation of town centre regeneration projects. A list of projects is included in Appendix 2.
- 5.3 During this period, the main grant programmes are:
- Transforming Towns Programme, Welsh Government
 - Levelling Up Fund, UK Government
 - Shared Prosperity Fund Programme, UK Government
 - Pride in Place Impact Fund, UK Government
- 5.4 Individual funding programmes with have specific objectives, guidelines, and requirements, and therefore it is necessary to ensure that proposals and applications comply with these. Also, there has been a tendency over recent years for financial programs to be implemented for a relatively short period of time, and as a result, the implementation period is limited, and the emphasis is very often on schemes with the ability to implement them within a short period of time.
- 5.5 It should also be noted that these grant investments are above the core work of different Services/Departments and that there is an opportunity to do more in the future.
- 5.6 During the 2026/7 period, arrangements are also in place to implement funding earmarked through the Pride in Place Impact Fund and the Local Growth Fund.
- 5.7 At its meeting on 10th February 2026, Cabinet decided to allocate £1.5m from the Pride in Place Impact Fund as follows :

Schemes	Leading	Pride in Place Fund	Total Cost
County Plans			
Town and Community Councils Fund	Local Councils	£400,000	£400,000
Infrastructure and urban routes	Highways, Municipal & YGC	£240,000	£258,000
Bangor City Centre Regeneration Programme			
Bangor Health and Wellbeing Centre	Economy and Community	£50,000	£850,000
Bangor Property Improvement Scheme	Economy and Community	£75,000	£75,000
College Road Improvements	Highways, Municipal & YGC	£76,500	£76,500
Storiell site improvements	Economy and Community	£125,000	£300,000
Town Centre Improvement Schemes			
Pwllheli Property Improvement Grant	Economy and Community	£75,000	£75,000
Pwllheli Signage Scheme	Economy and Community	£50,000	£200,000

Eldon Square Improvement, Dolgellau	Highways, Municipal & YGC	£50,000	£84,000
Barmouth public facilities	Highways, Municipal & YGC	£75,000	£98,000
Library Improvements			
Caernarfon Library	Economy and Community	£100,000	£650,000
Tywyn Library Upgrade	Economy and Community	£125,000	£450,000
Co-ordination costs	Economy and Community	£58,500	£58,500
	Total Amount	£1,500,000	£3,575,000

5.8 In preparing this report, it is intended to report on the Local Growth Fund - Plans 2026/27 to Cabinet on 7th July : [Cabinet 07/07/14](#) .

5.9 Whilst the Local Growth Fund prioritises the development of the economy and ensuring growth with an emphasis on activity of regional importance, it will also be seen that the proposed package includes a programme of support and support from Menter Gwynedd; Bangor City Centre programme, and the Culture for Growth Scheme programme with projects included within the Pwllheli, Bala and Porthmadog placemaking plans.

6. Empty Properties

6.1 Dealing with empty properties has been identified as a priority by the Council and is part of the 'Regenerating Communities and Town Centres' work stream within the Cyngor Gwynedd Plan 2023-28. The Service co-ordinates a cross-departmental Empty Property Group established to coordinate issues related to vacant properties.

6.2 The Group is made up of officers from the Departments of Environment (Planning Services and Building Control), Economy and Community (Regeneration); Housing and Property (Housing and Empty Housing Enforcement), Finance (Rates) and Legal.

6.3 Different Council Services/Departments implement different interventions relating to vacant properties such as:

- providing information and advice (general)
- Technical provision / support
- provide financial support (grants or loans)
- threat of enforcement action
- Recover financial debts
- formal enforcement (last option)

6.4 Generally, the resource and time requirement is intensified when working down this list.

7. Town Centre Performance Indicators and Data

7.1 As part of the Regeneration Programme Service's performance management arrangements, core indicators over the last 3 years are as follows.

Performance Indicators	2023/4	2024/5	2025/6
------------------------	--------	--------	--------

Total investment secured for town centre projects	£8,336,970	£8,495,308	£8,173,692
Empty units coming into use	3	10	15
Properties improved	34	26	13

- 7.2 The Service will also report on individual project outputs for relevant funding programmes.
- 7.3 More recently, work is being done to evaluate specific plans. For example, during 2024/5, £1.8m was invested through the first round of the Shared Prosperity Fund on the Town Centre: Laying the Foundations for Investment, Pride and Vibrancy, a package that included projects across the county. This package comprised cross-departmental projects including improvements to the North Quay in Pwllheli, signage for the city of Bangor, public art schemes for the slate towns of Bala, Bangor and Harlech, the upgrading of Maes Criccieth along with a smart street furniture scheme, community safety schemes and a buy local promotion scheme.
- 7.4 This link provides a summary of the successes and impact of this scheme - '[Laying the Foundations for Town Centre Investment, Pride and Bustle](#)' programme projects. The main outputs of these programmes were upgrades to buildings and public spaces, creative and heritage developments, developments to a public path network along with pre-preparation and feasibility work completed. A copy of an evaluation report on this scheme has been included as Appendix 3.
- 7.5 During 2025/6 a further £1.4m of funding was secured through the Shared Prosperity Fund and saw the scheme evolve into Gwynedd Ni where there was a wider, cross-departmental package of investments. A copy of a valuation report for the scheme is included in Appendix 4.
- 7.6 In recognising the role and contribution of local organisations a Town and Community Councils Fund was established across the county. A list of projects supported through the Fund during 2025/6 is included as Appendix 5. Following the success of the Fund in 2025/6, a further Town and Community Council Fund has been established during 2026/7 funded by the Pride in Place Impact Fund.

Empty Properties and Town Centre Data

- 7.7 In May 2024, a mapping exercise was carried out in Gwynedd town centres by the Service and the Research Unit, as part of the activity of the Vacant Property Group. The aim of the work was to provide an up-to-date and consistent picture of the vacancy situation across the towns of the county.
- 7.8 To ensure a consistent approach to data collection and comparison, the Local Development Plan's town centre boundaries were used as the analytical basis. It can be argued that this approach can influence percentages in some areas – for example, by including buildings that are not integral to the high street – but was essential for ensuring consistency across locations and allowing comparisons over time.

7.9 The table shows the number of empty properties as well as the percentage in May 2024, 2025, and 2026 (draft), arranged by Local Development Plan (LDP) categories and individual towns:

LDP Category	Town	Number of Vacant Properties [2024]	Number of Vacant Properties [2025]	Number of Vacant Properties [2026]
Sub-Regional Retail Centre	Bangor	48	43	50
Urban Retail Centre	Caernarfon	34	21	28
	Porthmadog	14	10	11
	Pwllheli	25	23	29
Skip to content _ Skip to footer	Dolgellau	16	7	15
	Bala Town	9	8	7
Local Retail Centre	Blaenau Ffestiniog	6	6	8
	Bethesda	5	5	9
	Llandudno	4	4	6
	Penrhyndeudraeth	3	3	1
	Penygroes	4	2	2
	Barmouth	12	8	11
	Tywyn	6	6	5
	Criccieth	1	3	0
	Abersoch	1	0	0
	Nefyn	2	2	3
Service Settlement	Harlech	5	5	3
	Aberdyfi	0	0	4
Total		195	156	192

Source : Gwynedd Council Survey

7.10 The number of vacant properties within individual towns will be constantly changing, and so the results of the survey above offer a snapshot at a given time, based on specific areas. Nevertheless, the figures suggest that the number of vacant properties within town centres decreased between 2024 and 2025 and increased again in 2026. It is also found that the largest number of empty properties in Bangor city centre and Pwllheli town centre are priorities for 2026/7.

7.11 We are also developing an annual data profile for Gwynedd's town centres. These profiles offer a picture of the current situation of Gwynedd's towns – including data on population, building occupancy and empty properties. Copies of the 2025 data profile are included as Appendix 6 and can be viewed via the link below (the 2026 data will be available in the coming weeks) : [Town Centre Profiles](#).

Measuring the Impact of Regeneration Projects

7.12 The Service's efforts to target and secure external grants for the development and implementation of regeneration projects have been very successful. However, it is very

difficult to prove associated the impacts on town centre areas. The Service measures direct outputs for projects (often to meet funders requirements) that do not measure wider impact. Similarly, the Service will commission evaluation reports on specific projects which are valuable in considering which aspects were successful, as well as any lessons to be learned. It should also be notes that the vibrancy of town centres will be influenced and affected by a very wide range of factors rather than a project output.

- 7.13 As a result, it is an aspect that the Service has sought to respond to – through the recently adopted [Economy Strategy](#).
- 7.14 The Strategy's vision is an innovative, productive, and low carbon economy that strengthens the Welsh language, creates new opportunities and contributes to the well-being of all – including the main themes of Enterprise, People and Place. One of the priorities of the Place theme is to ensure the best possible connectivity and infrastructure – including supporting town centre regeneration.
- 7.15 The Strategy provides for a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, a copy of which is included as Appendix 7. The table below summarises the outputs and indicators relevant to town centre regeneration activities.

Monitoring and Evaluation Framework	Relevant elements of town centre regeneration
<p style="text-align: center;">OUTPUTS</p> <p>The direct product of a project or activity in the short term</p>	<p>A14 : Public sector investment in capital projects</p> <p>A29 : Number of jobs created</p> <p>A30 : Towns invested</p> <p>A31 : Empty buildings returned to use</p> <p>A32 : Improved public spaces</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">RESULTS</p> <p>Medium-term indicators derived from plans and activity, and reflecting change in behaviour</p>	<p>Q22 : Residents living/visiting towns have received investment</p> <p>Q24 : Increase in the number of visitors to town centres</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">EFFECT</p> <p>Indicators of long-term, strategic change over a period of years</p>	<p>E19 : Town centres that are more resilient and sustainable, with fewer dilapidated or vacant buildings</p>

- 7.16 By having a consistent selection of indicators, it will be possible to evaluate the impact of activities and review progress against the priorities of the Strategy.
- 7.17 With the framework now in place, there will be further work to be done this year specifically for town centre regeneration – seeking to harmonise data and indicators for the Service's activities.

8. Conclusions and Lessons Learned

- 8.1 The report seeks to summarise the main activities of the Regeneration Programmes Service which have sought to support and regenerate town centres. Of course, the town centre agenda overlaps with a number of services within the Department of Economy, including Business Support, Community Support Service, Maritime, Museums and Arts, and Libraries.
- 8.2 Similarly, town centre issues also apply to a number of Council Departments operating in areas such as planning, transport, car parks, highways, street care etc.
- 8.3 In addressing the change and challenges facing our town centres, the following issues have emerged in the implementation of recent town centre programmes and projects:
- Town centres continue to go through a period of change and uncertainty. Such changes are influenced by factors that are much wider than the Gwynedd or Wales area
 - Efforts over the past few years have focused on targeting external grants to develop and implement projects aimed at improving or revitalising town centres
 - Fundamental issues such as business rates levels, parking fees and image are issues that are being raised as barriers to increasing the vitality of town centres. It is suggested that further attention needs to be paid to such issues as well as attracting investment to town centres.
 - Over the past few years an effort has been made to distribute benefit across the county. When regeneration investment is spread too widely across multiple areas, the impact can weaken and the consequences and impact are not as obvious. In contrast, an alternative approach would be to target and focus investment on fewer schemes with the potential to create a more pronounced impact.
 - In the last three years, there has been uncertainty regarding key regeneration programs often with a short timescale. This means that there is an emphasis on short-term plans where they can be implemented within the available timeframes.
 - Locally, coordination between partners (local authorities, businesses, landowners, organisations, the community) can be complex and challenging due to different priorities. The investment in developing the Placemaking Plans and supporting the local partnerships is an effort to alleviate these challenges.
 - Practical and technical issues are also often challenging in the implementation of regeneration projects. This includes the issues such as infrastructure maintenance, resolving land ownership issues, and ensuring that someone takes clear long-term responsibility for the development. These responsibilities are often associated with a cost that may not be included as part of a plan.
 - Continuing to strengthen and support the local partnerships is an important step in looking ahead to future priorities. The partnerships are important collaborative vehicles that enable communities, businesses and authorities to share knowledge, coordinate projects and build confidence. Maintaining this will ensure that the regeneration remains centralised and reflects local needs.
 - In terms of empty properties, the Service's efforts over the past few years have aimed to support developers and owners of vacant properties through various grants and financial loans. During 2026/7 we will also explore potential opportunities for developing more proactive interventions that could include

purchasing and renovating empty properties directly or supporting local partners to do so.

- Further work is required (as part of the new Economy Strategy) to develop a monitoring and evaluation structure for the town centre regeneration work stream so that we can measure what the plans and activities deliver individually, and their composite impact.

8.4 Following the establishment of the new Government in Parliament in May, we will also consider any changes in town centre regeneration policies or programmes.

9. Consultation

9.1 Consultation has been at the heart of the preparation of the 13 Gwynedd Ni Area Plans and the Placemaking Plans. It provided an opportunity for the communities, businesses, local stakeholders and Council departments to identify opportunities and shape the priorities for their areas. The same principle has also been important in establishing and supporting town centre partnerships, where negotiation has and continues to be essential to the formation of successful collaboration arrangements.

9.2 Going forward, when developing any new plans and reviewing existing ones, ongoing consultation is going to be key to respond to changing needs over time.

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

10.1 Much of Cyngor Gwynedd's regeneration work reflects the principles of the Well-being of Future Generations Act by working together broadly to create strong and sustainable communities. Strategic regeneration projects are being developed to improve the economy, communities, environment and culture of Gwynedd in the long term.

10.2 Regeneration work seeks to be integrated and inclusive as it means collaboration in across departments (including Departments of Housing and Property, Environment and Highways, Municipal and YGC), as well as working with a range of partners, organisations and organisations and the community to identify priorities and vision.

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

11.1 Equality and language issues are at the heart of all regeneration plans, and an Impact Assessment will be developed and implemented into Regeneration Programmes.

12. Recommendation

12.1 The views of the Scrutiny Committee are invited on the contents of the report.

Appendices

Appendix 1 : Report presented to the Scrutiny Committee on 8th June 2023

Appendix 2 : Summary of Regeneration Grants 2022-2026

Appendix 3 : Evaluation of Gwynedd Town Centres SPF Project

Appendix 4 : Evaluation of Gwynedd Ni Project 2026

Appendix 5 : Gwynedd Local Council Fund 2025/6

Appendix 6 : Town centre data profile 2025

Appendix 7 : Economy Strategy Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

Meeting	Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee
Date	8 June 2023
Title	Gwynedd Town Centres
Author	Esyllt Rhys Jones, Regeneration Programmes Manager, Economy and Community Department Llyr B Jones, Assistant Head of Economy and Community
Cabinet Member	Cllr. Nia Jeffreys

Details to be scrutinized

The Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider the following in the context that an element of the "Community and town centre regeneration" project in the Council's Plan 2023-28 is to prepare Placemaking Plans for individual towns:

- The arrangements for preparing action plans;
- Who is involved in their development?
- How is it intended to measure the impact of the action plans?

1. Background and Context

1.1. Town centres and high street areas are in a period of change. Challenges from online stores, changes in social patterns and customer expectations have been intensified by COVID and are forcing places to adapt more quickly.

1.2. More recently, wars and the energy price crisis add to the uncertainty for businesses and as a result, to the future of town centres. Centres that are able to evolve and diversify are more likely to succeed and prosper. In March 2022, 16% of high street shops in Britain were empty, with one in 20 having been empty for 3 years.

1.3. There are many challenges facing town centres including:

- Increase in online purchasing - in May 2022 its value was around 33% of all sales. It is predicted that the pattern will continue as it is convenient, offers choice and a lower cost/price;
- Change in social patterns - over the last twenty years there has been an increase in spending on experiences, and less spending on goods.

- Number of retail units - with the increase in online shopping, many town centres offer more retail units than can be sustained. This has led to an increase in empty units - which impacts the viability of the high street. Also, many retail units are too large for the market's requirements, and therefore difficult to install with many being empty for a long period, their condition deteriorating and disrupting the environment in prominent areas within our towns.
 - The growth of supermarkets - over a period of several decades there has been a significant increase in grocery sales in supermarkets, also extending to goods.
 - Shops or developments on the outskirts of towns - the 1980s and 1990s saw a significant increase in shops and developments on the outskirts of the main towns which are usually more accessible locations, offer free parking, and are often under one roof. (Note that sites like these also face similar challenges to town centre areas).
 - Business rates and rents - businesses argue that business rates - which are based on property value rather than turnover - are higher compared to locations on the outskirts of towns or businesses that sell online.
- 1.4. There are also opportunities for town centres, and especially Gwynedd's town centres as a number of our towns provide a diverse offer such as:
- Unique streets with a high percentage of independent shops and markets;
 - Diverse opportunities, events and experiences through the medium of Welsh;
 - Attractive environments and landscapes with World Heritage statuses within our towns.
- 1.5. With all the changes afoot, it is a real challenge to repurpose town centres and to develop and implement interventions with the intention of trying to make them lively, attractive centres and nice places to live, work and spend time in.

2. Strategic context

- 2.1. The trends in Gwynedd are common to those throughout the country and policies and programmes at all levels, from UK Government to local programmes, have been developed to try to respond to these challenges.
- 2.2. In recent weeks, Welsh Government published a Town Centre Position Statement which outlines the challenges and how they will support them to regenerate. The Town Centre First Principle and their Transforming Towns Regeneration Funding Programme is an example of their commitment to regenerating our urban areas.
- 2.3. At a Regional level, town centre regeneration also plays a central role in the North Wales Regeneration Strategy (2018-35). The vision notes: *"[in] 2035 North Wales will experience less inequality, increased employment, regenerated town centres, better quality housing, a stronger visitor economy, a resilient rural economy, and better health for local people"*.

- 2.4. Locally, the work of drawing up the Gwynedd Regeneration Framework, and engagement to draw up 13 Area Plans within the County, has highlighted concerns across the County about the future of town centres, and the need to support the viability of town centre businesses. As predicted, from the initial consultation, town centre challenges are identified in most Gwynedd Area Plans.
- 2.5. Gwynedd has a large number of towns of different nature, function and size. The definition of a town can be interpreted in many ways. Through the Gwynedd and Anglesey Joint Local Development Plan 2011-2026 and Eryri Local Development Plan 2016 - 2031, towns are interpreted on many levels, as follows:

Sub-Regional Retail Centre	Bangor
Urban Retail Centre	Caernarfon, Porthmadog, Pwllheli
Local Retail Centre	Abersoch, Barmouth, Bethesda, Blaenau Ffestiniog, Cricieth, Llanberis, Nefyn, Penrhyndeudraeth, Penygroes, Tywyn
<i>Local Service Centre*</i>	<i>Dolgellau, Bala</i>
<i>Service Settlement*</i>	<i>Aberdyfi, Harlech</i>

** Eryri Local Development Plan 2016 - 2031*

- 2.6. Town centre work has been based on the above since 2020. Having said this, more recently, a different interpretation can be seen within the North Wales Town Centre Regeneration Priorities Report (Hatch 2022).

Sub-Regional Centre	Bangor
Market Town or Commute Hub	Dolgellau, Porthmadog, Pwllheli, Caernarfon
Traditional Coastal Town	Barmouth, Cricieth, Tywyn
Rural Centres	Bala, Nefyn, Blaenau Ffestiniog, Bethesda, Penrhyndeudraeth, Penygroes
Visitor Centres	Abersoch, Llanberis, Harlech

3. Prosperous Gwynedd (Gwynedd Lewyrchus): Regeneration of communities and town centres

- 3.1. In response to the initial consultation through the Gwynedd Regeneration Framework arrangements, the Regeneration of Communities and Town Centres has been included as a priority project under the theme Gwynedd Lewyrchus in the Council's Plan 2023-28. The Economy and Community Department is currently preparing a Project Plan and operational steps.

3.2. The Project Plan will be a 5 year plan which will develop and implement interventions to support town centres with the intention of making them lively and attractive centres once more, which will be nice places to live, work and spend time in. It is anticipated that the plan could include the following milestones during Year 1:

- Setting a baseline for the current situation of towns in Gwynedd;
- Placemaking Plans commissioned for Bangor and Caernarfon;
- Financial applications and a programme in place for the preparation of other Placemaking Plans such as, Bala, Pwllheli, Porthmadog, Dolgellau and Barmouth;
- Consider options for reviewing the current plans / strategies of world heritage towns - Bethesda, Blaenau Ffestiniog, Penygroes, Llanberis, Tywyn and Harlech;
- The Bangor City Centre Investment Plan has been drawn up and agreed with key partners including the Welsh Government, Bangor University, and the Health Board; Implementation of a programme of interventions to support town centres as a result of Programme investments such as the Levelling Up Fund and the Shared Prosperity Fund;
- Invite town centre regeneration projects from external organizations to be considered as part of the Welsh Government's Transforming Towns.

3.3. The preparation of Placemaking Plans for a number of towns is key. The purpose of these is to identify and agree on action plans and priorities for individual towns. The Placemaking Plans would give specific attention to high street areas, and offer an opportunity to address issues such as:

- Residential units (for example empty space above shops);
- Support (grants/loans) for the restoration or conversion of empty properties;
- Infrastructure and green spaces;
- Improving public places and spaces;
- Markets and events;
- Support for town centre businesses;
- Digital Towns (provision and use of technology);
- Transport and green travel;
- Facilities within town centres;
- Promotion and marketing of local centres;
- Local enterprises and enterprising communities.

3.4. The work of drawing up a Placemaking Plan has already been commissioned in Bangor and Caernarfon. The work started in the two towns as they identified them as towns of need in the North Wales Regeneration Strategy. The Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019 was the basis of this analysis. The process

of securing a budget from Welsh Government is underway for other towns such as Porthmadog, Pwllheli, Dolgellau, Barmouth and Bala.

- 3.5. There are specific requirements from Welsh Government and the Design Commission for Wales when drawing up an effective Placemaking Plan. In towns where plans or strategies are already in place, consideration will be given to options for updating and revising these to avoid duplication. This applies to towns such as Blaenau Ffestiniog, Bethesda, Llanberis, Penygroes, Tywyn and Harlech.

4. The process of developing Placemaking Plans

- 4.1. Drawing up a Placemaking Plan is an inclusive process. The initial discussion with Local Members is to highlight the arrangements, opportunities and challenges in the town. In the same manner, conversations will be held with the relevant Council Departments in order to highlight the intention to undertake the work, and outline the process.
- 4.2. Securing resources to undertake the work is the first step. Welsh Government has a revenue fund to support this. This is followed by procurement arrangements to commission specialist consultants.
- 4.3. The initial role of the consultants is to familiarise themselves with the town, to understand priorities and challenges together with any current local research and consultation work. The work also includes identifying the town's current situation as a basis for measuring any improvements against it.
- 4.4. Consultation is a key part of the process. This work will include a series of engagement and consultation sessions with Members, organisations, groups and stakeholders in the towns. The type of consultation varies depending on local requirements and recent consultations within the town.
- 4.5. Although the Economy and Community Department is leading on the Plan, several Departments/Services across the Council provide services, plans or improvements within town centres. The Placemaking Plans will offer a cross-departmental tool to co-ordinate the Council's efforts. More broadly, the Placemaking Plans are an opportunity for other agencies to share their vision for towns. It is essential that the engagement work reflects this.
- 4.6. There will be an opportunity to present findings to Members, before sharing with the wider community. An Action Plan will be linked to each Placemaking Plan which will outline what the town's priority plans are, who will lead and what funding opportunities are available.

5. Operating Arrangements

- 5.1. The opportunities that have been identified highlight the need to coordinate the efforts in order to ensure that the plans contribute towards the same vision. Developing the Placemaking Plans is a perfect way to do this.
- 5.2. It is foreseen that the operating arrangements will include the Project Board, in order to include main stakeholders in towns. Regular contact with Local Members is envisaged to develop, implement and monitor the Placemaking Plans.
- 5.3. Within the Council, cross-departmental arrangements are anticipated, with relevant departments, in order to share information about plans that will be developed and implemented in Gwynedd towns.

6. Related Regeneration Programmes and Plans

- 6.1. It is anticipated that there will be opportunities to regenerate town centres by interlinking the work of creating a strategic direction with the funding programmes and plans already available. Some examples of opportunities like this are:

UK Government Schemes

- 6.2. The UK Government has established a series of funds to support the regeneration field. The table below outlines these:

Fund Title	Description
Levelling Up Fund	A capital programme with 3 themes; Town Centre Regeneration, Infrastructure and Culture. Opportunities for budgets up to £20m for mature and strategic plans.
Shared Prosperity Fund	A programme combining capital and revenue funding focusing on three priorities namely Community and Place, Supporting Local Businesses, and People and Skills.
Community Ownership Fund	A fund for community groups to seek funds to purchase and/or renew assets and facilities for the benefit of the community.

- 6.1. The Llewyrch o'r Llechi scheme was approved in the Levelling Up Fund's second round. The scheme will invest to maximise benefit from the recent designation of the North-West Wales Slate Valleys World Heritage Site. The £26m package includes a package of plans and specific developments in the town centres of Llanberis, Bethesda and Blaenau Ffestiniog.

6.2. A number of potential opportunities have been identified through the Shared Prosperity Fund to support town centre regeneration. Project plans and financial applications are being prepared for the schemes below:

- *Gwella Profiad Canol Trefi Gwynedd (Improving the experience in Gwynedd Town Centres)* - a series of cross-departmental interventions to improve image, upgrade facilities and promotional campaigns to increase excitement.
- *Diwylliesiant* - a plan promoting culture and a sustainable visiting economy for the benefit of Gwynedd's communities, environment and businesses.
- *Datblygu Busnes Gwynedd (Gwynedd Business Development)* - a series of funds and opportunities to support businesses to establish, develop and thrive.
- *Key Funds* - Funds to support communities and businesses to develop plans for the benefit of the County's communities.

Welsh Government Programmes

6.3. There are a number of opportunities through Welsh Government programmes. The main programme is Transforming Towns where there is financial support for mature plans. Town Centre Plans are essential to ensure investment.

6.4. There are further programmes and funding opportunities from the Welsh Government such as:

- Town Centre Loans;
- Smart Towns (Digital Towns Plan);
- Circular Economy Fund;
- Brilliant Basics Fund;
- Active Travel Scheme.

There are several other sources of funding such as the National Lottery that could support schemes in town centres.

6.5. There are wider opportunities and plans which include supporting third party partners to develop, apply for budgets and implement their plans for the benefit of the regeneration of the County's towns.

6.6. There are several programmes within the Council's departments which contribute towards the vision and these include the Housing Development Plan, the 'Ardal Ni' Tidying Up Team and various plans from the Environment Department in developing an urban fabric.

7. Recommendations

7.1. The Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider and provide comments on the following:

- Comments on the proposals and initial steps in preparing a Project Plan for the Gwynedd Lewyrchus theme: Regeneration of communities and town centres
- The arrangements for preparing Placemaking Plans;
- The basis for prioritising the regeneration of Gwynedd's town centres in response to the categories and types of towns specified in 2.5. and 2.6.

Town Centre Schemes supported 2022-2026

Name of Group/Organisation	Project Name	Grant	Project Value	Phase	Administered by Regeneration Programmes Service			
					Transforming Towns Programme	Levelling Up Fund	Gwynedd Ni Regeneration Fund	Pride in Place
County Plans								
Economy and Community Department, Cyngor Gwynedd	Small Properties Improvement Grants (Gwynedd Town Centres)	£500,000	£714,304	2022/23	✓			
Economy and Community Department, Cyngor Gwynedd	Empty Properties Window Vinyls (Gwynedd Town Centres)	£25,583	£25,583	2023/24			✓	
Highways, Engineering and YGC Department	Smart Street Furniture Scheme (Gwynedd Town Centres)	£67,450	£67,450	2025/26			✓	
Economy and Community Department, Cyngor Gwynedd	Slate Valley Schemes (Miscellaneous)	£125,000	£125,000	2025/26			✓	
Highways, Engineering and YGC Department	Improvements to Playing Fields (Miscellaneous)	£76,000	£76,000	2025/26			✓	
Highways, Engineering and YGC Department	Improvements to town footpaths	£240,000	£258,000	2026/27				
Environment Department	Bus Station Improvements (Miscellaneous)	£30,000	£30,000	2025/26			✓	
Economy and Community Department, Cyngor Gwynedd	Preparatory work on capital schemes	£592,791	£600,148	2023/24/25/26			✓	
Bangor Area								
Catchment Town and Community Councils	Various schemes by Town and Community Councils	£10,500	£10,500	2025/26			✓	
Bangor University	College Park, Bangor	£1,070,257	£2,050,082	2022/23	✓		✓	
Cwmni'r Frân Wen	Nyth, Bangor	£1,039,430	£3,916,888	2022/23	✓			
Economy and Community Department, Cyngor Gwynedd	Phase 1 Health and Well-being Centre	£992,230	£992,230	2024/25	✓			
Economy and Community Department, Cyngor Gwynedd	Bangor Signage Scheme	£45,861	£60,000	2024/25	✓		✓	
Economy and Community Department, Cyngor Gwynedd	Public Art Scheme	£7,530	£7,530	2024/25			✓	
Bangor City Council	Bangor Environmental Improvements	£101,975	£146,275	2024/25	✓			
Highways, Engineering and YGC Department	Roman Camp Schemes, Bangor	£24,073	£40,000	2025/26	✓		✓	
Economy and Community Department, Cyngor Gwynedd	Bangor Property Regeneration Scheme (BEPI)	£996,115	£2,256,657	2025/26	✓			
Economy and Community Department, Cyngor Gwynedd	External improvements to Storiell	£139,860	£199,800	2022/23	✓			
Grŵp Llandrillo Menai	Tŷ Cyfle, Bangor	£52,366	£1,199,946	2024/25	✓			
Adults Department, Cyngor Gwynedd	CCTV Upgrade Scheme	£139,530	£139,530	2024/25			✓	
Economy and Community Department, Cyngor Gwynedd	Pontio and Storiell Link	£40,000	£40,000	2025/26/27	✓			
Economy and Community Department, Cyngor Gwynedd	Bangor Property Improvement Grant	£155,000	£300,000	2026/27	✓			
Highways, Engineering and YGC Department	Bible Gardens Wall Upgrade	£20,000	£20,000	2024/25			✓	
Highways, Engineering and YGC Department	Improvements to College Road	£76,500	£76,500	2026/27				
Caernarfon Area								
Catchment Town and Community Councils	Various schemes by Town and Community Councils	£16,100	£16,100	2025/26			✓	
Housing and Property Department, Cyngor Gwynedd	Mona Building Upgrade	£218,887	£818,887	2024/25	✓			
Galeri Caernarfon Cyf	Empty Properties Scheme	£500,000	£1,190,000	2024/25	✓		✓	
Galeri Caernarfon Cyf	Canvas Scheme	£50,000	£110,700	2023/24	✓			
Caernarfon Harbour Trust	Slate Quay Environmental Improvements	£10,500	£15,000	2025/26	✓			
Llety Arall	Llety Arall improvements	£160,147	£165,100	2025/26	✓		✓	
Adults Department, Cyngor Gwynedd	CCTV Upgrade Scheme	£136,365	£136,365	2024/25			✓	
Housing and Property Department, Cyngor Gwynedd	Menai Bank Development, Caernarfon	£824,876	£824,876	2024/25	✓			
Housing and Property Department, Cyngor Gwynedd	Developing Lle Da	£665,000	£950,000	2022/23	✓			
Housing and Property Department, Cyngor Gwynedd	Cyngor Gwynedd Headquarters Property Improvements	£163,728	£163,728	2024/25			✓	
Highways, Engineering and YGC Department	Y Maes, Caernarfon Improvements	£50,000	£50,000	2025/26			✓	
Economy and Community Department	Improvements to Caernarfon Library	£350,000	£1,010,000	2026/27	✓			
Dyffryn Ogwen Area								
Catchment Town and Community Councils	Various schemes by Town and Community Councils	£20,935	£20,935	2025/26			✓	
Environment Department, Cyngor Gwynedd	Llwybr Ogwen to the Slate Landscape	£1,901,908	£2,261,908	2022/23		✓		
Partneriaeth Ogwen	Development of Yr Hen Bost	£1,946,121	£2,804,293	2022/23	✓	✓		
Partneriaeth Ogwen	Tregarth Community Centre Mural	£5,000	£5,000	2022/23		✓		
Adults Department, Cyngor Gwynedd	CCTV Upgrade Scheme	£3,748	£3,748	2024/25			✓	
Economy and Community Department, Cyngor Gwynedd	Bethesda Town Centre Regeneration Wales Slate	£489,614	£489,614	2022/23		✓		
Cwmni Tabernacl Cyf.	Neuadd Ogwen Upgrade	£648,973	£701,092	2022/23		✓		

Cwmni Tabernacl Cyf.	Tafarn y Fic	£47,540	£67,516	2022/23	✓			
Dyffryn Peris Area								
Catchment Town and Community Councils	Various schemes by Town and Community Councils	£44,021	£44,021	2025/26			✓	
Economy and Community Department, Cyngor Gwynedd	Gilfach Ddu, Parc Padarn Improvements	£2,207,000	£2,783,000	2022/23		✓	✓	✓
Economy and Community Department, Cyngor Gwynedd	Llanberis Town Centre Regeneration (Wales Slate)	£469,936	£469,936	2022/23		✓		
Llanberis Town Council	Outdoor gym	£24,678	£24,678	2022/23		✓		
Museum Wales	Development of the National Slate Museum (Phase 1)	£6,200,000	£12,400,000	2022/23		✓		
Economy and Community Department, Cyngor Gwynedd	Llanberis Events Infrastructure	£30,000	£30,000	2024/25			✓	
Bro Lleu and Nantlle Area								
Catchment Town and Community Councils	Various schemes by Town and Community Councils	£29,347	£29,347	2025/26			✓	
Adra	Tŷ Gwyrddfai Scheme	£230,000	£729,000	2022/23	✓		✓	
Siop Griffiths	Cymru Fydd, Penygroes	£158,373	£237,560	2022/23	✓			
Theatr Bara Caws	Development of Centre	£30,000	£30,000	2025/26			✓	
Economy and Community Department, Cyngor Gwynedd	Penygroes Town Centre Regeneration (Wales Slate)	£180,396	£180,396	2024/25			✓	
Gwynedd Council Economy and Community Department	Glynllifon business units and paths developments	£125,000	£125,000	2024/25			✓	
Pen Llŷn Area								
Catchment Town and Community Councils	Various schemes by Town and Community Councils	£27,649	£27,649	2025/26			✓	
Economy and Community Department	Upgrade the road to Abersoch beach	£30,000	£30,000	2025/26			✓	
Nefyn Town Council	Safeguarding the Penrallt path	£120,424	£134,424	2024/25			✓	
Melin Daron	Melin Daron Scheme (Phase 2)	£91,666	£445,000	2024/25			✓	
Menter Rabar	Upgrading the old ysgol Abersoch	£58,991	£98,991	2025/26			✓	
Highways, Engineering and YGC Department	Y Bont Public Toilets, Abersoch	£85,843	£85,843	2025/26			✓	
Pwllheli Area								
Catchment Town and Community Councils	Various schemes by Town and Community Councils	£21,698	£21,698	2025/26			✓	
Menter y Tŵr	Tŵr Scheme, Pwllheli (Phase 1)	£282,727	£854,911	2024/25	✓		✓	
Adults Department, Cyngor Gwynedd	CCTV Upgrade Scheme	£126,490	£126,490	2024/25			✓	
Economy and Community Department, Cyngor Gwynedd	Pwllheli Beach	£100,000	£120,000	2025/26			✓	✓
Economy and Community Department, Cyngor Gwynedd	Pwllheli Interpretation Panels	£14,656	£14,656	2024/25			✓	
Economy and Community Department, Cyngor Gwynedd	Cei'r Gogledd Upgrade	£284,631	£284,631	2024/25			✓	
Economy and Community Department	Pwllheli Town Centre Signage Scheme	£150,000	£150,000	2026/27	✓			
Economy and Community Department	Pwllheli Property Improvements Grant	£155,000	£300,000	2026/27	✓			
Porthmadog and Penrhyndeudraeth Area								
Catchment Town and Community Councils	Various schemes by Town and Community Councils	£38,954	£38,954	2025/26			✓	
Environment Department, Cyngor Gwynedd	Cob Crwn Improvements	£55,400	£130,000	2025/26	✓		✓	
Y Ganofan Committee	Improvements to y Ganolfan Porthmadog	£205,607	£315,152	2025/26	✓		✓	
Economy and Community Department, Cyngor Gwynedd	Morfa Bychan Beach Entrance	£60,000	£260,000	2025/26			✓	✓
Economy and Community Department, Cyngor Gwynedd	Porthmadog Town Centre Regeneration (Wales Slate)	£207,491	£207,491	2024/25			✓	
Adults Department, Cyngor Gwynedd	CCTV Upgrade Scheme	£2,978	£2,978	2024/25			✓	
Highways, Engineering and YGC Department	Maes Cricieth Upgrade	£99,999	£99,999	2024/25			✓	
Bro Ffestiniog Area								
Catchment Town and Community Councils	Various schemes by Town and Community Councils	£19,569	£19,569	2025/26			✓	
Welsh Government	Ffestiniog Path to the Slate Landscape	£1,782,186	£2,030,769	2022/23		✓		
Antur Stiniog	Town Centre Property Developments	£1,369,654	£1,584,654	2022/23	✓	✓		
Economy and Community Department, Cyngor Gwynedd	Blaenau Ffestiniog Town Centre Regeneration (Wales Slate)	£435,612	£435,612	2022/23		✓		
Economy and Community Department	Improvements to Blaenau Ffestiniog Libaray	£50,000	£50,000	2026/27				
Blaenau Ffestiniog Town Council	MUGA Blaenau Ffestiniog	£59,002	£59,002	2022/23		✓		
Antur Stiniog	Aelwyd yr Urdd	£32,500	£45,000	2022/23	✓			
Antur Stiniog	22/23 Market Street, Blaenau Ffestiniog	£70,000	£100,000	2022/23	✓			
Ardudwy Area								
Catchment Town and Community Councils	Various schemes by Town and Community Councils	£23,132	£23,122	2025/26			✓	
Dyffryn Ardudwy Community Council	Llidiart Car Park	£66,095	£66,095	2024/25			✓	
Harlech and Ardudwy Leisure	Keeping Afloat Scheme	£28,300	£138,180	2024/25			✓	
Dragon Theatr	Building sustainability upgrade	£10,000	£12,600	2023/24			✓	

Economy and Community Department, Cyngor Gwynedd	Public Art Scheme	£51,135	£51,135	2024/25			✓	
Highways, Engineering and YGC Department	North Promenade Public Toilets, Abermaw	£94,144	£94,144	2025/26			✓	
Economy and Community	Improvements to Barmouth Library	£50,000	£50,000	2026/7				
Highways, Engineering and YGC Department	Public Toilets Improvemenst	£75,000	£98,000	2026/27				
Bala Penllyn Area								
Catchment Town and Community Councils	Various schemes by Town and Community Councils	£32,417	£32,417	2025/26			✓	
Cwmni Pum Plwy Penllyn	Canolfan Bro Tegid	£208,721	£363,027	2024/25	✓		✓	
Bala Family Centre	Phase 2 - Bala Family Centre	£48,780	£51,781	2024/25			✓	
Economy and Community Department, Cyngor Gwynedd	Public Art Scheme	£10,858	£10,585	2024/5				
Dolgellau Area								
Catchment Town and Community Councils	Various schemes by Town and Community Councils	£36,201	£36,201	2025/26			✓	
Highways, Engineering and YGC Department	Eldon Square Improvements	£50,000	£84,000	2025/26				
Cwmni Tŷ Siamas	Tŷ Siamas Building Upgrade	£43,633	£43,633	2024/25			✓	
Bro Dysynni Area								
Catchment Town and Community Councils	Various schemes by Town and Community Councils	£40,425	£40,425	2025/26			✓	
Byw'n Iach	Tywyn Synthetic Pitch	£47,000	£374,269	2025/26			✓	
Economy and Community Department, Cyngor Gwynedd	Tywyn Town Centre Regeneration (Wales Slate)	£171,267	£171,267	2024/25			✓	
Economy and Community Department	Aberdyfi Jetty Upgrade	£50,000	£136,000	2025/26			✓	
Economy and Community Department	Improvements to Tywyn Library	£125,000	£450,000	2026/7				
Economy and Community Department	Tywyn Promenade Improvements	£35,000	£35,000	2026/27				
TOTAL		£31,842,079	£52,675,578					

wavehill

Social and economic research
Ymchwil cymdeithasol ac economaidd

wavehill.com

Evaluation of the Gwynedd Town Centres SPF Programme



Wedi ei ariannu gan
Llywodraeth y DU

Funded by
UK Government

Wavehill: Social and Economic Research

Our offices

- Wales office: 21 Alban Square, Aberaeron, Ceredigion, SA46 0DB (registered office)
- West England office: St Nicholas House, 31-34 High Street, Bristol, BS1 2AW
- North of England office: The Corner, 26 Mosley Street, Newcastle, NE1 1DF
- London office: 2.16 Oxford House, 49 Oxford Road, London, N4 3EY

Contact details

Tel: 0330 1228658

Email: wavehill@wavehill.com

Twitter: [@wavehilltweets](https://twitter.com/wavehilltweets)

More information

www.wavehill.com

<https://twitter.com/wavehilltweets>

© Wavehill: social and economic research.

This report is subject to copyright. The authors of the report (Wavehill: social and economic research) should be acknowledged in any reference that is made to its contents.

Report authors

Dr Huw Lloyd-Williams, Stuart Merali-Younger, Greta Dennis

Any questions in relation to this report should be directed in the first instance to Huw Lloyd-Williams (huw.lloyd-williams@wavehill.com)

Date of document: Draft 20/02/2025

Version: Final

Client details

Rhian Elin George (rhianelingorge@gwynedd.llyw.cymru)

Contents

1. Introduction.....	1
1.1 Evaluation Aims and Questions	1
1.2 Evaluation Approach.....	2
2. Programme Description.....	3
2.1 Need and Rationale for the Programme.....	3
2.2 Programme Aims	4
2.3 Inputs	4
2.4 Activities Delivered	4
2.5 Output and Outcome Indicators.....	6
2.6 Intended Impacts	7
3. Programme Performance	8
3.1 Performance against Spend Targets	8
3.2 Performance against Output & Outcome Targets.....	10
4. Programme Management and Delivery	13
4.1 Programme and Project Design	13
4.2 Delivery of Projects	14
4.3 Programme Management.....	15
4.4 Programme Monitoring	15
5. Programme Impacts	16
5.1 Evidence of Early Impacts	16
5.2 Evidence of Longer Term Impacts.....	17
5.3 Wider Benefits of the Programme.....	18
5.4 Impact Case Studies	19
6. Conclusions & Lessons.....	22
6.1 Lessons Learnt.....	24

1. Introduction

The Gwynedd Town Centre Scheme is a £1.91m scheme aiming to support the revitalisation of town centres across Gwynedd, linking to the Communities and Place investment priority of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The scheme funded activities relating to public art and environmental improvements, street furniture, enhanced signage, enhanced community safety, pop-up shops, marketing and campaigns, and a number of feasibility studies to support potential projects that could enliven town centres.

The programme responds to the significant challenges facing town centres and high streets struggling to attract footfall in Gwynedd, leading to empty premises, worsening town centre fabric and ultimately making centres less vibrant and reducing pride in place. These trends stem from a range of factors, including longer term trends of the growth of online and out-of-town retail, but also more recent challenges including cost of living increases and the longer-term impacts of COVID-19 on consumer behaviours.

Wavehill was appointed to undertake an evaluation of the programme covering progress against targets, process review and analysis of impacts generated by the investments. This report is the final evaluation of the programme.

1.1 Evaluation Aims and Questions

The evaluation sets out to test the relevance and appropriateness of programme design, performance against targets, effectiveness of management and programme impacts. A series of more detailed evaluation questions are set out for the study in the table below.

Table 1-1: Evaluation Questions

Topic	Evaluation Question
Relevance and Appropriateness of Programme Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Did the programme respond to clear socio-economic challenges facing the area?• Were the programme and individual projects well designed to address those challenges?• How were decisions made about programme design?• Did the programme or individual projects change design over the course of delivery? If so, why, and did that affect their ability to respond to the programme aims?• Did any aspects of the delivery context change over the course of delivery? If so, how did that affect programme relevance and appropriateness?
Performance Against Targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How did the programme perform against its spend targets?• What progress did the project make towards the achievement of its output and outcome indicators?• What factors explain variations, including under- or over-performance against contracted targets?

Topic	Evaluation Question
Programme Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How were the individual projects delivered? • How effective was the delivery approach for each project? • What worked well or less well in project delivery? • What were the decision-making processes structures for the programme? • How effectively did these structures and mechanisms work? • How are delivery, spend and impact achievements measured, monitored and evaluated?
Programme Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What outcomes and impacts has, or will the programme deliver? • To what extent has the programme delivered against its original objectives? • What wider added value has the programme generated? • What, if any, unexpected or unintended outcomes or impacts have occurred?

1.2 Evaluation Approach

The evaluation has involved the following key tasks:

- Review of background documents for the programme, including the original business case and key delivery documents.
- Analysis of programme management information, including spend and output data.
- Surveying 11 project leads to gather insights on their experience of delivery and impacts of the investments (representing over two thirds of the 16 lead individuals delivering projects funded through this programme).
- Surveying 12 other key stakeholders, including representatives from town and county councils and other delivery partners, to capture their perspectives on programme delivery and impacts.
- Undertaking three more detailed case studies with funded projects to get more detailed insights around early impacts generated by these investments.

2. Programme Description

This section sets out an overview of the Gwynedd Town Centres programme, covering a summary of the original need and rationale for the project, aims and objectives, inputs, activities delivered, output and outcome performance indicators, and the ultimate outcomes the project is seeking to achieve.

2.1 Need and Rationale for the Programme

The key need and rationale underpinning the project's design included the following:

- **Town centres and high streets struggling to attract footfall in Gwynedd.** The challenges facing high streets and town centres in Gwynedd mirror those across the UK, with out of-town and internet shopping, as well as the impacts of cost-of-living increases and the longer-term impacts of COVID-19 on consumer behaviours, all contributing to more challenging conditions, and leading to reduced footfall.
- **Quality of town centre spaces declining, further adding to challenges.** In many cases the reductions in footfall mean reductions in investments in public realm and increases in empty premises. Ultimately this can lead to reduced quality environments and reduced pride in place.
- **Town Centre Regeneration is one of the priorities of the Cyngor Gwynedd Plan 2023-28.** Sitting beneath this is a Gwynedd Regeneration Framework and 13 Area Plans, which identify individual priorities for each area. Across all plans is a common need for investment to regenerate town centres, which provides a key driver for this programme.
- **Need to find new uses in town centres and high streets.** This investment is needed to help transform and re-purpose new uses for town centres and high streets, to increase footfall, vibrancy and pride in place again. The aim of the programme investment (alongside wider activities) is to upgrade infrastructure and fabric and encourage prospective investors and users to bring new activities, which could include education, health, the arts, attractions, recreation, events, employment or living space. Cyngor Gwynedd recognise that any investments resulting from these improvements will lead to bringing empty buildings back into use, creating jobs and bring vibrancy back to town centres.
- **Investments will bring wider benefits contributing to Cyngor Gwynedd priorities.** As well as the regeneration benefits, the plans will be delivered on a cross-departmental basis, such that they also add value to other priorities within the Council Plan, such as the Clean and Tidy Communities theme and the Promoting our Culture Plan and the Sustainable Visitor Economy.

2.2 Programme Aims

The key aims of the programme are to:

- Enhancing the quality of the public realms in Gwynedd town centres and high streets
- Increase perceptions of safety in these spaces
- Support the development of new uses and users of town centre and high street spaces
- Attracting greater footfall and spend in these spaces.

2.3 Inputs

The Gwynedd Town Centre Scheme is a £1.91m scheme, funded primarily through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (£1.86m) alongside £45,654 match funding from the Welsh Government Transforming Towns Programme. Overall management and delivery of the programme was led by Cyngor Gwynedd.

2.4 Activities Delivered

The programme overall originally comprised a package of 18 projects to be supported. Over time some of these projects were identified as unable to go ahead, with funds reallocated to other viable projects that were brought forward. The projects and status, as well as the original and latest funding allocations are summarised in the table below.

Table 2-1: Summary of Activities Delivered

Project Name	Original Value (£k)	Latest Value (£k)	Description and Status
Original Projects			
1. Prynu'n Lleol	45.0	39.8	A county campaign to encourage residents of Gwynedd and beyond to spend in the local area through specific online campaigns and using social media. The foundation of this work is already in place by Cyngor Gwynedd. Status: Complete
2. Bangor Signage Scheme	25.6	27.2	Development, production and installation of 'finger post' signs in Bangor City Centre in accordance with the Bangor Signage Strategy Status: Complete
3. Community Safety Plan	456.3	456.3	Installing Closed Circuit Television in Bangor City Centre, Caernarfon town centre and Pwllheli town centre together with ensuring improvements to the lighting poles will enable the equipment to be installed in order to improve the safety of these towns Status: Live

Project Name	Original Value (£k)	Latest Value (£k)	Description and Status
Original Projects			
4. Bangor Health and Wellbeing Centre Economic Impact Study	15.0	26.0	Commissioning a Health and Wellbeing Centre Economic Impact Study for the Menai Centre site in Bangor. Status: Complete
5. Pen Llyn Area Feasibility Study, Caernarfon	70.0	-	In the wake of the development and opening of the Caernarfon Bypass, a commissioning and study which looks at the feasibility and options for the Pen Llyn area, Caernarfon and that focuses specifically on the viaduct and the car park Status: Not taken Forward
6. Cei Llechi Feasibility Study	60.0	47.0	Commissioning and study which looks at the feasibility and options for the Cei Llechi area, Caernarfon Status: Live
7. Pendeitch Feasibility Study	20.0	-	Commissioning and study looking at feasibility and options for the Pendeitch Gallery Building Caernarfon. Status: Not taken Forward
8. North Quay	175.0	284.6	Environmental and visual improvements to the link between Pwllheli town centre and Glan Don along North Quay Status: Live
9. Tŷ Siamas	19.4	19.4	Upgrading the Tŷ Siamas building, Dolgellau in accordance with the application submitted to the SPF Regeneration Fund Status: Complete
10. Llewyrch o'r Llechi 2	525.0	525.0	A scheme which includes art commissions, signage schemes and small infrastructure in the town centre of Tywyn, Porthmadog and Penygroes to add value to the work that will be done in the town centre of Llanberis, Bethesda and Blaenau Ffestiniog as a result of investment Bro Prosperity Fund Status: Live
11. Maes Cricieth Plan	33.6	60.0	Environmental improvements to Maes Cricieth Status: Complete
12. County Bins and Benches Upgrading Scheme	66.0	67.0	Upgrading the provisions of bins and benches across the main towns of the County offering innovative provision in some places Status: Complete
13. Vinyl Plan	50.0	18.0	Develop and implement a plan to install vinyl in vacant properties in Gwynedd town centres Status: Complete
14. Pop - Up Shop Plan	50.0	-	Develop and implement a plan to establish a pop-up shop plan in Bangor city center in conjunction with the University / Coleg Llandrillo Menai Status: Not taken Forward

Project Name	Original Value (£k)	Latest Value (£k)	Description and Status
Original Projects			
15. Eisteddfod Area Vinyl Plan	8.0	8.0	Develop and implement a plan to install vinyl in vacant properties in the town centers of the Llŷn and Eifionydd Eisteddfod area Status: Complete
16. Art Scheme	100.0	80.0	Develop and implement an art scheme in the town centre of Gwynedd Status: Live
17. Research Study	3.0	3.0	Commissioning and study which looks at the baseline and data for the town centres of Gwynedd Status: Complete
18. Project Manager Costs	75.0	62.5	Appoint a Project Manager to coordinate the work. Status: Live
Additional Projects			
19. Caernarfon signage	-	15.0	Commissioning a pedestrian signage strategy for Caernarfon Town Status: Complete
20. Porthmadog Centre	-	10.0	Commission an architect to develop new designs and costing for the Centre, which could increase the use of the centre if designs could be implemented in the future. Status: Complete
21. Bro Tegid Centre	-	64.5	Upgrading Bro Tegid Centre building, Bala in accordance with the application submitted to the SPF Regeneration Fund Status: Complete
22. Caernarfon and Bangor Bollards	-	1.2	Upgrade some of the road safety bollard in Caernarfon and Bangor Status: Complete
23. Bangor Biblical Wall	-	20.0	Upgrade the wall surrounding the Bangor Biblical Garden in Bangor Status: Complete
24. Llanberis infrastructure	-	30.0	Improve infrastructure for events in Llanberis Status: Live
Total	1,797	1,865	

Note: Against the budget of £1.91m, this leaves a remaining £0.05m still to be allocated.

2.5 Output and Outcome Indicators

The project set out four output indicators and three outcome indicators as set out in the table below.

Intervention Category	Indicator	Target
Outputs		
W1: Improvements to Town Centres and the High Street	Number of projects completed successfully	22
	Number of amenities/conveniences created or improved	2
	Number of feasibility studies developed as part of support	4
W8: Funding to develop and promote wider campaigns and experiences which entice people to visit the area	Number of people reached	10,000
Outcomes		
W1: Improvements to Town Centres and the High Street	Better perception of amenities/conveniences	200
	Better perception of safety	300
W8: Funding to develop and promote wider campaigns and experiences which entice people to visit the area	Increase number of visitors	10,000

2.6 Intended Impacts

Key impact indicators that the programme will eventually seek to impact positively on include the following:

- Enhance the quality of place in town centres and high streets
- Reduce numbers of vacant premises in town centres and high streets
- Reduced crime and anti-social behaviour in town centres and high streets
- Increased feeling of safety in town centres and high streets
- Increased footfall in town centres and high streets
- Enhance community pride in place in town centres and high streets
- Increased local spend in town centres and high streets
- New private and public investments made in town centres and high streets.

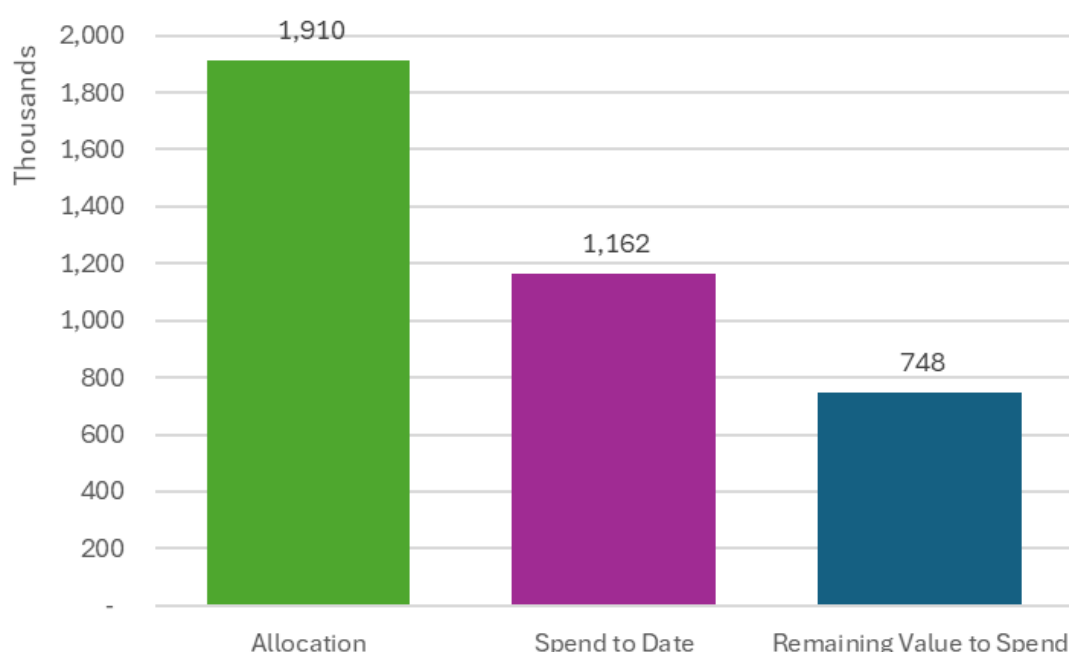
3. Programme Performance

This section outlines the expenditure and output / outcome performance targets and what has been achieved at the time of this evaluation at an overall programme and individual project level. This takes data up to January 2025.

3.1 Performance against Spend Targets

The charts below outline overall programme performance up to January 2025. This shows that against a current programme value of £1.91m, a total of 61% of expenditure (£1.16m) has been utilised to date. The remaining £0.75m is expected to be utilised over the remaining delivery period through to the end of February 2025.

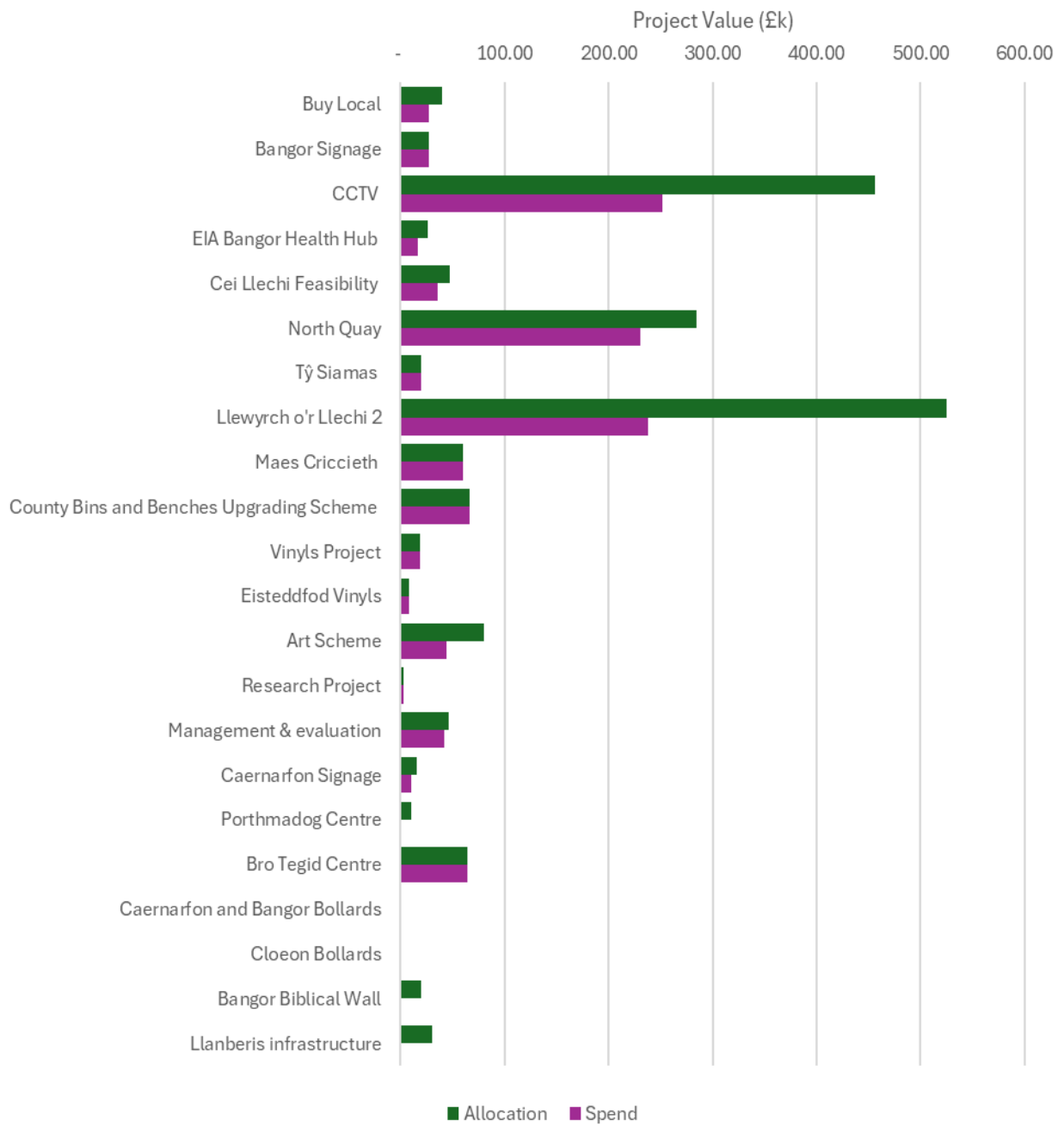
Figure 3-1: Overview of Programme Spend against Targets



The subsequent chart below breaks this down at an individual project level (note projects that were discontinued are not shown on this chart). This highlights that many of the new projects (towards the bottom of the chart) are not yet showing as having incurred any expenditure, these are mostly relatively small-scale projects and thus completing that expenditure in the remaining timescales appears feasible.

The two largest projects where there is still significant outstanding expenditure are the CCTV and Llewyrch o’r Llechi 2 projects. For both projects there is still over 200k still to be utilised on these projects by the end of February 2025. Nevertheless, in discussions with Cyngor Gwynedd, we understand that it is still fully expected that these and other projects will fully utilise funding by the end of the delivery period.

Figure 3-2: Overview of Project Level Spend to date against Targets



3.2 Performance against Output & Outcome Targets

The programme established a relatively tight set of outputs and outcome targets for the programme. An overview of these targets and progress against them is provided in the table below.

Table 3-1: Summary of Progress against Output and Outcome Targets

Indicator	Target	Actual To Date	Expected by Programme End	Description
Outputs				
Number of projects completed successfully	22	14	27	The programme remains on track to achieve this
Number of amenities/conveniences created or improved	2	4	5	Tŷ Siamas, Maes Criccieth, Canolfan Bro Tegid and the Crazy Golf (Part of the Llewyrch o'r Llechi 2 scheme) have met the output indicator, and the Cei'r Gogledd projects is on track to be finished.
Number of feasibility studies developed as part of support	4	7	11	The projects supporting Bangor Health and Wellbeing Centre Economic Impact Study, 2x Cei Llechi Feasibility Study, Concept designs for Cei'r Gogledd Pwllheli, Caernarfon Signage Strategy, Designs for Porthmadog Centre, Research Report and the Signage Strategy for Penygroes, Porthmadog and Towyn (as part of the Llewyrch i'r Llechi 2 scheme) are considered to have contributed to this indicator. Two other projects: Pen Llyn Area Feasibility Study and Pendeitch Feasibility Study were originally planned but were not taken forward
Number of people reached	10,000	100,300		This relates to numbers of people reached by campaigns and marketing especially in relation to the Prynu'n Lleol project. It should be noted however that the indicator definition is 'Number of people directly impacted by the UKSPF intervention', which is not a very clearly defined indicator in the instance of a marketing campaign.

Indicator	Target	Actual To Date	Expected by Programme End	Description
Outcomes				
Better perception of amenities/conveniences	200	725		For this indicator, Cyngor Gwynedd has retrospectively sought to gather feedback on perceptions of projects and their impacts on town centres in Penrhyndeudraeth, Bangor, Caernarfon and Bala, where 725 people noted that the Vinyls, Bangor Signage and Bala Mural had provided an increased perception of the towns' amenities. The survey questions were distributed through the local authority website and social media. Note: these findings do not fully meet the indicator description which suggests those individuals needed to report that the amenities were good / very good as well as improved, which the survey did not collect information on. Furthermore, a significant proportion of respondents also indicated there had not been improvements in amenities.
Better perception of safety	300	unknown		This indicator related to changes in peoples feeling of safety, however was not captured.
Increase number of visitors	10,000	unknown		This indicator related to numbers of additional visitors attracted linked to campaigns and marketing, however no baseline or actual visitor numbers have been collected as part of the programme.

While capturing output and outcome targets for this type of intervention can be challenging (particular for outcomes where there can be a lag between projects completing and the outcomes being realised), there are some important lessons to take from this programme with respect to these indicators:

- **Clarity on what the programme will deliver** – ideally the output and outcome indicators should be selected based on the most important things the programme will deliver. Although not everything can be quantified in a target, the targets should give a clear sense of what the programme has achieved. The existing indicators could for example have been supplemented with an indicator around number of town centres or high streets with enhanced public realm, which would capture a key output of what the funding has delivered.

- **Setting indicators where it is clear what is being measured** - the outcome indicators around better perceptions are an example where the meaning of the indicator could have been made clearer in relation to this project.
- **Planning for how the required data will be captured** – in the case of better perception of safety and increased number of visitors, the programme had not set out at the outset how these would be measured, and so these figures were not tracked over time, meaning data on these indicators has not been available for the evaluation.
- **Planning in advance to capture baseline evidence before the project activities begin, where needed** – linked to the points above, in the case of several indicators, as well as defining how indicators will be measured and putting in place monitoring approaches throughout delivery, some of the indicators require baseline data, in order that changes can be analysed pre and post intervention, which was not done for this programme.

4. Programme Management and Delivery

This section of the report sets out a summary of key aspects of management and delivery including overview of project and programme design, delivery of individual projects and what worked well or less well, programme management and monitoring.

The analysis draws on desk-based review by the evaluation team, alongside engagement with individual project leads and wider stakeholders, including town councils, property owners involved in funded projects and delivery partners for the projects.

4.1 Programme and Project Design

On the whole the suite of funded projects has strongly aligned with the original identified rationale and need for the programme. The rationale, as set out in Section 2, outlined aims to address declining footfall, spend, vibrancy and pride in town centres and high streets through new events/activities, enhanced public realm and safer space, and new premises investment.

The nature of supported projects strongly aligned with those aims, for example:

- **More attractive and safer public spaces** – such as the Bangor CCTV investment, Pwllheli North Quay environmental and visual enhancement project and Llewyrch o'r Llechi 2 funding art commissions and signage in Tywyn, Porthmadog and Penygroes.
- **Actions aimed at attracting and enabling new investment** – such as feasibility studies for the Bangor city centre Health and Wellbeing Centre, and Cei Llechi – analysing investment possibilities for an area of Caernarfon.
- **Attracting new visitors and spend** – such as the Prynu'n Lleol buy local marketing campaign.

Out of the eleven project leads surveyed for the evaluation, all indicated that the projects had delivered what had been originally planned: seven indicating this was the case 'to a great extent' and four stating this was the case 'to some extent', reflecting that some aspects of the original plans might have altered partially.

Across the suite of funded projects there were some changes to activities, including adjusted budgets on some projects, some projects which could not be taken forward, and others that were brought forward to utilise underspend created by those withdrawn. The status of each project is outlined in Section 3. Given the range of projects funded, a degree of adjustment would be expected over the course of delivery, and the review of replacement projects indicates the programme continued to fund projects which were well aligned to the needs and rationale for the programme.

4.2 Delivery of Projects

Feedback from project delivery leads and other stakeholders involved in project delivery reveal a range of common factors that were important to effective project delivery for town centre regeneration projects – in some cases these reflect factors that were broadly positive for this programme, and in other cases reflect areas where approaches could have been strengthened.

- **Delivery timescales were challenging for several projects.** More than half of project leads surveyed noted that delivery timescales were a challenge for their projects, particularly noting early delays in approval. Across different projects, delivery leads highlighted that timescales needed to factor in community and stakeholder consultations, developing partner agreements, recruitment and procurement processes, as well as design and delivery of projects. While projects were on the whole able to find ways to achieve delivery within timescales, this sometimes meant bringing in additional resources or reducing some aspects of consultation / engagement.
- **Community engagement and local stakeholder consultations were very important.** Most project leads highlighted the importance of community and key local stakeholder engagement in design and delivery of projects of this nature. As noted above, where this was reduced because of time pressures, this was not ideal for optimising project delivery.
- **Engaging certain stakeholders could be challenging.** While many projects highlighted great value secured through engaging local communities and stakeholders in project design and delivery, for some projects, additional challenges of engaging certain stakeholders was a challenge to effective delivery. This was particularly relevant for projects seeking to work with private building owners, where they were not always possible to reach or engage. In some cases failure to contact these individuals curtailed activities that could be delivered on the project, for example with the Vinyls project.
- **Incorporating technical expertise was important for several projects.** While not necessary for every project, for many of the projects the involvement of externally procured organisations bringing particular expertise relevant to the project was particularly important, and could add significant value to design as well as delivery, if brought in at a sufficiently early stage.
- **Cost inflation was a challenge for some projects.** Three of the project leads particularly noted that increases in costs from initial funding bid to approval and delivery stages affected their projects. Where this was the case, adjustments had to be made to project deliverables or seeking additional funding to address the shortfall.

- **Planning for long term sustainability was recognised as highly important.** All projects were required to have clear exit strategies, typically involving maintenance agreements signed by a lead organisation. This will be critical to ensuring longer term benefits can be generated by the funded projects.

4.3 Programme Management

On the whole, the feedback on management of the programme by Cyngor Gwynedd was very positive, from both project delivery leads and wider stakeholders engaged with the programme.

As part of the early phases of delivery, project applicants were required to submit applications forms for the funding, which went through a scrutiny and approvals process – assessing quality of the proposals and fit to local needs, before funding was awarded to the successful projects.

There were some concerns raised by stakeholders regarding this process, with some noting that they felt the length of application forms and amount of information was too great, and others highlighting that the time taken between submitting applications and receiving approvals was too long. A number did acknowledge however that delays in the early stages were largely related to delays in initial funding approval, linked back to decisions at national Government level.

Beyond this early stage however, stakeholders were broadly very positive about Cyngor Gwynedd's role in managing the programme, with seven out of the 11 project delivery leads specifically noting strong communications on an ongoing basis from Cyngor Gwynedd about the programme, and some also noting feeling that the support from the programme management team was strong.

4.4 Programme Monitoring

As part of the programme requirements for the funding, Cyngor Gwynedd were required to provide update reports on the programme back to the main fund team, and so in turn required monitoring updates from individual projects. In feedback from project delivery leads, a small number of respondents highlighted a feeling that the requirements for monitoring and reporting were too great and were taking time away from delivery. As a requirement from funders though, there may be limitations in the potential to reduce that administrative requirement.

More broadly on capturing key output and outcome indicators for the programme, there was a limited set of measurables, and the programme delivery team did not put approaches in place to ensure measurement of these indicators at an early stage, meaning data for several of these indicators is not available. Further details on this are set out in Section 3.

5. Programme Impacts

This section sets out a summary of evidence of impacts delivered by the programme to date. The nature of town centre regeneration projects is often that the types of impacts they can generate may not occur immediately after, and so in many cases, it is only intermediate outcomes and more qualitative and anecdotal impacts that can be captured at this stage.

The analysis draws on insights from project delivery leads and wider delivery stakeholders, as well as evidence from deeper dive case studies involving further interviews with project partners for four of the key funded projects.

In the sections below we have split the analysis of impacts into three main sections – the first covering early impacts experienced, the second focused on evidence for longer term impacts, and the third covering wider impacts achieved by the programme. The four case studies are then set out at the end of this section.

5.1 Evidence of Early Impacts

Evidence gathered from the supported projects has highlighted the following early impacts witnessed:

- **More attractive town centres.** Several of the funded projects supported enhanced attractiveness of town centres and high streets, through investments such as public realm improvements, enhanced signage and new murals. Four out of the 11 project delivery leads surveyed particularly noted this as a key early impact of schemes.
- **Increased feeling of safety.** This was noted most significantly in the case of the new CCTV installed in Bangor city centre, where the delivery lead noted that anecdotal feedback from businesses and the public had been positive about enhanced feelings of safety.
- **Enhanced digital accessibility.** Mainly associated with one project that involved introducing new benches to the town centre which incorporated wifi connectivity, bringing enhanced digital accessibility within the town centre.
- **Increased footfall.** Connected to all of the above, as well as through projects that encouraged new activities in town centres, such as the investment to support Crazy Golf in Porthmadog, a key ultimate aim is to support footfall growth and increased vibrancy in town centres and high streets. In many areas the impact of town centre enhancements can take time to translate to increased visits and footfall, and where there are footfall counters, there has not always been sufficient time passed to capture changes with these. However, at this stage there is anecdotal evidence of this beginning to be seen, for example in Bangor City Centre, where project delivery leads have reported beginning to see an upturn in footfall and new business activity over the last year, linked both to projects supported under this programme, but also in combination with wider investments, linked to the area regeneration plan.

- **Enhanced community pride and wellbeing.** Again, linked to the enhanced attractiveness and vibrancy of the centre, an ultimate outcome of the programmes was to support enhanced pride and wellbeing for local people connected with their town centres and high streets. Again, at this stage, there is anecdotal evidence that the interventions are translating through to this feeling, for example project stakeholders involved with mural schemes cited examples of town centre users stopping to engage with the delivery team and comment on the attractiveness of the new art work and express feelings of pride in these enhancements.

5.2 Evidence of Longer-Term Impacts

A significant observation made by a number of consultees was the recognition that the scale of interventions under this programme were relatively small, compared against the substantial challenge of declining town centres and high streets, which is a major challenge across all of Wales and the wider UK and affected by much larger economic and cultural factors. There is therefore a risk that a series of small and potentially disparate projects could fail to make a significant difference given the scale of challenge facing town centres and high streets.

There are a number of factors however which indicate the potential for the interventions under this programme to contribute to longer term and more substantial impacts, including the following.

- **Substantial infrastructure investments.** Some of the interventions made represent substantial longer-term investments that can make a notable difference to quality of town centres and high streets. The investments in CCTV in Bangor city centre (£456k), and the enhancements to North Quay in Pwllheli (£285k) represent important examples of these.
- **Feasibility studies that can enable larger investments.** The challenge of finding new and innovative ways to enliven high streets and town centres can be challenging, and take time, as well as detailed research and planning, to develop sustainable facilities and service offerings. Where this funding has been used to move forward potentially important new facilities, such as the feasibility analysis around the Bangor Health and Wellbeing Centre, this has significant potential to have a substantial impact, should that facility eventually move forward, partly enabled by the work supported by this programme.
- **Contribution to larger regeneration strategies.** Cyngor Gwynedd has invested significantly in work to develop strategic regeneration plans for areas across the county which highlight priority activities for investment that can complement one another and add greatest value in addressing and reversing decline in town centres and high streets. Where funded interventions are closely tied to those plans, they are likely to have greatest strategic impacts. The Bangor signage case study below is an example where the signage itself may be unlikely to significantly reverse negative footfall trends, but alongside a range of other interventions in the city centre, project

leads have identified that some of those trends around footfall and business activities are starting to reverse and grow again.

- **Developing connections between local authorities and town centre building owners.** Given the importance of finding uses for vacant building in town centres and high streets to enhance vibrancy and reduce perceptions of decline, some stakeholders noted the importance of small-scale schemes such as the Vinyls projects in creating new connections between property owners and local authorities or other partners. While having a smaller direct effect, the benefit of initiating or enhancing those relationships could have a more significant longer-term effect.
- **Activating communities and engaging them more in town centre development.** Similarly to the point above, the engagement of community groups in supporting town centre vibrancy can have a highly significant effect, so even relatively modest funding that better engages and stimulates activity of community groups in developing and delivering projects, events and activities that enliven and enhance the environment of a town centre or high street, can lead to more significant longer-term benefits.

5.3 Wider Benefits of the Programme

Beyond the core delivery impacts, the evaluation highlighted a range of wider benefits generated through the funded projects, including the following.

- **Development of Community Group Engagement and Project Work.** A number of project stakeholders noted that the projects have encouraged more people in the community to get involved, supported enhanced community cohesion and created potential for more of those from the community to engage with future projects.
- **Engagement and Enhanced Wellbeing of Volunteers.** A number of projects involved volunteer inputs, creating the potential for individuals to learn new skills, meet new people and gain satisfaction from working on local projects. Work on some of the town centre murals was an example where volunteers were involved in painting the mural, including young people and adults with disabilities, and through feedback to the delivery teams indicated that painting the mural contributed positively to their well-being.

5.4 Impact Case Studies

Case Study: Bangor Signage

Project Overview:

The £27,000 project involved development, production and installation of 24 'finger post' signs in Bangor City Centre in accordance with the Bangor Signage Strategy which was developed as part of the Bangor Masterplan.

Delivery:

- **Appointing Contractor** - After some early tendering challenges, an experienced company was successfully appointed to manufacture and install the finger posts at agreed locations in the city centre. One lesson was that a company with more experience with Welsh place names could have been beneficial.
- **Stakeholder Collaboration** between Cyngor Gwynedd and Bangor City Council was strong, with good communication and clarity on respective responsibilities. Bringing the relevant stakeholders together early was seen as an important positive aspect of the approach.
- **In the short term** the enhanced signage boosted the attractiveness of the city centre, helping people to navigate the city and encouraging people to walk around the city more - with sign posts stating the travel time on foot, improving awareness of accessibility on foot.
- **In the medium term** this connects well with wider activity around a tourism strategy for the city, being developed with North Wales Tourism, and will boost visitor economy activity by providing important wayfinding for visitors.
- **In the longer term**, the project team recognise that this needs to be part of a wider strategy to enhance the centre, to attract more visitors and increase vibrancy. This project complements wider work such as development of a new city map, funds for building improvements and a deep clean of the high street. Each has contributed to making the city centre more attractive, and there are early signs of an uplift in footfall and new businesses starting up.

Case Study: Bangor Mural

Project Overview:

The project commissioned artist Jess Bala to work with the community and paint a mural at the end of the Gable wall of the Annedd Ni building. The Anheddhau's activity centre, Annedd Ni, is a not for profit, charitable organisation which empowers adults with support needs.

Delivery:

- **Appointing the Artist:** Following expressed interest of a mural in Bangor's town centre by Bangor City Council, the community were consulted about the style and content of the mural. The mural brief was then drafted to be commissioned through Creative Gwynedd. This involved a scoring panel with representatives from Cyngor Gwynedd, Bangor City Council, and the Annedd Ni building owners which subsequently chose the artist, Jess Bala. Good communication between the Councils and relevant stakeholders mean project coordination was smooth.
- **Community Consultation:** A series of workshops were organised between the community, the Anheddau charity and Jess Bala to get a better understanding of what community members wanted the mural to be like. This was a strong element of the project as it ensured that local people were involved practically within the project and a collaborative approach to delivery was taken. However, tight timescales for planning workshops meant that attendance was relatively limited. With more time the project would have liked to have engaged more widely to consult on the project idea.

Impacts:

- **In the short term** the mural improved the appearance of the town, raised sense of pride in the community and raised awareness of the culture and history of the area.
- **In the medium term** the mural has sparked an interest in community art, therefore if there is more funding, there is likely to be more demand for more community art projects such as other murals in the town.
- **In the long term** the mural has the potential to attract more visitors into the town through the promotion of the area's cultural and historical attractions including the slate heritage and the Cathedral.

Case Study: Crazy Golf

Project Overview:

Due to the Golff Giamocs site being very run down and in need of renovation, the project involved regeneration of the Golff Giamocs site to enhance the site and add interest to the park so that it could be utilised properly by the residents and visitors of Porthmadog.

Delivery:

- **Communication between staff at Cyngor Gwynedd and delivery partners** was effective which meant that the site renovation brief was understood clearly and as a result, the tendering process went smoothly, with everything being costed correctly. This also meant that the budget was met, and everything was completed on time.
- **Ability to add extra elements to the project:** Due to there being no extra costs or delays to the project, the delivery team were able to add extra elements to complement the project. These included a website for the golf site as well as information boards and banners explaining the history of Porthmadog and its role in the slate industry.

Impacts:

- **In the short term** it has improved Porthmadog's town centre visually, given residents and visitors an additional activity to do and raised awareness about the culture and heritage of the area through the information boards and banners around the golf site.
- **In the medium term** the enhanced visual appeal of the Porthmadog's community infrastructure and increased cultural and historical awareness of the town can enhance community pride.
- **In the long-term** stakeholders recognise that there may be a change in the perception of Porthmadog among residents and visitors, potentially supporting an increase in visitor numbers to the town.

6. Conclusions & Lessons

This section draws together the key findings from the evaluation, focused around the four main evaluation question topics: relevance and appropriateness of programme design, performance against targets, programme management and delivery, and programme impacts. A series of lessons to take from the evaluation that can be useful for future interventions is set out at the end.

6.1 Conclusions

Relevance and Appropriateness of Programme Design

Town centres and high streets in Gwynedd, as across Wales and the rest of the UK, are facing major challenges of falling footfall, declining town centre environments and reduced vibrancy and pride in places. Regeneration of these town centres is one of the priorities of the Cyngor Gwynedd Plan, and underneath that, of the Gwynedd Regeneration Framework and 13 Area Plans. The need for investment to deliver these plans underpins the rationale for this UKSPF-funded programme.

The evaluation has found that the projects funded under this programme have strong alignment with the identified need and rationale, most notably supporting interventions to create more attractive and safer public spaces, attracting and enabling new investment, and attracting new visitors and spend.

Overall, the programme has remained highly relevant and appropriate to the identified needs. Changes to the suite of funded projects has only arisen where costings of certain projects have changed, or certain projects have been identified as unfeasible, therefore creating available budget for alternative schemes to come forward.

Performance Against Targets

The scheme has a total budget of £1.91m of which £1.86m (97%) was from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. **By mid-January 2025 (the timing of this evaluation report), 61% of that funding (£1.16m) had been spent**, with £0.75m remaining to be spent. While this leaves a significant value left to spend in the remaining delivery through to the end of February 2025, **the client anticipates that the programme will meet this total spend value in that remaining period.**

The main output targets for the programme are relatively straightforward and relate to the numbers of projects completed. **The target for overall number of projects completed (22) is expected to be reached by the end of February 2025**, also the sub-target around number of feasibility studies (target of 4) has been exceeded to date (7) and predicted to reach 11 by the end of the programme.

The outcome targets proved to be more challenging to measure, and two of the three did not have baselines set before interventions began, meaning accurate measures for these outcomes will not be possible. The evaluation report outlines lessons to take from this around ensuring greater clarity around what the programme will deliver and ensuring this translates to appropriate output and outcome measures. This requires being clear on how indicators will be measured and how required data will be captured, and capturing baseline evidence before the project activities begin, where needed.

Programme Management and Delivery

The evaluation drew out a broad range of positive factors as well as a range of challenges encountered in delivering the funded interventions. The most significant factor, identified by over half of project delivery leads was the **challenge of tight delivery timescales**, particularly when taking account of the need for community and stakeholder consultations, developing partner agreements, recruitment and procurement processes, as well as design and delivery of projects.

Key aspects that were noted as effective and important to success included the **value and importance of effective community and local stakeholder engagement and involvement** in schemes, which most projects appeared to deliver strongly, **involvement of technical experts** where that was needed, and effectively **building in clear exit strategies for projects to ensure the sustainability of impacts**, for example through maintenance agreements to ensure upkeep of new facilities or amenities.

For some projects there were **additional challenges in engaging certain stakeholders**, such as property owners who could not be easily contracted, and **in some cases timescales curtailed the amount of community and stakeholder consultation** that delivery partners felt would have been optimal. For some projects **cost inflation** between when project plans were drafted and when projects began delivery created additional issues.

Overall, **delivery partners and wider stakeholders were positive about the programme management by Cyngor Gwynedd**. Although some expressed frustration with delays on funding approval and around the amount of administration involved in progress reporting, the overall application process was felt to be clear and the majority of project delivery leads noted that communication from the Council had been strong throughout delivery.

Programme Impacts

Evidence gathered from the supported projects highlighted a range of early impacts relating to enhanced **attractiveness of town centres and high streets, increased feeling of safety, enhanced town centre digital accessibility** (relating to one project), early evidence of **increased footfall** linked to interventions (alongside other activities), and **enhanced feelings of community pride and wellbeing**. In most cases these have been more qualitative or anecdotal evidence of emerging impacts, but nevertheless provide indications that interventions are delivering the types of outcomes anticipated.

A number of consultees noted that in order **to contribute to more significant longer-term impacts that address the scale of the challenge facing town centres and high streets, a number of factors needed to be built in to project design**. The evaluation particularly highlights the importance of projects:

- **Contributing to larger regeneration strategies** for an area, with clear connection to wider investments and contributing to larger scale plans.
- **Contributing more substantial investment to strategically important infrastructure** that addresses local challenges.
- **Developing and helping to advance plans for larger scale investment**, such as feasibility studies for new investments that could have larger scale and strategic benefits.
- **Adding wider value through smaller projects** for example by **establishing or enhancing connections with town centre property owners**, or by helping to **activate and empower community groups** to have greater involvement in projects, events and activities that stimulate town centre vibrancy.

Beyond the impacts for places, a number of the projects also highlighted **wider benefits** generated by the programme for those involved in delivery, including the **development of community groups** involved in local projects, and the **wellbeing benefits experienced by volunteers** involved in project delivery, such as supporting painting of the murals.

6.2 Lessons Learnt

Drawing on the findings from the evaluation, a number of key lessons emerge which could help to further enhance town centre regeneration projects funded under future programmes. These have been set out below under three main lessons

1. Ensuring timescales are sufficient to enable effective delivery.

The experience of the multiple and sometimes iterative phases involved in effectively co-designing, consulting on, gaining permissions and approvals, recruiting, procuring for, and finally delivering projects can require substantial timescales, which many projects identified was a particular challenge (exacerbated by early delays in UKSPF funding being approved from UK Government).

For future schemes it will be beneficial to ensure that projects set out detailed timescale plans in their bids to be assessed as part of the approval process. It may also be useful to provide funding guidance that outlines those potential phases of delivery outlined above, with commentary on how much time could be needed for each activity, where possible. This would help provide useful prompts for prospective delivery bodies, to help them fully consider whether the delivery timescales available are sufficient to effectively deliver their scheme and help with their own planning.

2. Ensuring strategic fit and strategic impact are carefully factored into project design.

The evaluation has highlighted a range of factors that can contribute to ensuring that all projects, even relatively small investments can contribute to strategic impacts, and it would be worthwhile factoring these in to future assessments about what should be funded. In particular it could be useful to factor in some of the following aspects to application forms and assessment criteria for projects under similar future programmes:

- **Strategic fit with Area Regeneration Plans** – with greater priority for projects that deliver strongly against agreed strategic investment aims for that place.
- **Potential for attracting or enabling larger scale investment** – although not necessarily straightforward to assess, if there is good evidence that funding a research or feasibility study could enable large scale private / public investment in town centres, then this could have very significant strategic impacts for relatively low investment costs.
- **Added value through building key stakeholder relationships** – in areas where there have been challenges with engaging key town centre stakeholders such as the business community or specific property owners, schemes which help to engage and build relationships with those stakeholders could have significant strategic benefits beyond the outputs generated by the intervention itself.
- **Added value through activating and empowering community groups** – where there is a need for greater community capacity and engagement in enlivening town centres, activities that support and empower local groups could similarly have greater strategic benefits that go beyond just the outputs from the funded project itself.

In selecting projects to be funded, it could add significant value to future programmes to incorporate approaches to assess these factors, to help ensure that the optimal set of projects are taken forward for delivery.

3. Further develop indicators for monitoring success.

The evaluation has highlighted that capturing outcomes and impacts of town centre regeneration projects can be challenging within the available timescales for monitoring. Nevertheless, more could have been done to enhance the quality of monitoring data for this programme, which provides lessons for future schemes. In particular for future programmes it would be valuable to set out a clear monitoring plan from the outset and clear guidance on this for individual projects. This should include:

- **Clarity on what the programme will deliver and ensuring the output and outcome indicators are selected based on the most important things** the programme will deliver. Although not everything can be quantified in a target, the targets should give a clear sense of what the programme has achieved.

- **Setting indicators where it is clear what is being measured** – with a clear description of exactly what the indicator is capturing, and how this information will be collected.
- **Capturing baseline data for outcome indicators where this is needed** – for example if key indicators relate to footfall levels or perceptions of specific stakeholders about attractiveness, vibrancy or safety of the town centre, then baselines for these indicators need to be captured before funded interventions occur as well as after they are completed, to be able to capture any changes in these measures.

Contact us



0330 122 8658



wavehill@wavehill.com



wavehill.com

Follow us on our social



[@wavehilltweets](https://twitter.com/wavehilltweets)



[wavehill](https://www.linkedin.com/company/wavehill)



An evaluation of the Gwynedd Ni programme

Prepared by Lafan

March 2026



Wedi ei ariannu gan
Llywodraeth y DU

Funded by
UK Government

We would like to thank Alys Rees Jones and Rhian Elin George for their cooperation during the evaluation period and for their help collecting the data needed to produce this report.

**Contact details**

Lafan

M-Sparc

GAERWEN LL60 6AG

post@lafan.cymru

01248 665624

Report author

Dr Irfan Rais

Please get in touch with Irfan at irfan@lafan.cymru if you have any questions related to this report.

Executive summary

Gwynedd Ni is a programme that is funded by the Shared Prosperity Fund with the aim of regenerating town centres and strengthening communities across Gwynedd. Valued at a total of £1.28m made up of both SPF and matching funds, the programme delivers improvements to public spaces, community projects, cultural enterprises, accessibility improvements, and innovative projects.

This light-touch evaluation shows that the programme is moving positively forwards, with 75% of the funds claimed at the time of writing with the rest of the work to be completed by June 2026. The programme supported a variety of projects including upgrading playgrounds, improvements to public spaces in towns, feasibility studies for future development, and IoT pilot projects.

The engagement with 55 town and community councils shows a wide local reach, with many of them praising the clear and timely support from Council officers. The outcomes of the Community and Town Councils Fund was especially positive, even though there were challenges such as tight deadlines and procurement requirements in rural areas.

The early impacts of the programme include improvements in accessibility, a higher quality of community assets, an increase in local pride, and a stronger working relationship between Cyngor Gwynedd and community and town councils. Even though it is not possible to assess the long-term economic outcomes at this stage, the programme has nonetheless created a strong foundation for wider regeneration in the County.

Table of contents

.....	<i>i</i>
<i>Executive summary</i>	<i>iv</i>
<i>Introduction</i>	<i>1</i>
The brief	1
Logic model and evaluation framework	1
Methodology	2
<i>Overview of the programme</i>	<i>3</i>
Theory of Change of the project	3
Plans delivered	5
<i>Programme performance</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Case Study 1: Town and Community Fund pilot</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Case study 2: Improvements on Y Maes, Criccieth</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Case study 3: Improvements to playgrounds</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Impact of Gwynedd Ni</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>Conclusion</i>	<i>29</i>

Introduction

One of Cyngor Gwynedd's priorities between 2023 and 2028 is regenerating town centres across the county. Recently, the council held an extensive consultation when creating the Gwynedd Regeneration Plan, which was supported by 13 area plans in the county and identifying individual priorities for these areas. A common theme that arose in all these area plans is the need to regenerate town centres.

In 2025, Cyngor Gwynedd succeeded in securing funding worth £1,278,000 from the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) to carry out the Gwynedd Ni programme, which includes a number of schemes leading to the regeneration of communities and town centres across Gwynedd. It is hoped that this work will create a buzz in these communities.

The aim of this project is to upgrade the infrastructure of towns in the area and repurpose or inspire new uses for existing structures. This could attract investment in various areas, including education, leisure, the arts, and in the workplace.

In November 2024, the plan leaders were asked by the SPF team to extend certain activities for 2025/2026. As a result of a number of scoping sessions across the departments of Cyngor Gwynedd, together with the considerations that arose from the Ardal Ni project, a program of short-term plans was identified. This programme formed the basis of this Gwynedd Ni programme, which is evaluated in this report.

The brief

Lafan was commissioned by Cyngor Gwynedd to carry out a light-touch evaluation on the Gwynedd Ni programme. The aim of this commission was to create an evaluation plan and collect data from key members involved in the project, and create a bilingual evaluation report.

The evaluation work was carried out between October 2025 and January 2026, with this report presented in March 2026.

Logic model and evaluation framework

In line with SPF's guidelines, we have developed a logic model that links the context of the programme to its inputs, activities, outputs, and desired outcomes. This logic model is in the form of a Theory of Change.

This evaluation assesses Gwynedd Ni's performance against targets, the effectiveness of the programme and its impact on communities. The table below shows the themes of the evaluation and questions that relate to them:

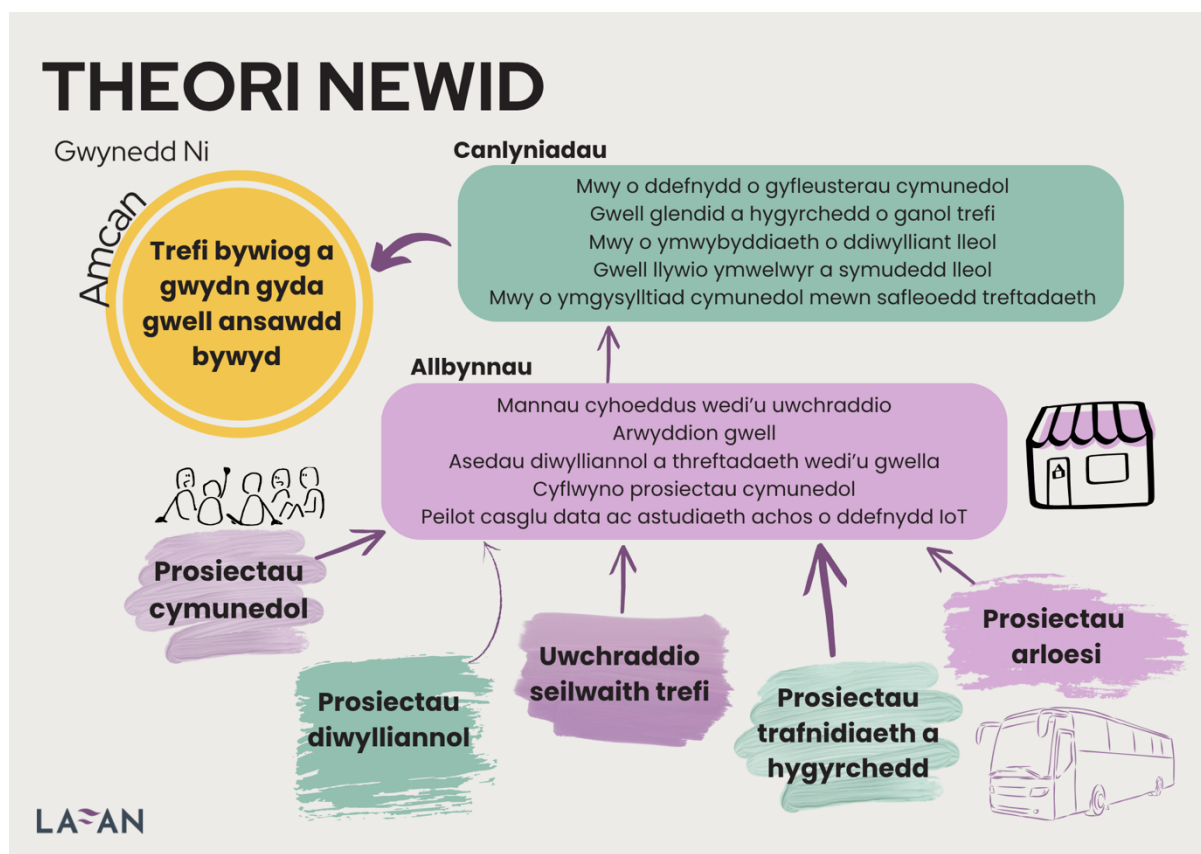
Theme	Question
Performance against targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did the programme perform against its targets?
Effectiveness of the programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How were the projects delivered • What worked well when delivering the project? • What lessons were learnt?
Impact of the programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the outcomes of the project? • Were there any unexpected outcomes?

Methodology

In order to collect data, we have done the following:

- Review documents relevant to the programme, including progress reports and project completion forms
- Interviewed five town council representatives over the phone to gather insights on their experience delivering projects supported by the Town and Community Council Fund.
- Interviewed three project representatives to gather insights on the execution of their plans.
- Conducted an online questionnaire directed at businesses in Criccieth.

Overview of the programme



Theory of Change of the project

The Gwynedd Ni programme was funded by the UKSPF alongside a total of £162,673.32 in match funding: £79,473.32 from the Welsh Government's Transforming Towns programme, and £83,200 from Cyngor Gwynedd. The SPF grant is worth £1,278,000, which includes £1,005,125.16 of capital funding and £272,874.84 of revenue funding.

Other programme inputs include work from contractors and consultants.

The inputs above feed into different activities that are part of the programme. These activities can be sorted into five broad categories, namely:

1. Community projects
2. Cultural projects
3. Upgrading town infrastructure
4. Transport and accessibility projects
5. Innovation projects

These activities are expected to produce the following in the short term:

1. Upgraded public spaces
2. Better signs
3. Improved cultural and heritage assets
4. Delivering community projects
5. Data collection pilot and a case study on the use of IoT technology

In the long term, the Gwynedd Ni programme is expected to lead to the following:

1. Greater use of community facilities
2. Better cleanliness and accessibility from town centres
3. Greater awareness of local culture
4. Better visitor navigation and local mobility
5. Higher community engagement in heritage sites

A series of targets were set based on the framework established by SPF. The table below shows the output and outcome indicators relevant to the programme and their targets:

Outputs	
Description of indicators	Target
OP03 Amount of public land created or improved	1,100m ²
OP05 Number of amenities/facilities created or improved	22
OP07 Total length of new or improved bike or footpaths	1km
OP25 Number of organisations receiving grants	64
OP28 Number of feasibility studies developed as a result of support	9
Outcomes	
Description of indicators	Targed
OC02 More use of bike or footpaths	500 o bobl

The general aim of the programme is to improve the fabric of town centres across Gwynedd as part of the council's wider effort to regenerate these areas. The programme is part of achieving the priorities of the council's plan 2023-2028, which identifies town centre regeneration as a key policy area.

Ultimately, the intention is to attract new uses to town centres, thereby opening the door to further investment and significant economic benefits for local communities. The long-term objective of the programme is to develop vibrant and resilient towns with a better quality of life.

Plans delivered

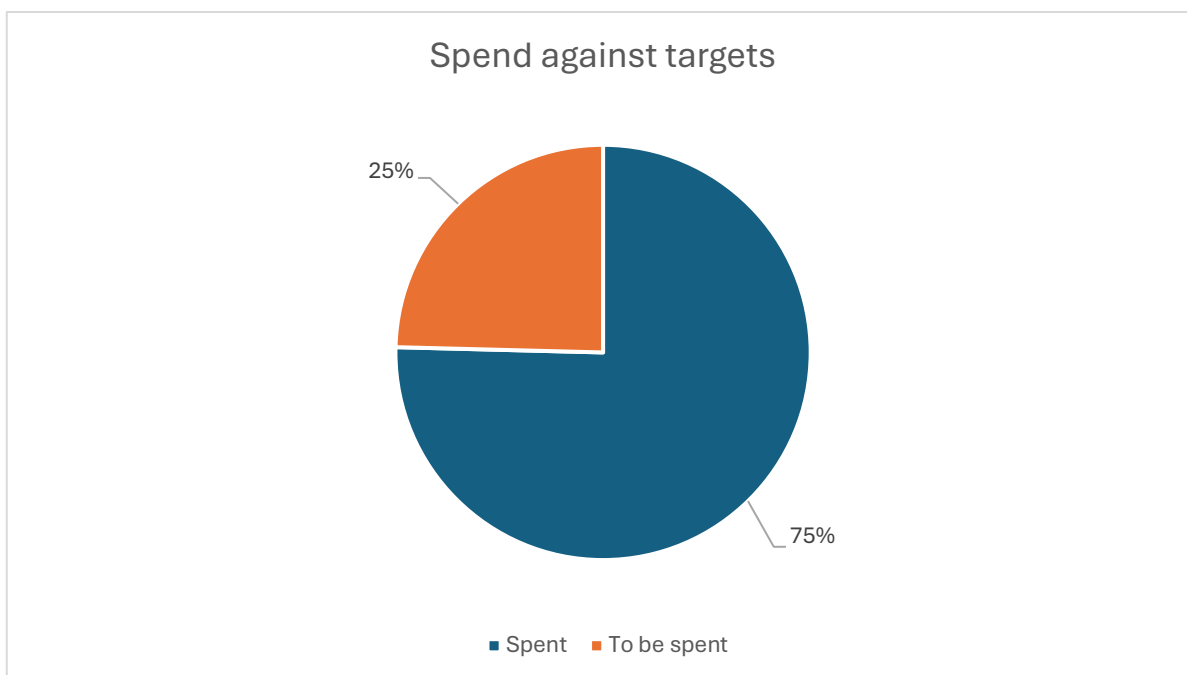
The table below shows all the plans that were part of the Gwynedd Ni programme.

Plan	SPF funds committed	Funds claimed	Status (from March 2026)
<p>Town and community councils fund</p> <p>The purpose of the fund is to support town and community councils to develop and implement projects that meet the needs of their community. This would allow these councils to play a role in contributing to the regeneration of their communities.</p>	£341,998.94	£322,100.56	Ongoing
<p>Trefi Llechi 2</p> <p>A plan that included completing the signage plan for slate towns in Gwynedd, along with developing a plan to interpret the art in 4 towns (Llanberis, Blaenau Ffestiniog, Penygroes, and Porthmadog)</p>	£115,000	£115,000	Completed
<p>Adding value to the Cei'r Gogledd plan</p> <p>Adding value to the Cei'r Gogledd plan by placing benches and introduce a utility connection.</p>	£9,100	£5,000	Ongoing
<p>Improvements to playgrounds</p> <p>Upgraded 7 playgrounds in Gwynedd, offering new facilities that are accessible to all, as well as levelling works to make it suitable for all weather.</p>	£76,000	£76,000	Completed
<p>Improvements to public toilets</p> <p>Upgrading two public toilets in Gwynedd by installing new</p>	£234,000	£92,614.97	Ongoing

equipment and carrying our structural work to make it safe for the public			
<p>Bus station cleaning and vinyl installation work</p> <p>A project to install vinyls on bus stations in Bangor, Caernarfon, Porthmadog, Blaenau Ffestiniog, Barmouth, and Pwllheli. The work also included cleaning the stations</p>	£29,598.88	£29,598.88	Completed
<p>Implementation of parts of the Caernarfon Coach Park scheme</p> <p>Created a communication sheet for buses visiting the town</p>	£5,100	£5,000	Ongoing
<p>Highway improvements in the historic areas of Caernarfon</p> <p>Replacement of granite slates and stones in Maes Caernarfon</p>	£50,000	£34,000	Ongoing
<p>Improvements and interpretation of the Cob Crwn path, Porthmadog</p> <p>The upgrade will improve 0.7km of the current path and 0.3km of a new path will be created.</p>	£49,600		Received an extension
<p>Bala signage strategy</p> <p>Appoint consultants to plan, develop, and design a signing strategy for Bala</p>	£10,206	£7,776	Ongoing
<p>Preparatory work for improvements at the Roman Camp, Bangor</p> <p>Development work to create a new design at the Roman Camp in Bangor, with the aim of improving access and providing signs in order to raise awareness of the historic site.</p>	£12,000	£12,000	Completed

<p>Feasibility study: Upgrading the Storiel boundary</p> <p>A feasibility study to examine how Storiel and Pontio can be better connected in Bangor, with the aim of improving the experience of residents and visitors.</p>	£20,500	£20,500	Ongoing
<p>Caernarfon parking survey</p> <p>Commissioned consultants to carry out surveys examining the use of carparks in Caernarfon</p>	£4,550	£4,550	Completed
<p>Pwllheli signage strategy</p> <p>Appoint consultants to plan, develop, and design a signage strategy for Pwllheli</p>	£10,000	£6,695.25	Ongoing
<p>Feasibility study for the library in Blaenau Ffestiniog</p> <p>Appointed consultants to complete a feasibility study for relocating the library</p>	£14,974	£14,974	Completed
<p>Pilot: Internet of Things Gwynedd</p> <p>A pilot project to purchase a range of IoT sensors that collect data on the environment. The data will be used to draw up case studies in order to justify further funding for future developments</p>	£63,075	£38,542.72	Ongoing
<p>Report assessing leisure resources in Bangor</p>	£49,900	£34,260.50	Ongoing
<p>Improvements to Maes Criccieth</p> <p>Added value to the Maes Criccieth upgrading scheme</p>	£40,000	£40,000	Completed
<p>Improvements to the resources in Tŷ Siamas, Dolgellau</p>	£24,200	£24,200	Completed

Improvements to Tŷ Siamas' resources as well as an options study for the centre.			
Madog sports club Develop a business plan and architectural plan options for Madog Sports Club	£10,000		Received an extension
Lon Abersoch path Upgraded the beach entrance next to the golf car park	£26,000	£26,000	Completed
Bangor Health Hub and Library Study	£11,660	£1,674.84	Received an extension
TOTAL	£1,207,462.82	£910,487.72	



According to the data we have collected, as of 27/3/2026, a total of £910,487.72, which is 75% of the total budget, has been claimed.

Programme performance

The following table shows how the programme has performed against its targets:

Outputs				
Description of indicator	Target	Current	Expected by the end of the project	Comments
OP03 Amount of public land created or improved	1,100m ²	631m ²	741m ² +	The expected number could increase depending on the Maes Caernarfon project
OP05 Number of amenities/facilities created or improved	22	7	21	
OP07 Total length of new or improved bike or footpaths	1km	0	1km	
OP25 Number of organisations receiving grants	64	13	55	This refers to the number of Town and Community councils that applied for the Fund. In total, 55 councils received funding.
OP28 Number of feasibility studies developed as a result of support	9	0	9	
Outcomes				
Description of indicator	Target	Current	By the end of the project	Comments
OC02 More use of bike or footpaths	500 people	0		This relates to the number of people who will use the paths developed as

				part of the Cob Crwn project. This project has faced delays in the beginning due to the planning application, and the work has been extended to June
--	--	--	--	--

Case Study 1: Town and Community Fund pilot

Background

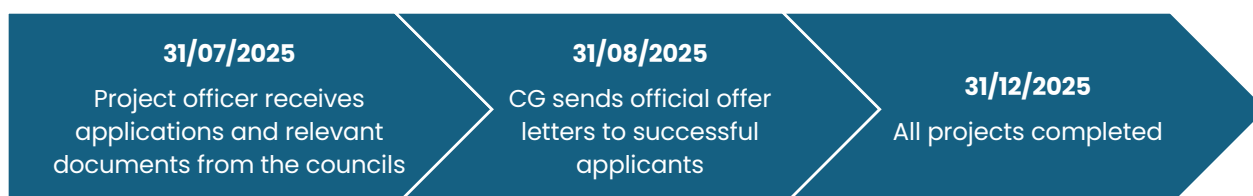
£341,998.94 was committed from FCG funding to administer the Town and Community Council Fund as a pilot scheme, which offers specific financial support to all town and community councils across the County. The intention of the Fund is to spread the benefits of SPF in the county, and to improve the quality of life of the residents of Gwynedd by supporting small regeneration schemes that intend to do so.

According to its guidelines, the purpose of the Fund is to "improve the appearance, facilities, and bustle of the towns and villages of Gwynedd". The Fund does not support elements of loan payments or core or normal costs such as maintenance and upkeep, and employment. Also, the Fund does not support activities outside the boundaries of the town councils or activities that promote religion.

The Fund was allocated according to the catchment area of the town or community council. A maximum of £7,500 is available to town councils of less than 1,000 people, but this maximum increases to £9,000 for town councils with between 1,000 and 4,999 people. In terms of town councils of 5000 people and more, a maximum of £10,500 is available to them.

The Fund was managed by Alys Rees Jones and Rhian Elin George. Alys acted as a coordinator, with responsibilities such as supporting the councils through the application process, monitoring progress, and collecting evidence documents and project completion forms. On the other hand, Rhian provided higher supervision by developing any guidance and supporting the assessment panel.

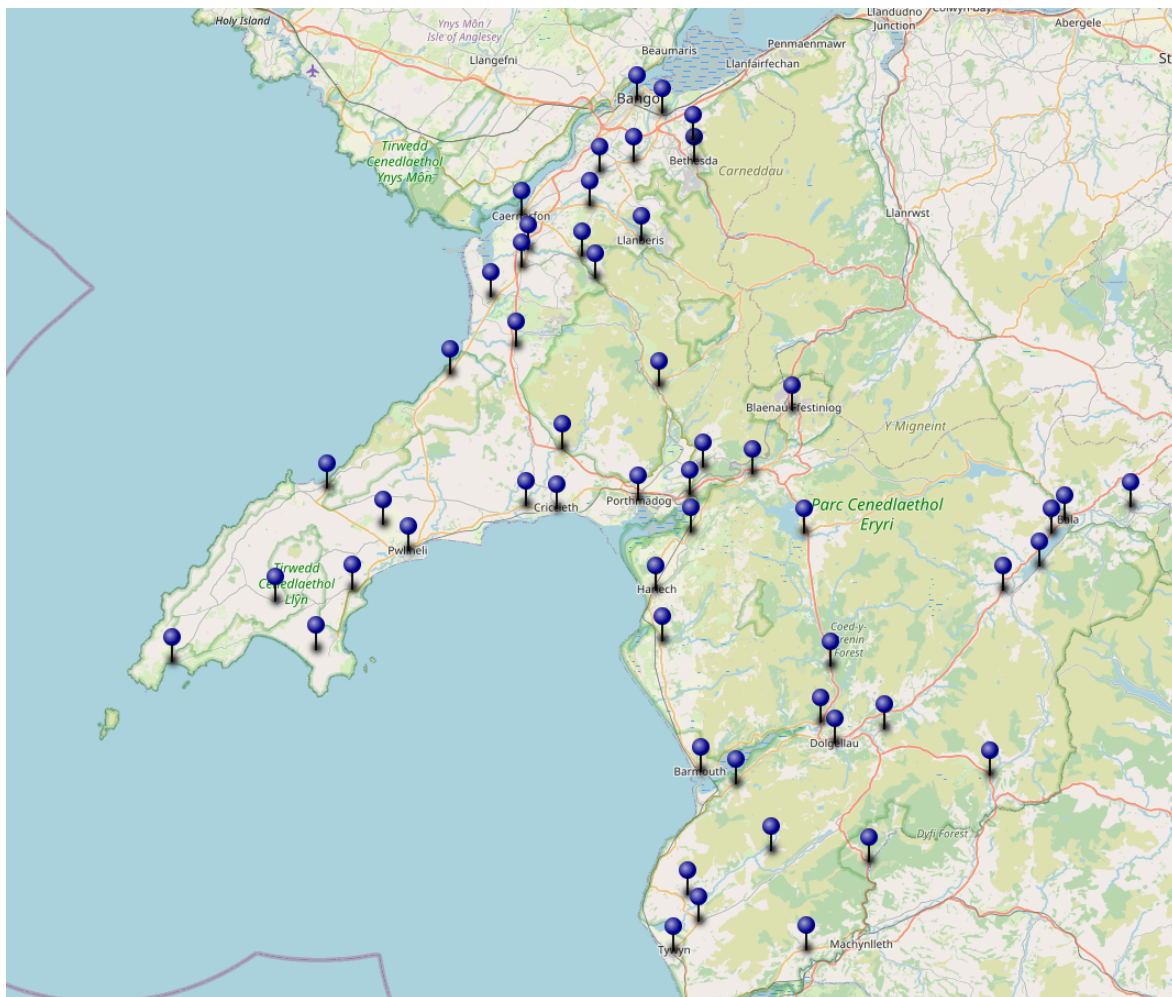
The chart below shows the key dates in terms of administering the Fund:



Applications were received by the cabinet member, two officers, and Alys Rees Jones.

Delivering the fund

The Fund has supported 55 town councils across the County. The map below shows the spread of the Fund's benefit with each pin indicating the location of the successful town councils:



We have created an interactive version of the map above which shows the different projects by each town council, and the budget committed to them.¹

¹ <http://u.osmfr.org/m/1338626/>

Good practices

According to the interviews and the questionnaire carried out, the process of applying for the grant is very positive. The councils have described the process as "easy", "very good", and "brilliant". Alys was also praised in our interviews with the councils.

Also, most participants in the interview expressed that they felt they were well supported: everyone had direct contact with Alys to get help filling in forms. When any problems or questions arose, the responses were prompt, and one participant has described the communication throughout delivery as "excellent".

Challenges

Although the overall feedback was positive, the councils raised some of the challenges we faced.

In terms of applying for the grant, some of the councils were having trouble with the application window. Based on the responses we have received in the interviews, time is the most challenging thing that the councils have faced. One council had expressed that the application window did not allow enough time to properly consult with communities. Also, another respondent said they needed more time to collect quotes. Another challenge that faced some councils is the fact that they meet monthly, which may have meant that there was not enough oversight of the application process.

In addition to this, in terms of quotations, one council expressed that the requirement for three quotations is not realistic in rural areas where there are not many providers.

In terms of realizing the projects, most councils reported few or no obstacles at all. When problems arose, delays from contractors were the most common issue. Logistical problems were also raised several times, for example temporarily storing old equipment, or coordinating volunteers.

Having said that, each expressed that Gwynedd Council was understanding and supportive when delays occurred.

Impact on the community

The main impacts on the community include:

- Better accessibility, for example accessible paths and wheelchairs to beaches
- Safer playgrounds for children
- More attractive public spaces

Many councils emphasized that their project would not have happened without the support of the Fund.

Lessons learnt

Based on the findings of our interviews with the councils, these are the lessons learned from delivering the Fund:

Consistent, responsive, and friendly support makes a big difference.

Respondents expressed that they appreciated getting good advice from Gwynedd Council with the attitude of wanting candidates to succeed. This has been particularly helpful for small councils with limited capacity. This shows the importance of support. Therefore, it would be good to maintain this standard of support for similar projects in the future.

Keep processes as simple as possible. Some responses in our interviews expressed that they appreciated the fact that claiming and presenting evidence was a simple process. Also, some respondents said that Gwynedd Council was quite flexible when carrying out their projects, which could be seen when Gwynedd Council was understanding about contractors' delays and allowed small adjustments to their projects.

However, there is room to simplify the procurement application process. We have heard that the requirement to collect three quotes was unrealistic for some rural communities, where options are limited. We are aware that this is part of procurement rules for the local authorities, so we would suggest that policy makers consider working closely with county councils to find solutions to this problem for communities like these in Gwynedd.

Councils need more time to make their applications. Some councils expressed that the deadlines for submitting an application are tight, especially from councils that meet monthly. Also, the window to apply was not enough for some councils who needed time to carry out a consultation with the community. Of course, the period of the UK Government funding program has influenced the application window, so we recommend that grant makers take these factors into account when making similar grants in the future.

Case study 2: Improvements on Y Maes, Criccieth

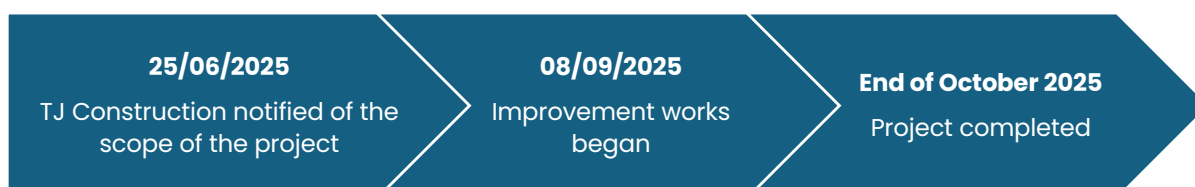
Project background

An extension of work under the Town centres: laying the foundation for investment, pride and activity programme funded by the SPF in 2024/25 were the improvements near Y Maes in Criccieth. This plan was split into two phases because there was not enough budget available within the previous program to make all the improvements.

The area that was improved as part of the Gwynedd Ni project is located near Y Maes in Criccieth. Y Maes is a new street food market, and it was opened to the public in 2025. Y Maes has benefited from funding provided through other programs that have previously received financial support through Gwynedd Council's business support grants. After being opened, there was a need to improve the appearance of the surrounding space in order to improve the overall environment and experience for residents and visitors.

In 2025, a maximum of £40,000 was allocated to this work, and the work was carried out by the Highways, Engineering, and YGC (Gwynedd Consultancy) Department of Gwynedd Council. The tender to carry out the work was awarded to TJ Construction.

A chart below shows the progress of the work:



Work done

In order to carry out the work, a list of activities was identified. Initially, it was necessary to clear the site by removing the existing block paving and excavating a total of 220mm deep to accommodate the new surface.



Image 1: The area before the improvements with the old block paving

After that, a new resin-bonding surface was built up. They also provided and installed new edging to border the new surface with concrete paving slabs.



Image 2: New surface being installed after removing the old surface

Finally, new benches were placed on concrete foundations.



Image 3: New benches placed on the new surface

Heriau a rhwystrau

One challenge that arose during the delivery of the project was managing the expectations of the different stakeholders. The project included feedback from Criccieth Town Council, local businesses, community groups such as Criccieth in Bloom, and the town's residents. Each group had their own priorities, and Gareth, who managed the project, expressed that it was challenging making sure everyone was happy. He also had to resist requests outside the scope of the project, such as installing more trees, and this prevented the scope from expanding.

Managing finances was another challenge to the work. The project needed to be carried out within a relatively small pot of money. Some initial cost savings were achieved in areas such as subbase material, but these were offset by higher costs elsewhere, such as the concrete and foundation structures.

It was important to complete the project before winter. The resin surface required certain temperature conditions in order to be installed successfully, so the team had to complete the surfacing work before the weather got colder. This meant that there was no room to be flexible in terms of scheduling, and there was pressure to complete the work within a tight window.

Finally, the success of the work in the area in 2024 influenced the execution of the work in the current stage, and this set a benchmark for the community. Gareth

noted that the stakeholders had higher expectations because of this, and they were keen to ensure the continuity of the design quality. This had influenced stakeholder discussions and design decisions throughout the work in this phase.

Good practices

One of the strengths of the project was the relationship between Gwynedd Council and the community. We understand that there is a regular meeting between the manager of this project and the clerk from Criccieth town council; business owners and representatives of community groups were included in the discussions as well. This relationship has built trust and makes sure that everyone is aligned in terms of expectations.

Also, the decision to reuse the contractor from the first stage was a good call, as they were familiar with the site and the community's expectations.

The project also demonstrated good planning practices. The area has been integrated into the Highways Department's asset management system to ensure it receives regular maintenance. The design of the area itself was deliberately simple, featuring easily maintainable materials and fixtures.

Finally, we note that the project has been completed on time and within the allocated budget.

Impact of the project

The improvements on Y Maes have left a very positive impact on the community in Criccieth. According to a conversation with the town council clerk over email, she noted that the Town Council has been pushing for these improvements for several years, and they are satisfied with the investment and the result.

In October 2025, Creative Criccieth published 2 posts on Facebook celebrating the work on Y Maes. The posts have received 137 likes and 17 loves, with all the comments being very positive (see screenshots below).

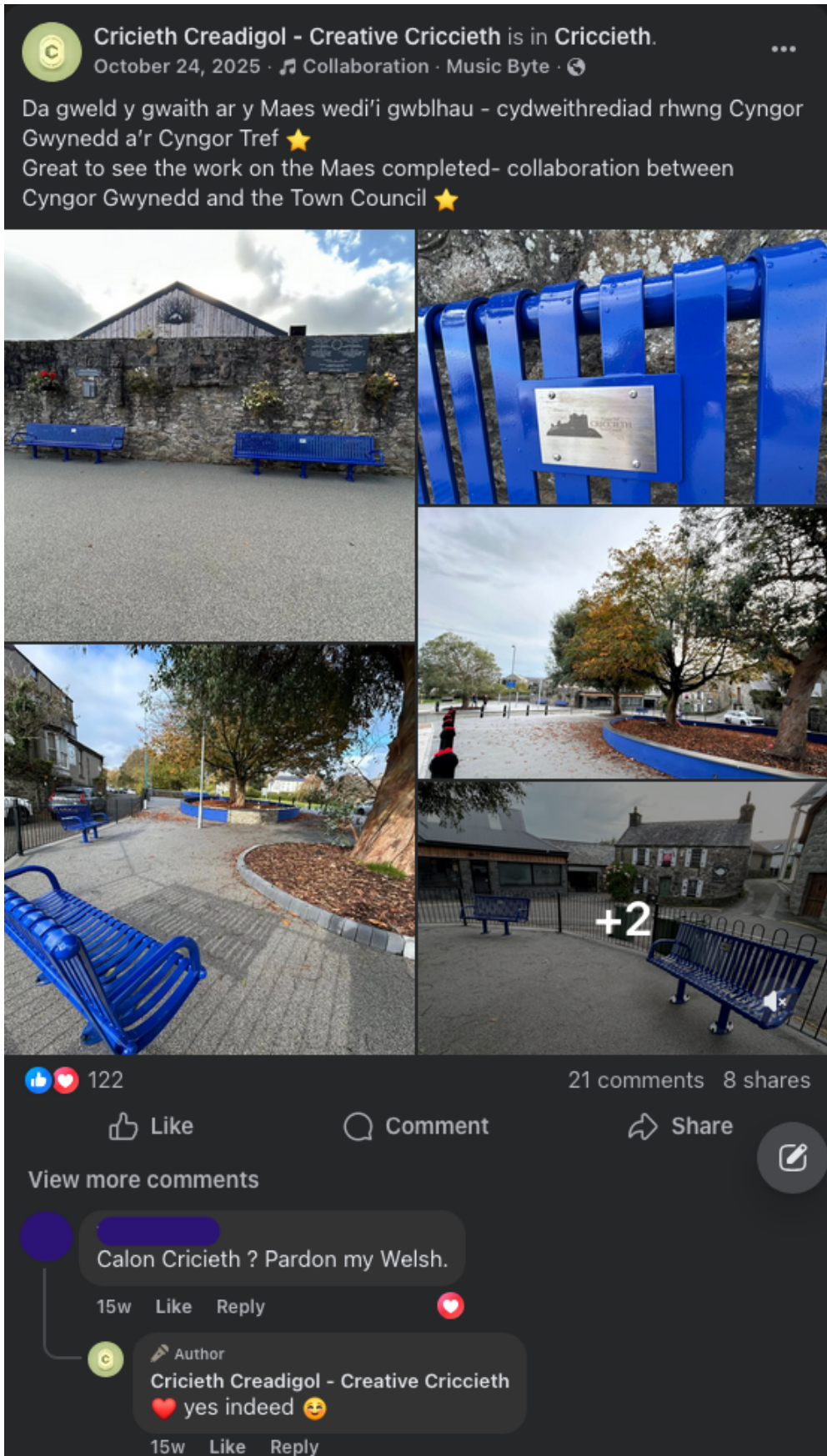


Image 4: A screenshot of a post celebrating the opening of Y Maes

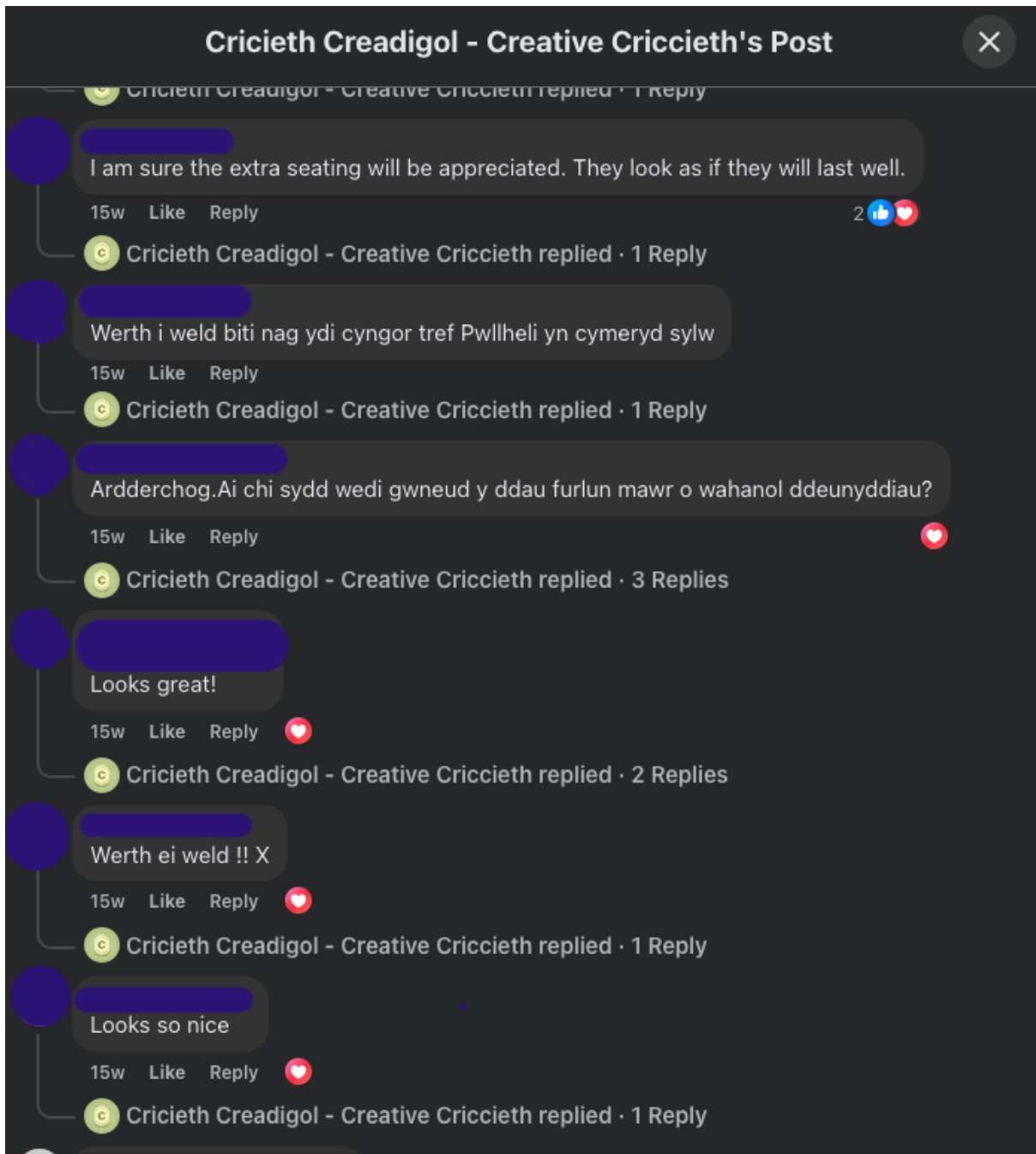


Image 5: A screenshot showing the comments on the post above

Lessons learnt

Based on our interview with Gareth, we have identified the following lessons learned:

Establish clear governance from the outset. The project has shown the importance of knowing who is responsible for different aspects of the project, and who has the authority to make decisions. This clarity helped with situations where it was necessary to manage the expectations of the stakeholders who have different priorities.

Stick to the brief. Gareth has shown the value of sticking to the brief. As mentioned in the point above, there were occasions where stakeholders tried to add new elements to the work, but the Highways Department team prevented the scope from spreading and protected the budget.

Re-appoint contractors where possible. The reuse of the contractor was efficient as the team already understood elements such as local knowledge and expectations. The continuity of partners can achieve significant simplification of project management and improve consistency.

Create a good relationship with the stakeholders. In carrying out this work, Cyngor Gwynedd created a good relationship with the Town Council and other community groups in Criccieth by holding regular meetings with them. This strengthened relationships, improved transparency, and helped avoid any misunderstandings. In other words, having a good relationship helps manage expectations and maintain community trust.

Case study 3: Improvements to playgrounds

Project background

£76,000 was committed from SPF funding to carry out upgrading work on 7 playing fields across the county. The aim of this project is to improve the accessibility of these playing fields by installing new equipment and carrying out levelling work to ensure use in all weather conditions. The project was carried out by a team that included a municipal asset manager, a senior municipal engineer, a playground inspector, and three assistant engineers.

Initially in the planning stage of the project, there was a discussion within the Borough Unit in terms of places that really needed new play equipment. Also, the above team considered requests from the public in terms of playground improvements they would like to see in their communities.

The seven playgrounds which were upgraded are:

- 1) Marine Parade, Tywyn
- 2) Y Waun, Harlech
- 3) Cae Glyn, Caernarfon
- 4) Wembli, Pwllheli
- 5) Cynan Road, Penrhosgarnedd
- 6) Old skate park, Talysarn
- 7) Maes y Mor playground, Penygroes²

The map overleaf shows where the playgrounds are located.

² As the prices were cheaper than expected, there was a lot of money left over in the claim period between October and December 2025, the project manager was able to add another location to the plan, namely this playground in Penygroes.

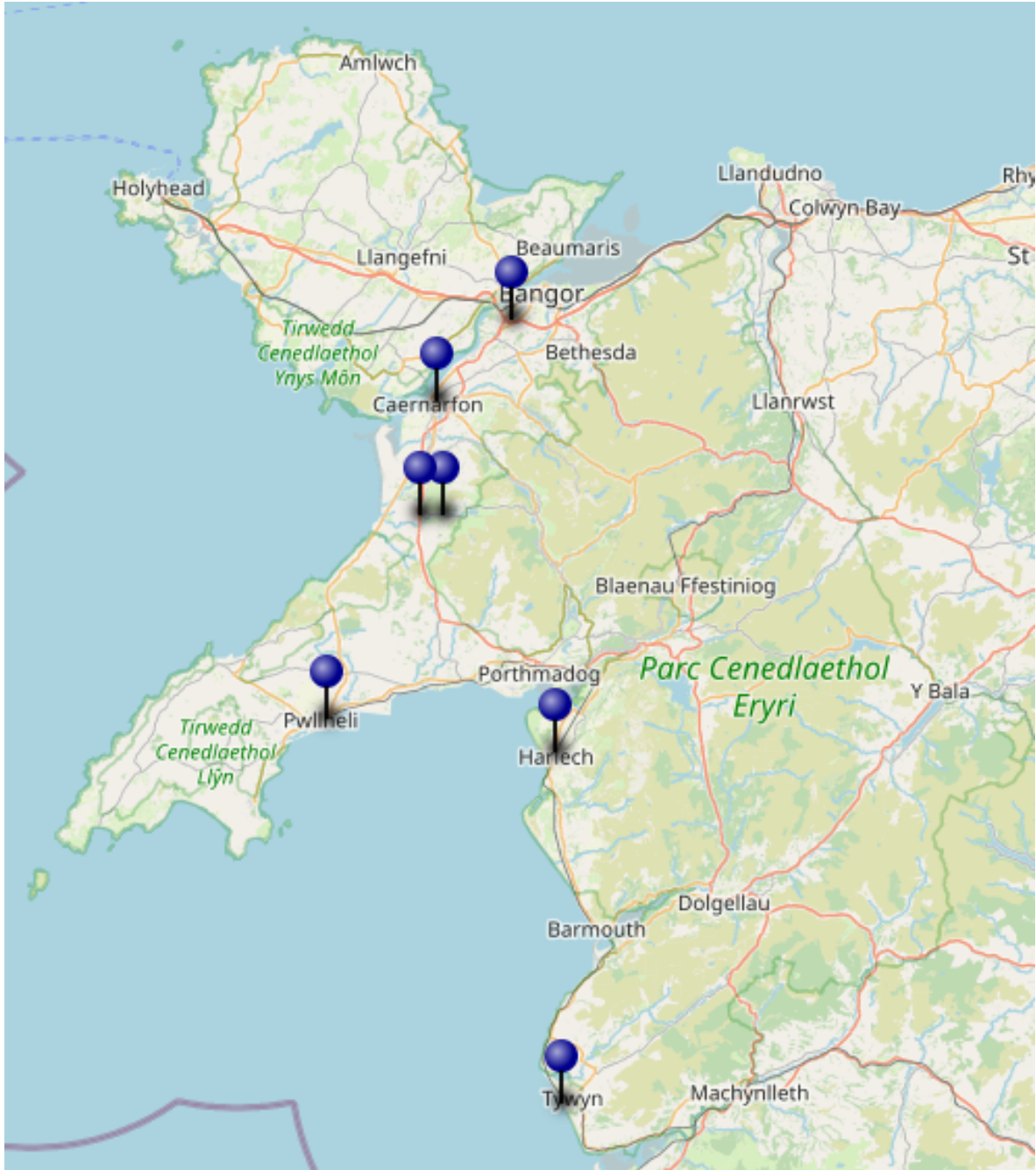


Image 6: Map showing the locations of the playgrounds upgraded

Work done

The companies Wicksteed and GL Jones Playgrounds were appointed to carry out the upgrading work on the playing fields in Tywyn, Harlech, Caernarfon, Pwllheli, and Penrhosgarnedd during the claim period between July and September 2025. This work was completed by December 2025.

In the meantime, there was a request from a councillor for the children of Talysarn to use the old skate park for ball games. A contractor was appointed in October 2025 to carry out tarmac work on the site to create a ball playing court. This work was completed at the end of January 2026.

There was money left over in December 2025 due to the play equipment being cheaper than expected. Because of this, the project manager added another site in Penygroes to the plan. The equipment was installed by the end of January 2026.

Here is the specific work carried out:

Marine Parade, Tywyn: Installed a new multi-purpose frame



Y Waun, Harlech: Installed a roundabout for wheelchairs



Cae Glyn, Caernarfon: Installed a basket swing



Wembli, Pwllheli: Installed a webspinner



Cynan Road, Penrhosgarnedd: Installed a roundabout for wheelchairs.



According to our contact, the project went smoothly without any challenges, although we noted that some of the work was dependent on the weather which could have caused risks to the work.

One good practice we have identified is the collaborative process when carrying out the project. We understand that the team had a discussion to identify which playing fields needed more attention. This avoided any kind of unilateral decision making. The community was also part of the process in the planning stage; this can be seen where the public and a councillor were able to present their ideas.

Another good practice we have identified is reinvesting the budget in another project, where surplus money was used to provide additional equipment in another playground in Penygroes.

Lessons learnt

Based on the documents provided to us, these are the lessons learned from this project:

The importance of meaningful community engagement. The project benefited from ideas provided by community members and local councillors, which influenced the type of equipment chosen and the sites prioritized. This shows the value of maintaining communication channels with the residents that provide a local insight.

The value of being flexible within the project budget. As equipment prices were lower than expected, the team was able to reinvest the remaining money in additional play equipment for another site. This points to how adaptable financial planning can lead to better outcomes for the community.

Impact of Gwynedd Ni

Although many elements of the Gwynedd Ni program are still being delivered, there is evidence of early impacts on people, places, and delivery systems.

The program has created improvements in terms of accessibility and the quality of public spaces. There are upgraded playgrounds which provide more inclusive leisure opportunities for children by installing accessible equipment.

Improvements to public areas, such as those on Y Maes in Criccieth, have improved the daily experience of the town's residents. Feedback from town and community councils shows that these interventions are valuable, contributing to greater local pride. Importantly, several councils expressed that their projects would not be possible without the support of the plan.

In terms of impact on places in the project area, the program improves the physical fabric of town centres through upgrading amenities and preparatory feasibility work. In the case of the Maes in Criccieth, the improvements have complemented earlier investments. Although evidence of long-term results such as economic progress or an increase in the number of visitors cannot yet be shown, these changes could represent a precursor to the wider regeneration objectives in the County.

In addition to this, the Fund has engaged with 55 councils throughout the County, showing a wide reach. Feedback that we have collected consistently points to the value of responsive support from officers and clear communication. This has strengthened confidence to deliver amongst smaller councils and has contributed to positive working relationships between the Council and local stakeholders.

Conclusion

This evaluation shows that the Council has succeeded in laying the foundations for the regeneration of town centres and communities across Gwynedd. Although there are projects still underway, early evidence shows improvements to the quality of public spaces, accessibility, and the experience of local people.

The program has achieved progress in upgrading local infrastructure, providing accessible facilities, and supporting small community projects. The three case studies in this report show the benefits for local communities and highlight the value of an approach based on collaboration, clear communication, and ongoing support from Gwynedd Council officers.

The wider economic impact of the program is not yet fully visible, but early signs suggest that the initial improvements are laying the groundwork for long-term regeneration, triggering new uses of space, attracting more people to town centres, and opening the door to further investment.

Town and Community Council's Fund 2025/6

As part of the Gwynedd Ni Regeneration programme, which is funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, a pilot scheme was established to support Gwynedd Town and Community Councils to develop and deliver projects that contribute towards the effort to improve communities and the quality of life of Gwynedd residents across the county.

There was a £371,000 budget for the fund, and a specific amount was earmarked from the budget to every Town and Community Council based on the population of the Town/Community Council catchment area.

During May 2025, each of the 64 Town and Community Councils across the county received an information and application pack for the fund, and support was available to develop project ideas that would be suitable for the fund.

55 Town and Community Councils across the county have benefited from this scheme, and the table below provides information about the plans underway by the Town and Community Councils over the coming months.

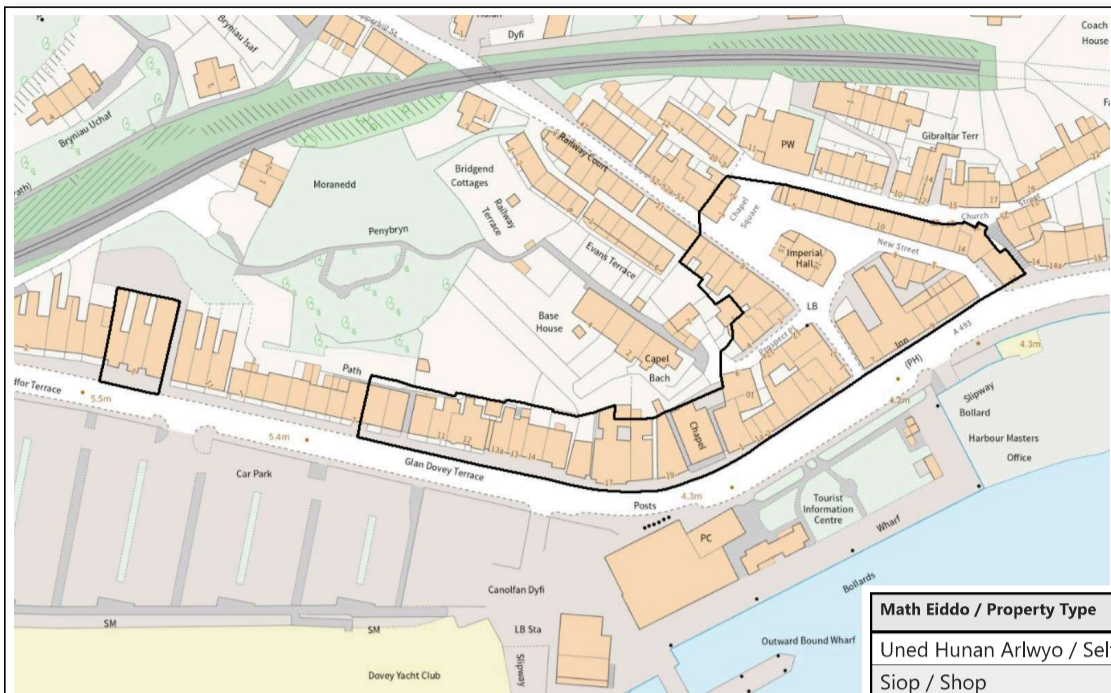
Note that the amount committed to the Town and Community Councils could change as the plans develop.

Community/Town Council	Project Details	Budget Committed
Bangor City Council	To commission concept designs for the development of two green area in the city centre.	£10,500
Pentir Community Council	Record history and enhance Pentir – Mural art projects within community centres, and improvements to the cemetery	£6,660
Bethesda Community Council	Bus Shelter – Maes Bleddyn Entrance	£5,925
Llanllechid Community Council	Murals, signs, planting fruit trees in the Tal y Bont community park	£7,167
Llandygai Community Council	Creative slow signs for Ysgol Bodfeurig and the Mynydd Llandygai community, as well as resources for the new community garden on the school grounds.	£7,842
Caernarfon Town Council	Improvements to Parc Coed Helen	£10,500
Bontnewydd Community Council	Improve the entrance and use of Cae Stanley, Bontnewydd for the public	£5,600
Llandwrog Community Council	Install a Bus Shelter in Penbwlch, Carmel	£9,000
Llanllyfni Community Council	Install planters in Penygroes and create a Mural on the Talysarn centre	£7,367
Clynnog Community Council	Put photos up in the hall, plant fruit trees and install a picnic bench and planters in the village	£3,980
Llanwnda Community Council	Improve Paths	£9,000
Llanddeiniolen Community Council	Improve signs and the appearance of entrances to the parish villages	£7,544

Waunfawr Community Council	Design and publish a new website, a noticeboard for the village and new windows for the centre	£6,973
Betws Garmon Community Council	Design and publish a new website, a noticeboard for the village, improvements to Cefn Cwellyn and a de-fib for the area	£4,843
Llanberis Community Council	Upgrade the Ger y Llyn Playground	£9,000
Llanrug Community Council	Playing equipment for Pwll Moeleyn Playground	£9,000
Aberdaron Community Council	A purpose-built wheelchair for the beach and playing mats for the playground	£4,950
Llanengan Community Council	Inclusive music equipment for two playgrounds in the area	£6,350
Botwnnog Community Council	Install a bus shelter near the Rhydbach Surgery, Botwnnog	£5,300
Llanbedrog Community Council	A specialist wheelchair for Llanbedrog beach users	£2,511
Nefyn Town Council	Work on the cemeteries and flowerbeds	£8,538
Pwllheli Town Council	A Public Art Scheme around the town	£8,999
Llannor Community Council	Upgrade playing equipment in the Efailnewydd park	£7,900
Llanystumdwy Community Council	Record the names of bridges and install a noticeboard	£4,799
Porthmadog Town Council	Equipment to store bikes and benches for the town	£4,987
Penrhyndeudraeth Community Council	A new fence in the Penrhyndeudraeth playground	£7,170
Beddgelert Community Council	Install new benches, a noticeboard and planters around the village	£4,631
Llanfrothen Community Council	Install a bus shelter in the village of Garreg, Llanfrothen	£7,500
Dolbenmaen Community Council	Install digital equipment in every hall	£6,681
Cricieth Town Council	Noticeboard and Heritage Information Panels	£7,985
Ffestiniog Town Council	Playing equipment in the Bryncoed park	£8,000
Trawsfynydd Community Council	Playing equipment for Tŷ Llwyd Stesion park	£7,500
Maentwrog Community Council	Improvements to Gellilydan Village Hall	£4,068
Dolgellau Town Council	Planters around the town	£7,413
Brithdir, Llanfachreth and Rhydymain Community Council	Benches on public footpaths in the area, and Noticeboards in Brithdir and Rhydymain	£4,006.
Ganllwyd Community Council	Upgrade street furniture	£4,284
Llanelltyd Community Council	Install picnic tables and benches	£4,055

Dinas Mawddwy Community Council	A noticeboard, planters, picnic benches and work to tidy Dinas cemetery	£7,496
Corris Community Council	Benches and kitchen equipment for the community hub	£7,500
Llanfihangel y Pennant Community Council	Improvements to the main entrance to Abergynolwyn with planters and benches	£5,825
Pennal Community Council	Picnic tables and benches and pamphlet to promote Cylch y Marian	£7,260
Llanegryn Community Council	Upgrade the public toilets and cycling area in Llanegryn	£5,890
Bryncrug Community Council	A Bus Shelter by Cefn Coed crossing	£7,500
Llanbedr Community Council	Benches in the playground and information panels	£1,925
Llandderfel Community Council	Restoration work in the Sant Marc cemetery, Frongoch	£9,000
Llanycil Community Council	A community gazebo, projector and chairs for the centre	£7,500
Aberdyfi Community Council	Design, supply and install an interpretation panel in a children's playground	£4,950
Abermaw Community Council	Memorial Park Redevelopment Stage 1: Feasibility Study and a Christmas Lights Exhibition along the street	£9,000
Arthog Community Council	Sitting area and flowers by the new boat planters	£1,444
Llangywer Community Council	Digital resources for the Llangywer Hall	£3,361
Llanuwchllyn Community Council	Develop Llanuwchllyn Heritage Paths	£7,500
Bala Town Council	Improvements to Bala High Street Facilities – flags, QR codes for a cycle path and bike racks	£5,055
Talsarnau Community Council	Improvements to the seating area in Talsarnau	£4,700
Tywyn Community Council	Electrical foundations work, picnic tables and gazebos for community events	£9,000
Harlech Town Council	Improvements to the community garden , Y Llech ac Eglwys Sant Tanwg	£7,500

If you are interested in receiving more detailed information about the projects of the town and community councils in your area, you are more than welcome to contact the team via e-mail: adfywio@gwynedd.llyw.cymru



Poblogaeth yn y Canol Tref / Population in the Town Centre

81

Cyfrifiad 2021 / Census 2021

Aelwydydd yn y Canol Tref / Households in the Town Centre

51

Cyfrifiad 2021 / Census 2021

Incwm Canolrif Aelwydydd / Median Household Income

£37,138

(2023)

Nifer Eiddo Gwag / Number of Empty Properties

0

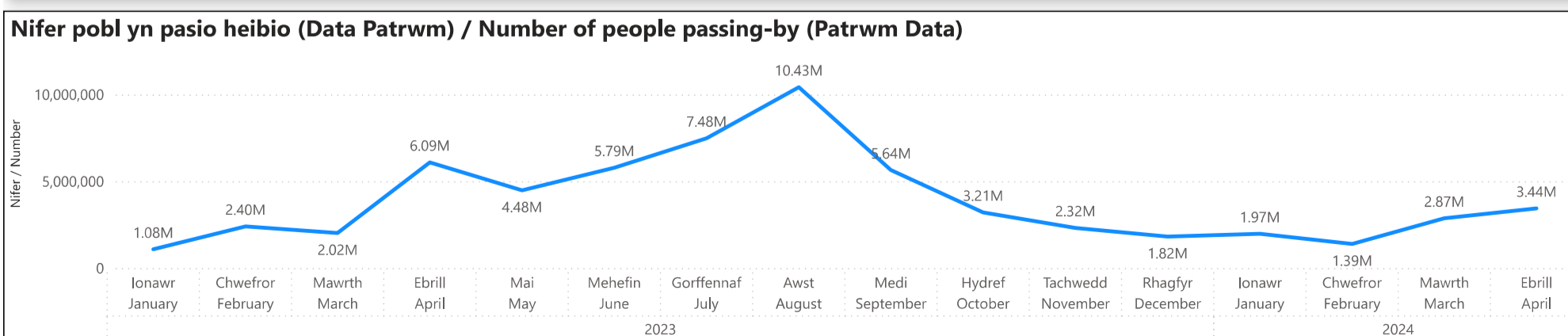
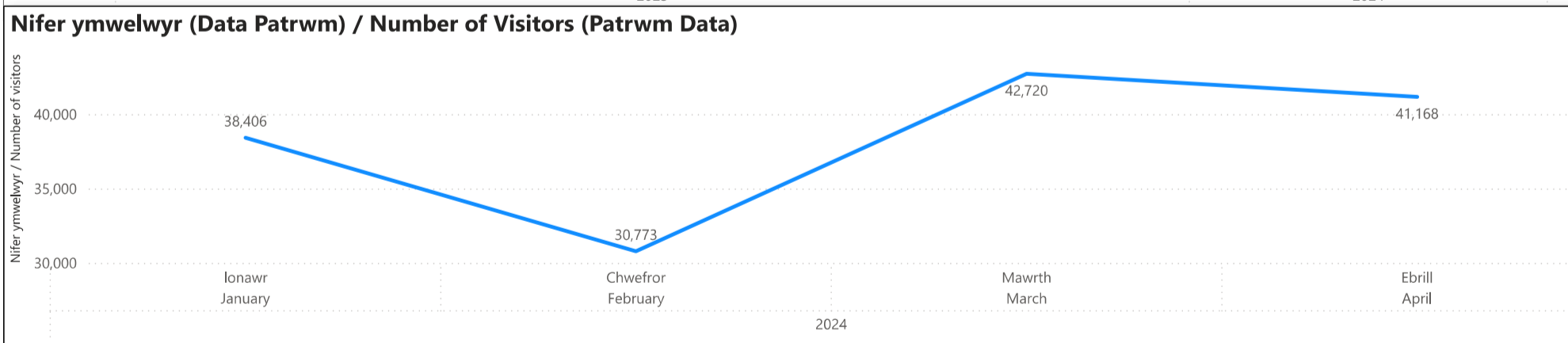
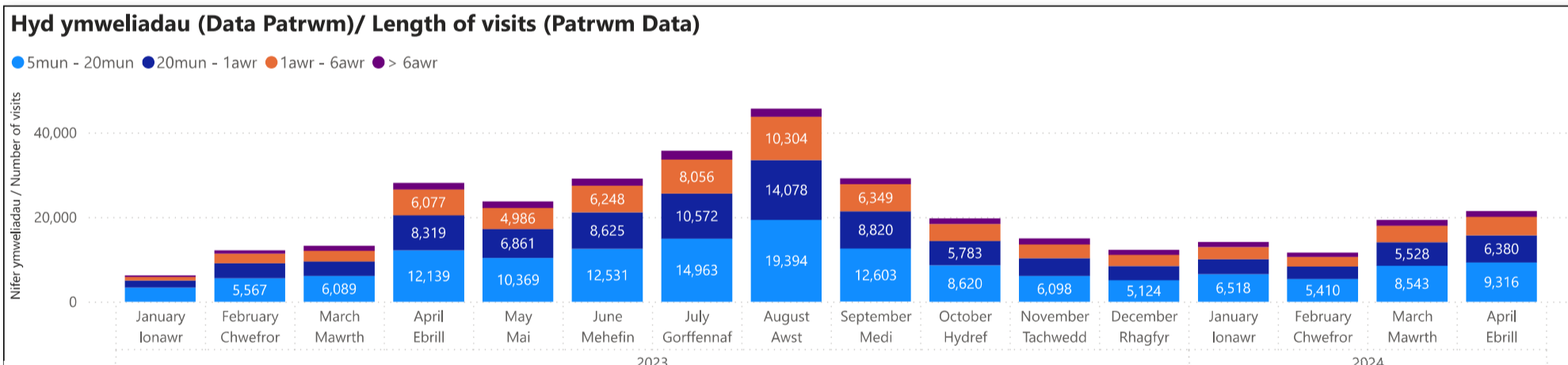
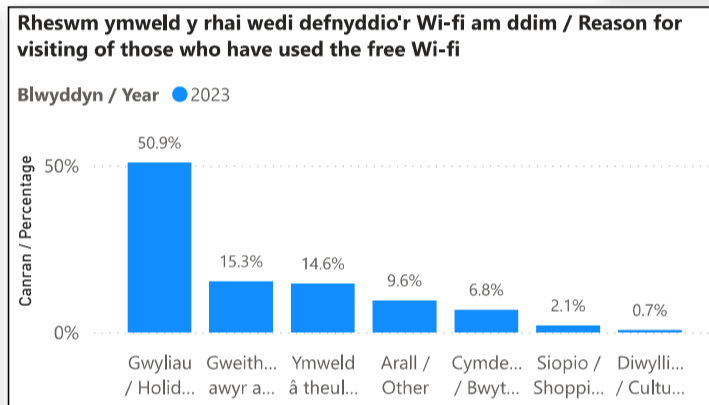
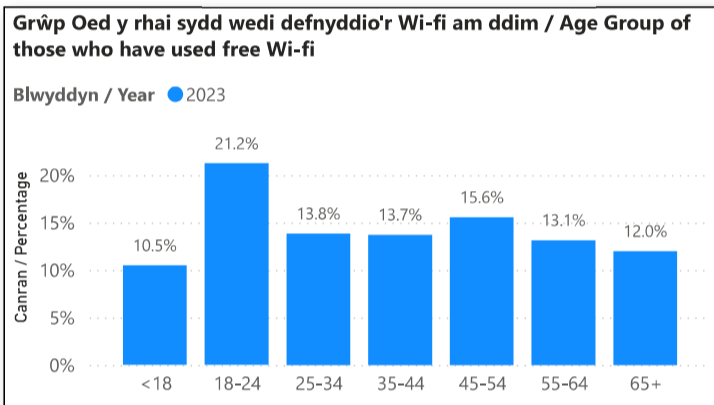
Mai 2024 / May 2024

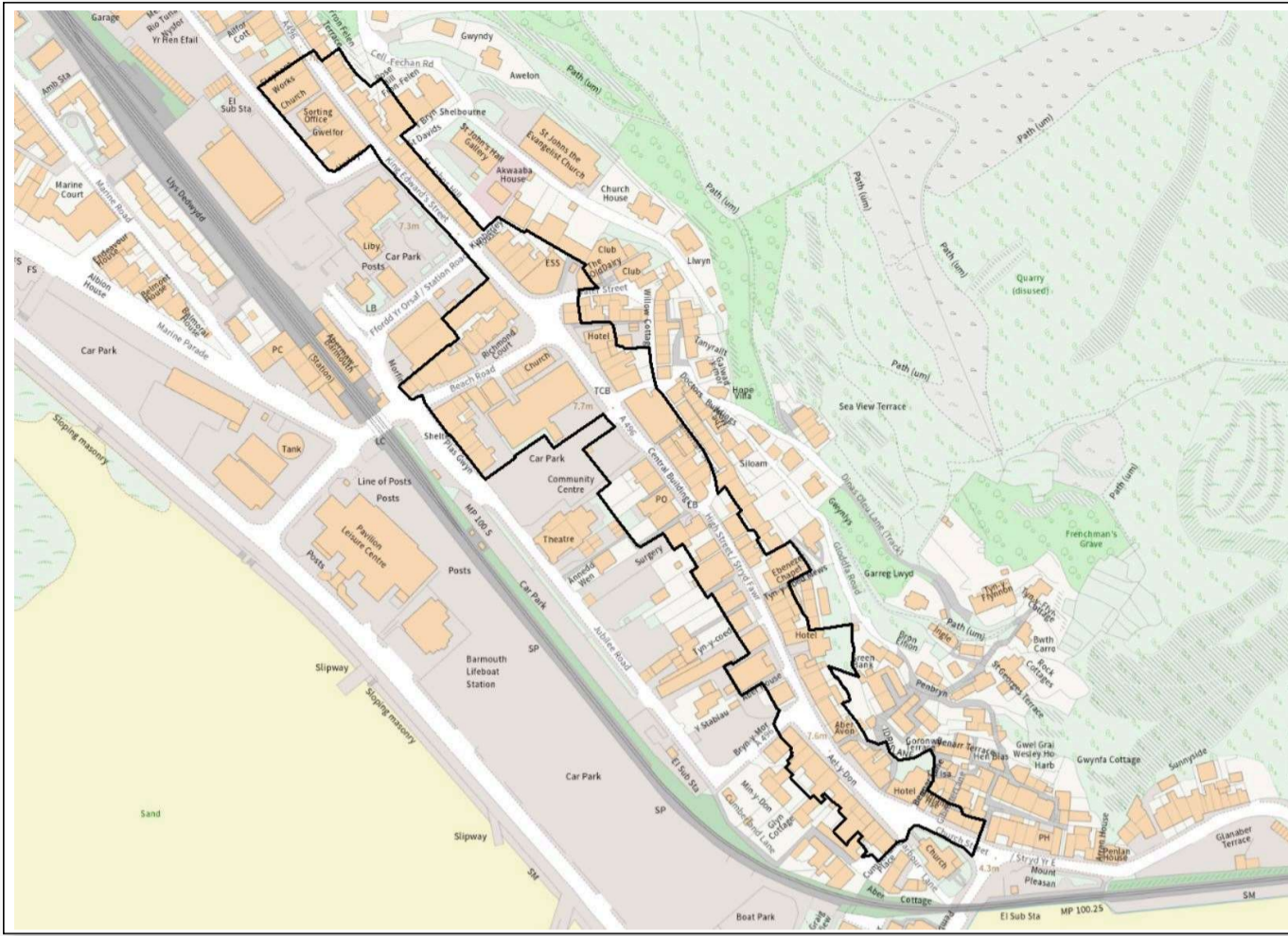
Canran Eiddo Gwag / Percentage of Empty Properties

0.0%

Mai 2024 / May 2024

Math Eiddo / Property Type	Nifer / Number
Uned Hunan Arlwy / Self Catering Unit	30
Siop / Shop	23
Caffi / Café	3
Swyddfa / Office	3
Bwyty / Restaurant	2
Gwesty / Hotel	2
Siop Trin Gwallt / Barbwr / Hairdresser / Barber	1
Tafarn / Public House	1
Cyfanswm / Total	65





Poblogaeth yn y Canol Tref / Population in the Town Centre

451

Cyfrifiad 2021 / Census 2021

Aelwydydd yn y Canol Tref / Households in the Town Centre

239

Cyfrifiad 2021 / Census 2021

Incwm Canolrif Aelwydydd / Median Household Income

£30,470

(2023)

Math Eiddo / Property Type	Nifer / Number
Siop / Shop	82
Uned Hunan Arlwy / Self Catering Unit	9
Bwyty / Restaurant	8
Caffi / Café	6
Siop Trin Gwallt / Barbwr / Hairdresser / Barber	5
Tafarn / Public House	4
Gwesty / Hotel	2
Swyddfa / Office	2
Banc / Bank	1
Campfa Ffithwydd / Gymnasium	1
Eiddo mewn cyflwr gwael / Property in poor state of repair	1
Gorsaf Heddlu / Police Station	1
Gweithdy / Workshop	1
Launderette / Launderette	1
Marchnad / Market	1
Meithrinfa Gofal Plant / Day Nursery	1
Showroom / Showroom	1
Cyfanswm	127

Nifer Eiddo Gwag / Number of Empty Properties

12

Mai 2024 / May 2024

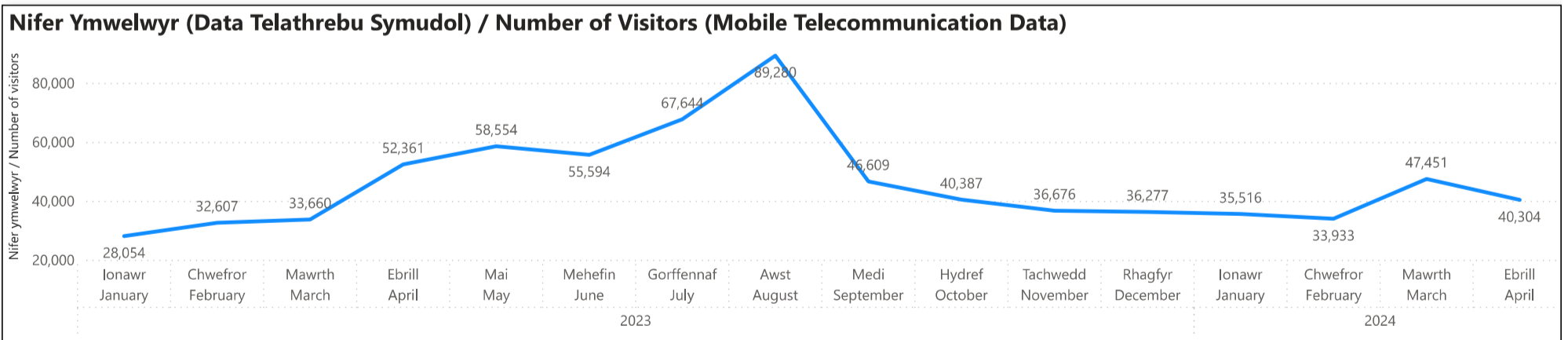
Canran Eiddo Gwag / Percentage of Empty Properties

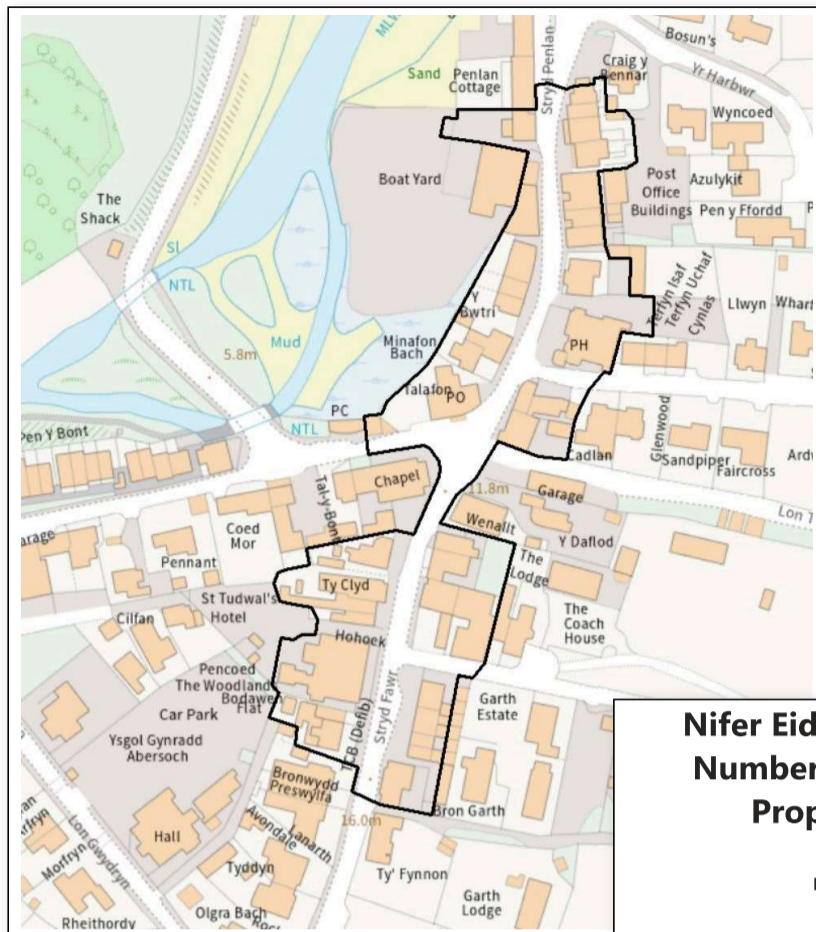
9.4%

Mai 2024 / May 2024

Data Incwm - yn seiliedig ar data incwm yr ardal sydd yn ffitio orau gyda ffin y "Canol Tref". Ffynhonnell : CaciPaycheck 2023

Income Data - based on the income data of the area that fits best with the "Town Centre" boundary. Source: CaciPaycheck 2023





Math Eiddo / Property Type	Nifer / Number
Siop / Shop	24
Bwyty / Restaurant	6
Uned Hunan Arlwy / Self Catering Unit	5
Tafarn / Public House	3
Caffi / Café	2
Swyddfa / Office	2
Gorsaf Betrol / Petrol Station	1
Gwesty / Hotel	1
Modurdy / Garage	1
Salon Harddwch / Beauty Salon	1
Swyddfa Bost / Post Office	1
Cyfanswm	47

Poblogaeth yn y Canol Tref / Population in the Town Centre

77

Cyfrifiad 2021 / Census 2021

Aelwydydd yn y Canol Tref / Households in the Town Centre

44

Cyfrifiad 2021 / Census 2021

Nifer Eiddo Gwag / Number of Empty Properties

1

Mai 2024 / May 2024

Canran Eiddo Gwag / Percentage of Empty Properties

2.1%

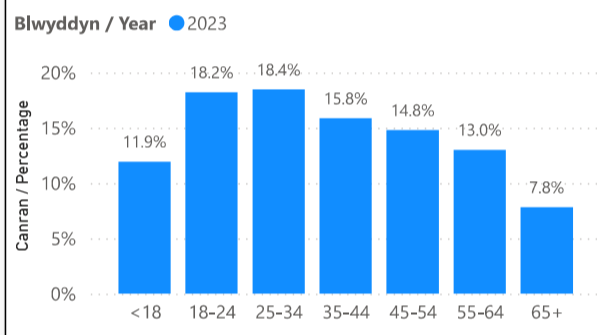
Mai 2024 / May 2024

Incwm Canolrif Aelwydydd / Median Household Income

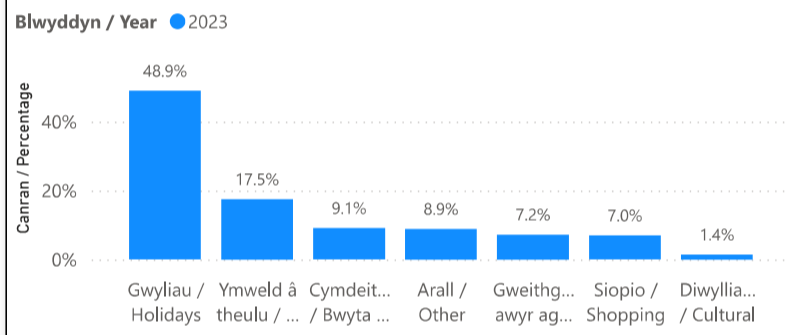
£43,845

(2023)

Grŵp Oed y rhai sydd wedi defnyddio'r Wi-fi am ddim / Age Group of those who have used free Wi-fi



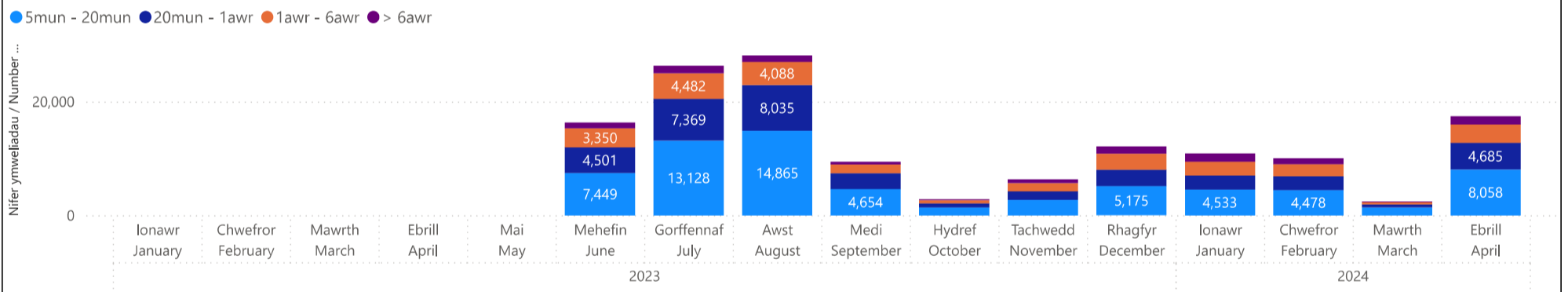
Rheswm ymweld y rhai wedi defnyddio'r Wi-fi am ddim / Reason for visiting of those who have used the free Wi-fi



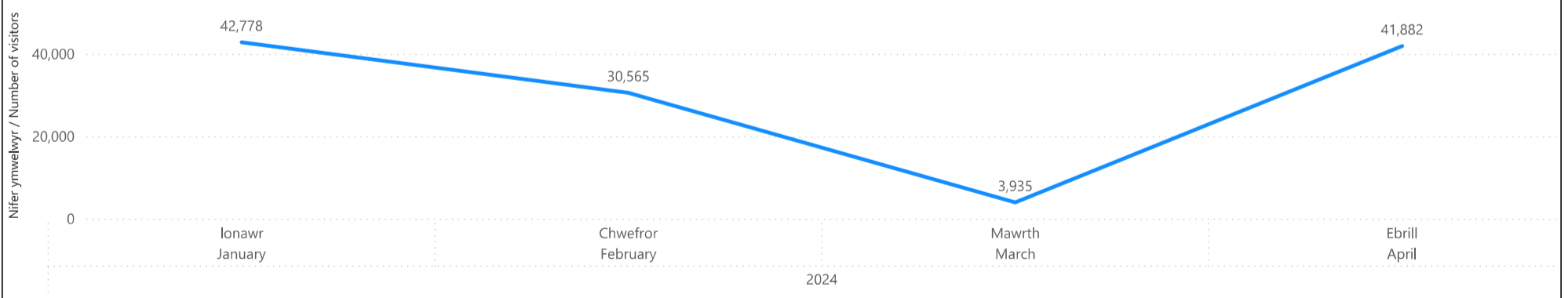
Data Incwm - yn seiliedig ar data incwm yr ardal sydd yn ffitio orau gyda ffin y "Canol Tref". Ffynhonnell : CaciPaycheck 2023

Income Data - based on the income data of the area that fits best with the "Town Centre" boundary. Source: CaciPaycheck 2023

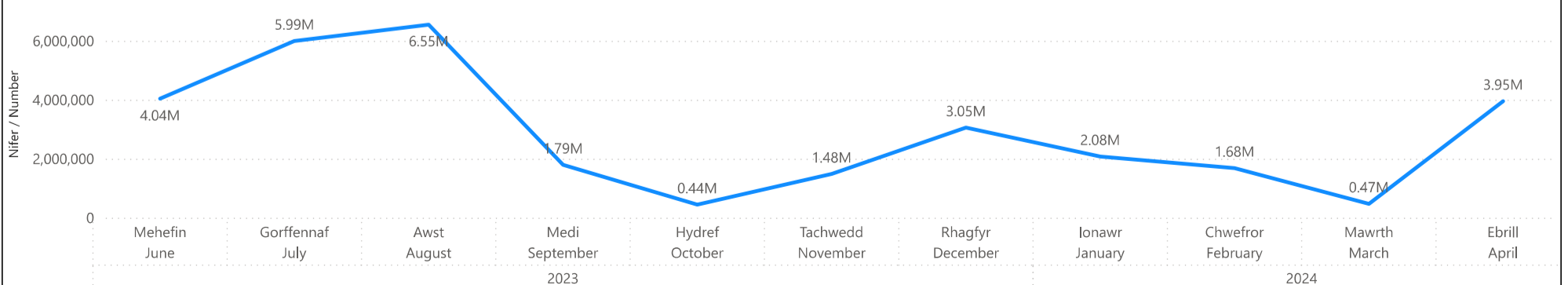
Hyd ymweliadau (Data Patrwm) / Length of visits (Patrwm Data)

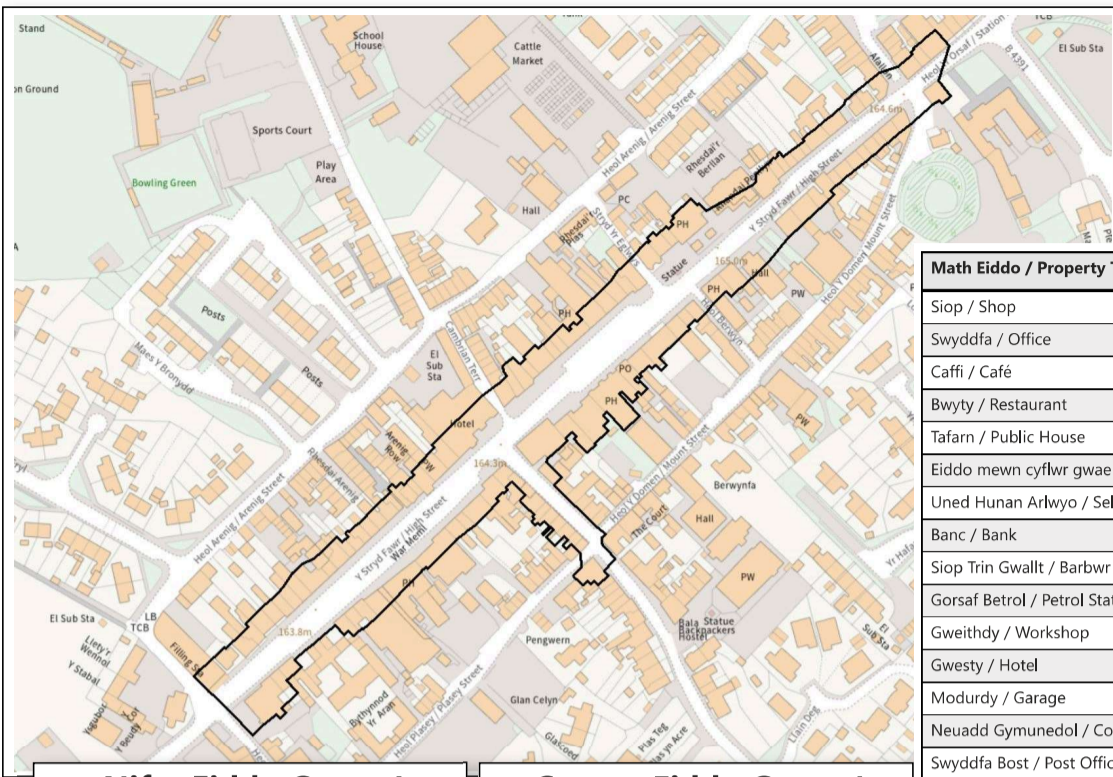


Nifer ymwelwyr (Data Patrwm) / Number of Visitors (Patrwm Data)



Nifer pobl yn pasio heibio (Data Patrwm) / Number of people passing-by (Patrwm Data)





Poblogaeth yn y Canol Tref / Population in the Town Centre

389

Cyfrifiad 2021 / Census 2021

Aelwydydd yn y Canol Tref / Households in the Town Centre

191

Cyfrifiad 2021 / Census 2021

Incwm Canolrif Aelwydydd / Median Household Income

£25,780

(2023)

Math Eiddo / Property Type	Nifer / Number
Siop / Shop	51
Swyddfa / Office	12
Caffi / Café	5
Bwyty / Restaurant	4
Tafarn / Public House	4
Eiddo mewn cyflwr gwael / Property in poor state of repair	3
Uned Hunan Arlwy / Self Catering Unit	3
Banc / Bank	2
Siop Trin Gwallt / Barbwr / Hairdresser / Barber	2
Gorsaf Betrol / Petrol Station	1
Gweithdy / Workshop	1
Gwesty / Hotel	1
Modurdy / Garage	1
Neuadd Gymunedol / Community Hall	1
Swyddfa Bost / Post Office	1
Warws / Warehouse	1
Cyfanswm	93

Nifer Eiddo Gwag / Number of Empty Properties

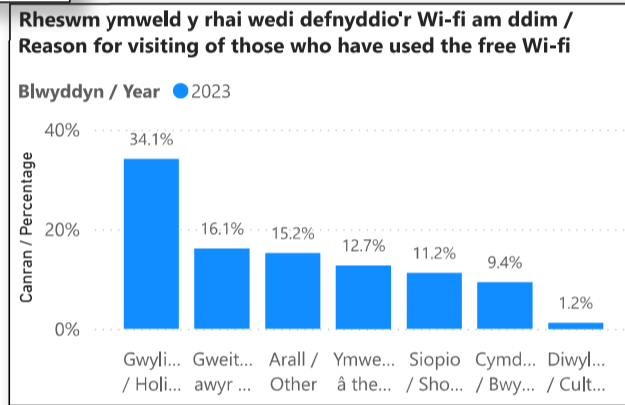
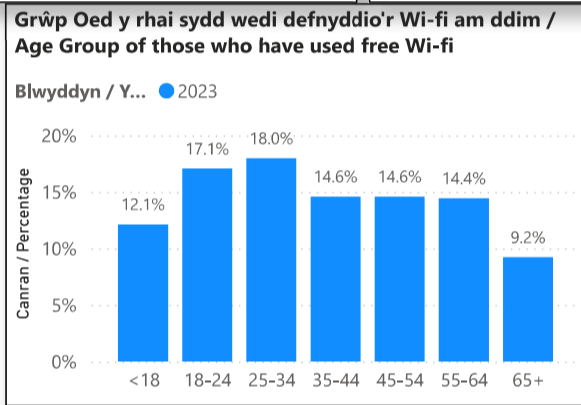
9

Mai 2024 / May 2024

Canran Eiddo Gwag / Percentage of Empty Properties

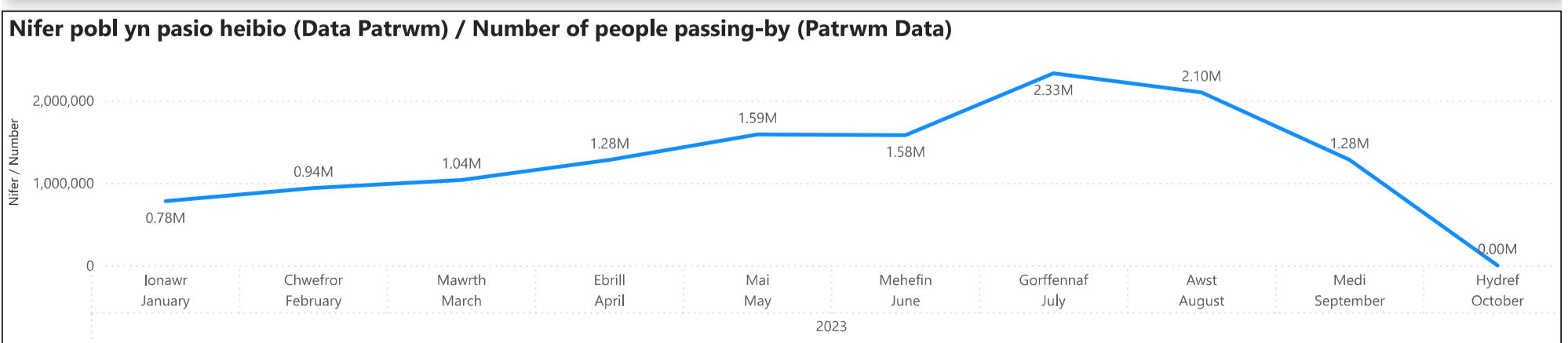
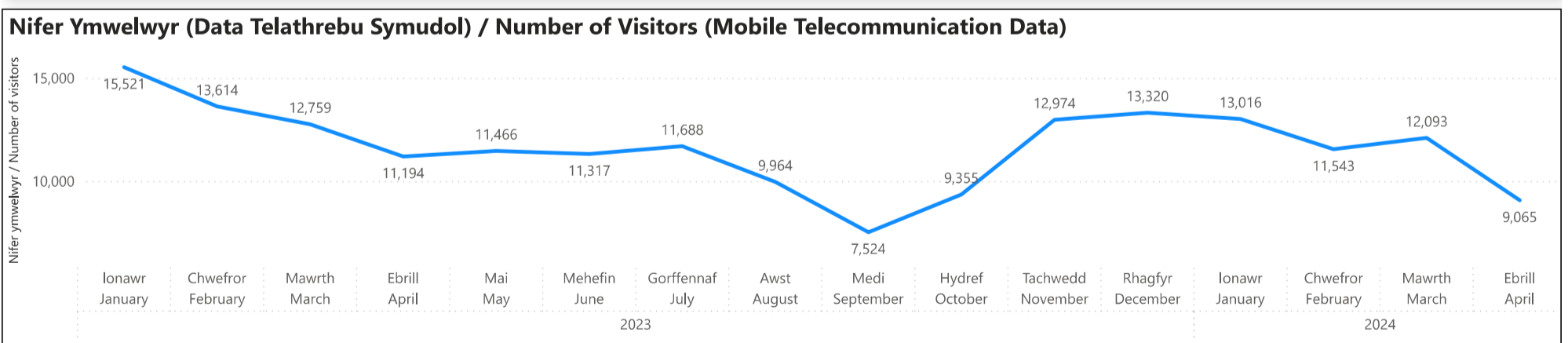
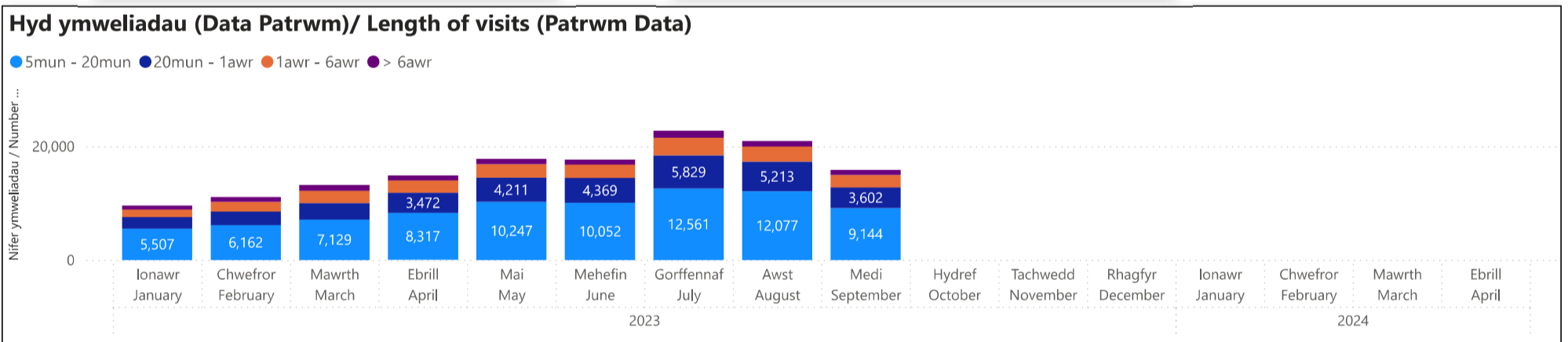
9.7%

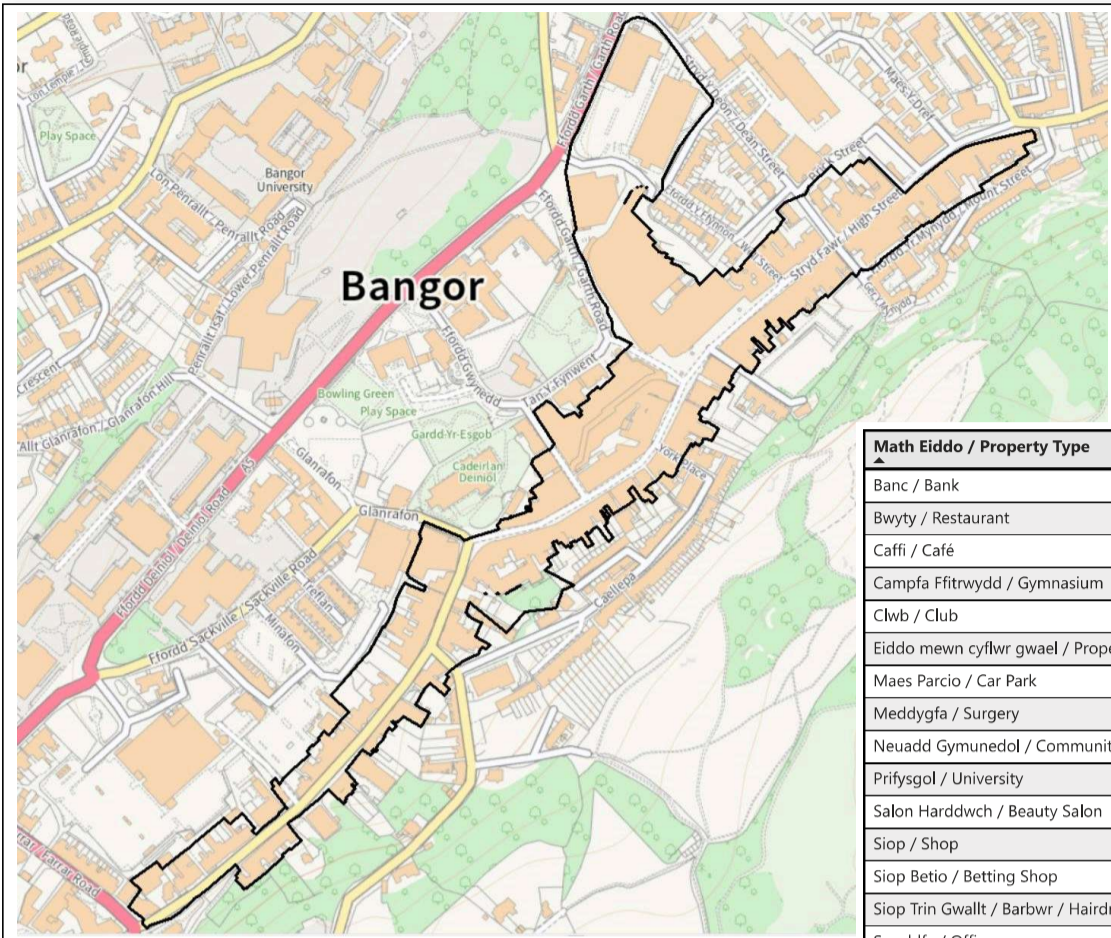
Mai 2024 / May 2024



Data Incwm - yn seiliedig ar data incwm yr ardal sydd yn ffitio orau gyda ffin y "Canol Tref". Ffynhonnell : CaciPaycheck 2023

Income Data - based on the income data of the area that fits best with the "Town Centre" boundary. Source: CaciPaycheck 2023





Poblogaeth yn y Canol Tref / Population in the Town Centre

620

Cyfrifiad 2021 / Census 2021

Aelwydydd yn y Canol Tref / Households in the Town Centre

308

Cyfrifiad 2021 / Census 2021

Incwm Canolrif Aelwydydd / Median Household Income

£26,106

(2023)

Math Eiddo / Property Type	Nifer / Number
Banc / Bank	4
Bwyty / Restaurant	6
Caffi / Café	5
Campfa Ffitrwydd / Gymnasium	1
Clwb / Club	1
Eiddo mewn cyflwr gwael / Property in poor state of repair	4
Maes Parcio / Car Park	3
Meddygfa / Surgery	3
Neuadd Gymunedol / Community Hall	1
Prifysgol / University	1
Salon Harddwch / Beauty Salon	2
Siop / Shop	167
Siop Betio / Betting Shop	1
Siop Trin Gwallt / Barbwr / Hairdresser / Barber	10
Swyddfa / Office	50
Tafarn / Public House	11
Ymgymerywr Angladdau / Funeral Directors	1
Cyfanswm	271

Nifer Eiddo Gwag / Number of Empty Properties

48

Mai 2024 / May 2024

Canran Eiddo Gwag / Percentage of Empty Properties

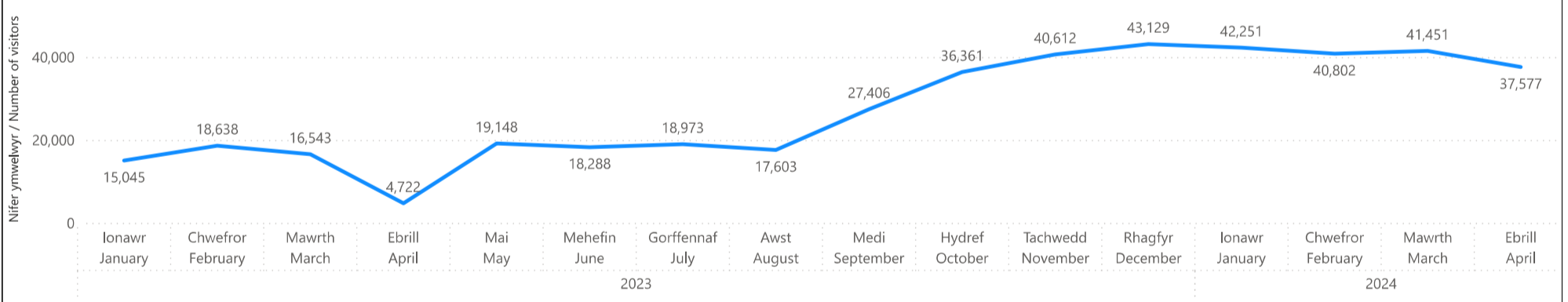
17.7%

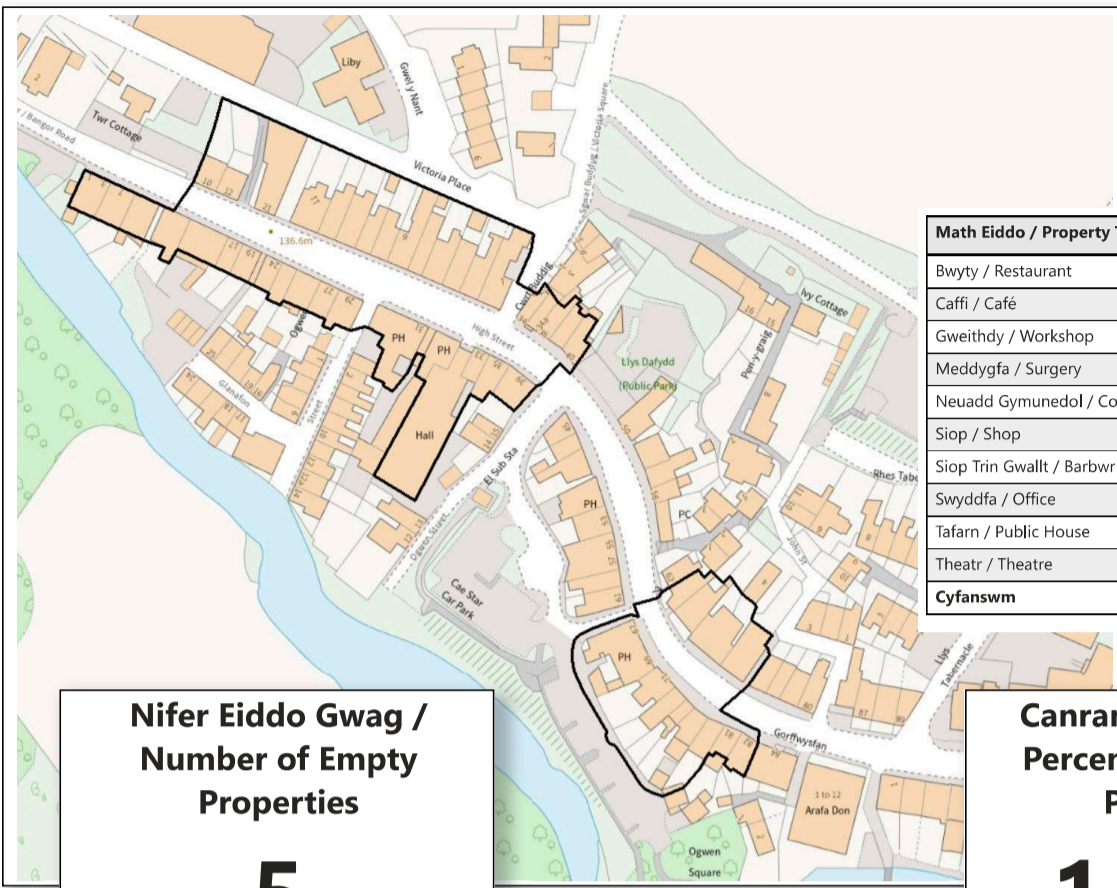
Mai 2024 / May 2024

Data Incwm - yn seiliedig ar data incwm yr ardal sydd yn ffitio orau gyda ffin y "Canol Tref". Ffynhonnell : CaciPaycheck 2023

Income Data - based on the income data of the area that fits best with the "Town Centre" boundary. Source: CaciPaycheck 2023

Nifer Ymwelwyr (Data Telathrebu Symudol) / Number of Visitors (Mobile Telecommunication Data)





Math Eiddo / Property Type	Nifer / Number
Bwyty / Restaurant	1
Caffi / Café	1
Gweithdy / Workshop	1
Meddygfa / Surgery	1
Neuadd Gymunedol / Community Hall	1
Siop / Shop	20
Siop Trin Gwallt / Barbwr / Hairdresser / Barber	2
Swyddfa / Office	3
Tafarn / Public House	3
Theatr / Theatre	1
Cyfanswm	34

Poblogaeth yn y Canol Tref / Population in the Town Centre

219

Cyfrifiad 2021 / Census 2021

Aelwydydd yn y Canol Tref / Households in the Town Centre

133

Cyfrifiad 2021 / Census 2021

Incwm Canolrif Aelwydydd / Median Household Income

£30,134

(2023)

Data Incwm - yn seiliedig ar data incwm yr ardal sydd yn ffitio orau gyda ffin y "Canol Tref". Ffynhonnell: CaciPaycheck 2023

Income Data - based on the income data of the area that fits best with the "Town Centre" boundary. Source: CaciPaycheck 2023

Nifer Eiddo Gwag / Number of Empty Properties

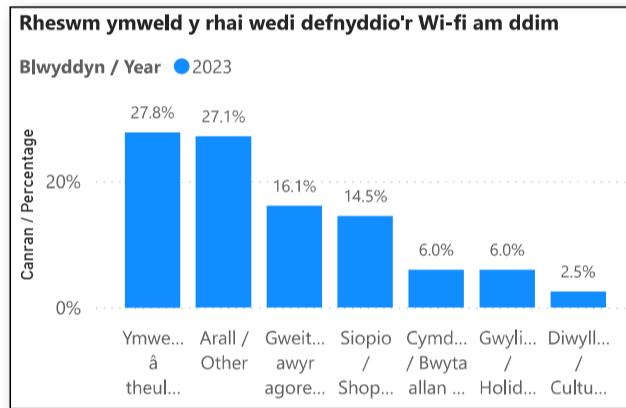
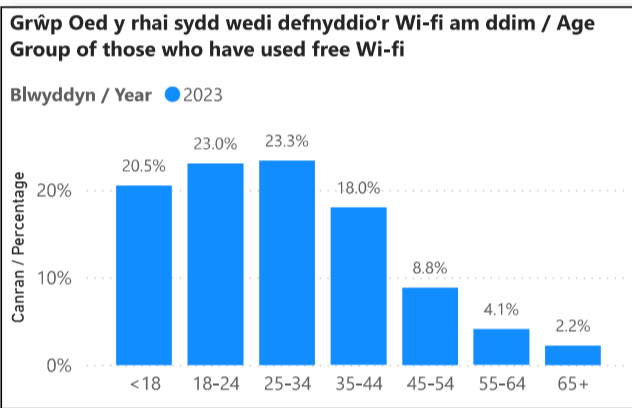
5

Mai 2024 / May 2024

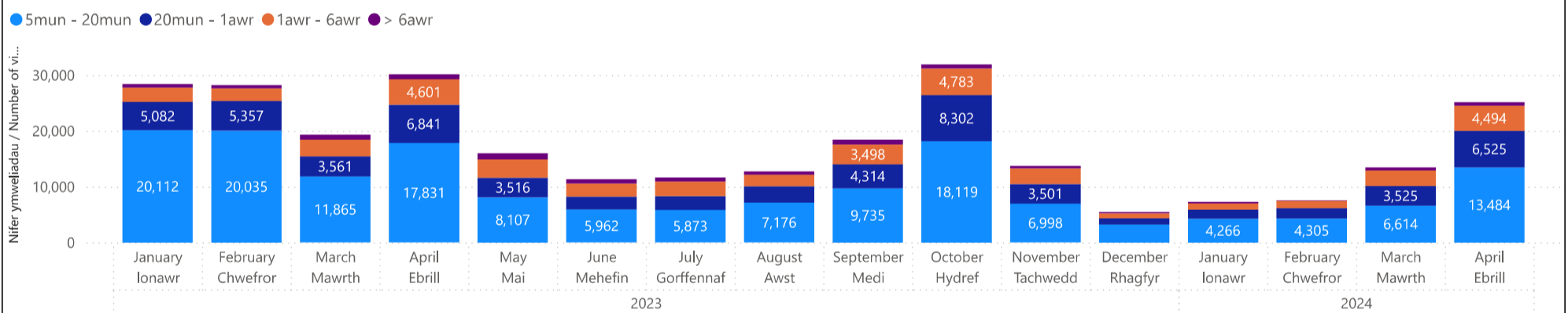
Canran Eiddo Gwag / Percentage of Empty Properties

14.7%

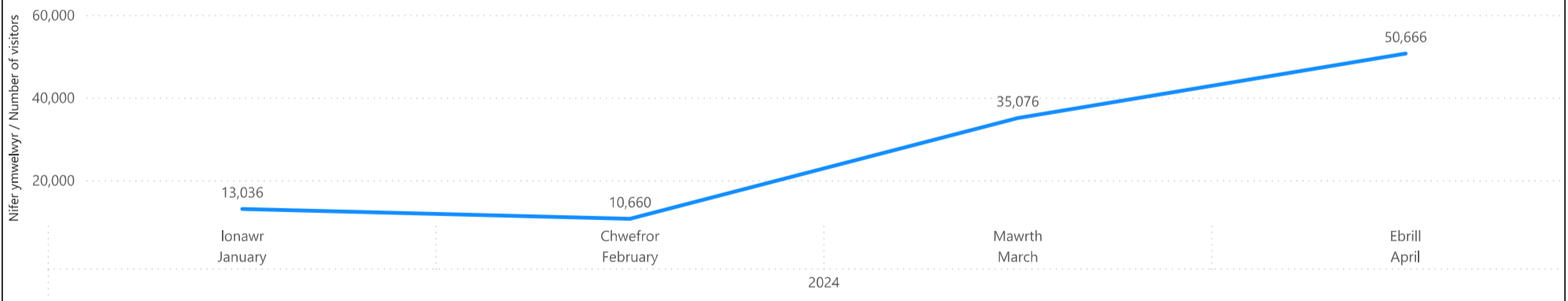
Mai 2024 / May 2024



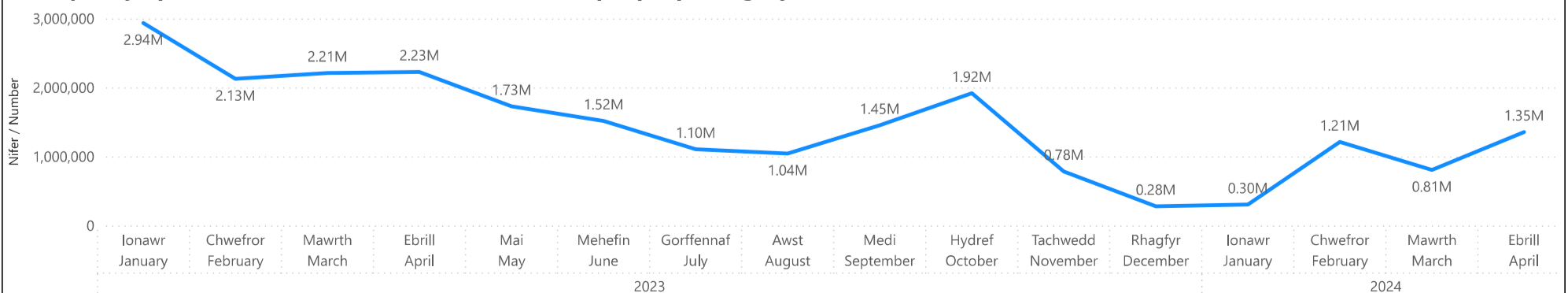
Hyd ymweliadau (Data Patrwm) / Length of visits (Patrwm Data)

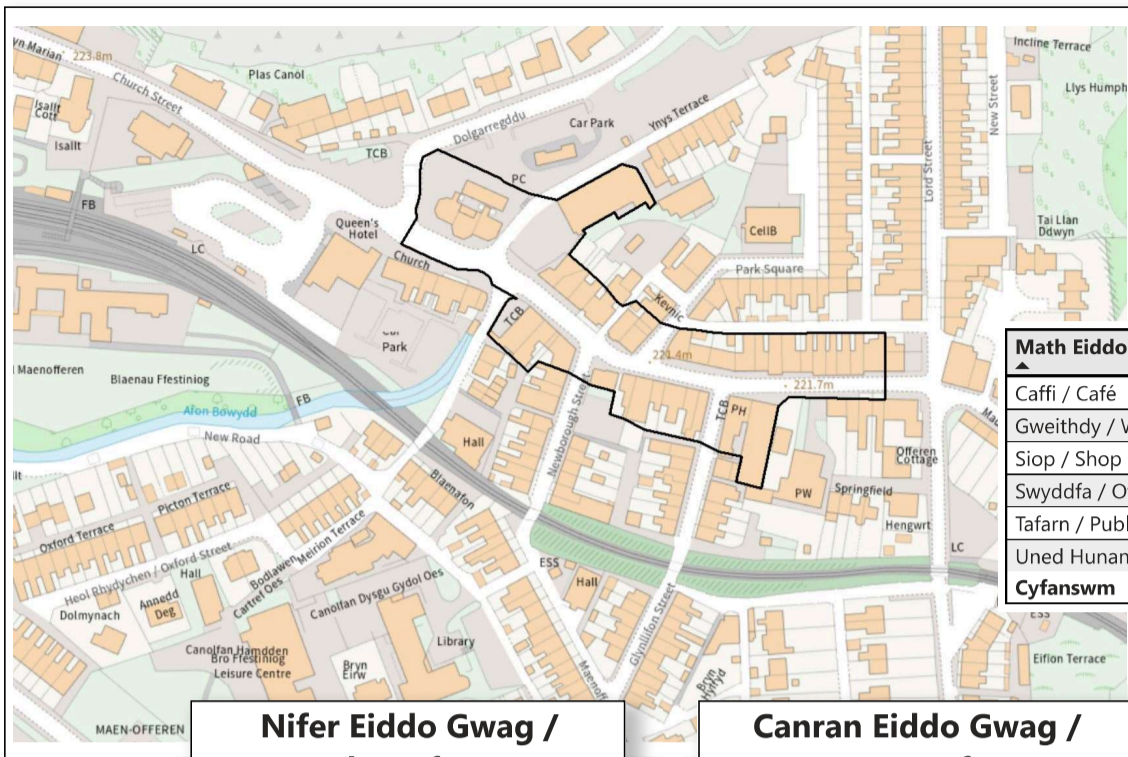


Nifer ymwelwyr (Data Patrwm) / Number of Visitors (Patrwm Data)



Nifer pobl yn pasio heibio (Data Patrwm) / Number of people passing-by (Patrwm Data)





Poblogaeth yn y Canol Tref / Population in the Town Centre

195

Cyfrifiad 2021 / Census 2021

Aelwydydd yn y Canol Tref / Households in the Town Centre

115

Cyfrifiad 2021 / Census 2021

Incwm Canolrif Aelwydydd / Median Household Income

£24,505

(2023)

Nifer Eiddo Gwag / Number of Empty Properties

6

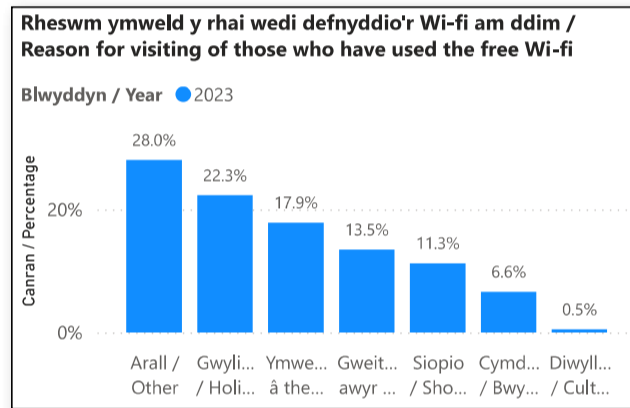
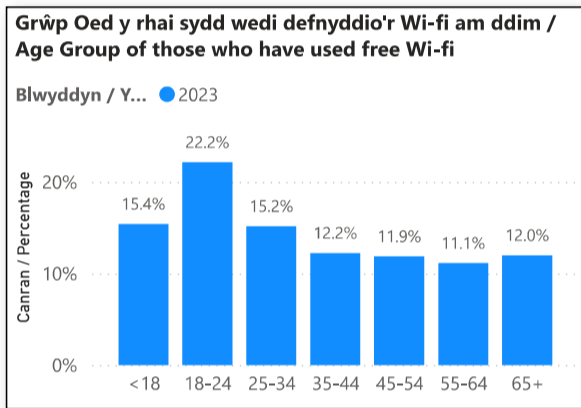
Mai 2024 / May 2024

Canran Eiddo Gwag / Percentage of Empty Properties

18.8%

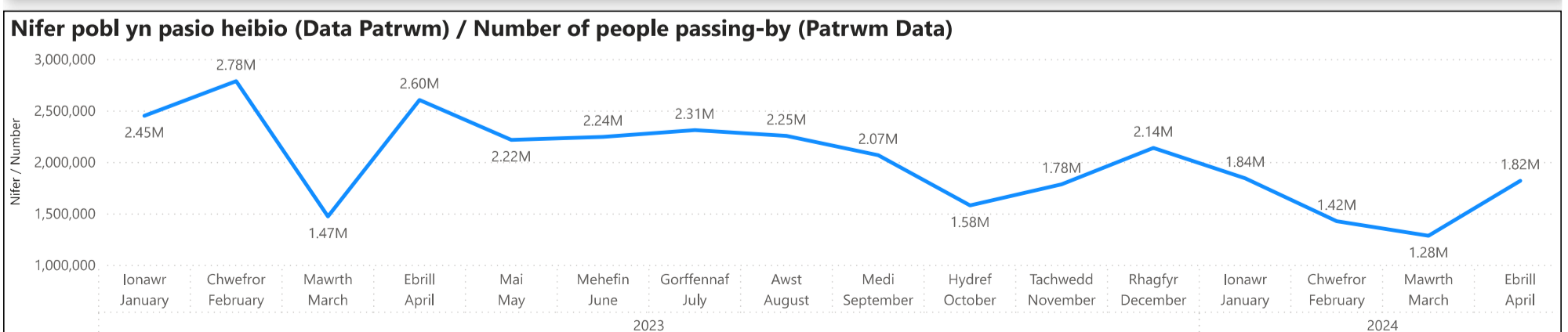
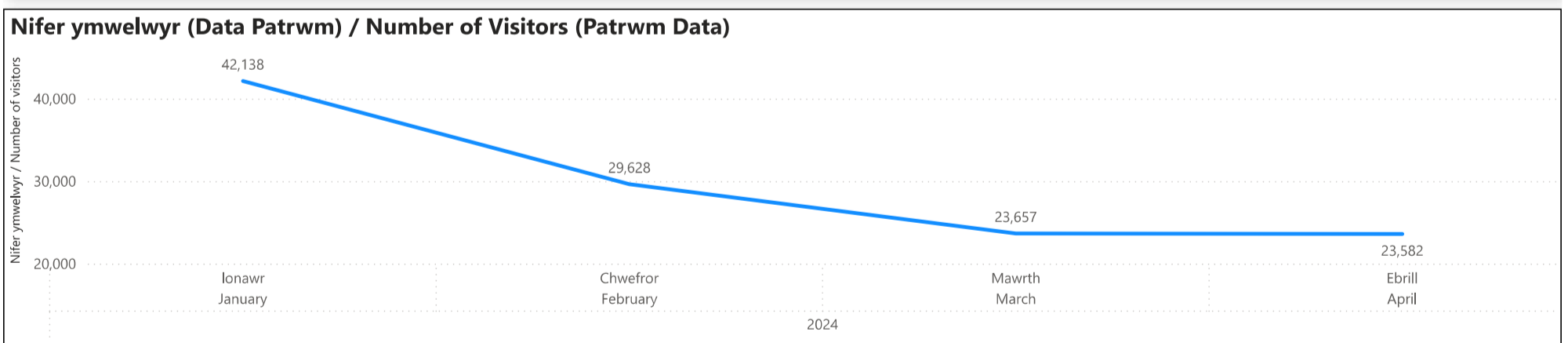
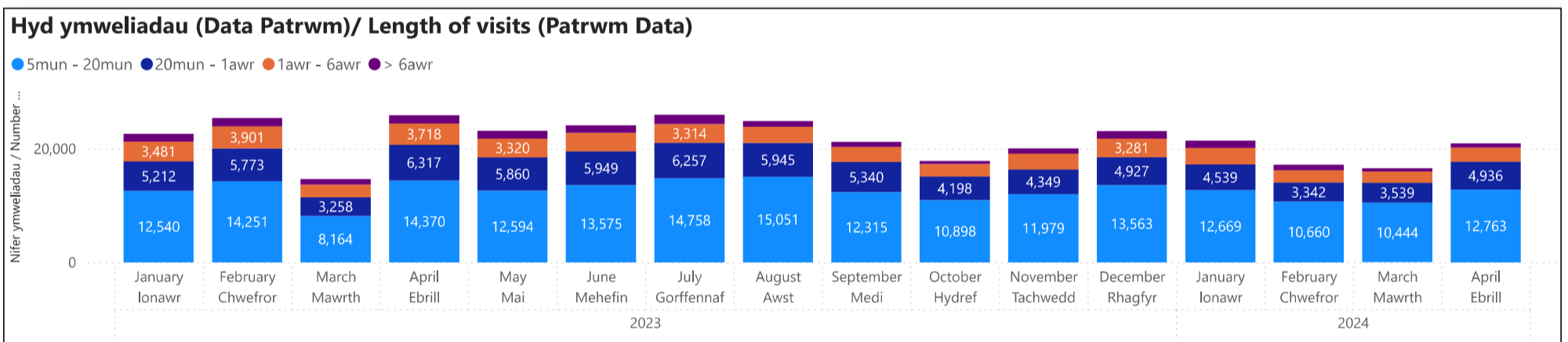
Mai 2024 / May 2024

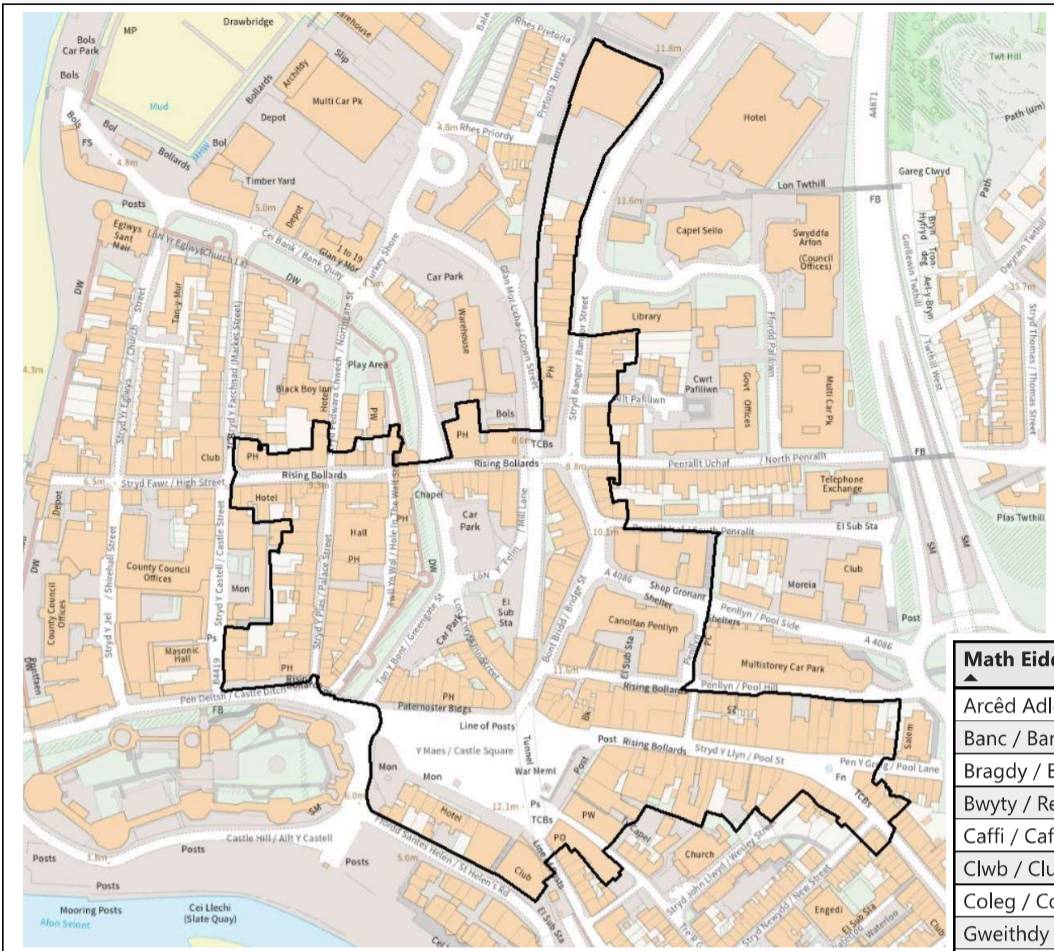
Math Eiddo / Property Type	Nifer
Caffi / Café	2
Gweithdy / Workshop	1
Siop / Shop	21
Swyddfa / Office	6
Tafarn / Public House	1
Uned Hunan Arlwy / Self Catering Unit	1
Cyfanswm	32



Data Incwm - yn seiliedig ar data incwm yr ardal sydd yn ffitio orau gyda ffin y "Canol Tref". Ffynhonnell: CaciPaycheck 2023

Income Data - based on the income data of the area that fits best with the "Town Centre" boundary. Source: CaciPaycheck 2023





Poblogaeth yn y Canol Tref / Population in the Town Centre

559

Cyfrifiad 2021 / Census 2021

Aelwydydd yn y Canol Tref / Households in the Town Centre

328

Cyfrifiad 2021 / Census 2021

Incwm Canolrif Aelwydydd / Median Household Income

£26,923

(2023)

Math Eiddo / Property Type	Nifer
Arcêd Adloniant / Amusement Arcade	1
Banc / Bank	3
Bragdy / Brewery	1
Bwyty / Restaurant	7
Caffi / Café	11
Clwb / Club	1
Coleg / College	1
Gweithdy / Workshop	1
Hostel / Hostel	1
Launderette / Launderette	2
Marchnad / Market	1
Meddygfa / Surgery	2
Salon Harddwch / Beauty Salon	1
Siop / Shop	141
Siop Betio / Betting Shop	2
Siop Trin Gwallt / Barbwr / Hairdresser / Barber	7
Swyddfa / Office	61
Tafarn / Public House	9
Toiledau Cyhoeddus / Public Toilets	1
Uned Hunan Arlwy / Self Catering Unit	9
Cyfanswm	263

Nifer Eiddo Gwag / Number of Empty Properties

34

Mai 2024 / May 2024

Canran Eiddo Gwag / Percentage of Empty Properties

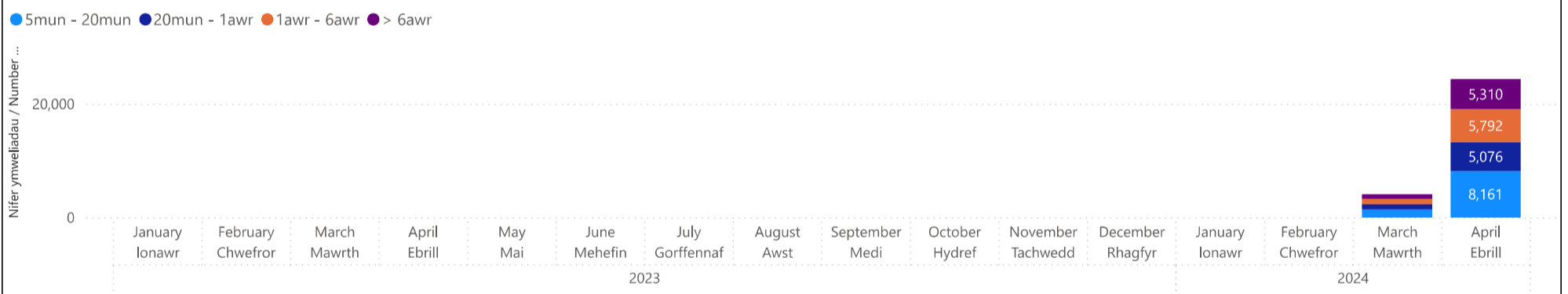
12.9%

Mai 2024 / May 2024

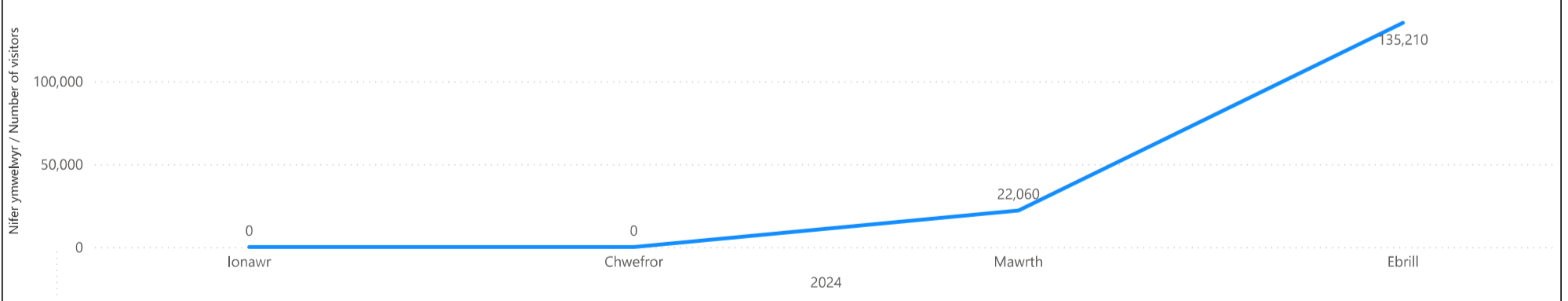
Data Incwm - yn seiliedig ar data incwm yr ardal sydd yn ffitio orau gyda ffin y "Canol Tref". Ffynhonnell : CaciPaycheck 2023

Income Data - based on the income data of the area that fits best with the "Town Centre" boundary. Source: CaciPaycheck 2023

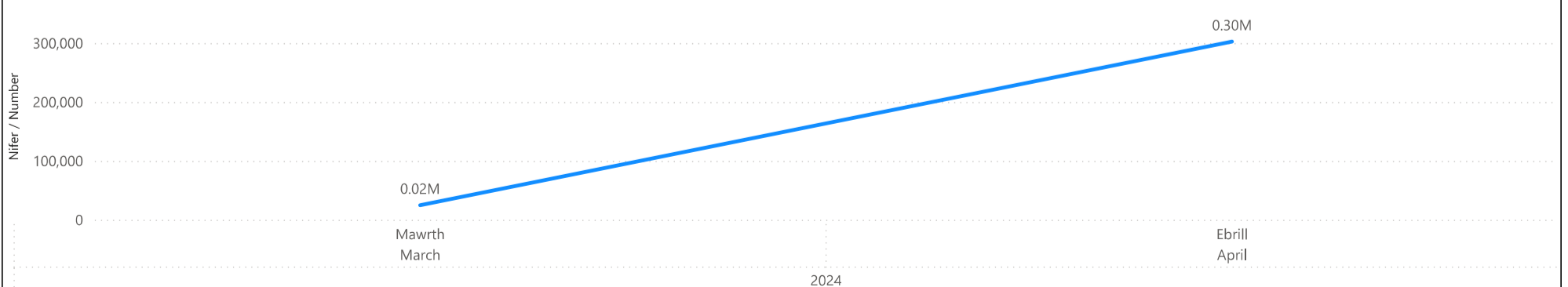
Hyd ymweliadau (Data Patrwm) / Length of visits (Patrwm Data)

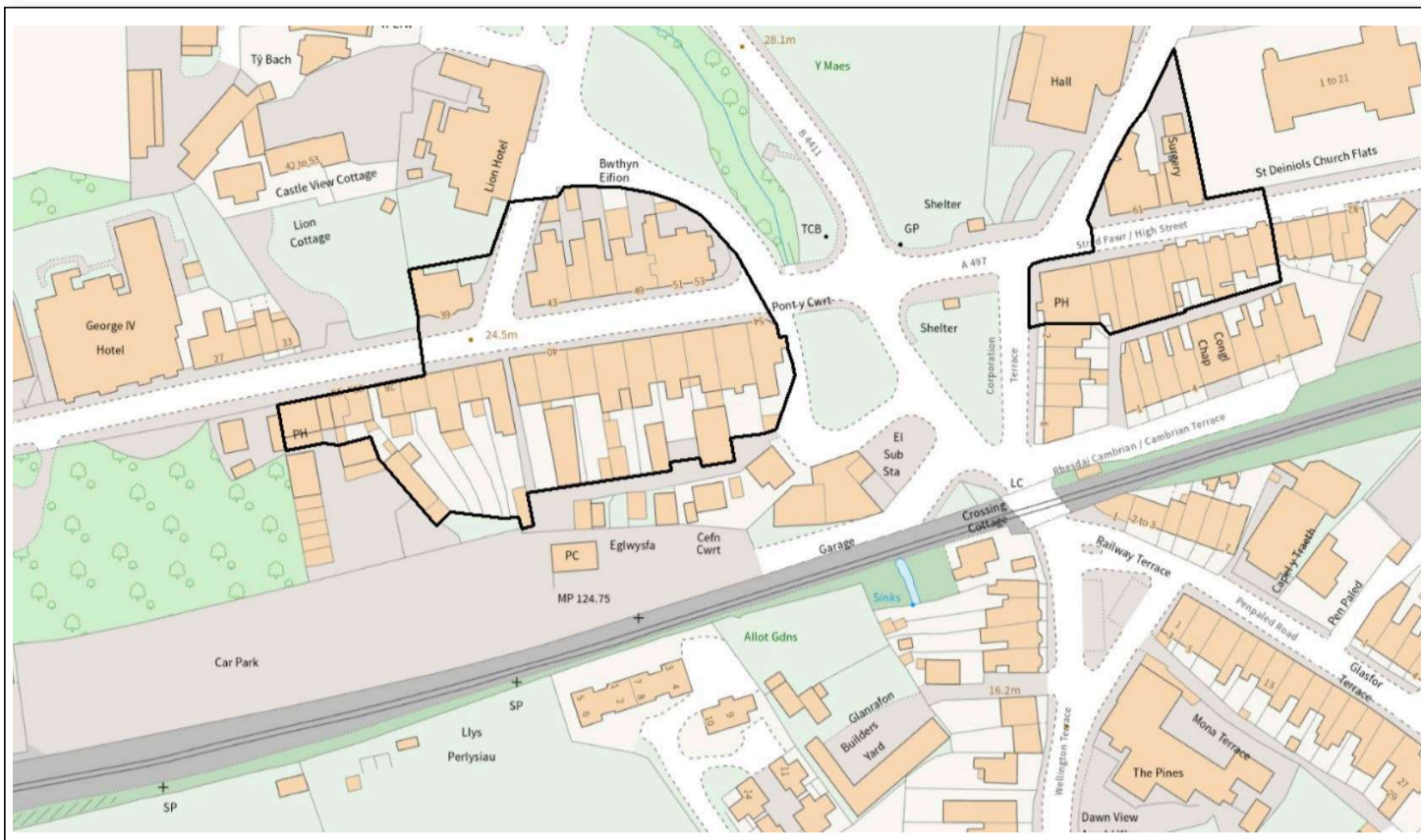


Nifer ymwelwyr (Data Patrwm) / Number of Visitors (Patrwm Data)



Nifer pobl yn pasio heibio (Data Patrwm) / Number of people passing-by (Patrwm Data)





Poblogaeth yn y Canol Tref / Population in the Town Centre

109

Cyfrifiad 2021 / Census 2021

Aelwydydd yn y Canol Tref / Households in the Town Centre

54

Cyfrifiad 2021 / Census 2021

Incwm Canolrif Aelwydydd / Median Household Income

£37,089

(2023)

Data Incwm - yn seiliedig ar data incwm yr ardal sydd yn ffitio orau gyda ffin y "Canol Tref". Ffynhonnell : CaciPaycheck 2023

Income Data - based on the income data of the area that fits best with the "Town Centre" boundary. Source: CaciPaycheck 2023

Math Eiddo / Property Type	Nifer
Bwyty / Restaurant	3
Caffi / Café	2
Launderette / Launderette	1
Siop / Shop	26
Siop Trin Gwallt / Barbwr / Hairdresser / Barber	2
Swyddfa / Office	3
Tafarn / Public House	1
Uned Hunan Arlwy / Self Catering Unit	2
Cyfanswm	40

Nifer Eiddo Gwag / Number of Empty Properties

1

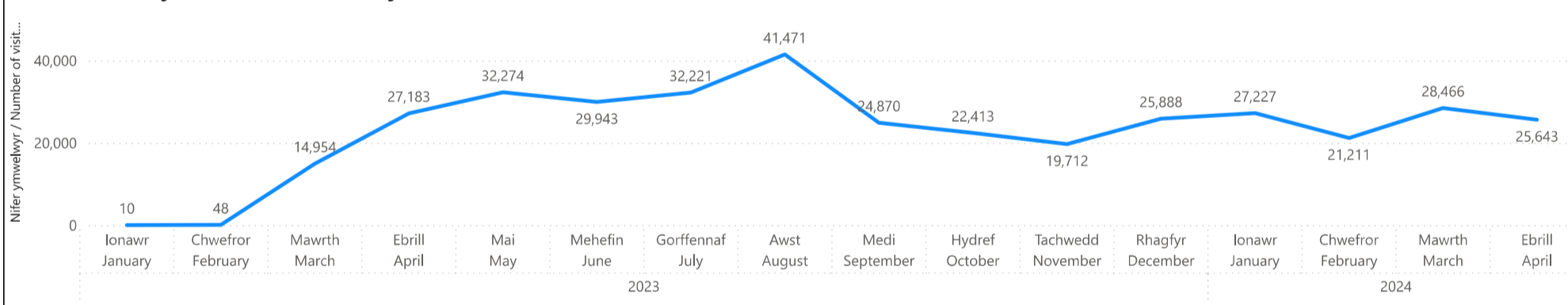
Mai 2024 / May 2024

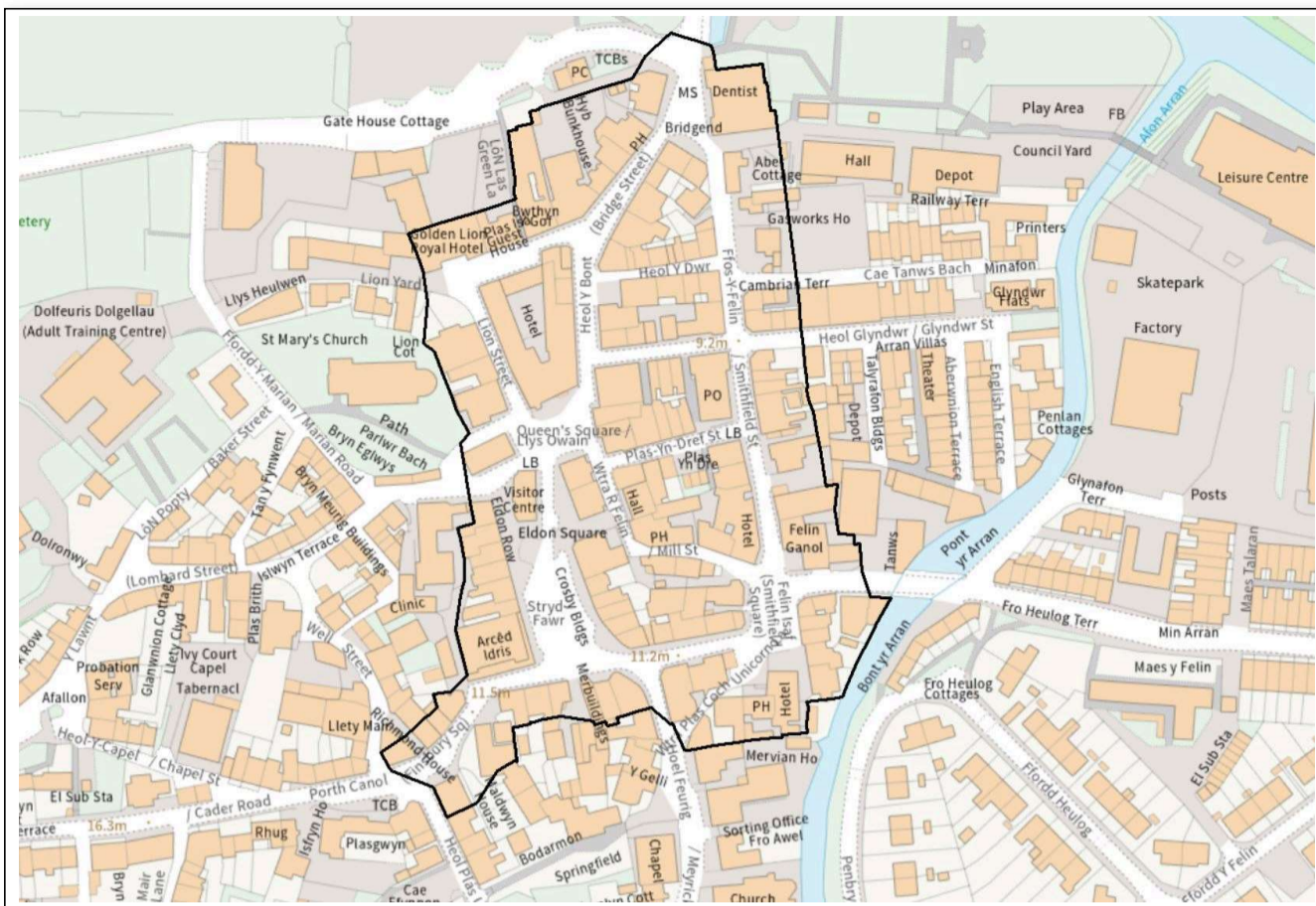
Canran Eiddo Gwag / Percentage of Empty Properties

2.5%

Mai 2024 / May 2024

Nifer Ymwelwyr (Data Telathrebu Symudol)





Poblogaeth yn y Canol Tref / Population in the Town Centre

293

Cyfrifiad 2021 / Census 2021

Aelwydydd yn y Canol Tref / Households in the Town Centre

172

Cyfrifiad 2021 / Census 2021

Incwm Canolrif Aelwydydd / Median Household Income

£31,150

(2023)

Data Incwm - yn seiliedig ar data incwm yr ardal sydd yn ffitio orau gyda ffin y "Canol Tref". Ffynhonnell: CaciPaycheck 2023

Income Data - based on the income data of the area that fits best with the "Town Centre" boundary. Source: CaciPaycheck 2023

Math Eiddo / Property Type	Nifer
Uned Hunan Arlwyyo / Self Catering Unit	5
Theatr / Theatre	2
Tafarn / Public House	5
Swyddfa Bost / Post Office	1
Swyddfa / Office	41
Siop Trin Gwallt / Barbwr / Hairdresser / Barber	2
Siop Betio / Betting Shop	1
Siop / Shop	58
Sefydliad Amddiffyn Ategol / Auxiliary Defence Establishment	1
Neuadd Gymunedol / Community Hall	1
Modurdy / Garage	1
Meddygfa / Surgery	2
Llyfrgell / Library	1
Gwesty / Hotel	3
Gweithdy / Workshop	3
Canolfan Iechyd / Health Centre	1
Canolfan Dwristiaeth / Visitor Centre	1
Caffi / Café	4
Bwyty / Restaurant	4
Banc / Bank	3
Cyfanswm	140

Nifer Eiddo Gwag / Number of Empty Properties

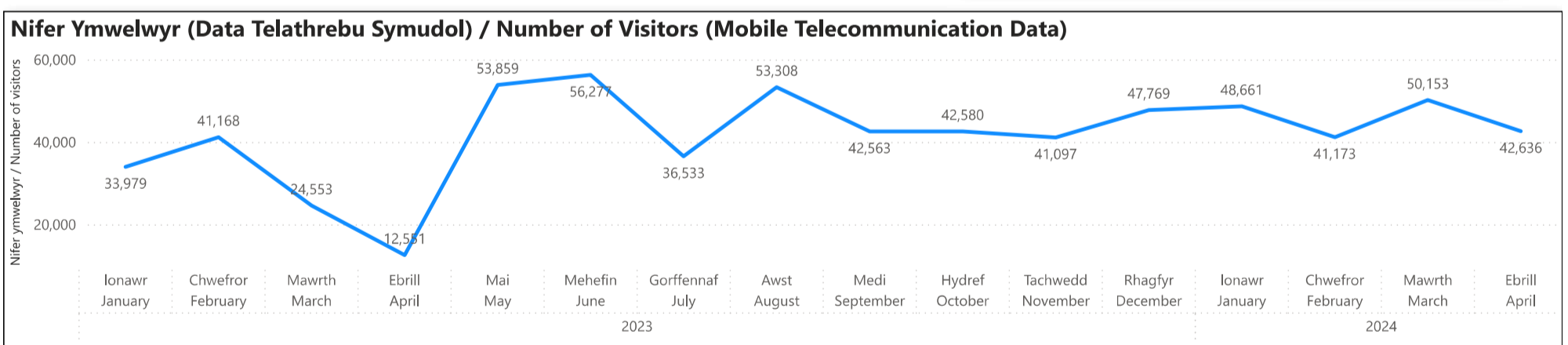
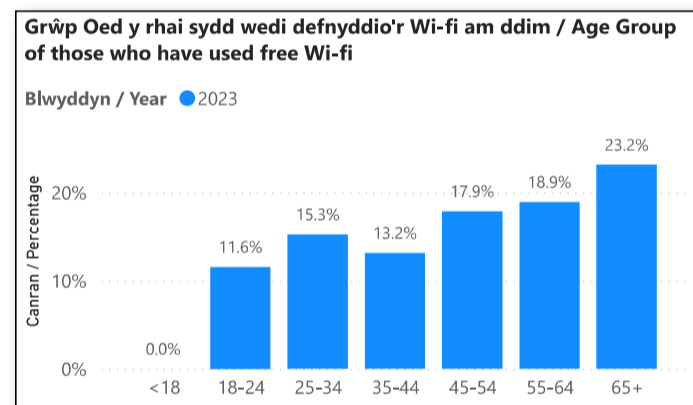
16

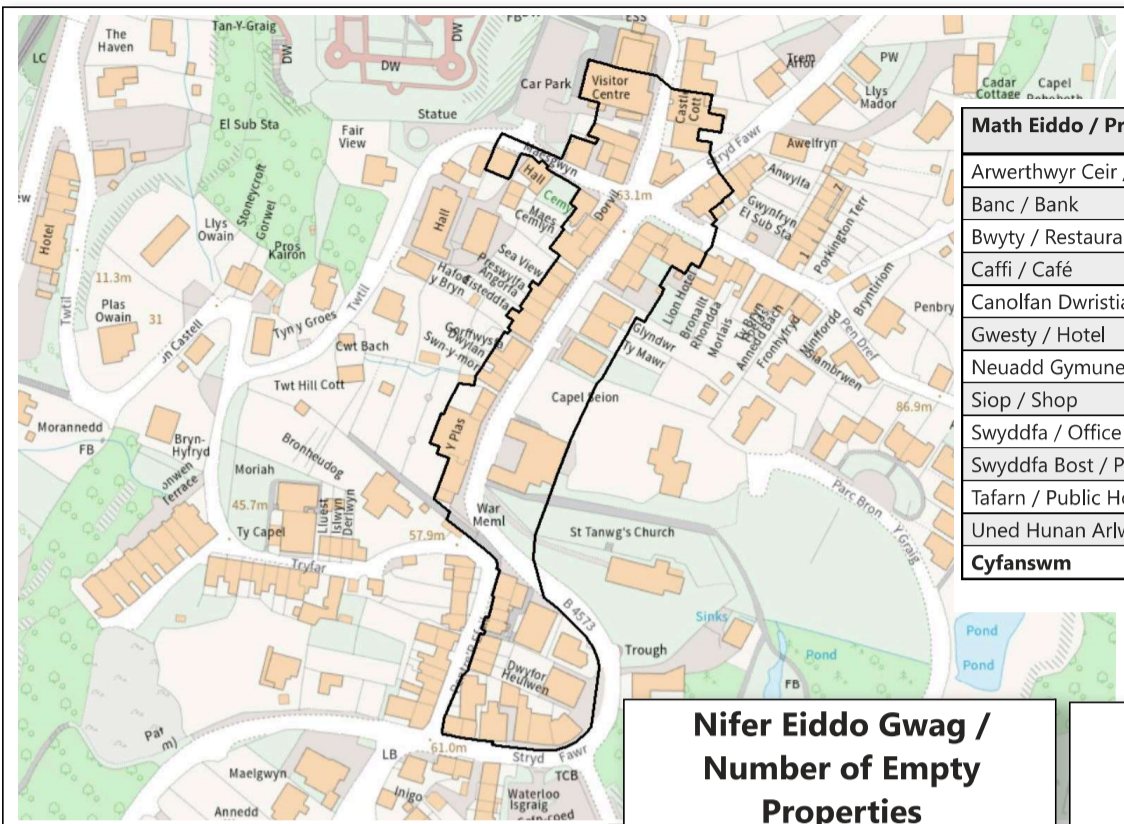
Mai 2024 / May 2024

Canran Eiddo Gwag / Percentage of Empty Properties

11.4%

Mai 2024 / May 2024





Math Eiddo / Property Type	Nifer
Arwerthwyr Ceir / Car Showroom	1
Banc / Bank	1
Bwyty / Restaurant	6
Caffi / Café	4
Canolfan Dwrstiaeth / Visitor Centre	1
Gwesty / Hotel	1
Neuadd Gymunedol / Community Hall	1
Siop / Shop	19
Swyddfa / Office	4
Swyddfa Bost / Post Office	1
Tafarn / Public House	1
Uned Hunan Arlwy / Self Catering Unit	4
Cyfanswm	44

Poblogaeth yn y Canol Tref / Population in the Town Centre

102

Cyfrifiad 2021 / Census 2021

Aelwydydd yn y Canol Tref / Households in the Town Centre

57

Cyfrifiad 2021 / Census 2021

Nifer Eiddo Gwag / Number of Empty Properties

5

Mai 2024 / May 2024

Canran Eiddo Gwag / Percentage of Empty Properties

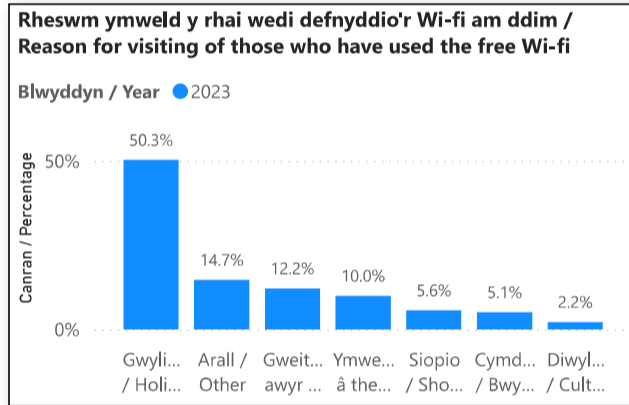
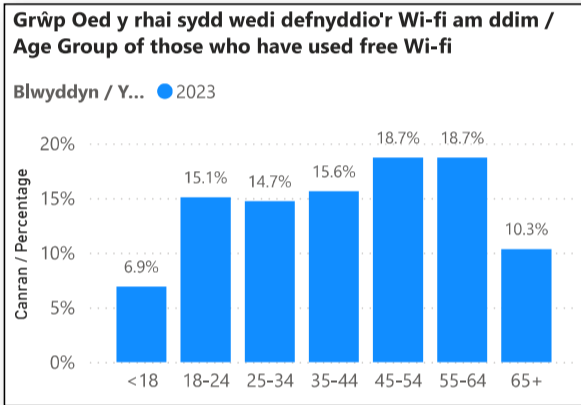
11.4%

Mai 2024 / May 2024

Incwm Canolrif Aelwydydd / Median Household Income

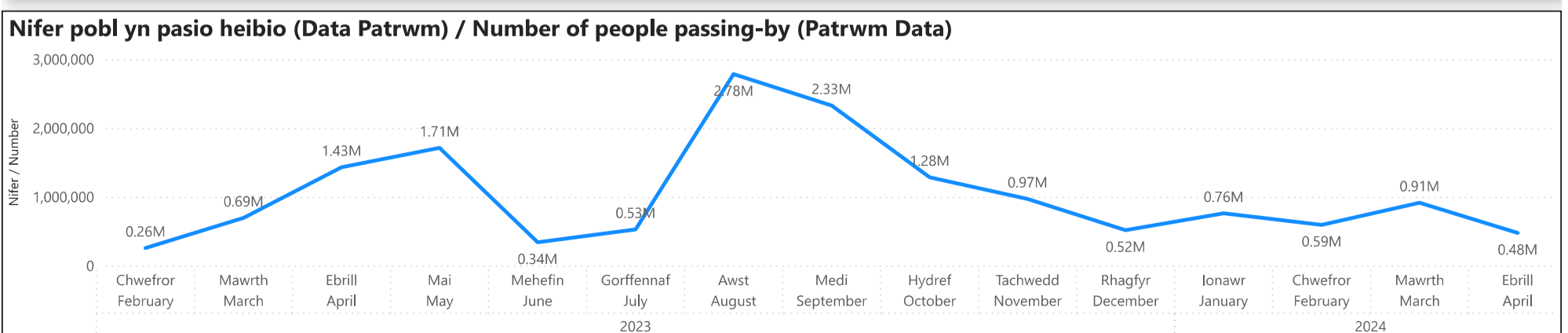
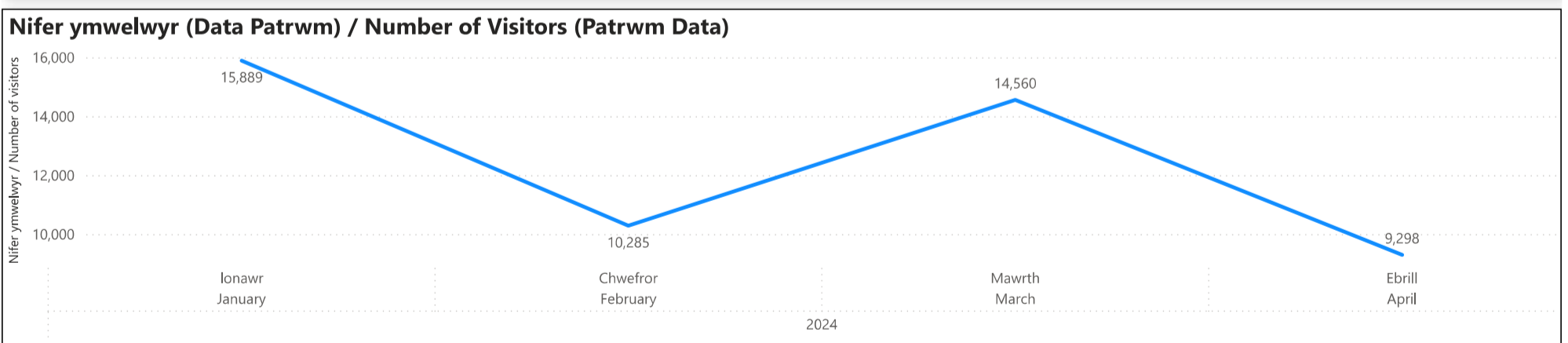
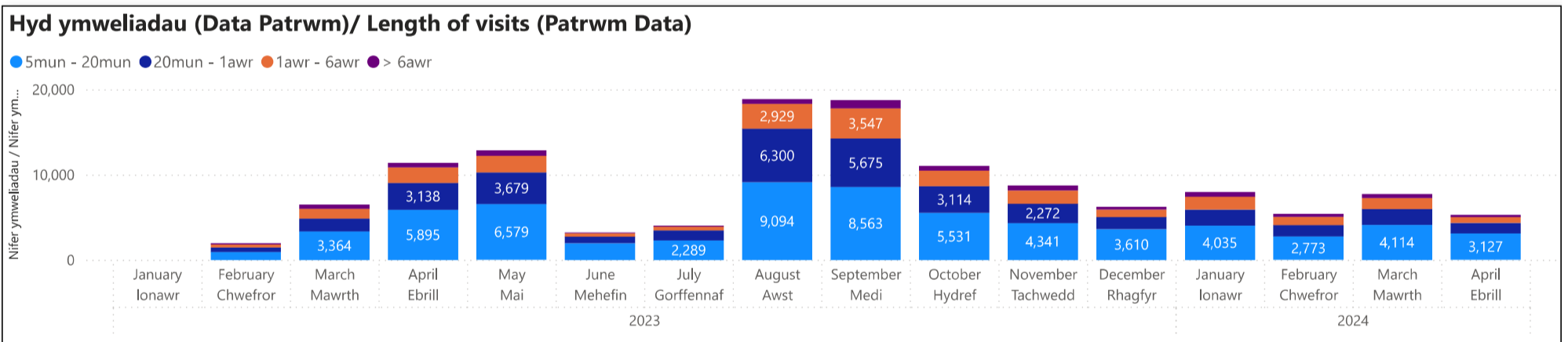
£32,531

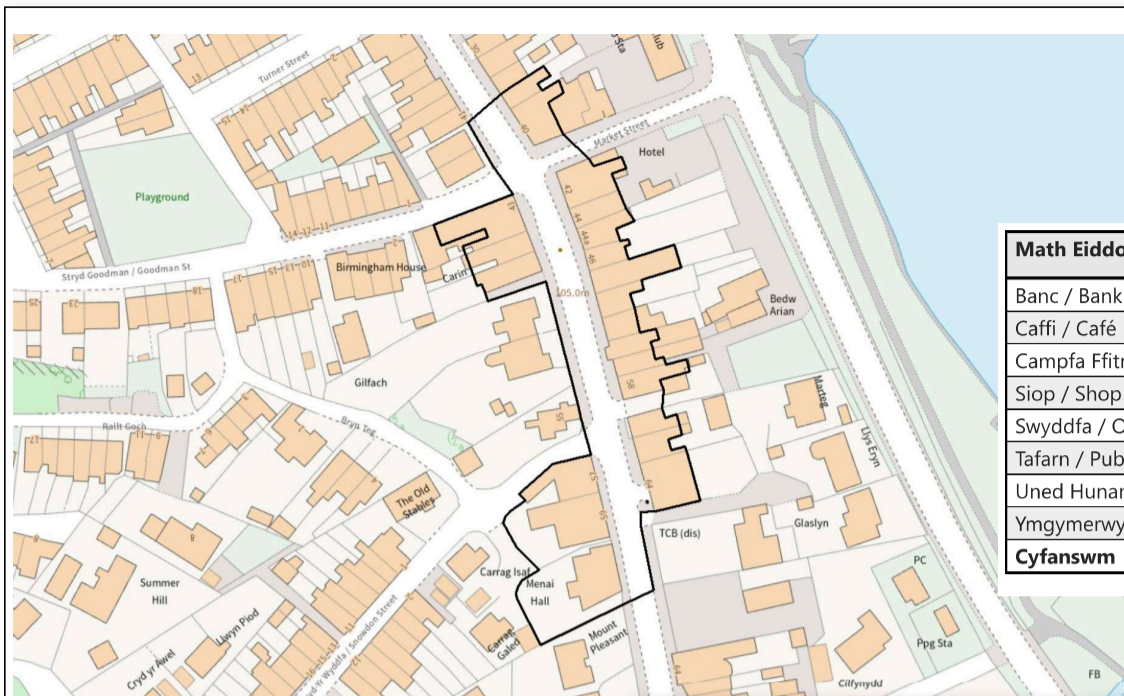
(2023)



Data Incwm - yn seiliedig ar data incwm yr ardal sydd yn ffitio orau gyda ffin y "Canol Tref". Ffynhonnell : CaciPaycheck 2023

Income Data - based on the income data of the area that fits best with the "Town Centre" boundary. Source: CaciPaycheck 2023





Math Eiddo / Property Type	Nifer
Banc / Bank	1
Caffi / Café	1
Campfa Ffitrwydd / Gymnasium	1
Siop / Shop	14
Swyddfa / Office	2
Tafarn / Public House	1
Uned Hunan Arlwyo / Self Catering Unit	3
Ymgwymerwyr Angladdau / Funeral Directors	1
Cyfanswm	24

Poblogaeth yn y Canol Tref / Population in the Town Centre

246

Cyfrifiad 2021 / Census 2021

Aelwydydd yn y Canol Tref / Households in the Town Centre

111

Cyfrifiad 2021 / Census 2021

Nifer Eiddo Gwag / Number of Empty Properties

4

Mai 2024 / May 2024

Canran Eiddo Gwag / Percentage of Empty Properties

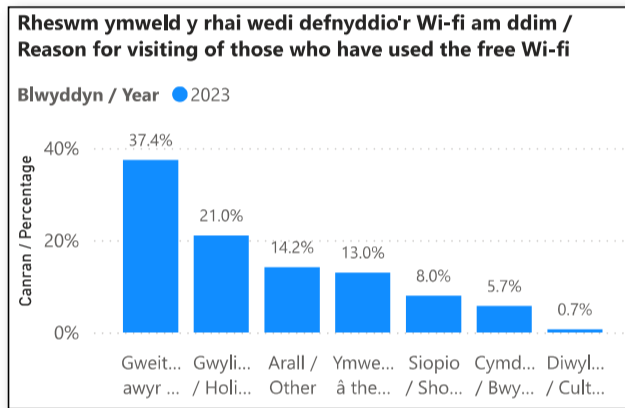
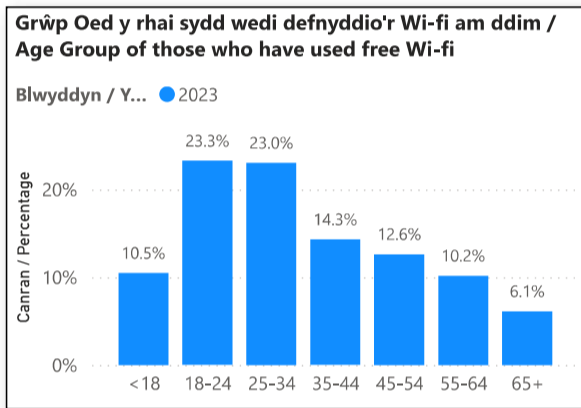
16.7%

Mai 2024 / May 2024

Incwm Canolrif Aelwydydd / Median Household Income

£34,846

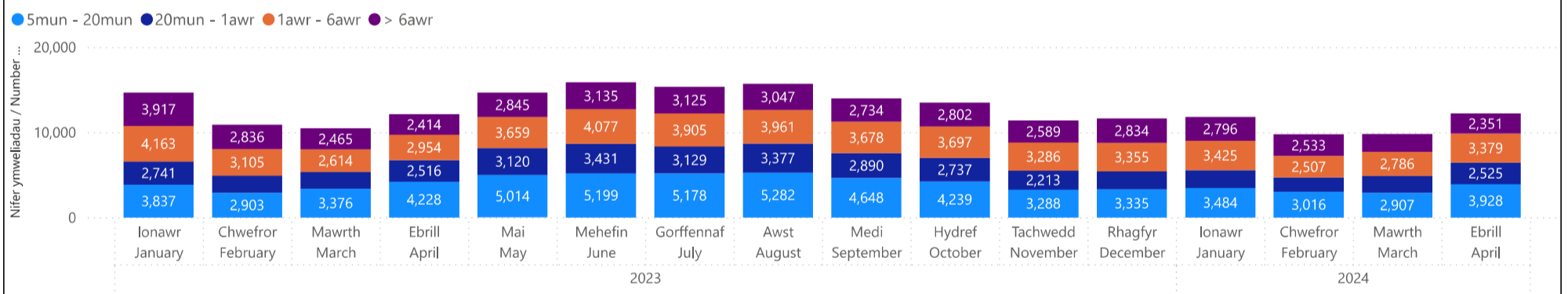
(2023)



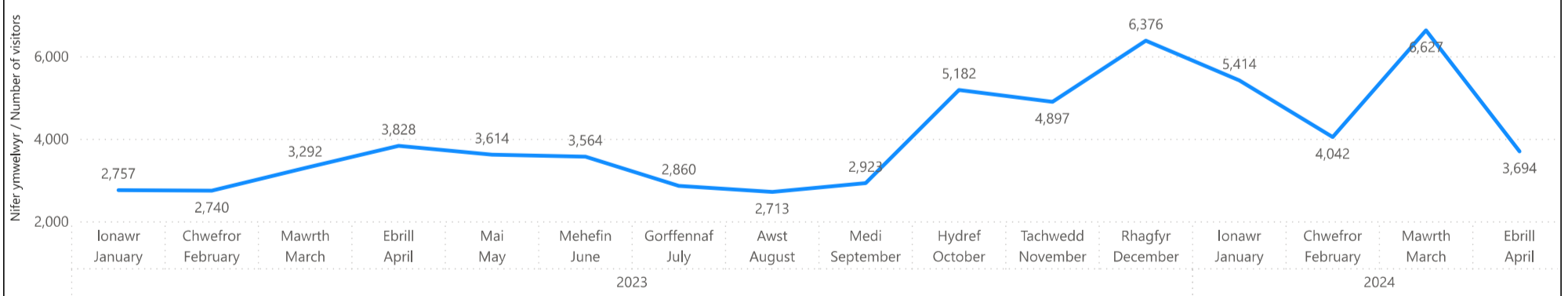
Data Incwm - yn seiliedig ar data incwm yr ardal sydd yn ffitio orau gyda ffin y "Canol Tref". Ffynhonnell: CaciPaycheck 2023

Income Data - based on the income data of the area that fits best with the "Town Centre" boundary. Source: CaciPaycheck 2023

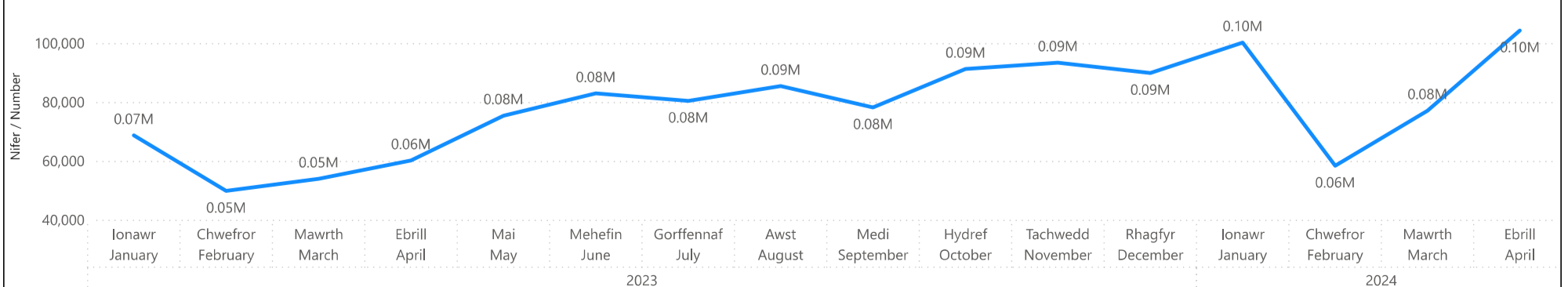
Hyd ymweliadau (Data Patrwm) / Length of visits (Patrwm Data)

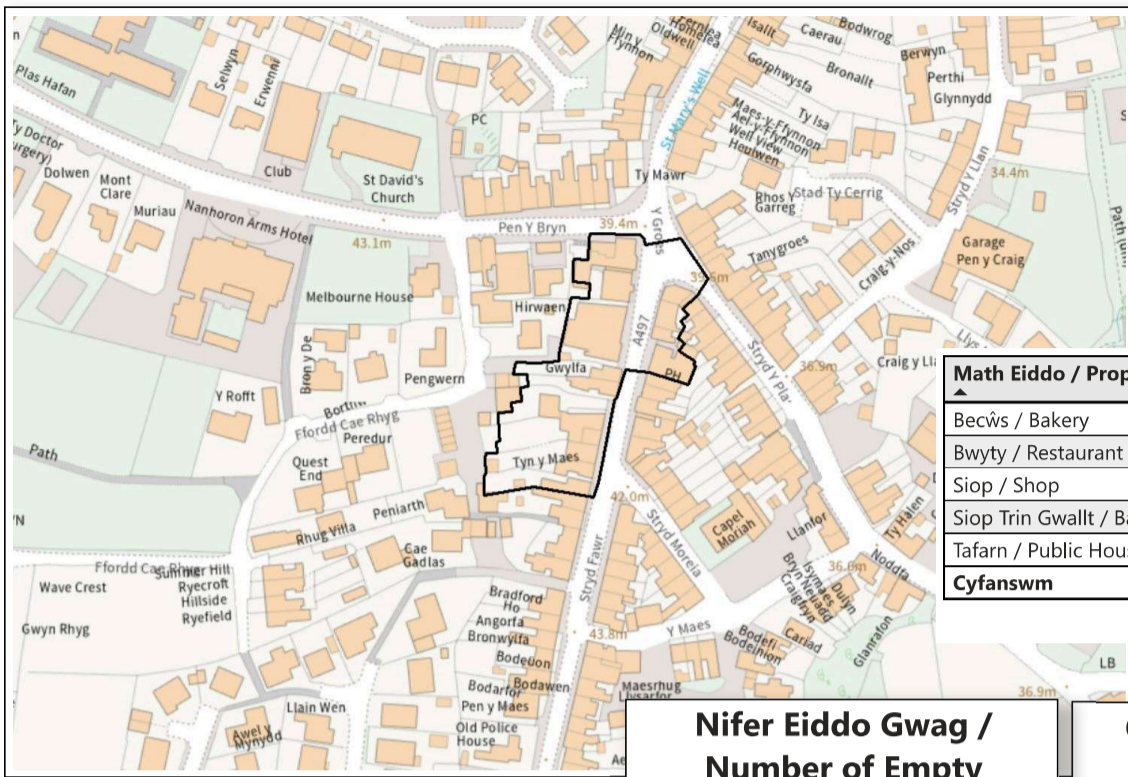


Nifer Ymwelwyr (Data Telathrebu Symudol) / Number of Visitors (Mobile Telecommunication Data)



Nifer pobl yn pasio heibio (Data Patrwm) / Number of people passing-by (Patrwm Data)





Poblogaeth yn y Canol Tref / Population in the Town Centre
235
 Cyfrifiad 2021 / Census 2021

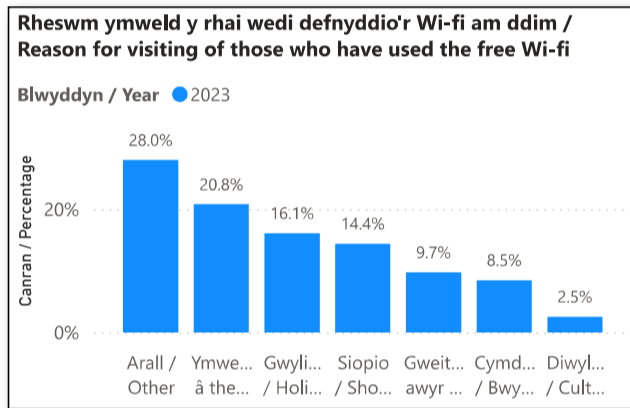
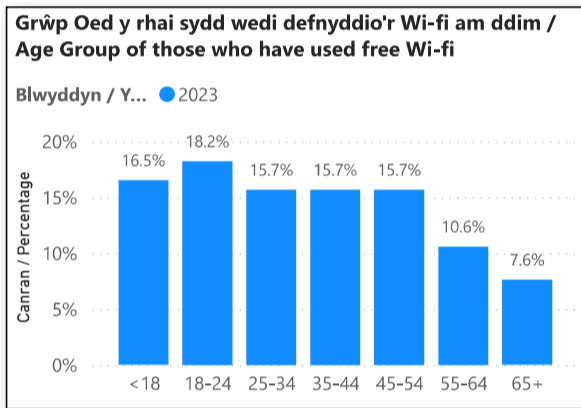
Math Eiddo / Property Type	Nifer
Becws / Bakery	1
Bwyty / Restaurant	1
Siop / Shop	8
Siop Trin Gwallt / Barbwr / Hairdresser / Barber	1
Tafarn / Public House	1
Cyfanswm	12

Aelwydydd yn y Canol Tref / Households in the Town Centre
112
 Cyfrifiad 2021 / Census 2021

Nifer Eiddo Gwag / Number of Empty Properties
5
 Mai 2024 / May 2024

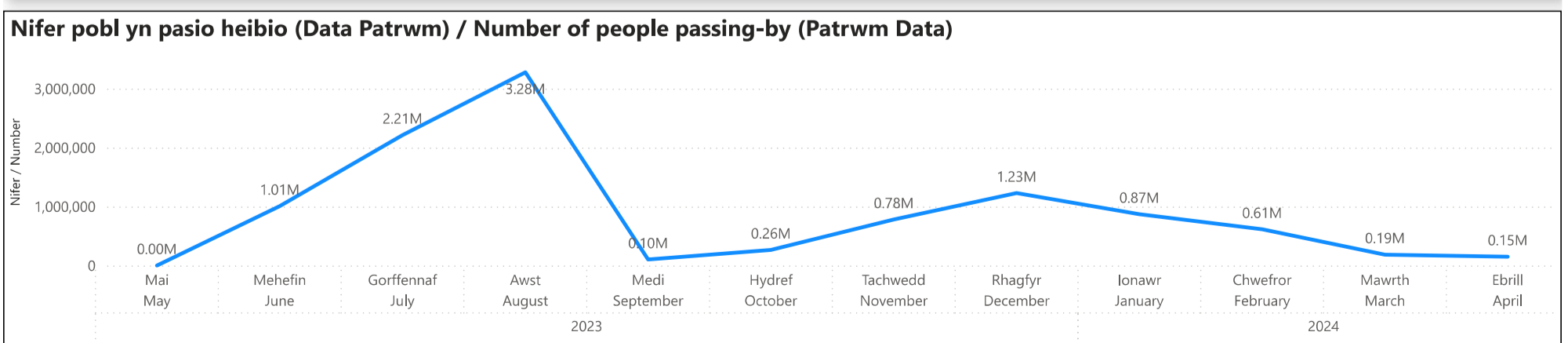
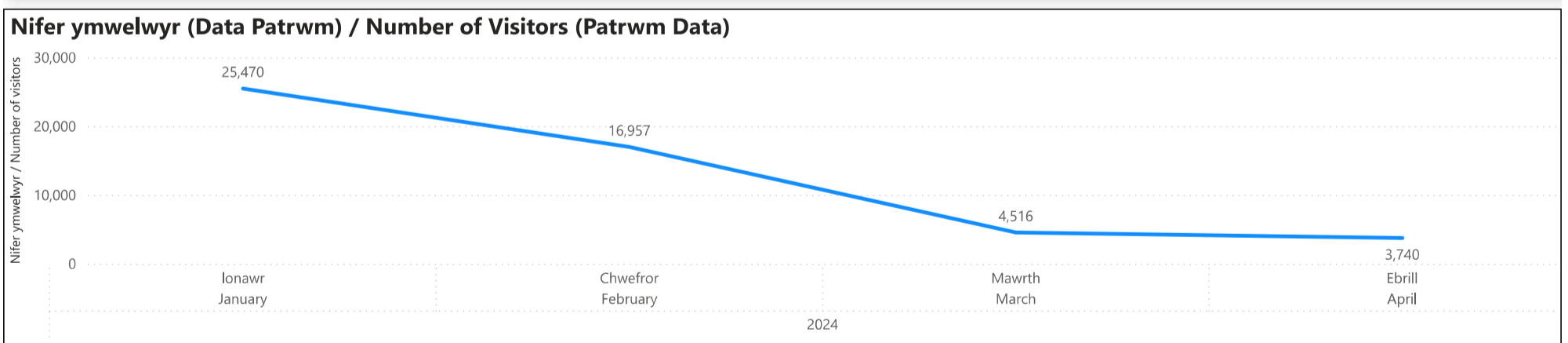
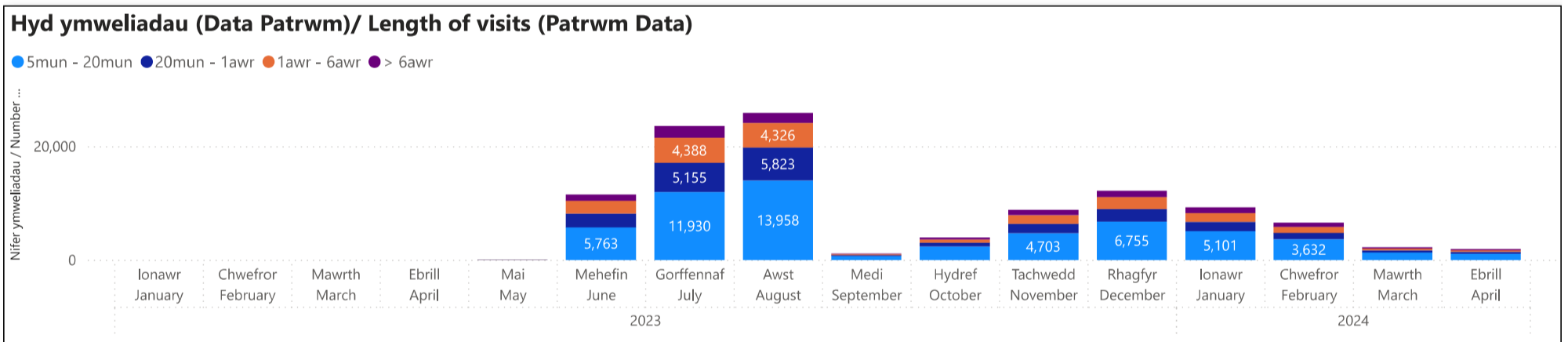
Canran Eiddo Gwag / Percentage of Empty Properties
41.7%
 Mai 2024 / May 2024

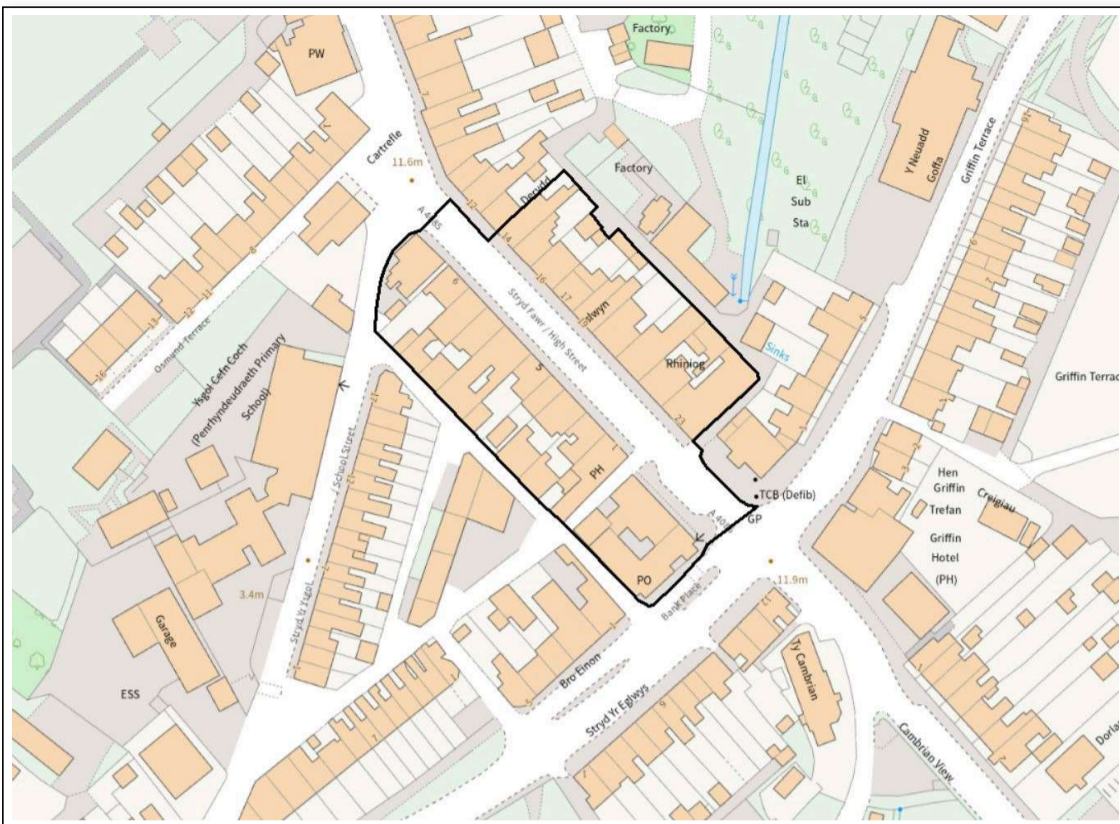
Incwm Canolrif Aelwydydd / Median Household Income
£31,560
 (2023)



Data Incwm - yn seiliedig ar data incwm yr ardal sydd yn ffitio orau gyda ffin y "Canol Tref". Ffynhonnell : CaciPaycheck 2023

Income Data - based on the income data of the area that fits best with the "Town Centre" boundary. Source: CaciPaycheck 2023





Poblogaeth yn y Canol Tref / Population in the Town Centre

68

Cyfrifiad 2021 / Census 2021

Aelwydydd yn y Canol Tref / Households in the Town Centre

35

Cyfrifiad 2021 / Census 2021

Incwm Canolrif Aelwydydd / Median Household Income

£31,906

(2023)

Data Incwm - yn seiliedig ar data incwm yr ardal sydd yn ffitio orau gyda ffin y "Canol Tref". Ffynhonnell: CaciPaycheck 2023

Income Data - based on the income data of the area that fits best with the "Town Centre" boundary. Source: CaciPaycheck 2023

Nifer Eiddo Gwag / Number of Empty Properties

3

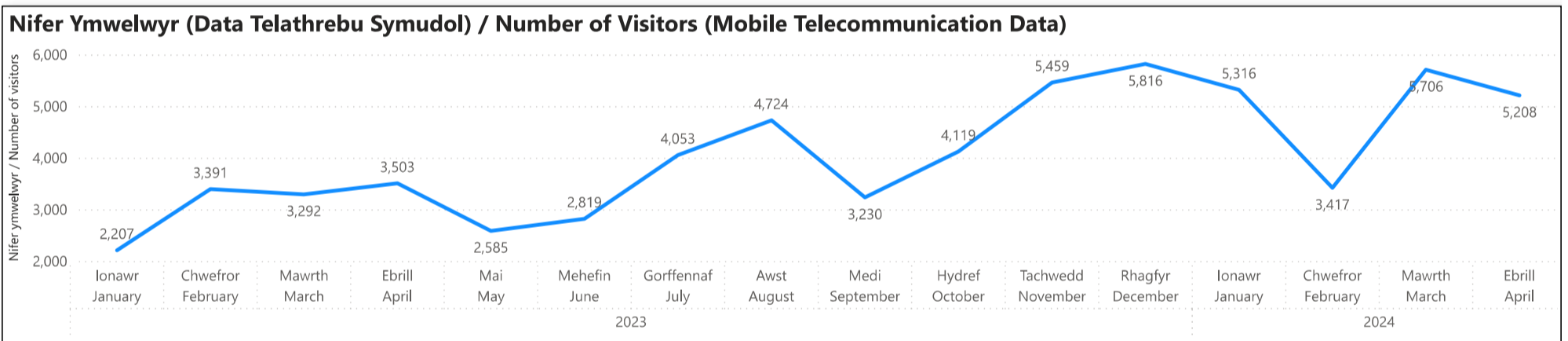
Mai 2024 / May 2024

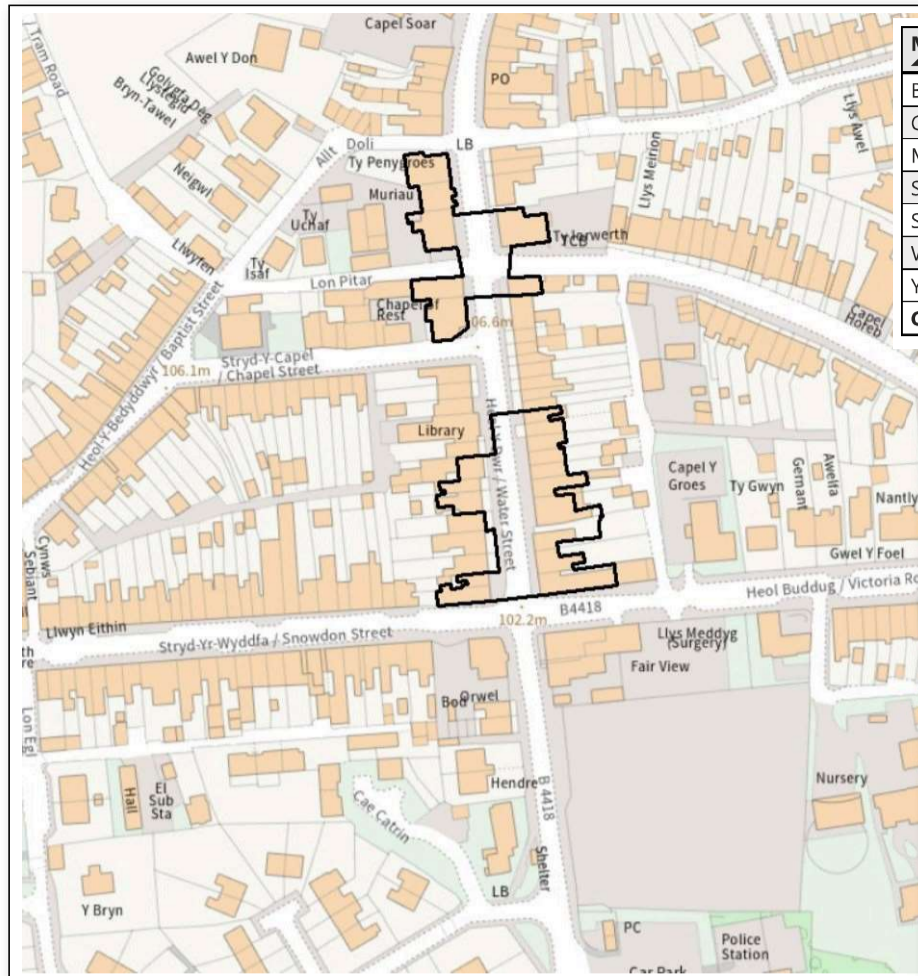
Canran Eiddo Gwag / Percentage of Empty Properties

15.0%

Mai 2024 / May 2024

Math Eiddo / Property Type	Nifer
Bwyty / Restaurant	1
Caffi / Café	1
Gweithdy / Workshop	1
Llyfrgell / Library	1
Siop / Shop	11
Swyddfa / Office	4
Tafarn / Public House	1
Cyfanswm	20





Math Eiddo / Property Type	Nifer
Banc / Bank	1
Caffi / Café	1
Meddygfa / Surgery	1
Siop / Shop	12
Swyddfa / Office	11
Warws / Warehouse	4
Ymgwymerwyr Angladdau / Funeral Directors	1
Cyfanswm	31

Poblogaeth yn y Canol Tref / Population in the Town Centre

114

Cyfrifiad 2021 / Census 2021

Nifer Eiddo Gwag / Number of Empty Properties

4

Mai 2024 / May 2024

Aelwydydd yn y Canol Tref / Households in the Town Centre

61

Cyfrifiad 2021 / Census 2021

Canran Eiddo Gwag / Percentage of Empty Properties

12.9%

Mai 2024 / May 2024

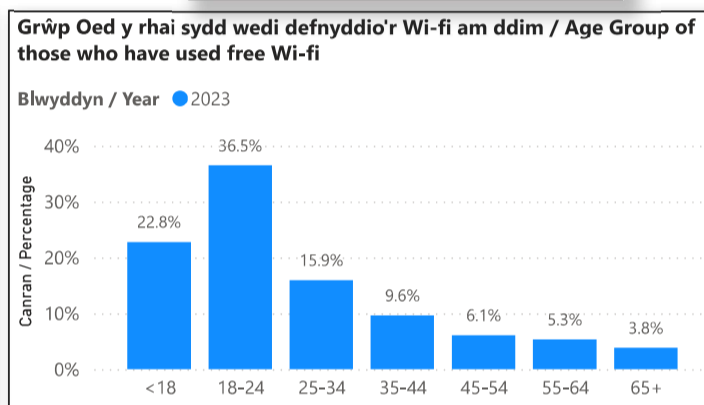
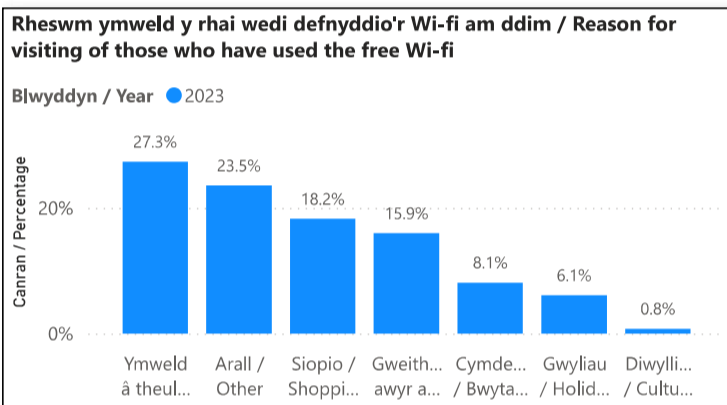
Incwm Canolrif Aelwydydd / Median Household Income

£27,245

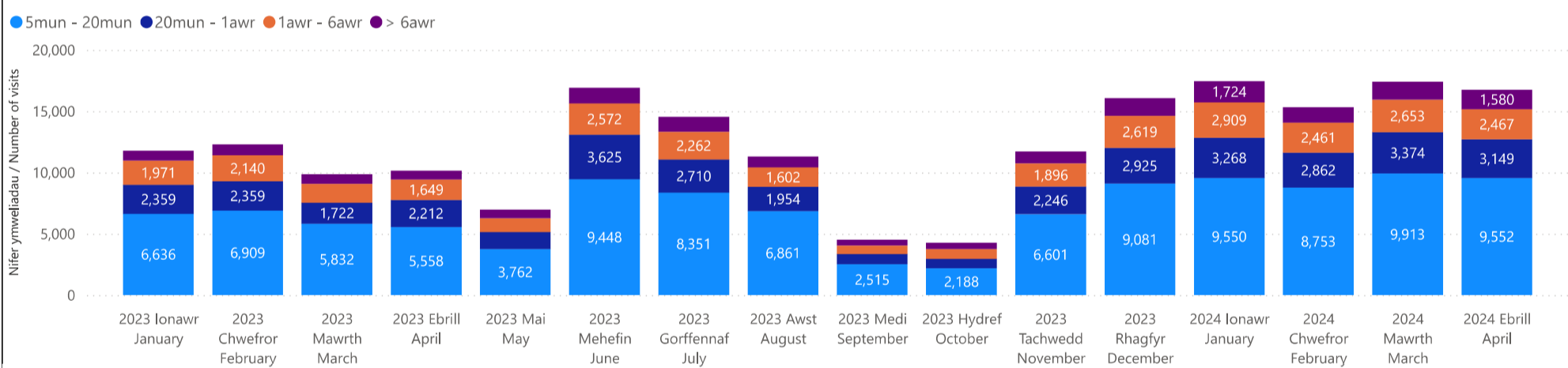
(2023)

Data Incwm - yn seiliedig ar data incwm yr ardal sydd yn ffitio orau gyda ffin y "Canol Tref". Ffynhonnell: CaciPaycheck 2023

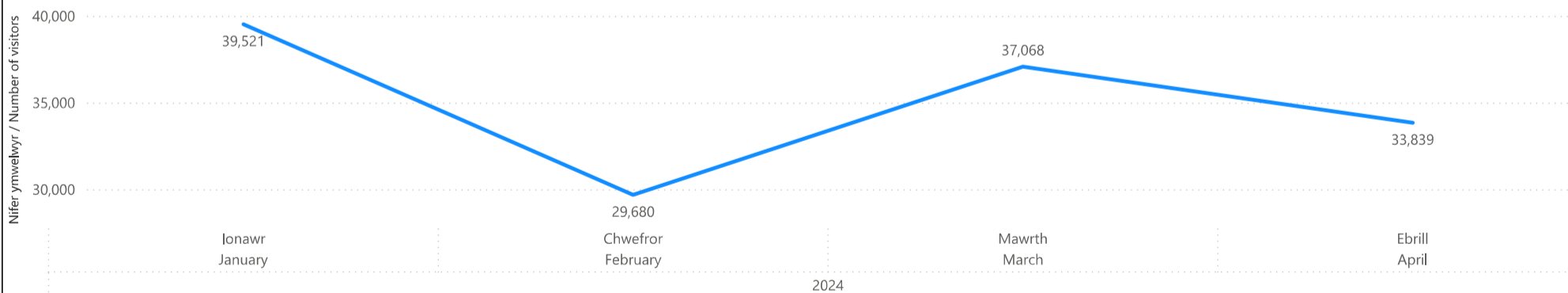
Income Data - based on the income data of the area that fits best with the "Town Centre" boundary. Source: CaciPaycheck 2023



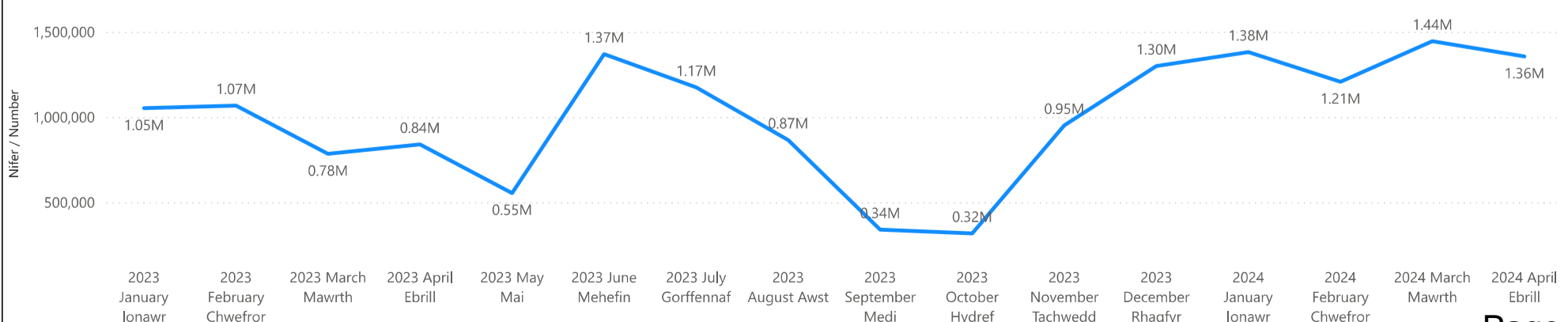
Hyd ymweliadau (Data Patrwm) / Length of visits (Patrwm Data)

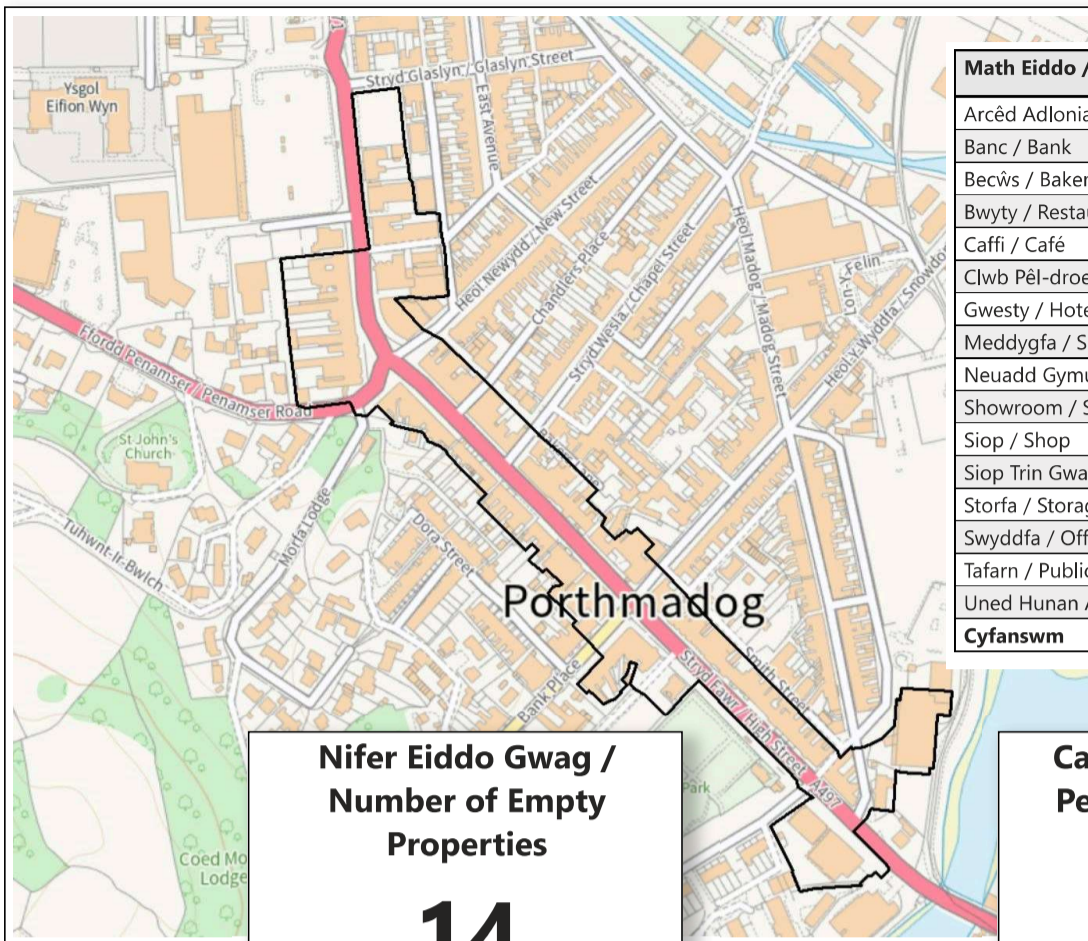


Nifer ymwelwyr (Data Patrwm) / Number of Visitors (Patrwm Data)



Nifer pobl yn pasio heibio (Data Patrwm) / Number of people passing-by (Patrwm Data)





Math Eiddo / Property Type	Nifer
Arcêd Adloniant / Amusement Arcade	1
Banc / Bank	1
Becŵs / Bakery	1
Bwyty / Restaurant	6
Caffi / Café	3
Clwb Pêl-droed / Football Club	1
Gwesty / Hotel	1
Meddygfa / Surgery	2
Neuadd Gymunedol / Community Hall	1
Showroom / Showroom	1
Siop / Shop	85
Siop Trin Gwallt / Barbwr / Hairdresser / Barber	4
Storfa / Storage	2
Swyddfa / Office	22
Tafarn / Public House	1
Uned Hunan Arlwy / Self Catering Unit	2
Cyfanswm	134

Poblogaeth yn y Canol Tref / Population in the Town Centre

673

Cyfrifiad 2021 / Census 2021

Aelwydydd yn y Canol Tref / Households in the Town Centre

345

Cyfrifiad 2021 / Census 2021

Incwm Canolrif Aelwydydd / Median Household Income

£31,700

(2023)

Nifer Eiddo Gwag / Number of Empty Properties

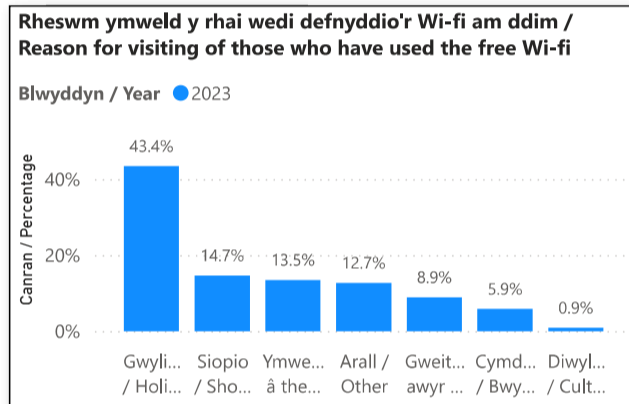
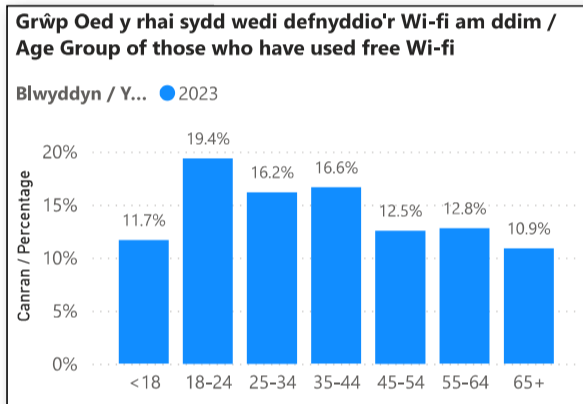
14

Mai 2024 / May 2024

Canran Eiddo Gwag / Percentage of Empty Properties

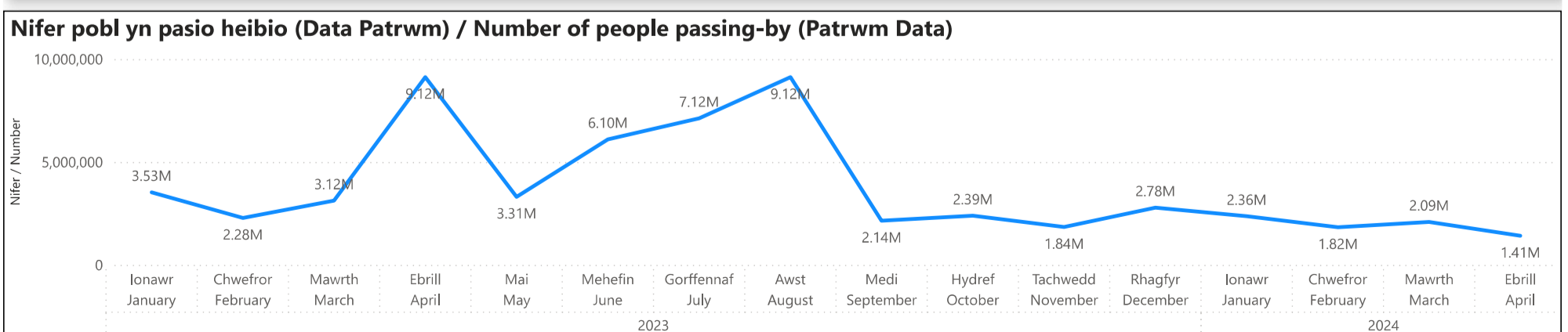
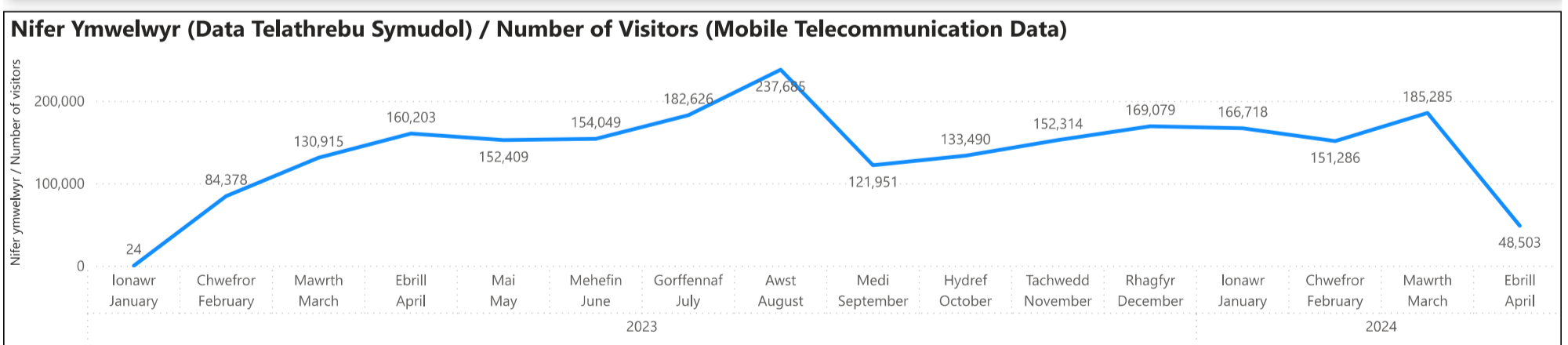
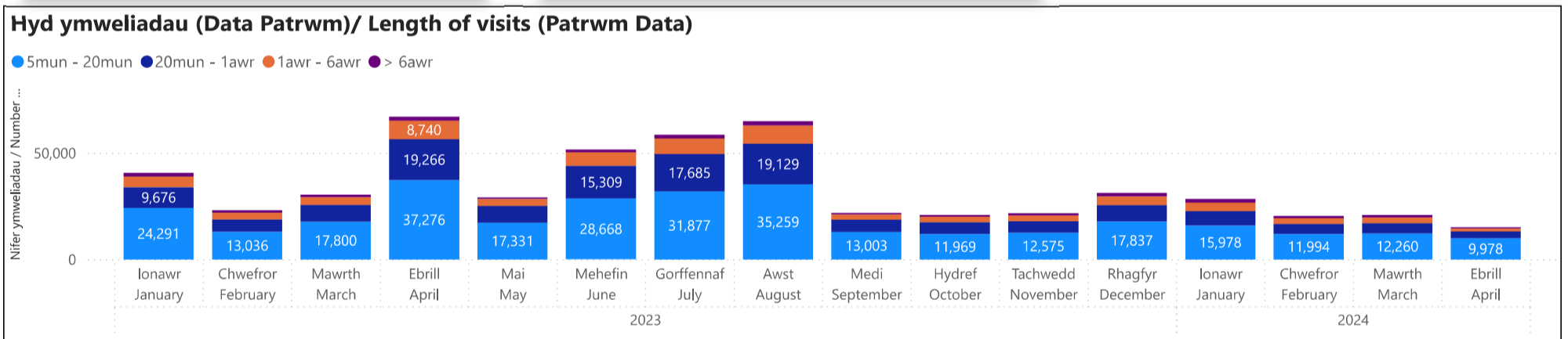
10.4%

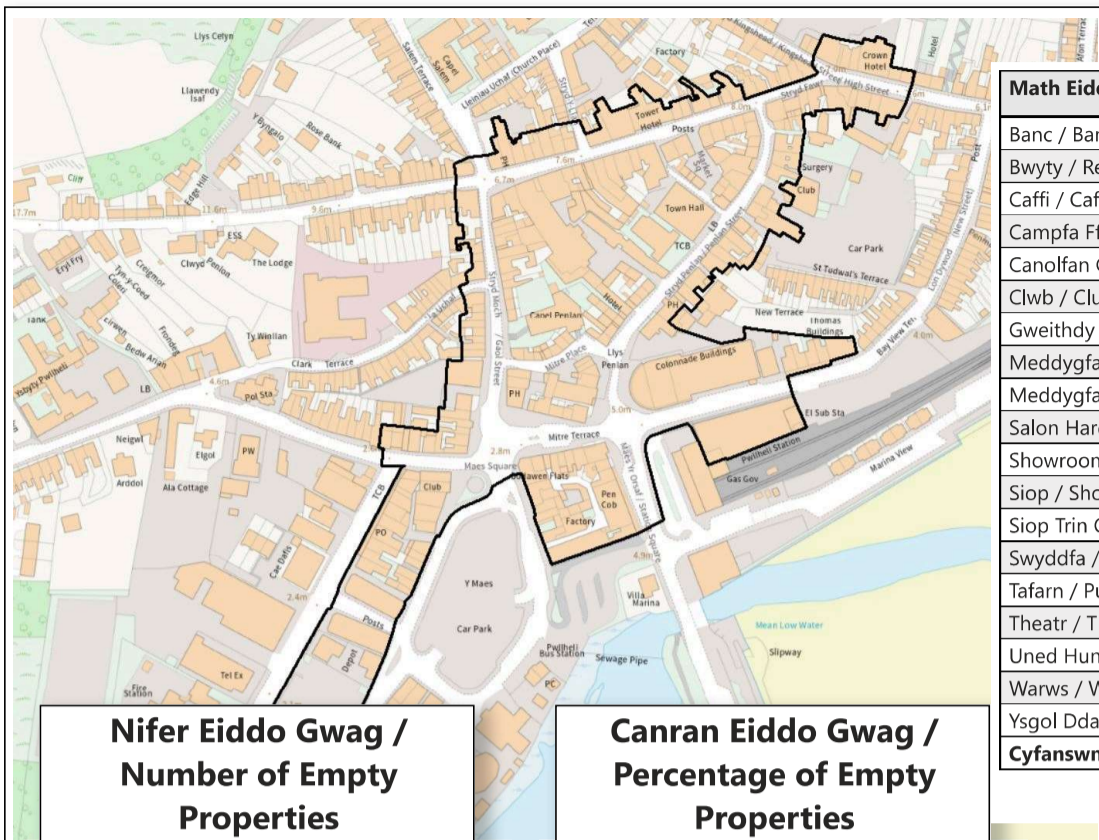
Mai 2024 / May 2024



Data Incwm - yn seiliedig ar data incwm yr ardal sydd yn ffitio orau gyda ffin y "Canol Tref". Ffynhonnell: CaciPaycheck 2023

Income Data - based on the income data of the area that fits best with the "Town Centre" boundary. Source: CaciPaycheck 2023





Math Eiddo / Property Type	Nifer
Banc / Bank	4
Bwyty / Restaurant	8
Caffi / Café	6
Campfa Ffitrwydd / Gymnasium	1
Canolfan Gymunedol / Community Centre	1
Clwb / Club	1
Gweithdy / Workshop	7
Meddygfa / Surgery	3
Meddygfa Deintyddol / Dental Surgery	1
Salon Harddwch / Beauty Salon	2
Showroom / Showroom	2
Siop / Shop	131
Siop Trin Gwallt / Barbwr / Hairdresser / Barber	5
Swyddfa / Office	55
Tafarn / Public House	7
Theatr / Theatre	1
Uned Hunan Arlwy / Self Catering Unit	3
Warws / Warehouse	2
Ysgol Ddawns / Dance School	1
Cyfanswm	241

Poblogaeth yn y Canol Tref / Population in the Town Centre

511

Cyfrifiad 2021 / Census 2021

Aelwydydd yn y Canol Tref / Households in the Town Centre

266

Cyfrifiad 2021 / Census 2021

Nifer Eiddo Gwag / Number of Empty Properties

25

Mai 2024 / May 2024

Canran Eiddo Gwag / Percentage of Empty Properties

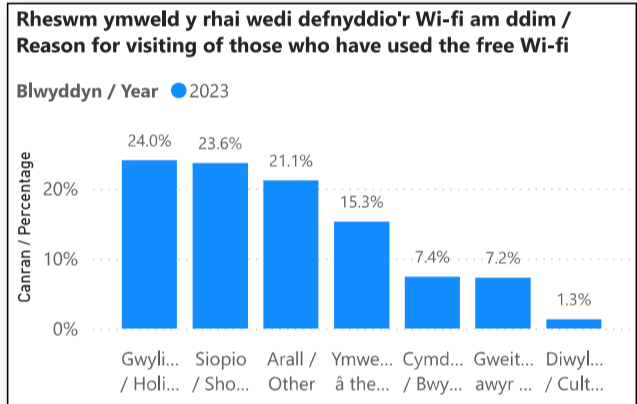
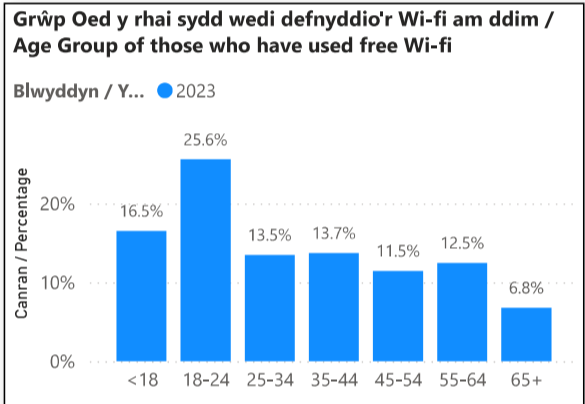
10.4%

Mai 2024 / May 2024

Incwm Canolrif Aelwydydd

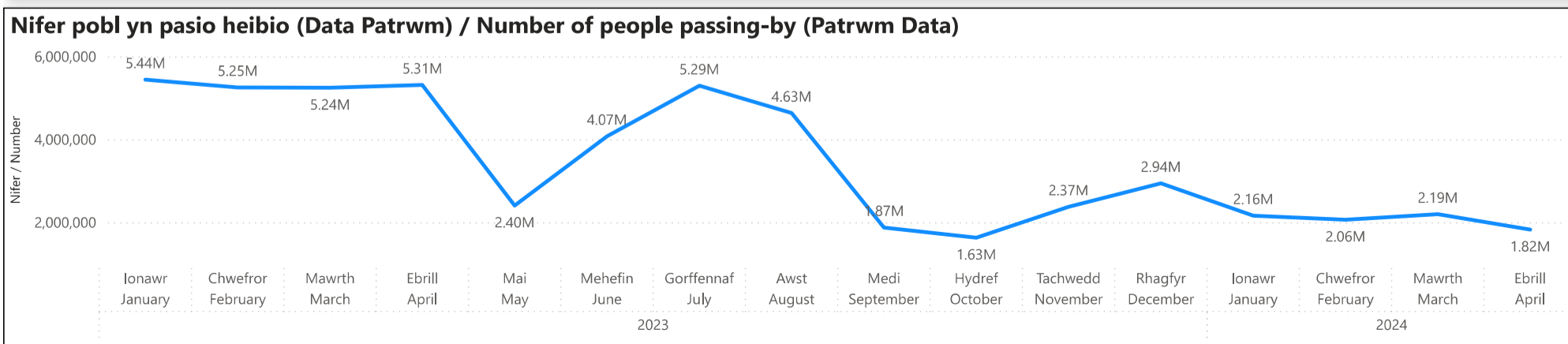
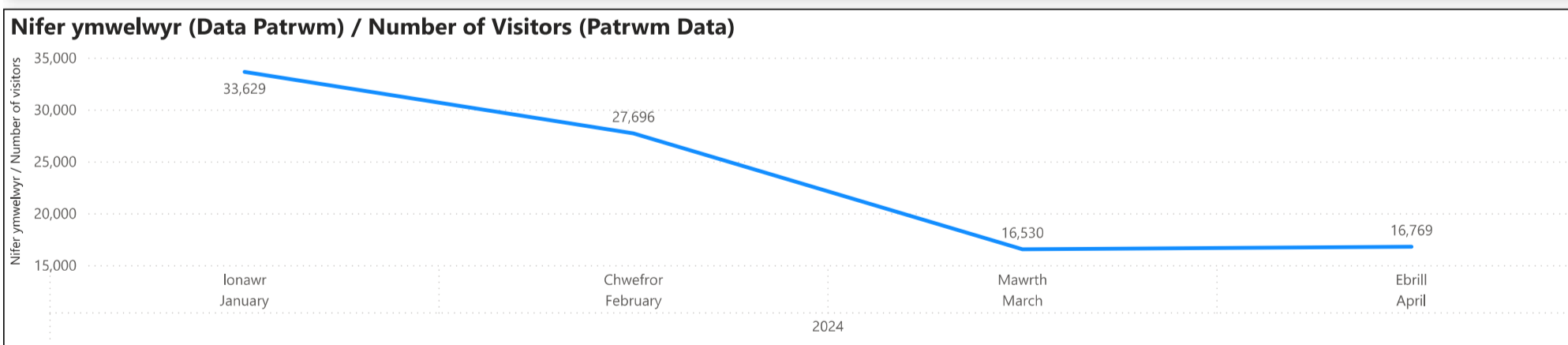
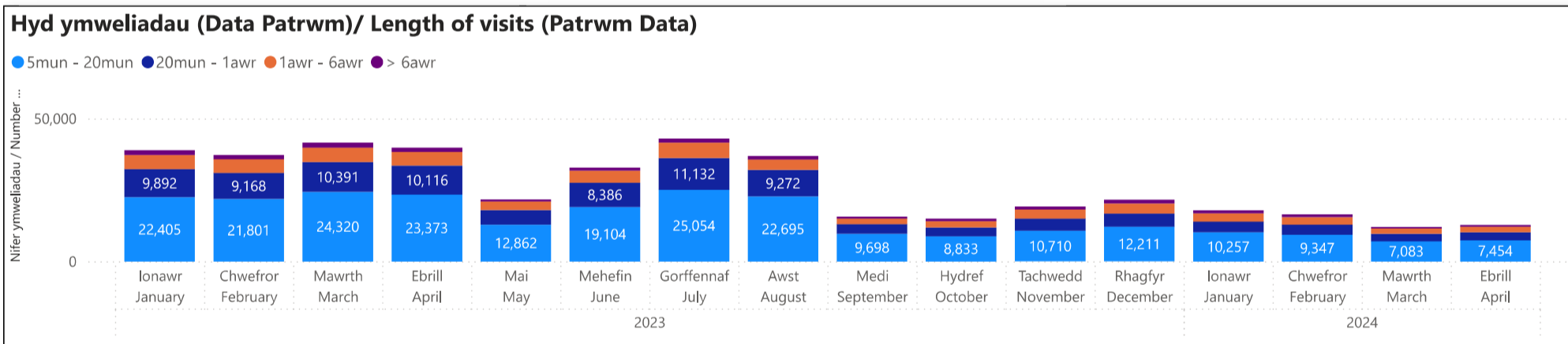
£30,032

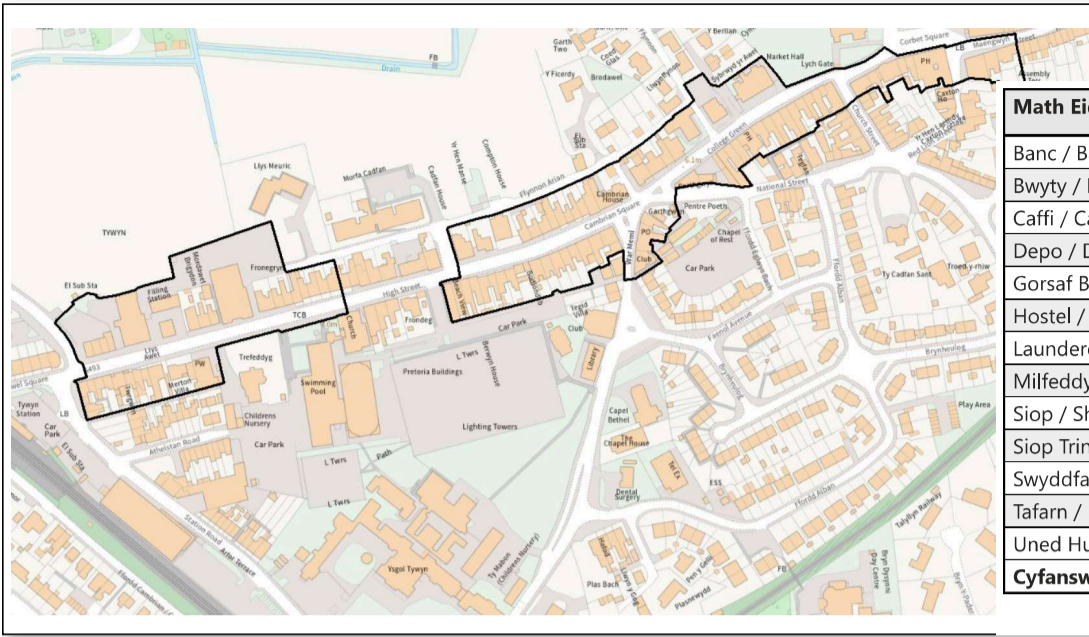
(2023)



Data Incwm - yn seiliedig ar data incwm yr ardal sydd yn ffitio orau gyda ffin y "Canol Tref". Ffynhonnell: CaciPaycheck 2023

Income Data - based on the income data of the area that fits best with the "Town Centre" boundary. Source: CaciPaycheck 2023





Math Eiddo / Property Type	Nifer
Banc / Bank	1
Bwyty / Restaurant	3
Caffi / Café	4
Depo / Depot	1
Gorsaf Betrol / Petrol Station	1
Hostel / Hostel	2
Launderette / Launderette	1
Milfeddygfa / Veterinary	1
Siop / Shop	53
Siop Trin Gwallt / Barbwr / Hairdresser / Barber	2
Swyddfa / Office	16
Tafarn / Public House	2
Uned Hunan Arlwy / Self Catering Unit	2
Cyfanswm	89

Poblogaeth yn y Canol Tref / Population in the Town Centre

431

Cyfrifiad 2021 / Census 2021

Aelwydydd yn y Canol Tref / Households in the Town Centre

223

Cyfrifiad 2021 / Census 2021

Nifer Eiddo Gwag / Number of Empty Properties

6

Mai 2024 / May 2024

Canran Eiddo Gwag / Percentage of Empty Properties

6.7%

Mai 2024 / May 2024

Incwm Canolrif Aelwydydd / Median Household Income

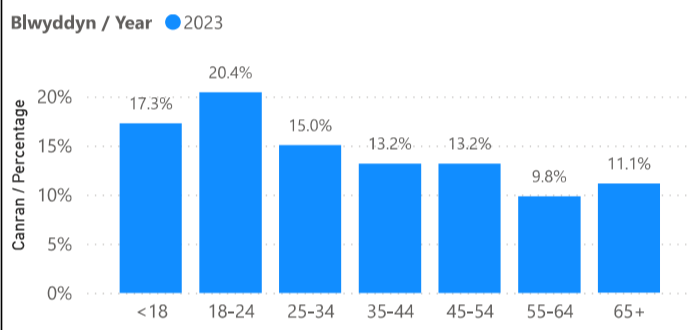
£27,626

(2023)

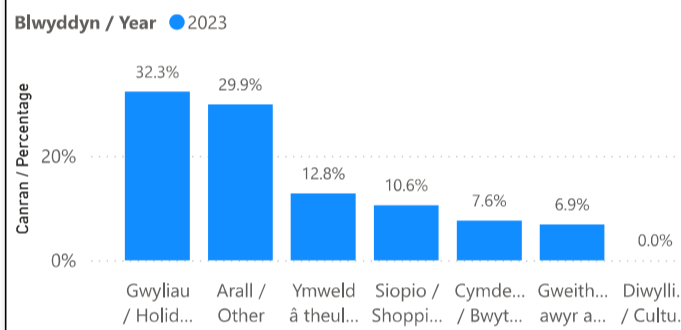
Data Incwm - yn seiliedig ar data incwm yr ardal sydd yn ffitio orau gyda ffin y "Canol Tref". Ffynhonnell : CaciPaycheck 2023

Income Data - based on the income data of the area that fits best with the "Town Centre" boundary. Source: CaciPaycheck 2023

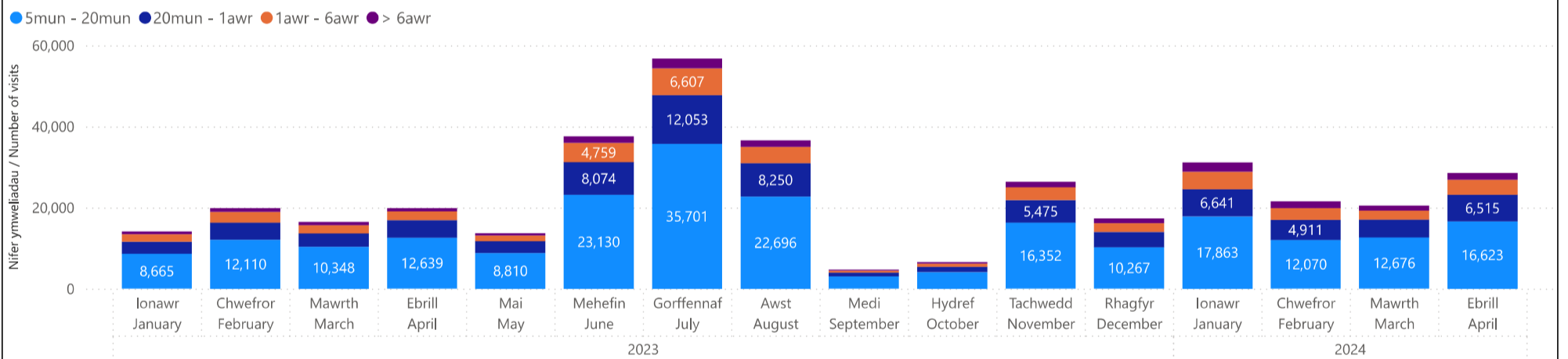
Grŵp Oed y rhai sydd wedi defnyddio'r Wi-fi am ddim / Age Group of those who have used free Wi-fi



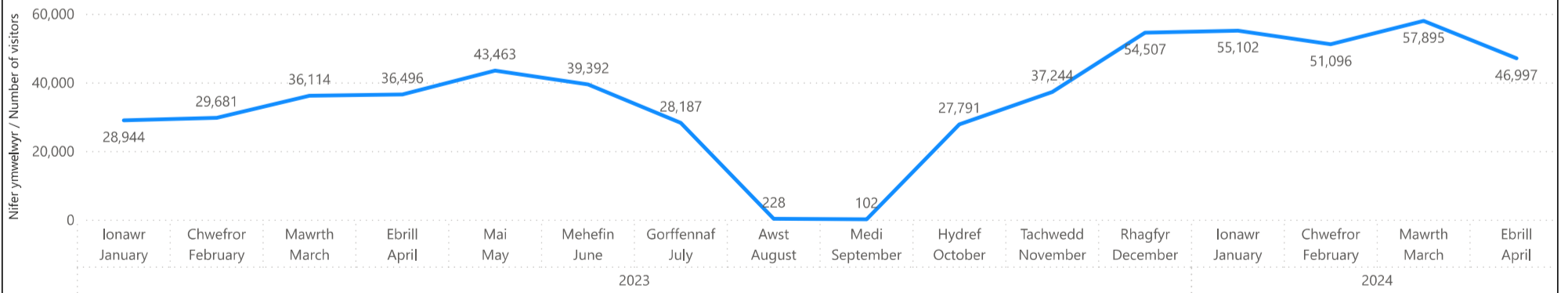
Rheswm ymweld y rhai wedi defnyddio'r Wi-fi am ddim / Reason for visiting of those who have used the free Wi-fi



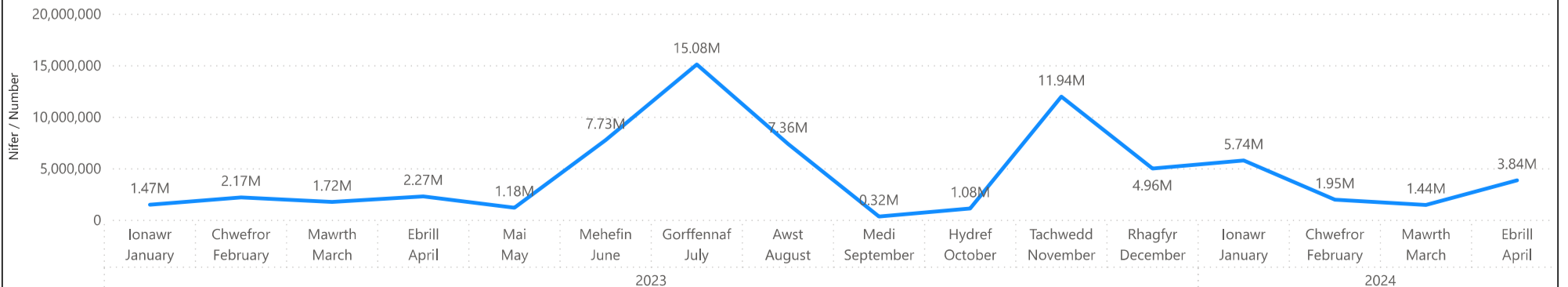
Hyd ymweliadau (Data Patrwm) / Length of visits (Patrwm Data)



Nifer Ymwelwyr (Data Telathrebu Symudol) / Number of Visitors (Mobile Telecommunication Data)



Nifer pobl yn pasio heibio (Data Patrwm) / Number of people passing-by (Patrwm Data)



MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

THE STRATEGY IN PRACTICE

Outputs - Short Term

A1. Enterprises supported to adopt technology	A11. Enterprises in high value sectors supported to start up or grow	A23. Unemployed, economically inactive or people facing additional challenges supported into employment	A34. Improvements to grid capacity and other utility infrastructure
A2. Enterprises receiving succession support	A12. Major developments engaged	A24. People in work who have received training or support	A35. Work units built
A3. Enterprises supported to transfer to employee ownership	A13. Major developments consented	A25. People of retirement age supported to continue working or volunteering	A36. Commercial floor spaces permitted
A4. Enterprises adopting green technology	A14. Inward investment into capital projects	A26. Disabled people supported into training, work or volunteering	A37. Commercial floor spaces built
A5. Local enterprises engaging with business support	A15. Public sector investment into capital projects	A27. Women supported into training or to return to work	A38. Welsh speakers supported to secure a job and return to the area
A6. Enterprises that have received procurement support	A16. Public sector investment to support the growth of existing businesses	A28. Digital infrastructure improvements supported	A39. Enterprises committing to using more Welsh
A7. Enterprises supported to expand into a new market	A17. Inward investment to support the growth of existing businesses	A29. Number of jobs created	A40. Young people engaged before they graduate from education
A8. Enterprises supported to win public sector contracts	A18. Enterprises receiving recruitment support	A30. Towns that have received investment	A41. Enterprises supported to increase spending in the local supply chain
A9. Enterprises supported to become more productive and competitive	A19. People enrolled in a qualification	A31. Empty buildings returned to use	A42. Cultural or social activities supported
A10. Manufacturing enterprises supported to start up or grow	A20. Young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) receiving support	A32. Public spaces improved	A43. Number of activities to promote positive perceptions of Gwynedd
	A21. People supported through schemes to attract and develop talent	A33. Improvements to transport connectivity	
	A22. People supported to volunteer		

Outcomes - Medium Term

C1. Enterprises remaining locally owned following founder's retirement	C10. Major developments spending with local enterprises	C17. Enterprises paying the Real Living Wage as a result of support	C25. Enterprises located within new work units or new commercial floor spaces
C2. Enterprises more productive as a result of support	C11. Enterprises reporting a reduction in recruitment challenges	C18. People in employment as a result of support	C26. Enterprises using more Welsh as a result of support
C3. Enterprises that have reduced their carbon footprint as a result of support	C12. People gaining a qualification as a result of support	C19. People of retirement age in employment or volunteering as a result of support	C27. People who have participated in a cultural or social activity
C4. Increase in business start-up rate	C13. NEET young people in education, training or work as a result of support	C20. Disabled people who have received training, are in employment or volunteering following support	C28. People engaged in activities to promote positive perceptions of Gwynedd
C5. Increase in business survival rate	C14. People volunteering as a result of support	C21. Individuals/businesses with access to improved digital infrastructure	C29. Enterprises creating an action plan to use the Welsh language
C6. Public sector spending with local enterprises	C15. People who were unemployed, economically inactive or facing additional challenges in employment	C22. Residents living / visiting towns that have received investment	
C7. Increase in spending in the supply chain in North Wales	C16. People increasing their earnings (increased hours/wages) as a result of support	C23. People benefitting from improved transport connectivity	
C8. Enterprises being established or growing as a result of inward investment		C24. Increase in the number of visitors to town centres	
C9. Enterprises being established or growing as a result of public sector investment			

Effect - Long Term

E1. Gwynedd economy's productivity gap narrowing compared to Wales, UK and similar areas	E7. An economy that will be better able to seize global opportunities	E14. Household income closer to the average in Wales and the UK	E20. Reduction in the risk that grid capacity or other infrastructure will restrict or delay development
E2. Proportion of businesses hiring closer to the Welsh and UK average	E8. Business growth increases as talent supply strengthens	E15. Part-time working rate closer to the average in Wales and UK	E21. Reduction in the barrier that transport connectivity creates for jobseekers
E3. Increase in the proportion of medium-sized enterprises	E9. The skills level in the county maintained and improved	E16. Reduction in the rate of children in workless households	E22. Reduction in the rate of young people emigrating from the county
E4. Growth in employment across the economy, particularly in the high value/high productivity sectors	E10. Reduction in young people not in education, employment or training (NEET)	E17. Increase in the rate of people over the age of 50 continuing to work	E23. Increase in the perception that Gwynedd is a good place to live or venture among young people
E5. A more diversified economy by sector	E11. Increased sense of community pride and community engagement	E18. Digital infrastructure availability rate closer to the average in Wales and UK and better than similar areas	E24. Reduction in the rate of people commuting from the county
E6. Growth in employment across the economy, particularly in the high value/high productivity sectors	E12. Economic inactivity rate closer to the average in Wales and UK	E19. Town centres that are more resilient and sustainable, with fewer dilapidated or vacant buildings	E25. Increase in the use of Welsh across the county
	E13. Narrowing in the average pay gap with Wales and the UK		E26. Communities where the percentage of speakers has been maintained or improved

MEETING	EDUCATION AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE	14 July 2026
TITLE	Education and Economy 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 informal meeting on 20 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. An attempt was made to prioritise a maximum of three items per meeting to ensure that matters receive due attention and that scrutiny can add value. This was not possible for every meeting. All members are expected to ensure their attendance at both the morning and afternoon session.
7. See attached as an appendix to the report, the Committee's draft work programme.
8. The item 'Attendance, behaviour and attainment of pupils in Gwynedd schools' is scheduled for the 18 February 2027 meeting. There was a discussion at the workshop about the possibility of holding a task and finish group to scrutinise issues relating to artificial intelligence and the behaviour of children and young people in schools. A discussion will take place at the Committee's informal meeting on 3 September 2026 to consider in more detail what exactly needs to be scrutinised.
9. The item 'Gwynedd Economy Strategy Action Plan' is identified as an item for scrutiny when timely.
10. 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.
11. **The Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee is asked to adopt the work programme for 2026/27.**

EDUCATION AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE DRAFT FORWARD PROGRAMME 2026/27

Date	Items	Reason for scrutiny
18/6/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure for Members 	Pre-decision Scrutiny / Ensure a clear and robust procedure
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education Transport 	Pre-decision Scrutiny / Overspending in the field
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education Performance Report 	Scrutiny of the performance of Council departments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economy and Community Performance Report 	Scrutiny of the performance of Council departments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate and Legal Services Performance Report 	Scrutiny of the performance of Council departments
14/7/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finance Performance Report 	Scrutiny of the performance of Council departments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safeguarding Arrangements in Schools Scrutiny Investigation Report 	Scrutiny Investigation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town Centre Vibrancy 	Follow-up / Council Plan 2023-28 - A Prosperous Gwynedd
8/10/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Response Plan to the Our Bravery Brought Justice Report 	Assurance in terms of implementation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gwynedd Culture Plan 	Pre-decision scrutiny / Council Plan 2023-28 – A Prosperous Gwynedd
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth Work 5 Year Strategy 	Council Plan 2023-28 – Tomorrow’s Gwynedd
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secondary Education Finance 	The impact of funding on teaching in Secondary Schools
10/12/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional Learning Needs 	Scrutinise the additional learning needs education provision
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education Performance Report 	Scrutiny of the performance of Council departments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economy and Community Performance Report 	Scrutiny of the performance of Council departments

18/2/27	• Finance Performance Report	Scrutiny of the performance of Council departments
	• Corporate and Legal Services Performance Report	Scrutiny of the performance of Council departments
	• Pupils' attendance, behaviour and attainment in Gwynedd schools	Follow-up to the scrutiny in the 17 October 2024 meeting
16/3/27	• School Support Service	Implementation of the new arrangements
	• Supporting Businesses and Community Enterprises	Follow-up / Council Plan 2023-28 - A Prosperous Gwynedd

Item to be added when timely - Gwynedd Economy Strategy Action Plan