



Complete Agenda

Democracy Service
Council Offices
CAERNARFON
Gwynedd
LL55 1SH

Cymraeg

Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.

This document is also available in Welsh.

Meeting

THE COUNCIL

Date and Time

1.30 pm, THURSDAY, 24TH SEPTEMBER, 2026

*** NOTE ***

This meeting will be webcast

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

Location

Hybrid - Siambr Dafydd Orwig, Swyddfeydd y Cyngor, Caernarfon LL55 1SH

Contact Point

Annes Sion

01286 679490

AnnesSion@gwynedd.llyw.cymru

(DISTRIBUTED 16/09/26)

Ian Jones
Head of Democracy Service

www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru

WEDNESDAY, 16 SEPTEMBER 2026

Dear Councillor,

MEETING OF CYNGOR GWYNEDD – THURSDAY, 24 SEPTEMBER 2026

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED to attend a multi-location meeting of **CYNGOR GWYNEDD** which will be held at **1.30 pm** on **THURSDAY, 24TH SEPTEMBER, 2026** in **SIAMBR DAFYDD ORWIG, SWYDDFEYDD Y CYNGOR, CAERNARFON LL55 1SH / VIRTUALLY ON ZOOM**, to consider the matters mentioned in the following agenda.

Yours faithfully,



Head of Democracy Services

The following rooms will be available for the political groups during the morning: -

Plaid Cymru - Siambr Dafydd Orwig
Independent – Siambr Hywel Dda
Lib / Lab – Ystafell Ogwen

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. MINUTES

6 - 17

The Chair shall propose that the minutes of the previous meeting of the Council held on 2 July 2026 be signed as a true record.

3. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

To receive any declarations of personal interest.

4. THE CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

To receive any Chair's announcements.

5. URGENT ITEMS

To note any items which are urgent business in the opinion of the Chair so they may be considered.

6. QUESTIONS

To consider any questions the appropriate notice for which have been given under Section 4.18 of the Constitution.

7. VISITOR LEVY

18 - 22

To submit the report of the Cabinet Member for Economy and Community.

8. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC SAFEGUARDING PANEL 2025-26

23 - 53

To submit the report of the Chair of the Strategic Safeguarding Panel.

9. SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2025-26

54 - 84

To submit the Scrutiny Annual Report.

10. NOTICES OF MOTION

(A) NOTICE OF MOTION BY COUNCILLOR CAI LARSEN

In accordance with the Notice of Motion received under Section 4.19

of the Constitution, Councillor Cai Larsen will propose as follows:-

This Council:

Notes the increase in the number of motorhomes and campervans using locations across Gwynedd for parking and overnight stays, including lay-bys, car parks, coastal areas and scenic spots;

Acknowledges the important contribution that visitors who use motorhomes and campervans can make to Gwynedd's economy, and welcome visitors who use appropriate facilities and respect our communities and environment;

Expresses concern, however, regarding cases where vehicles stay for extended periods in places not intended for that purpose, occupying parking spaces, causing problems for residents and other users, and putting pressure on some of the county's most sensitive and popular areas;

Notes that the Council has already established dedicated Arosfan sites for motor homes, but that issues of inappropriate parking and overnight stays persist in several locations;

Acknowledges constraints on the Council's capacity and human resources can make it difficult to enforce in all locations at the same time, but **it does not accept that a lack of capacity to enforce everywhere should mean that obvious and persistent problems cannot be addressed in certain locations.**

Therefore, the Council calls on Cabinet and the relevant Cabinet Member to address the problems arising from inappropriate parking and overnight stays by motor homes and campervans across Gwynedd, and to consider what action can be taken to bring the situation under better control.

(B) NOTICE OF MOTION BY COUNCILLOR PAUL ROWLINSON

In accordance with the Notice of Motion received under Section 4.19 of the Constitution, Councillor Paul Rowlinson will propose as follows:-

The Council

- is concerned about the number of children and young people riding e-scooters on pavements and public roads;
- believes that this endangers the safety of those who use them and the safety of pedestrians, especially those with visual impairments;
- states that e-scooters fall within the legal definition of 'motor vehicle'. As a result, they are subject to the same requirements as are required for other motor vehicles, such as licensing and insuring them and the need to have a driver's licence for use

on public roads. As a result, they cannot be lawfully used except on private land with the landowner's consent;

- notes that e-scooters are being trialled by the UK government and are allowed on roads within some areas but none of these are within Gwynedd;
- believes that many parents and young people do not realise that the use of e-scooters on public roads is illegal and that the police can confiscate the e-scooter and file a traffic offence report of 'driving a motor vehicle without third party insurance', resulting in a fine of £300 and 6 points on the driver's licence.

To address this problem, the Council is calling on the Welsh and UK Governments to consider what action they could take / what regulations they could introduce, to tackle the problem.

11. RESPONSES / UPDATES TO PREVIOUS NOTICES OF MOTION 85 - 86

Letter from the Welsh Government in response to Councillor Huw Rowlands' Notice of Motion to the 2nd of July Council meeting regarding Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board.

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL 02/07/2026

Present: Councillor Elin Walker-Jones (Chair)
Councillor Delyth Lloyd Griffiths (Vice-chair).

Councillors:

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

Officers: Dafydd Gibbard (Chief Executive), Catrin Thomas (Corporate Director), Dylan Owen (Corporate Director), Dewi A Morgan (Head of Finance), Iwan Evans (Monitoring Officer), Ian Jones (Head of Corporate Services), Nia Grisdale (Legal Service Manager), Vera Jones (Democracy and Language Service Manager) and Annes Sion (Democracy Team Leader).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Gareth A Roberts, Menna Baines, Dafydd Meurig and Gareth Coj Parry.

2. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of the Council held on 14 May 2026 as a true record.

3. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

There were no declarations of personal interest.

4. THE CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Condolences were noted with the family of Robin Evans from Caernarfon, originally from Eifionydd, who had recently passed away. He made a significant contribution to the television industry, being one of the founders of Ffilmiau'r Nant and Rondo here in Gwynedd, as well as an original member of the band Mynediad am Ddim. Condolences were extended to families in Gwynedd who had recently lost loved ones.

Councillor Dawn Lynne Jones was congratulated on winning the Police Commissioner's Community award. Congratulations were expressed to Lois Medi from Bangor for winning the Chair at the Urdd Eisteddfod, Dafydd Llŷr Hughes from Llanbedrog on winning the Urdd Eisteddfod's Young Artist Scholarship and Katie Baddiley who is a Police Community Support Officer in Dyffryn Nantlle for winning the Bobi Jones Medal. All the children and young people of the county who competed and were successful in the Eisteddfod were also congratulated.

Congratulations were noted to Leisa Gwenllian and the entire cast and production team of the film 'Effi o Blaenau'. Good luck wishes were given to all the athletes in the county who would be representing Wales at the Commonwealth Games this summer.

5. URGENT ITEMS

None to note.

6. QUESTIONS

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

(1) Question by Councillor Huw Rowlands

Is the Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Well-being aware of the growing public frustration at the significant delay by Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board and Grŵp Cynefin in establishing a health centre in Penygroes, namely Canolfan Lleu, and also the significant delay by Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board in establishing a new Health Centre in Waunfawr?

Answer from Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Well-being, Councillor Dilwyn Morgan

The Councillor was thanked for the question and the opportunity to raise awareness about issues affecting the public. As a result of the important messages contained in the written response, he stated that he would read it as follows.

In my role as Chair of the North Wales Regional Partnership Board, I work closely with the Health Board and receive regular reports on the situation. These reports are relevant to the plans identified but also to wider plans to improve health provision across the region. I therefore confirm that I am aware of the situation and understand the frustrations.

However, I would like to offer reassurance to the member of the positive work and strong collaboration that is taking place between our social and health services in Dyffryn Nantlle and Waunfawr. Professionals from both organisations hold regular meetings, joint visits, collaborative assessments and multidisciplinary discussions to ensure that individuals receive the right support at the right time. A strong culture of collaborative problem-solving has developed, and this is true across the county – not just for the areas involved, with staff working creatively and flexibly to find practical solutions to complex needs.

There are good examples of collaboration between health and social care teams to prevent unnecessary hospital admissions, facilitate timely discharge when individuals are ready to leave hospital, and ensure that appropriate support is in place in the community. Close collaboration is also taking place with Tuag Adref services to ensure a proportionate and seamless continuity of care for individuals during the transition from hospital back to their homes and communities. These arrangements are proof of the collaboration between local partners with the aim of improving outcomes for local people and to provide more integrated and effective services.

Supplementary Question by Councillor Huw Rowlands

What can Cyngor Gwynedd do to ensure the realisation of Canolfan Iechyd Waunfawr and Canolfan Lleu in the foreseeable future?

Answer from Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Well-being, Councillor Dilwyn Morgan

The Councillor was thanked for the question. Upon receiving the original question, he stated that he had contacted the Chair of the Health Board in person and had now received from

him a full timetable of what the plans were at both locations. He noted that he would share this with the Member who had asked the question along with the local members for those areas.

(2) Question by Councillor Gruffydd Williams

Following the Supreme Court's unanimous ruling in the case of *For Women Scotland v Scotland Ministers* (April 2025) that 'sex' in the Equality Act 2010 means biological sex (birth sex), and the latest EHRC guidance confirming that (including the Code of Practice updated in 2026), it follows under the law that allowing "trans women" to enter women-only spaces means that the space can no longer be legally protected as a space for women only. What specific steps has the Council therefore taken, or intends to take, to review and update its policies, procedures and services (e.g. toilets, changing rooms, schools, single sex services, sports, recruitment) in order to fully incorporate this guidance and when will a report or action plan on this matter be submitted to Cabinet or the Council?

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

She answered by stressing the importance of noting that the Equality and Human Rights Commission's Guidance was currently in draft form and was still undergoing further consultation, consideration and development before any final decision was made. It was explained that the Council, in moving forward, would carefully consider its duties under the equality and human rights legislation, and seek to ensure that any future changes were lawful, balanced and proportionate.

One of the key principles of the review moving forward was highlighted, namely to maintain the dignity, safety and respect of all individuals, recognising the need to consider and balance a range of protected rights in practice. It was noted that Lord Justice Hodge had noted that the ruling should not be seen as a victory for one side over the other. Also, that trans people were protected under the Equality Act 2010 in the same way as any other characteristic.

Supplementary Question from Councillor Gruffydd Williams

As the Council has already begun to look at the implications of the Supreme Court ruling and the draft EHRC guidance and "sex" as biological sex, can you give specific details on what policies or services have been reviewed so far for example toilets, changing rooms, single sex services in schools or sports, what is the timetable for completing the reviews and when will a report or action plan be submitted to the Cabinet or Full Council?

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

It was highlighted once again that the Guidance was still currently in draft form and that the Council would continue to monitor developments and take any necessary action once the final version had been published. She expressed that it was the subject of constant discussion with officers and that they would consider a report to Cabinet if necessary.

The opportunity was taken to reiterate the response to the same question that was received last year – namely that the Council was committed to support the rights of women and trans people and that fighting for women's rights meant fighting for the rights of working-class women, disabled women, women from ethnic minority backgrounds, and LGBTQ women including trans women. It was emphasised that everyone should have the freedom to choose their own gender identity and that this should be respected and that they certainly should not be excluded from society. It was noted that everyone was welcome in Gwynedd and that everyone's rights needed to be supported and respected. It was expressed that protecting everyone's rights underpinned Plaid Cymru's position.

It was noted that it was heartbreaking to think that some people in Gwynedd could misuse this ruling to make lives and fringe communities more difficult, and that they as Councillors were here to support all the residents of Gwynedd to live together and to live their lives with dignity and respect.

7. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE 2025/26

The Chair of the Standards Committee presented the Committee's Annual Report. The Chair noted that it had been a quiet year with not a single hearing held. Members were thanked for their work in upholding the Council's high standards and for their support to the Town and Community Councils when the need arose. The Monitoring Officer and his team were thanked for their support and also the Group Leaders for prioritising the matter.

Members were given the opportunity to ask questions and make observations.

A question was asked about the complaints' framework and the timescale. A response was given which assumed that the question was about complaints to the Ombudsman as the Standards Committee did not receive complaints. It was explained that, in regard to the Standards Committee, if a complaint was received by the Ombudsman that it would be dealt with in a matter of weeks. Looking at the Ombudsman, it was expressed that the timescale could be up to a year for a full inquiry.

It was RESOLVED to accept the report.

8. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE 2025/2026

The report was presented by the Chair of the Governance and Audit Committee during 2025/26. It was expressed that this was the fourth time that the report had been presented in line with the Welsh Government's expectations and guidance. It was explained that the report provided a summary of the Committee's work along with evidence of its impact.

It was noted that all Local Authorities were facing a number of challenges and there were ongoing pressures on statutory service budgets particularly in care. It was explained that she believed that the Council's governance arrangements had continued to show resilience. In the face of these financial challenges, it was reiterated that the Committee's role in terms of financial scrutiny had been central and had played a prominent role in scrutinising the budget, monitoring overspending and assessing risks to the Council's financial sustainability in the medium and long term.

All officers, Elected Members and Lay Members were thanked for their commitment and contribution throughout the year. It was added that 2025/26 had been a year of strengthening and stabilising the membership of the Committee. It was expressed that the year had followed a period of significant loss with the deaths of the late Sharon Warnes and Councillor Rob Triggs, but that their contribution to the work of the Committee and their dedication to public service continued to inspire them to continue with the work.

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

It was pointed out that CIPFA guidelines emphasised the need to demonstrate the impact of the work, and it was asked whether this element could be strengthened by perhaps showing clearer examples of changes as a result of the committee.

More information was requested about the two members of staff who recently had press coverage for being on full pay for a period of over 9 years while investigations were ongoing. It was asked on what pay scale they were and if there were more people on full pay over a long period of time while investigations were ongoing. The response given was that individual staff could not be discussed in an open meeting, but that they understood the Councillor's

frustration but was not relevant to this report. It was added that a review was underway and that conclusions would be drawn in due course.

It was RESOLVED to accept the report.

9. SOCIAL SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT 2025/26

The report was presented by the Corporate Director for Social Services.

To start his presentation, a video was shown about the electronic cats being offered to help people experiencing loneliness and isolation.

The report was presented by firstly thanking the staff that the Director had to assist him with the work. It was expressed that the video shown was one of many that promoted and explained the work that Social Services did, and celebrated the good work being done. However, it was noted that it was difficult to stand there and boast after such a turbulent year.

The importance of the Our Bravery Brought Justice report was highlighted despite how difficult it was to acknowledge what had happened along with the long-term implications for the Council and Social Services. Pride was expressed in the positive and constructive work that had been done to ensure that the Council's safeguarding and protection arrangements were optimised. It was noted that it was a tragedy for the individuals along with the staff and pupils of Ysgol Friars who had been affected. Further details were given on the safeguarding work that had been done which extended beyond Social Services and that work was being done in conjunction with Corporate Services to highlight that it was everyone's responsibility. It was added that a website highlighting the steps to report any concerns, support and information would be launched soon.

It was noted that the department was incredibly big in size with expenditure of almost £150 million, with 1500 in-house staff and almost 3000 staff when looking at commissioned work. As a result, it was reiterated that the size and vastness of the services made it challenging for Councillors to challenge the services on their work. It was emphasised that failures were inevitable and that they had been very evident through the Our Bravery Brought Justice report and more recently the Bryn Ffynnon case, despite the department's efforts to improve services. It was explained that it was a significantly important system but one that was under pressure and that children and adults needed to be better protected and safeguarded, and that they were under pressure to improve which required an investment. It was highlighted that a lot of money had been invested over the last few months to be able to respond to challenges sooner.

It was emphasised that money was a challenge. It was explained that internal money was being spent transparently but that external costs such as the costs of specialist children's homes were extremely high and that the demand for services was increasing. It was highlighted that children's referrals had almost doubled since Covid with almost 8,000 cases over the past year. It was highlighted that the work of Llechen Lân had been published which highlighted that the demography of Gwynedd was challenging with fewer young people and more older people, resulting in a challenge of delivering services for the future. It was elaborated that the report provided some answers but also called on the Welsh Government for more support.

It was noted that there had been an investment in early intervention so that people could live independently and be able to stay in their communities. Particular attention was drawn to schemes such as the Trobwynt Team which had worked with 77 children about to enter the care system but that 64 had managed to stay at home.

With technology advancing so rapidly with Artificial Intelligence, the need to work with this technology was expressed, using the cat in the video as an example. It was expressed that

there was a sense of belittling individuals in using such things, but that in reality it showed how real this one small scheme was and how it changed lives.

It was explained that the report attempted to show the real situation and be proportionate. It was reiterated that last year's report indicated hopes of reducing numbers waiting for domiciliary care, but that this had not happened. It was noted that this was because its delivery needed to be examined to ensure its effectiveness. It was emphasised once again that the whole intention was for people to live in their communities and live their best life, which was a growing challenge for the department.

It was highlighted that good work was being done working with Council departments such as housing and education and beyond with the police and the health service but that there was work to be done to improve across departments and strategically with Health. To conclude, it was noted that although the situation had been challenging there was a need to acknowledge the work that had been done, and thanks were given to the workforce which was under constant pressure but committed to children, vulnerable people and the elderly to provide the best care and support.

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

Staff were thanked for their work in a very challenging situation, and a report highlighting the work and recommendations arising from the Our Bravery Brought Justice report was welcomed. The bravery of the individuals, all those who have supported them and the individuals who had come forward following the case was highlighted. It was expressed that the report gave the Council an exceptional privilege to start over. It was asked what the main indicators would be to highlight the work that had been done to improve the safety of children and how the department could ensure capacity, a change in culture and arrangements when responding to any further learning. The response given was that the measures were very obvious in the work of the Response Board which was on the web, but what had worried him was that the voice of the child had not been heard but that this had been an opportunity to check that. It was highlighted that an investment had been made this year to ensure that the voice of the child was central to the department's work. It was reiterated that there was much to be learned from the incoming complaints as quarterly and annual reports highlighted themes and that steps were being taken to look at procedures and policies.

Thanks were given for highlighting the "Message in a Bottle" procedure and that Councillors had a responsibility to encourage them in their communities. With regard to Telecare, attention was drawn to a national problem that had emerged following the digitisation of telephone lines, and whether there were steps to ensure that the system worked during a power failure. The response given was that issues had arisen as a result of this last year, and when risks were highlighted that actions were in place to ensure the system continued to work.

It was asked why the Domestic Violence service was based in the Housing and Property Department - shouldn't it be based in the Adults, Health and Well-being Department where experience of assessment and care was held. It was explained that the budget for housing support, where the service was funded, came directly to the Housing and Property Department from the Welsh Government. It was added that this was under review to bring all the services together to create a single service rather than pockets in more than one place. It was reiterated that there was also work to be done with the money received through the Police Commissioner, as the post was coming to an end.

It was noted that the word "fail" had come up frequently in today's presentation which was not a word he liked using. It was highlighted that work was done by frontline workers where small things made a real difference. It was expressed that recruitment was a problem especially to frontline staff and it was asked if something was being done to ensure it did not continue to "fail". The number of people receiving domiciliary care was highlighted - 811 - and it was asked if this was a number across the county. It was added that the report noted 129 people with disabilities on a pathway to work and it was asked how many had now had

jobs. The response given was that good work was being done by frontline staff and that services were working well with one another. It was highlighted that it was difficult to get staff but pride was taken in the work of the care academy and the numbers who had applied for the role. In terms of domiciliary care, it was confirmed that the number was for the whole county, with individuals receiving an average of around 10 hours a week but did not include the other 20% who received care through direct payments. It was explained that around 50 disabled people out of the 129 were now in employment.

One Member highlighted financial resources drawing attention to the fact that some activities such as "Summer of Fun" for children with autism had come to an end. It was highlighted that the actual impact of withdrawing such activities must be known before any decisions were made. It was expressed that the Derwen Team for integrated services for children with disabilities did not support all disabled children. With regard to unpaid carers, it was asked if work was being done to highlight their rights. And finally, the complaints procedure was highlighted citing concerns that individuals caring for vulnerable adults were unable to make a complaint when they saw risks, as only the service user was allowed to lodge the complaint. The response was that Summer of Fun was a series of events funded by the Government, but that work was being done to look at what could be held in the future. In relation to unpaid carers it was noted that events were held across the county on a semi-regular basis in order to promote carers' rights. It was reiterated that there were discussions about creating unpaid carers champions in all schools and GP surgeries so that constant support was available. It was explained, in regard to Derwen, that it was not possible to reach every single child due to obstacles such as waiting lists. In regard to the observations about complaints, the response given was that the complaints procedure was set by the Welsh Government, and therefore a carer could only make a complaint about the service with the consent of service users, unless it was a safeguarding matter.

It was highlighted that the report described this year as one of the most challenging years the department had experienced. In response to this, it was asked if it was possible to highlight the challenges that existed as well as to highlight which challenges and risks remained, and to highlight the lessons learned and those that had led to a real change. In response, it was expressed that a number of lessons had been learned but that it was difficult to choose one, and an individual meeting was offered to discuss them in detail. In terms of lessons to be learned, the main one was listening to the voice of the child, which extended beyond the Social Services department, and that there was a need to reach a point where young people's voices were being heard in all aspects of the Council's work. It was expressed that an officer had been appointed to listen to the voice of the child from the Young People's Forums, for Looked After Children and those in receipt of support from Youth Justice. Through this, it was hoped that a holistic voice would be heard. When looking at risks it was noted that day-to-day risks were specific to those receiving support, but that policies and procedures were in place to keep people safe.

When asked about the falls policy last year, it was noted that work had begun but it was asked whether it had continued. The response given was that specific work was currently in hand, and although not fully adopted work was underway.

Thanks were expressed for the video showing the work with the cats as it highlighted the good work that was being done. The importance of receiving complaints was emphasised, as there would be more of an issue if no complaints were received. It was expressed that the main issue was a lack of staff - not only carers but doctors, ambulance service staff - Dyfed Edwards along with the Ambulance Service were asked to come and meet with the Health Board in order to have a further discussion. Her view was noted that Ysbyty Gwynedd was now a care home with the number of older people being unable to leave, and that there was a real need for more care beds. Hopes were expressed with Plaid Cymru leading in the Senedd that it would be possible to move forward with the Penrhos site. The response given was that there was a real need to look wider and that there would be a discussion to see if it was possible to arrange this meeting with the Health Board and Ambulance Service. The Penrhos site was highlighted noting that aspect 1 had gone well, and sooner than expected

with tenants being able to move there in a few weeks' time. It was added that extra care homes would be available soon and that they were currently in the process of consulting for the Full Business Plan for the Care Home, with a full planning application due to be submitted next March.

Thanks were given for the report stating his feeling that the tone used for the presentation, the video and the structure of the report was not suitable, and that it was too close to being entertainment. However, it was clarified that this was a cosmetic criticism and not about the content. A further question was asked in relation to Telecare and whether work had been done to address the lack of a mobile phone network that could possibly accompany the problem of digitising telephone lines in relation to telecare. The comments were appreciated, explaining that the report was for everyone and not just for Councillors, and following a consultation in 2024 it had been adapted to ensure that it was clear for everyone. Responding to the question about Telecare, he stated that he was not entirely sure of the answer and would come back and respond further.

The report was appreciated and clearly highlighted the Council's response to the Our Bravery Brought Justice Report along with the work of the Response Plan. It was asked how it could be ensured that responding to failures was not dependent on temporary structures and when the Council would take ownership, what had changed in the Council's culture and accountability to ensure that external intervention was not needed again and whether there were measures in place to quantify this, and if important aspects of the department's work had slipped in the wake of the Our Bravery Brought Justice Report. The response noted that ownership along with the Response Board stepping back had been a topic of discussion recently. It was explained that the next meeting of the Response Board would look specifically at this, but in terms of structures there were expectations to be meeting certain standards before considering for the Response Board to step back. It was emphasised that a balance needed to be obtained between moving forward ourselves and to keep safe from the external challenge. In terms of accountability and quantifying the culture and accountability, it was expressed that these were to be found in the Response Board papers and that he was happy to go through it further with the member. It was expressed that important aspects had of course slipped, but that the safeguarding of children and adults was essential.

It was highlighted that a page highlighting the challenges over the year had noted financial pressures, vacancies and recruitment as key challenges. It was asked how confident the service was in being able to recruit and retain staff for the next five years. The response noted that the Llechen Lân report highlighted the need for thousands more staff if things did not change, with numbers of a working age decreasing. It was emphasised that a lot of work was underway to try to get young people to stay in Gwynedd and to attract young people to the county.

It was expressed that this report as a performance report did not fully measure performance and that the statistics were superficial and did not clearly show how to improve, which was fundamental to a performance report. It was noted that a page reporting on last year's progress did not have any data, only traffic lights, but that it did not give the full picture in terms of targets. It was reiterated that the use of cartoons might make it too simplistic, and that the feeling of the presentation, in particular the video, was something that would not be seen in Senedd Cymru and the need was noted to highlight that the Full Council was high-level politics, and that more time was needed to challenge and less time for cats. The response given noted that this report did not measure performance but that there was a statutory role to be providing the information to the Government and the public on the work being done. The desire to scrutinise the work further was welcomed and that there was more to the situation than this report.

Thanks were given for the report highlighting the wide-ranging work being done in the face of major challenges. There was disagreement with the previous member, noting that the pictures and cartoons gave a clearer picture of individuals' stories. It was emphasised that the last two years had been difficult but that there had been excellent developments and it

was expressed that she was looking forward to working together over the coming year in order to highlight and underline the work that needed to be done to support children and young people.

Pride was noted in giving time today to discuss the item as it showed interest in care. It was emphasised that the Cabinet Members or the Director could be contacted throughout the year. There was disagreement with the comments about the format of the report as plenty of academic reports were produced and that this was one was available to everyone. It was also emphasised that this was an annual report and not a performance report - but that individuals were welcome to come to the Performance Challenge Meetings to see the data and scrutiny being done. More importantly, it was expressed that the report was honest and did not hide failures and the Corporate Director was thanked for his contribution and work to the Council and the wider region.

RESOLVED to accept the report.

10. ANNUAL REPORT BY THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

The report by the Head of Democracy Services was presented stating that it was a requirement to present a report outlining the work undertaken over the past year. The Former Chair was thanked for her work, and congratulations were noted to Cllr. Dewi Owen for being elected as Chair. Thanks were expressed to the Democracy Service Committee for their input and to the team for their professionalism throughout the year.

Attention was drawn to the highlights of the year with reference to the start of preparations for the 2027 Election along with plans to improve the digital provision in the Chambers. Attention was drawn to the eighth core area added to the members' training area and members were asked to complete the available training. This year's priorities were noted which followed on from last year's work with the forthcoming Election.

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

Attention was drawn to the core training areas highlighting that numbers reported to have completed training were still low and emphasising figures such as 3 members not having completed any of the eight areas. The importance of the training and the fact that it was available on-line at any time was highlighted.

It was asked if there was a discussion about councillors facing a by-election if changing political group during a democratic term. The response was that there were no steps at a Local Government level to impose such a requirement.

It was asked where the information was available about members' training. It was explained that it was public information on the website and available on the Members' Self-Service, but Councillors were asked to get in touch if they needed assistance.

Thanks were noted for all the training available which was very beneficial. Cara, the former Members' Training Officer, was thanked for her work over the years.

It was RESOLVED to accept the report.

11. CYNGOR GWYNEDD'S STATEMENT REGARDING PROMOTING DIVERSITY IN DEMOCRACY

The report was presented by the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services noting that the Council had adopted a Diversity Statement back in October 2021 in line with the Local Government Act 2021. It was explained that the statement highlighted the Council's

commitment to encouraging and promoting greater diversity ahead of the 2027 Local Government election.

With the forthcoming Local Election, it was noted that it was timely to review the statement. It was highlighted that it was not a statutory requirement but that it was believed that Members were keen to ensure a fair representation of society, and to encourage individuals from all backgrounds to stand as a Councillor.

It was noted that there had been no significant change to the statement since 2021, only a few updates. Attention was drawn to the work programme which would accompany the statement which highlighted the steps that would be taken by the Democracy Team and the Elections Team.

It was highlighted that the statement had been supported by the Democracy Services Committee at their meeting a fortnight ago.

Members were given the opportunity to ask questions and make observations.

Thanks were noted for the report, and the statement of having Councillors who reflect the communities served and to remove barriers that ensure people of all backgrounds and ages are involved in local politics was welcomed.

Support was expressed highlighting that it was easy to say that more diversity was needed but that the Political Groups had a role to play in promoting and encouraging this diversity. It was noted that a single transferrable voting system would make it easier. The response given was that working with the Political Groups was part of the work programme, and that it was through Plaid Cymru's encouragement to get more young women into politics that the Cabinet Member had become a Councillor.

It was asked what barriers had been identified as the main ones that prevented people from standing. A conversation beyond the meeting with the member was welcomed to give fair consideration to the matter.

It was RESOLVED to adopt the revised Diversity in Democracy Declaration along with the work programme to support the declaration.

12. MEMBERS' CONFIDENTIAL REPORTING POLICY ("WHISTLEBLOWING")

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

It was expressed back in January that the Cabinet had adopted a revised Whistleblowing Policy for Cyngor Gwynedd staff which represented an important step in strengthening the Council's arrangements in response to the Our Bravery Brought Justice report. It was explained that there was a call for a policy that would allow elected and co-opted members to have a pathway to bring concerns about serious misconduct to light.

It was explained that there was a need to prepare a Policy that would be suitable and appropriate for elected members, as staff procedure relating to employment legislation had legal protection within the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. It was noted that this policy offered guidance and a clear pathway for members on how to raise concerns in a safe space, and coexisted with other arrangements for specific types of concerns such as the Code of Conduct. It was reiterated that what was being presented was a system where members could bring issues to light, obtain guidance and feedback on the response steps.

The steps involved in the formulation of the Policy were highlighted which included input from the Member Enquiries Task Group as well as engagement with all Members. Consultations with the Standards Committee, the Education and Economy Committee along with the Protect organisation - a charitable body specialising in whistleblowing matters - were

highlighted. It was emphasised that amendments submitted by the Scrutiny Committee had been incorporated into the Policy.

Members were given the opportunity to ask questions and make observations.

Support for the policy was noted and the Cabinet Member and the officers were thanked for their work. It was expressed that it gave members an element of protection and demonstrated a commitment to a culture of honesty and accountability along with confidence that concerns are handled appropriately and confidentially. It was asked how members would know when this policy should be used rather than other procedures. The response noted by stating that the essence of the policy was to report any concern and that the Monitoring Officer would identify the pathway upon receipt.

It was asked how the policy struck a balance between protecting those who raise the concern and preventing the process from being used in political disputes. It was expressed that there was a serious purpose to this policy and that there was an expectation for it to be used for serious conduct, as officers were not allowed to engage in political matters.

It was RESOLVED to adopt a Members' Confidential Reporting Policy (Whistleblowing) to be included in the constitution.

13. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION - SECTION 22 - STAFF WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

The Monitoring Officer's report was presented stating that it was an organisational report. It was clarified in April that there had been a change in Employment Legislation where the categories of unacceptable behaviour had been extended to include sexual harassment within the definition of protected disclosures. It was clarified that the Monitoring Officer had the right to amend the Constitution accordingly, as a result it was noted that it was a formal report to note the change.

Members were given the opportunity to ask questions and make observations.

It was asked whether the word "whistleblowing" could be changed in English, as it was an unhealthy way of raising concerns. It was explained that it was a recognised term that was used consistently across all sectors.

It was RESOLVED to adopt a Members' Confidential Reporting Policy (Whistleblowing) to be incorporated in the constitution.

14. PROCUREMENT THRESHOLDS AND MODIFICATIONS TO THE CONTRACTS PROCEDURE RULES

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

It was noted that it was timely to review the Council's tender thresholds and procurement quotations following a significant change in contracting and procurement legislation as well as a change to the Council's internal Contracts Procedure Rules following this Council's decision in March of last year. It was explained that the current thresholds had been in place since 1996, and that inflation and prices had risen dramatically over the years.

It was highlighted that further changes had been introduced to ensure that the Council complied with the Act as well as fine tuning internal arrangements and providing clarity of the appropriate arrangements. It was noted that the recommendation was to double the thresholds. It was explained that in setting the thresholds there was a need to weigh and

measure the provision of open opportunities, encourage competition and the participation of local businesses. It was emphasised that today's recommendation supported keeping the benefit local, as higher thresholds were an opportunity to support local businesses by providing flexibility in the procedures to invite local companies to submit quotations.

It was expressed that the report had received support from the Governance and Audit Committee and was being recommended to the Full Council.

Members were given the opportunity to ask questions and make observations.

It was expressed that there was no issue with increasing the thresholds as it provided a better capacity to fund projects by local companies, but it was pointed out that Anglesey Council's thresholds were much higher.

A question was asked about the proportion of Welsh meat and vegetables bought by the Council to which it was replied that the response would be provided by the Education Department.

It was asked what consideration had been given to using a higher threshold to keep the work local and to what extent small pieces of work for the same company can be carried out. The response given was that it was a balance of having a practical system in terms of values, and on the other hand ensuring propriety under regulations.

RESOLVED

1. To increase the procurement thresholds as follows:

- **Procurements up to £10,000 single quotation**
- **Procurements between £10,000 and £100,000 request three quotations**
- **Procurements of over £100,000 open request for quotations or tenders**

2. Make minor amendments to the Council's Contract Procedure Rules as set out in Appendix 1.

15. NOTICE OF MOTION

The notice of motion was presented by Councillor Huw Rowlands under Section 4.19 of the Constitution and was seconded.

The member set out the context of the motion, noting:-

- That it stemmed from the frustration at the Board's failures over a number of years.
- Special measures for over 11 years and that not a single state establishment in the entire history of the Health Board had been in special measures for so long.
- It was highlighted that the Audit had drawn attention last week that the Board had not made it clear how an investment worth £461 million had been spent or its impact as a result of a lack of reliable evidence.
- It was emphasised that this showed that throwing more money was not successful.
- It was noted that all efforts to improve had failed.
- Looking at Ysbyty Gwynedd - that the shortcomings were clear without entering buildings with no parking spaces, full bins and that this kind of neglect for this amount of money was a greater negligence.
- Pride was expressed to see that the Welsh Government had given the Board one last chance this week.

Members expressed enthusiastic support for the proposal, noting:

- Confidence in the Welsh Government seeing the importance of moving forward on the matter.
- Attention was drawn to the 16 empty beds in Tywyn.
- It was stressed that everyone was aware of the nightmare stories and that the Government had left it too long to do something about the matter.

- Frontline staff were thanked for all their work and for doing a fantastic job in such a difficult situation and that this was a structural problem.

It was RESOLVED to adopt the motion, namely:-

Cyngor Gwynedd is asked to contact the Welsh Government to:

- 1. Express concern that Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board has been in special measures for 11 years.**
- 2. Ask what steps and what efforts the Welsh Government would be taking to improve the health provision in North Wales for the people of Gwynedd.**

The meeting commenced at 1.30p.m. and concluded at 5.20p.m.

CHAIR

MEETING	Full Council
DATE	24 September 2026
SUBJECT	Visitor Levy
PURPOSE	An update on the consultation on the Gwynedd Visitor Levy Proposal
AUTHOR	Roland Evans Assistant Head of Economy and Community Department
CABINET MEMBER	Cllr R.Medwyn Hughes

Decision Sought

- Accept the report;
- Agree to receive a complete report to decide whether or not to introduce a Visitor Levy in Gwynedd once the analysis, consideration and response to the content of the Consultation have been fully and appropriately completed.

Background

1. Following the decision of the Full Council on 14 May 2026, it was agreed to hold a public consultation on the possibility of introducing a Visitor Levy in Gwynedd.
2. The consultation was intended to gather the views of residents, businesses, visitors and stakeholders before making a further decision.
3. The consultation ran from 20 May to 26 July 2026. The consultation period was extended by 11 days following comments and a request made by the Gwynedd and Eryri 2035 Partnership during their special meeting to discuss the Levy on 12 June 2026.

What is the Visitor Levy?

4. The levy would be a daily payment by people staying overnight in visitor accommodation, such as:
 - Hotels
 - Bed & Breakfast
 - Self-catering accommodation
 - Holiday caravans
 - Campsites
 - Hostels and shared accommodation
5. The levy is intended to ensure that visitors make a direct contribution to the maintenance and improvement of the services and assets that support the visitor economy. Any income would be reinvested locally to support communities, culture and the Welsh language, the environment, facilities and infrastructure used by visitors and residents alike.

Proposed Rates

Type of accommodation	Rate per person per night
Hostels, shared rooms and tent pitches	75p + VAT (£0.90)
Most other types of accommodation (hotels, B&Bs, self-catering, caravans etc.)	£1.30 + VAT (£1.56)

Exemptions

6. The levy would not be payable if:
 - Visitor is under the age of 18 and staying in tent pitches or shared accommodation.
 - Stay lasts more than 31 nights within a single booking.
 - Accommodation is emergency or temporary housing arranged by a local authority.

Purpose of the Consultation

7. The consultation sought views on:
 - The potential economic impact of the levy on tourism businesses.
 - Impact on visitors and travel decisions.
 - The most appropriate use of any income collected.
 - Impact on local communities, the environment and the Welsh language.
 - How the levy could be implemented effectively in Gwynedd.
 - Views on support for the introduction of the Gwynedd Visitor Levy Proposal.
8. Several impact assessments were published as part of the consultation, including economic, social, environmental, equality and Welsh Language assessments.

Consultation methods

9. For consultation exercises conducted by public bodies, the '*Gunning Principles*' are the key legal standards used by the courts to assess whether a consultation has been fair and lawful.
10. To comply with these principles, stakeholders must be consulted while proposals are still at a formative stage. Sufficient information must be provided to enable informed responses, and adequate time must be allowed for stakeholders to consider the proposals and submit their views. All responses must then be conscientiously considered before the recommendations are finalised and a final decision is made.
11. A combination of digital channels, social media, public events, drop-in sessions and partnership networks were used to reach businesses, residents and stakeholders across the county as well as visitors. Posters, business cards and bookmarks were also distributed to encourage a response via the QR code within Gwynedd's 13 Regeneration Areas.
12. During the consultation period we saw:
 - 15,555 visits to Cyngor Gwynedd's consultation information page
 - 4 public meetings (3 in Gwynedd Areas and 1 online)
 - 6 drop-in sessions (2 in each area of Gwynedd)
 - 76 attendees
 - 15 statutory bodies and stakeholders contacted
 - All Gwynedd Community Councils have been notified
 - Cyngor Gwynedd members have been briefed

- Encouragement to complete the questionnaire through the network of Libraries, Byw'n Iach Centres and other networks

The response

13. The response received in the public sessions was heated, challenging and opposing. These were difficult meetings. Their intention was to raise awareness of the consultation and encourage a response – but naturally many were keen to voice opinions.
14. Copies of the questionnaire were provided at Gwynedd Libraries, Siop Gwynedd and there was also an opportunity to request a paper copy. The paper responses were transferred to the online questionnaire as one source of gathering the response to the consultation.
15. The campaign by the sector (including corresponding with customers to encourage a response, creating a Facebook page and corresponding with local businesses to encourage a response against the Levy) has ensured that the number of visitors who responded increased significantly in the last 2 weeks of the consultation and these influence the final results significantly.
16. A very small percentage (1% Welsh website and 2% English website) had clicked to read the Gwynedd Visitor Levy Proposal and to obtain comprehensive information on the Proposal to assist with their response.
17. As part of the consultation response questionnaire, respondents were able to select the category that best described them as a respondent.
18. They were able to select more than one category and therefore it should be noted that some respondents may have been a combination of residents, businesses, visitors and organisations, for example. It is not easy to separate people into individual categories.
19. A total of 6,856 responses were received to the consultation. Based on the initial analysis of the figures, 48.7% of Gwynedd residents supported the Proposal, with 43.5% opposing it; 14.7% of businesses supported it, while 79.5% opposed it; and 10.7% of visitors supported it, while 79.9% opposed it. Considering the overall response, including visitors, residents and businesses, 22.7% supported the Visitor Levy Proposal and 68.5% opposed it.
20. It should be remembered that this was not a consultation on whether respondents were 'for' or 'against' the Gwynedd Visitor Levy Proposal. Rather, it was a consultation to identify the potential impacts of introducing a Visitor Levy in the County and to assist in reaching a decision.
21. The reports summarising and weighing up the consultation will provide us with detailed information on the responses based on all cohorts, priorities, regeneration areas as well as providing potential recommendations moving forward.
22. The number of responses received in Gwynedd was significant and exceeded expectations based on previous consultations. It was also considerably higher when compared with the 2,000 responses received in Anglesey and 1,300 in Conwy.

Main messages arising from the consultation

23. In addition to the significantly higher number of responses than has been seen in other areas, the range of key issues raised in the responses is broader than originally anticipated
24. Some of the main themes raised during the consultation include waste and cleanliness; roads, parking and transport; the economy and employment; governance, data and

monitoring; the environment and public space; the timing and cumulative impact of wider policies on the tourism sector; opportunities for wider collaboration; the impact on certain equality characteristics; the Welsh language and culture.

25. We have received clear legal advice that it is not possible to proceed with a decision on the levy in September 2026, as originally intended, because it has not been possible to analyse, process and consider all the consultation responses within the available timeframe. At present, the full range of information, factors and evidence raised in response to the consultation has not yet been prepared and presented in a form suitable for submission to the Council. Consequently, the Council would not be able to give the matter full consideration before reaching a decision.
26. In accordance with the 'Gunning' Principles of consultation, the responses to the consultation must be considered conscientiously. This requires a full assessment of the consultation findings, updating the impact assessments, and preparing responses to the key issues raised. Furthermore, reasonable investigative work must be undertaken when analysing the information. Without ensuring conscientious consideration and reasonable inquiry, the duty to conduct a consultation and report on its outcomes would not be fulfilled in a fair and comprehensive manner.
27. There may be no relevant response or mitigating measures available for some of the issues raised. However, these will still need to be identified as impacts so that the Council fully understands the implications and effects of the Visitor Levy when reaching its decision.
28. The information collected will need to be carefully weighed and considered, after which the Visitor Levy impact assessments will need to be updated and, where appropriate, the Proposal itself may need to be amended.

Timeline and next steps

29. Originally, the intention was to present a decision report to the Full Council on 24 September 2026
30. The main reason for presenting a report on 24 September 2026 was to provide 12 months' notice to the Welsh Revenue Authority (WRA) of our intention to introduce the Levy, so that collection of the Visitor Levy could commence from 1 October 2027, should a decision be made to do so.
31. There are two opportunities in any year to submit notice of an intention to introduce a Visitor Levy to the WRA, namely before 1 April or 1 October.
32. Considering the 11-day extension granted to the consultation at the request of the Gwynedd and Eryri 2035 Partnership, the high number of responses received, and the range of issues raised, the Council is not currently in a position to make a decision on the Gwynedd Visitor Levy Proposal.
33. It is proposed that a report be presented to a meeting of the Full Council asking the Council to decide whether a Visitor Levy should be introduced in Gwynedd, once the work of analysing, considering and responding to the consultation findings has been fully and appropriately completed.
34. As a result of the delay to the timetable, it is not currently possible to determine when the relevant notice can be submitted to the Welsh Revenue Authority. This will depend on when the report is presented to the Full Council and on the Council's decision as to whether a Visitor Levy should be introduced in Gwynedd.

Views of Statutory Officers

Monitoring Officer

"The report, which reflects specialist legal advice, provides clear guidance that it would not be appropriate to proceed to a decision on the adoption of the levy in September 2026 for the reasons highlighted. The circumstances that have led to this conclusion are explained in the report. In particular, the legal duties involved in carrying out a consultation and how to deal with the responses and views received, are underlined. In addition, the preparation of specific impact assessments are a core part of the decision-making process and, as noted, the responses contribute to the understanding and updating of these assessments in leading to the preparation of the final report and reaching a decision".

Head of Finance

"I support the decision sought from the perspective of financial propriety. It is essential that the results of the consultation are assessed appropriately".

Background information

[Report to Full Council](#) 14 May 2026

MEETING	Full Council
DATE	24 September 2026
TITLE	Strategic Safeguarding Panel's Annual Report 2025/26
CABINET MEMBER	Councillor Dewi Jones
CONTACT OFFICER	Dylan Owen, Director of Social Services

1. Background / Introduction

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on what has been achieved by the Strategic Safeguarding Panel during 2025/26. It also presents for information, a review of the safeguarding policy undertaken during 2025/2026 to all council members.
- 1.2. The Council's main priority is to ensure that children and adults at risk are protected from abuse, neglect, radicalisation, slavery, domestic abuse and exploitation. **Everyone** in Cyngor Gwynedd has a responsibility to create an environment that ensures this, and that children and adults are less likely to be abused.
- 1.3. It is the Strategic Safeguarding Panel that ensures that suitable and appropriate safeguarding procedures are in place, and it is important that all members are able to satisfy themselves that the Panel has undertaken the work required thoroughly and conscientiously. It is believed that the Annual Report (**Appendix 1**) summarises the Panel's work for 2025/26 accurately and fairly, whilst also including references to observations from external auditors in relation to this work.
- 1.4. This year, elements of the Annual Report have been presented in a format that is more accessible to children and young people (**Appendix 3**). This has been done to help raise awareness of safeguarding and ensure that information about the work is easier to understand to a wider audience.
- 1.5. It is vital that all Council members are aware of the Panel's work on safeguarding and are satisfied that the Panel has undertaken the required work in a thorough and conscientious manner.
- 1.6. As well as overseeing safeguarding activity across the Council, the Panel also led a review of the Safeguarding Policy between January and March 2026. The Safeguarding Policy sets out how we intend to fulfil our statutory responsibilities for safeguarding children and adults who are at risk in accordance with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act (2014). This review was carried out as part of the policy's regular review cycle, which takes place every two years.
- 1.7. A sub-group was established to lead the review, including the Director of Social Services, Safeguarding Children and Adults Managers, Learning and Development Manager, Head

of Adults Department, Community Safety Officer, and Senior Executive Officer.

1.8. Several changes were made to the Safeguarding Policy following the review, including:

- Highlighting the pathway for raising concerns and the relevant contact details have been made clearer at the beginning of the document.
- Introducing more practical procedures for recording concerns, including guidance on the information that should be recorded.
- Clarifying mandatory and regular safeguarding training requirements (every three years), as well as strengthening the compliance monitoring arrangements.
- Explaining the role and responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Person.
- Strengthening the safeguarding requirements and expectations for commissioned services.
- Simplifying the appendices, including providing links to useful guidance and information.
- Strengthening safeguarding governance arrangements by:
 - monitoring completion rates of safeguarding and violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV) training in each department's performance challenge processes;
 - establishing safeguarding as a permanent item on the agenda of the Corporate Management Team;
 - including it as a regular item on the agenda of departmental management teams;
 - continuing to present the Safeguarding Annual Report to the Full Council.

1.9. An informal consultation on the revised Policy was held with members of the Strategic Safeguarding Panel, the Safeguarding Executive Group and the Procurement Service. The draft policy was also presented to the Care Scrutiny Committee on 4 June 2026, at which a constructive discussion on its content was held. Several valuable comments and proposals were received during the process, and these have been incorporated into the revised version of the Policy.

1.10. On 15 July 2026, Cabinet approved the Strategic Safeguarding Panel Annual Report 2025/26 Revised Policy, and therefore the above changes have now been adopted.

1.11. We recognise that further work is needed to promote the revised Policy amongst all Council staff. It is felt that presenting it to you in Full Council is an important step in order to raise widespread awareness of the Policy.

1.12. **Equality Impact Assessment**

1.12.1. In accordance with the legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 ("The Act") (including Welsh public sector duties) when making decisions, the Council must give due

attention to the need (1) to eliminate unlawful discrimination (2) promote equality of opportunity and (3) encourage good relations based on the protected characteristics as well as addressing socio-economic impacts.

1.12.2. No new Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared for this review, as the statutory requirements and the basic responsibilities placed on the Council have not changed. The proposed amendments mainly provide further clarity to staff and Elected Members about their responsibilities in relation to the safeguarding of children and adults at risk of abuse or neglect.

1.12.3. However, as a significant period has elapsed since the adoption of the original policy, it is planned to undertake a full Equality Impact Assessment as part of the next review of the Policy to ensure that it continues to reflect good practice.

2. Recommendation

2.1. The Council is asked to:

- accept the Report presented on the work of the Strategic Safeguarding Panel for the 2025/26 year (**Appendix 1**).
- note the revised Safeguarding Policy (**Appendix 2**)

3. Statutory Officers' Views

3.1. Views of the Monitoring Officer

As a member of the Panel I welcome the report which is an appropriate summary of the work. It is a means of providing assurance to the Council about this key responsibility.

3.2. Views of the Head of Finance

The report presents information to the Council on activities undertaken over the past year. The decision sought does not create any new spending commitment and, therefore, I have no further comments from the perspective of financial propriety.

STRATEGIC SAFEGUARDING PANEL REPORT

2025/26

A SNAPSHOT OF THE YEAR 2025/26

94%



of safeguarding referrals (Adults) responded to within 7 days

8,069



number of referrals to Children's Services



98%



of referrals to the intake team that were responded to within the statutory timescale (24 Hours)

792



number of adult safeguarding referrals

75.9%



of Council staff have completed the Safeguarding Training (Group A)



319



number of people awaiting a DoLS assessment (31.3.26)



100%



of schools have introduced safeguarding training to all staff



282



children receiving their education at home



74.7%



of Council staff have completed the VAWDASV Training



293



number of children in care (31.3.26)



100%

of the risk assessments submitted to Case Conferences (Children) showing high quality in decision making.

126



children on the Child Protection Register (31.3.26)



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. It has been an incredibly disturbing and challenging period for Cyngor Gwynedd in the safeguarding field, with the need to improve and strengthen safeguarding systems being central to the work this year and it will remain so for the year to come.
- 1.2. This report presents an overview of the work of the Safeguarding Strategic Panel over the period from April 2025 to March 2026. The report highlights the work achieved by the Council, as well as the work done in partnership with others, seeking to provide a fair, balanced and transparent picture of the progress and challenges.
- 1.3. The aim of the Strategic Safeguarding Panel is to ensure that appropriate arrangements and procedures are in place at a corporate level across the Council to ensure the safety of children, young people and adults. Since 2017/18 the Panel is also responsible for maintaining an overview of wider safeguarding issues across Gwynedd, such as Community Safety.
- 1.4. The Panel in turn is accountable to the Statutory Director of Social Services, who has the final accountability for safeguarding issues.
- 1.5. The term of the Chair of the Panel is two years. Up to June 2025, Councillor Menna Trenholme, Cabinet Member for Children and Family Support, was the Chair. At the meeting held on 25 June 2025, Councillor Dewi Jones was elected as Chair for the 2025-2027 period.
- 1.6. A Safeguarding Operational Group supports the Strategic Panel to implement its priorities and to deal with practical issues in its remit. This is an internal group of officers, with the Designated Safeguarding Person of each department serving on it, to ensure whole-Council ownership of safeguarding issues.
- 1.7. During the year, the terms of reference of the Safeguarding Strategic Panel and Safeguarding Operational Group were reviewed, making minor changes to ensure that they were current and fit for purpose.

2. REVIEWING THE SAFEGUARDING POLICY

- 2.1. A review of the Council's Safeguarding Policy is carried out on a two-year cycle. This policy notes how the Council intends to achieve its statutory responsibilities to safeguard children and adults who are at risk, in accordance with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

- 2.2. Between January and March 2026, a comprehensive review of the Policy was carried out. A sub-group was established to lead the review, including the Director of Social Services, Safeguarding Children and Adults Managers, Learning and Development Manager, Head of Adults Department, Community Safety Officer, and Senior Executive Officer.
- 2.3. Several changes were made to the Safeguarding Policy following the review, including strengthening the clarity and usefulness of the document. More emphasis was placed on explaining the pathway for raising concerns, highlighting it clearly at the beginning of the document. More practical procedures were developed for reporting and recording concerns, including a detailed, new section, noting the information that should be recorded when seeing or hearing about a safeguarding matter.
- 2.4. The accountability and lead role of senior officers was strengthened, and the roles and responsibilities of individuals and different groups of staff were also made clearer.
- 2.5. The training requirements were explained more explicitly, emphasising the mandatory and regular (every three years) training expectations for staff and elected members, as well as strengthening the compliance monitoring arrangements.
- 2.6. Further steps were taken to strengthen accountability across the Council in the safeguarding field. The Policy now includes the following requirements:
- Including data (%) on the number who have completed safeguarding training and domestic violence training as a part of the Performance Challenge process in each department.
 - Establishing safeguarding as a permanent item on the agenda of the Corporate Management Team.
 - Asking every department to include safeguarding as a standing item on the agendas of our departmental management team.
 - Continuing with the procedure of submitting the Annual Report to the Care Scrutiny Committee, the Cabinet and the full Council.
- 2.7. Input was received from the members of the Safeguarding Strategic Panel and the broader Safeguarding Operational Group, which contributed to improving the document further. The amended policy will be submitted before the Scrutiny Committee and the Cabinet before it was adopted formally. It will also be submitted for information to the Full Council.

3. OUR BRAVERY BROUGHT JUSTICE REPORT

- 3.1. Following the publication of the North Wales Regional Safeguarding Board's report, *Our Bravery Brought Justice*, in October 2025, Cyngor Gwynedd drew up a comprehensive response to address the recommendations, as well as broader matters noted in

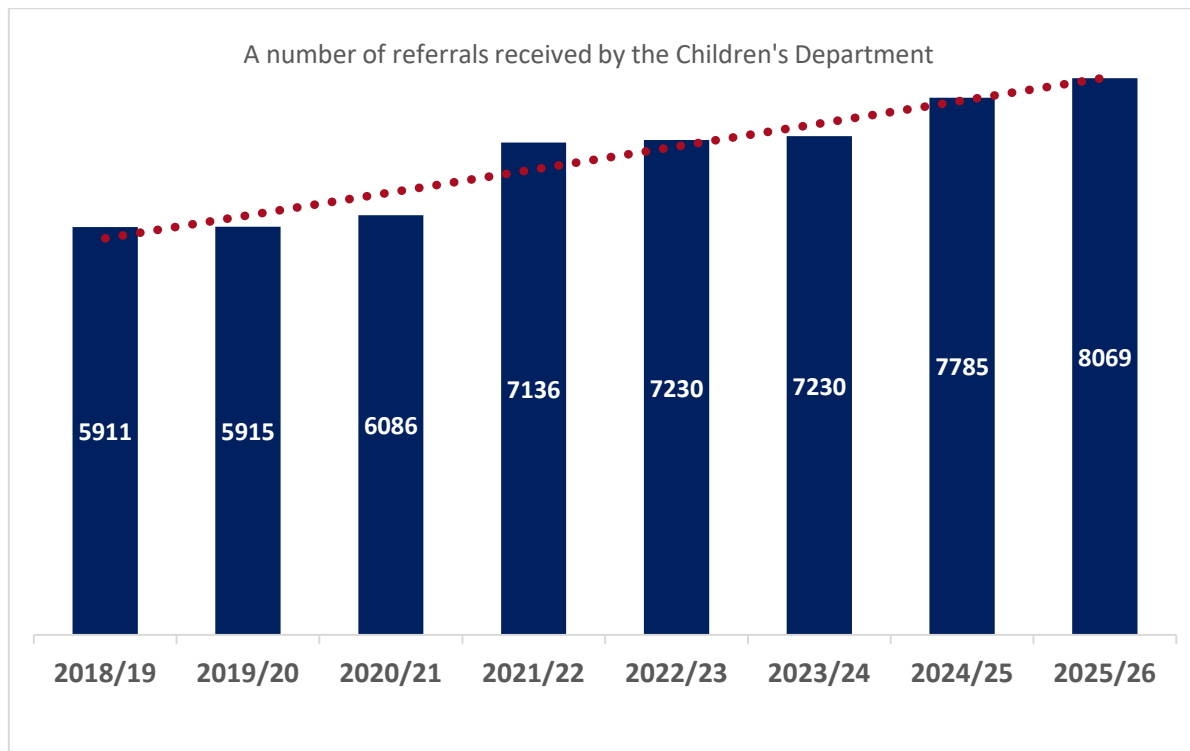
inspections and associated investigations. This was a challenging and damning report, and the Council acknowledged that there were important lessons to learn.

- 3.2. A Response Board was established to supervise the work, chaired by Professor Sally Holland, the previous Children's Commissioner for Wales. The aim of the Board is to ensure firm progress and give assurances to the Council, elected members and stakeholders that definitive steps are being taken to strengthen safeguarding arrangements and to improve the experiences of children and vulnerable adults in Gwynedd.
- 3.3. Since then, the board has met regularly and have benefited from the input and guidance from Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW), Estyn and Welsh Government. Also considered was the learning from the CIW and Estyn joint-inspection in November 2025. Sally Holland reports every quarter to the Council Cabinet, whilst the Welsh Government's Ministerial Assurance Group also monitors progress against the recommendation.
- 3.4. By March 2026, positive progress was achieved on several of the steps noted. However, work is still to be done, and the Council remains committed to act on the learning and ensure continuous improvements.
- 3.5. The Safeguarding Strategic Panel plays a key role in terms of scrutinising progress, including monitoring the levels of safeguarding training across the Council. He will have a stronger role in the future in terms of providing a strategic overview of the progress against the recommendations.

4. PERFORMANCE AND PROGRESS IN THE SAFEGUARDING FIELD

4.1. Safeguarding Children

- 4.1.1. **8,069** referrals to children's services were received in 2025/26. This is an increase of **3.7%** in the number of referrals compared with 7785 last year.



4.1.2. Once again, the pressure on the service has been substantial, with the workforce incredibly busy supporting children and families across the county. It is noted that the nature of the cases seen now is much more intensive and complex than in the past. During 2025-2026, referrals for families with several children, high levels of neglect, substance misuse, domestic abuse and new families, were brought to our attention, adding to the operational challenges.

4.1.3. An increase is also seen in the number on the Child Protection Register this year. On 31 March 2025, the number of children on the register was **106**, and this year, the number is **126**. Emotional abuse continued to be the main reason for including children on the register and it can be seen that children tend to stay on the register for longer periods by now. Similar patterns were seen in several Local Authorities, and it is intended to consider alternative methods of supporting children over the year to come.

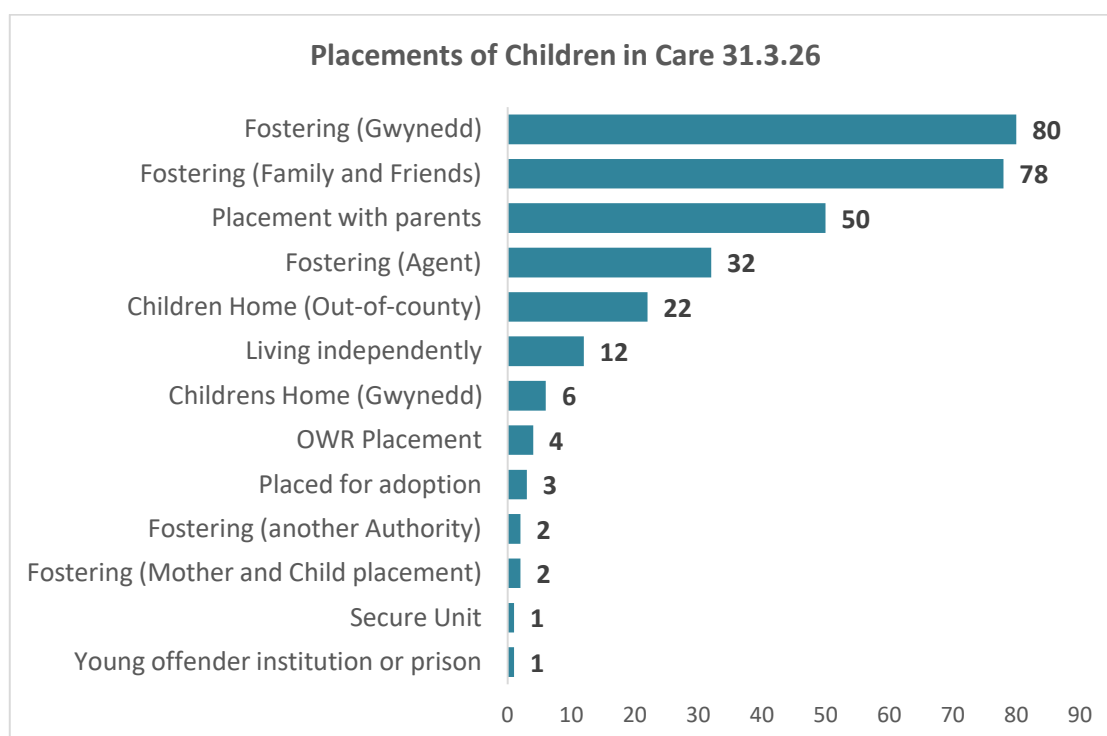
4.1.4. **84% (↑2%)** child protection reviews were held within the statutory timetable during the year. The percentage of risk assessments submitted to Case Conferences which were considered as exhibiting quality in decision making remained high at **100%**.

4.1.5. The Part 5 work of the Wales safeguarding procedures has increased again this year. Part 5 relates to safeguarding concerns about practitioners and those in posts of trust, and these procedures identify arrangements for responding to safeguarding concerns about those whose work, whether employed or voluntary, brings them

into contact with children or adults at risk. The intention is to increase capacity by creating additional posts within the Safeguarding Unit early in 2026/27.

4.1.6. Gwynedd Children's Services now take a proactive approach to ensuring that the voice of the child is heard when responding to concerns relating to individuals working with children and young people. Some challenges remain as a result of parental refusal, meaning that individual assessments are required to determine the appropriate course of action.

4.1.7. At the end of March, there were **293 (↑12)** looked after children. Of the total number of looked after children, **66%** are in foster placements, **28 (10%)** are in residential placements and **50 (17%)** are placed with their parents. There were **3** children in adoptive placements at the end of the year, with **12** young persons living independently with support.



4.1.8. During 2025/26, unregistered placements arrangements (OWR) were used for **4** young people in care. However, the situation nationally is much more serious by now, with the majority, if not all authorities having to ensure that such an arrangement is available due to the lack of registered placements across the United Kingdom.

4.1.9. When a looked after child needs to be placed, the wish is to keep them close to their family and home area. We therefore focus on finding ways of accommodating and providing care to children and young people closer to home, so that they can continue to be part of the community and maintain their support networks.

Developing the residential provision through the Small Group Homes Scheme was a priority in the Council Plan 2023-28.

- 4.1.10. Two homes are already operational in Morfa Bychan and Deiniolen, with the children settling well into the placements. Renovation work on the home in Edern is now nearing completion. A third property was purchased in Cricieth last year, with the registration process with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) ongoing. Work also commenced during the year on the property, with the hope that it will be completed early in 2026/27.
- 4.1.11. The high cost of out-of-county specialist placements places substantial pressure on the budget, with some costs arising unexpectedly and difficult to anticipate in advance. Although some placements of this type were unavoidable, this pressure has led the Council to speed-up the work of developing small group homes to strengthen the local provision and reduce the dependency on a costly out-of-county provision. This also coincides with the children's non-profit agenda of the Welsh Government, which is seeking to ensure that children's care and accommodation is provided based on the needs of children, instead of profits. A specific role was created to support and speed-up the programme in 2026/27.

4.2. Safeguarding Adults

- 4.2.1. **792** Adults reports were received in 2025/26, and this was an increase from the **750** reports received in 2024/25. On average, **94.4% (↑2.3%)** of the initial s.126 enquiries safeguarding referrals were completed within the statutory 7-day period.
- 4.2.2. From the reports of Adults at Risk received, the risk was managed in **100%** of the cases.
- 4.2.3. Although the department appointed an additional part-time Safeguarding Officer, the capacity remains challenging due to long-term sickness within the team. As a result, the additional workload has fallen on the leaders of the Community Resources Teams and the Social Work Teams to complete the safeguarding work. In order to manage the risk, a temporary post has now been advertised; however, recruitment has been challenging, meaning that the post has had to be readvertised.
- 4.2.4. The officers carry out regular monitoring and respond promptly to any concerns, ensuring that safe and high-quality care is commissioned. The data shows that regular visits are held in residential homes. A pre-monitoring form was submitted, which assisted officers to prepare more effectively for visits and to focus on potential risk areas.

- 4.2.5. The team also meets every fortnight with the Medications Team and in-house managers to discuss medication errors and preparing appropriate support. This work makes a direct contribution to the safety of residents within the provision.
- 4.2.6. One provider continues under the Escalating Concerns system, and an embargo on new admissions has been in place since October 2025. This embargo affects the ability of services to place individuals in that area, and ongoing efforts are being made to collaborate with the provider in order to ensure that necessary improvements are implemented in full.
- 4.2.7. Concerns around the DoLS (Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards Arrangements) continue. At the end of March 2026, **319** individuals were awaiting a DoLS assessment, compared with **356** at the end of March 2025. It is necessary to prioritise cases according to the level of risk, paying particular attention to individuals living in supported accommodation, where an application needs to be submitted to the Court of Protection for authorisation to the deprivation of liberty.
- 4.2.8. A successful bid was made during 2024/25 to employ two Best Interest Assessors on a permanent basis. Whilst two individuals were appointed to the roles, they did not have the qualifications or experience to start straight away. By now, they have both completed their training, have qualified and have started on their workload.

4.3. Education

- 4.3.1. During 2025-2026, the Schools Safeguarding and Well-being Team has conducted visits to 89 schools to review and ensure the quality of safeguarding arrangements, policies and procedures. Since January 2025, every school receives an annual visit to assess the quality of their safeguarding arrangements, ensuring consistency and compliance across the county.
- 4.3.2. Almost every school visited in 2025/26 complied with the appropriate safeguarding arrangements. From these visits, **4 schools** which have received a second visit to check aspects such as arrangements for recording attendance / absences and the content of Safeguarding posters.
- 4.3.3. An Annual Safeguarding Review is completed by every school annually. The latest findings demonstrate:
- **95% (↑1%)** of the "Main Safeguarding Persons" in schools had received specific safeguarding training during the past two years;
 - **85% (→remains the same)** of Designated Governors in Gwynedd's schools had also received the relevant training for their role in the last two years;

- **100% (↑ 3%)** of Gwynedd Schools had introduced Basic Safeguarding Training to all staff before the end of the Winter term;
- **100% (remains the same)** of Gwynedd Schools noted that they were confident that all school staff and volunteers know what to do if a child should disclose information on abuse.

4.3.4. Since April 2025, the Safeguarding and Well-being Service has conducted:

- **3** Safeguarding training sessions for designated Safeguarding Governors and Chairs
- **14** Designated Safeguarding Person training sessions with a total of **161 individual** in attendance.

In addition, the Designated Lead officer has held training sessions for supply teachers, early years staff, the education modernisation team and Additional Learning Needs (ALN) staff.

4.3.5. In February 2026, an additional member was appointed to increase the capacity of the Education Safeguarding and Well-being Team. The team has already developed new resources to strengthen the response of schools to safeguarding matters, including simple flow charts for the safeguarding concerns and allegations against staff, as well as quality posters to display in the schools and their websites. The materials include the details of the designated safeguarding persons and chairs, details of the Education Safeguarding and Well-being Team and supporting clarity and accessibility of information for staff, governors and parents.

4.3.6. Every school has adopted the 'Promoting measures and practices leading to the use and reduction of restrictive intervention' exemplar policy. This is checked during the annual safeguarding quality visits. An external evaluation has been commissioned to ensure compliance with the national guidance as well as further developing training arrangements and provisions. The recommendations of the evaluation leads to developing and strengthening training and support for schools, empowering them to respond safely in cases of restrictive intervention, listening to the voice of the pupil and being reflective of any such intervention.

4.3.7. At the end of March 2026, there was a total of **282 (↑ 7.63%)** children receiving their education at home, through parents' choice. This figure includes **158** children who are historically on the register and **124** new children since September 2025. Not all children on the register have registered at a school previously, with some moving into the County but not wishing to register at a school and others making the decision very soon to home educate from statutory school age.

- 4.3.8. The main reasons for a parent's choice to home educate is lifestyle/ideology, but anxiety and mental health problems are also increasing. We managed to maintain contact with most of these families, with a small number refusing any contact (in line with their rights).

4.4. **Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV)**

- 4.4.1. The Council is working in partnership to prevent violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence, raising awareness, providing support to victims and improving the response of services.
- 4.4.2. Following an application prepared by officers from the Corporate Support Department, the Council received a 'White Ribbon' accreditation in May 2022. The White Ribbon is an organisation that works to raise awareness and encourage people, particularly men, to act against violence against women and domestic abuse.
- 4.4.3. We also worked with the Police to develop an initiative called 'Safe Zones' in Bangor and Caernarfon. The method is simple, but effective, focusing on improving natural surveillance, lights and using existing CCTV systems in key locations. A successful application was made to the Home Office for finance to support the project, and further work is progressing.
- 4.4.4. **11.1 in every 1000 of the population** in Gwynedd experience domestic violence annually (1.1%). This compares with 10.4 in Anglesey, 17.5 in Denbighshire and 16.5 in Conwy. During 2025/2026, the Council has commissioned Gorwel (through Grŵp Cynefin) and DASU (Domestic Abuse Support Unit) to provide support services for victims, including practical and emotional support, housing and refuge for individuals in crisis, safety advice, advocacy and guidance to steer the justice system.
- 4.4.5. The Council has also made a successful application through the Welsh Government's VAWDASV Capital Grant to purchase 100 security cameras to support the survivors of domestic abuse in the area. The cameras will be distributed through key partners, including the Police, DASU and Gorwel, in order to provide practical support for at-risk individuals.
- 4.4.6. In addition, following discussions with Women's Aid Wales about supporting deaf domestic abuse survivors, the Partnership arranged British Sign Language (BSL) training through Coleg Llandrillo for Siop Gwynedd staff and local domestic abuse organisations. Feedback will be collected from participants to assess the impact of the session and note any further needs, with the possibility of arranging additional sessions in line with the demand.

- 4.4.7. The Housing Department, through Housing Support Grant funding, has commissioned a comprehensive assessment of the Domestic Violence services in order to strengthen collaboration and facilitate joint commissioning for the future. It was agreed that the current services and arrangements had been too fragmented, and that it would be beneficial to establish a specific working group on domestic violence within the Council.
- 4.4.8. Currently, the Welsh Government is holding a national consultation to review the Domestic Violence services. It is noted that there is substantial differences in the funding models and provisions across regions. For example, in the north, funding is channelled through the Police and Crime Commissioner, whilst in other areas, it goes directly to Local Authorities. The consultation therefore is an opportunity for the Welsh Government to reconcile operational methods across the country.
- 4.4.9. The Gwynedd and Anglesey Community Safety Partnership is responsible for commissioning Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHR) in Gwynedd. One DHR review has been approved by the Home Office and is about to be published, and a first draft of another DHR review has been submitted before Christmas.
- 4.4.10. By now, this statutory duty is achieved through a Single Unified Safeguarding Review (SUSR), which incorporates Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) within the same reviewing process now used for every safeguarding review in Wales. The first review to follow this procedure has begun, with the first meeting of the Panel held in March 2026.
- 4.4.11. By now, the Domestic Abuse (VAWDASV) e-module is statutory for all members of staff. It is vital that the workforce receives the training to ensure that the Council is doing everything within its ability to support individuals and to raise awareness. 'Ask and Act' training is also promoted to give staff confidence to help individuals experiencing violence, domestic abuse or sexual violence. On 31 March 2026, **74.7%** of Council staff (including Permanent, Casual and Fixed-term staff) have completed the training.
- 4.4.12. More 'Bystander Intervention' training sessions were held for Council staff. This was provided by Welsh Government, with the aim of helping individuals to deal with potentially harmful situations such as sexual harassment, giving them confidence to have discussions with friends and colleagues about these matters.
- 4.4.13. This year, a series of training sessions for staff were commissioned by Men at Work, an organisation established by Michael Conroy, in order to give professionals more confidence and practical resources to conduct constructive conversations with boys and young men on a range of sensitive and important topics. This included healthy

relationships, on-line influences, gender stereotyping, self-image, dangerous behaviours, impacts of pornography, and well-being. The training offers a practical, open and considerate method of supporting staff to engage effectively with young people on these matters, and very positive feedback was received from those attending.

4.5. Crime

- 4.5.1. The Council is collaborating with the Police through the Community Partnership Board, and a regular overview of crime levels across Gwynedd is received. In 2025/26, **a small increase of 3.6%** was seen in the number of offences in Gwynedd, compared with the previous year.
- 4.5.2. The level of Sex Offences recorded to date in 2025/26 in Gwynedd saw **a reduction of 1.5%** compared with 2024/25. There can be significant variations in crimes reported from week to week, partly because of reporting on historical offences.
- 4.5.3. Acquisitive crimes include the categories of Residential Burglary, Business and Community Burglary, Theft, Vehicle Crime and Thefts and Handling. Residential Burglary and Business and Community Burglary have reduced this year, but an increase was seen in the number of Vehicle Crimes and Thefts and Handling.
- 4.5.4. Anti-social behaviour in Gwynedd has seen a reduction to date of **0.7%** in 2025/26, compared with the same period in 2024/25. Collaborative work is being done with Town and Community Councils, the Highways Department and the Police, for example by installing CCTV cameras where the biggest need arises.
- 4.5.5. The Serious Violence Duty came into force nationally in January 2023. The duty makes it a requirement for specified authorities to work together to prepare and implement a strategy for preventing and reducing serious violence in the area. The North Wales final Strategy was published in January 2024. The Council has been part of this work since the beginning and continues to be part of the Regional Steering Group to implement the Duty.
- 4.5.6. As part of the duty, the Partnership received £65k of funding for preventative and early intervention projects to reduce serious violence by children and young people. Several projects were completed by April 2026, including:
 - 'Don't Steal My Future' sessions held by RASASC Wales (Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre) to raise awareness of sexual violence with pupils and to influence attitudes and behaviours.
 - An awareness campaign around selling illegal vapes and child exploitation, with a focus on increased reporting and sharing of intelligence.

- Increase the youth provision over the summer holidays and half-term, with activities targeted for young people aged 11-25 years in areas at high risk of crime and violence.
- A schools project led by the Education Department to prevent serious violence, including training, mentoring and group work to reduce exclusions and keeping pupils safe and in education.

4.6. **Modern Slavery**

- 4.6.1. Modern slavery spans several types of exploitation, namely labour, criminal, sexual exploitation and domestic slavery. In North Wales, Modern Slavery cases in the area mainly relate to drugs exploitation, where the victims are often young males who are forced to sell drugs, usually through county lines. Regionally, promoting contextual safeguarding to work with children and young people at risk of exploitation and/or modern slavery is a priority within the North Wales Serious Violence Strategy.
- 4.6.2. The Police is raising awareness of Modern Slavery amongst authorities and businesses across the region, and conducting regular visits to hotels and holiday sites, as well as providing literature in sexual health surgeries and clinics.
- 4.6.3. Between January and December 2024, North Wales Police received 112 referrals relating to modern slavery, human trafficking or exploitation through the National Referral Mechanism, with 13 of these relating to Gwynedd. A further 6 reports were received through the Duty to Notify process, with 1 relating to Gwynedd.
- 4.6.4. In 2025, the number of referrals fell to 95, with 9 relating to Gwynedd. Two reports were received through the Duty to Notify process during the year, none of which related to Gwynedd.

4.7. **Counter Terrorism**

- 4.7.1. Cyngor Gwynedd holds a Public Places Group: Preparedness to Protect and Safeguard and is also a member of the equivalent regional groups, e.g., Contest Board. The aim of the group is to strengthen safety in public spaces, improving preparedness to respond to events, and raising awareness amongst stakeholders to keep communities safe.
- 4.7.2. In 2025/26, preparations were continued to ensure compliance with Martyn's Law, which is expected to come into force in 2027; the Group also considered the venue Hire Policy during the year, as well as specific safety issues raised by the North Wales Society for the Blind in relation to cycle lanes.

4.7.3. In 2024/25, the Council undertook a quality assurance process with the Home Office in order to meet the statutory requirements under the Prevent duty. Strengths were identified such as the efforts for regional collaboration and the work of managing risks in relation to radicalisation.

4.7.4. As a result of this process, two further recommendations were received, namely: developing a venue Hire Policy and develop a prevent training strategy. As above, the Hire Policy has received attention during the year, and once the Welsh training will be available, the new "prevent" training plan can be implemented.

4.8. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

4.8.1. The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) is responsible for processing criminal checks. The purpose of DBS checks is to help employers make safer recruiting and licensing decisions, although the check is only one part of the recruitment process. When the check has been processed and completed by the DBS, the applicant will receive a DBS certificate.

4.8.2. The Operational Group has undertaken some significant work to check, challenge and revisit the corporate procedure in respect of the DBS. As a result, Departments now have greater ownership of the DBS procedures, and this has transformed how the Operational Group reports on its conformity on departmental disclosures.

4.8.3. The DBS situation has stabilised during the year, with most departments achieving 100% compliance, i.e., that every member of staff requiring a DBS for their role has a current certificate. Where individuals have no current DBS, a clear explanation is provided for the Group, mainly associated with long-term absences or maternity periods. The departments continue to monitor the situation on an ongoing basis in order to ensure continuous compliance and manage any gaps in a timely way.

4.9. Corporate Safeguarding Training

4.9.1. During the year, a substantial effort was made to increase awareness and safeguarding training completion rates across the organisation. This work has led to the increase in the number of staff completing the mandatory training.

4.9.2. On 31 March 2025, **36.4%** of Council staff had completed the safeguarding e-module. By 31 March 2026, this percentage had more than doubled, with **75.9%** of Council staff had now completed the e-module. It should be noted that this increase is partly due to a change in the way the data is reported, with the 2025 figures including school teachers while the 2026 figures exclude them.

- 4.9.3. Every Councillor is encouraged to attend safeguarding training (specific training - Group F). **87% of Councillors** have completed the training and a further session will be held early in 2026/27.
- 4.9.4. Although completing the training is important, ensuring an appropriate level of understanding and awareness amongst staff and members, is more important. Following a request by the Safeguarding Operational Group, an internal inspection was carried out to assess the Council's field workers' awareness level of the Safeguarding Policy. The inspection highlighted that more work needed to be done to ensure consistent understanding of the Policy and associated procedures.
- 4.9.5. A Corporate Safeguarding Promoter was appointed to ensure that every member of Cyngor Gwynedd staff is aware of their responsibilities in terms of safeguarding. The role will promote key messages that safeguarding is everyone's business and educate staff to be more aware and promote confidence when reporting on concerns.
- 4.9.6. The Corporate Safeguarding Promoter is working to increase the number of staff who complete the mandatory safeguarding training. Although office staff have been directed to use the e-learning platform, the challenge is to reach members of front-line staff who have no access to the Council's Information Technology systems. To overcome this challenge, a comprehensive video was prepared that will be presented to the workforce in easily accessible and easy to understand collective sessions.
- 4.9.7. The Corporate Safeguarding Promoter is also collaborating with the Safeguarding Operational Group to develop a central page on the intranet with all promotional/associated information to the workforce regarding safeguarding. This includes the Corporate Safeguarding Policy, details of the Designated Safeguarding Officers, mandatory training and contacts for support.
- 4.9.8. A further internal audit is intended to be held during the autumn 2026 in order to assess the effectiveness of the current arrangements and level of understanding across the organisation. This will also be an opportunity to evaluate whether the new interventions have increased awareness amongst staff, and to identify any further gaps where support or additional guidance will need to be provided.

5. WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

- 5.1. Although the Safeguarding Strategic Panel focuses on the corporate responsibilities relating to safeguarding matters within Gwynedd, collaboration also happens on a

regional level through the **North Wales Safeguarding Board** for Children and Adults Safeguarding. These are Statutory Boards with cross-agency membership and specific statutory and legal responsibilities. Further information regarding the work of the Boards can be seen here - <https://www.northwalessafeguardingboard.wales/>

5.2. During the year, the Welsh Government conducted a review into safeguarding governance and supervision arrangements. This national review focuses on how suitable the current structures are, investigating the roles of the Regional Safeguarding Boards and National Independent Safeguarding Boards, how these bodies are collaborating with regulators and inspectorates, and what improvements are needed to strengthen accountability and governance. The final report is expected in the spring 2026.

5.3. The **Gwynedd and Anglesey Community Safety Partnership** has also shown that working in partnership across county borders is proving to be a success. Several organisations have a statutory duty to be part of the partnership, including Local Authorities, Police, Probation Services, Fire and Rescue Service and the Health Board. Information on all aspects of community safety that the Council deal with is available on our [website](#).

6. THE FUTURE

6.1. In terms of the Panel's priorities for the coming year, the intention is to focus on the following priorities:

- Implement and monitor the Council's response to the recommendations of the *Our Bravery Brought Justice* report, ensuring that the necessary improvements are embedded across the organisation.
- Strengthen the corporate safeguarding awareness, understanding and culture across all services, including increasing the completion of training and ensuring that staff are confident to act on concerns.
- Publish a safeguarding video to make it easy and accessible for field workers to complete the mandatory training.
- Increase capacity within the safeguarding services, particularly in relation to work on Part 5, adult safeguarding and DoLS arrangements.
- Further develop the regional and local partnership work with the Police, schools, the Health Board, Welsh Government and other partners in order to respond more effectively to complex safeguarding risks.
- Continue to strengthen the arrangements for corporate governance, accountability and scrutiny in the field of scrutiny, including the role of the Safeguarding Strategic Panel and Safeguarding Operational Group.
- Conduct further internal audits to assess the efficiency of new arrangements and identify any further gaps in awareness, training or practice.

GWYNEDD SAFEGUARDING REPORT 2025/26

*Children and Young
People's Version*



What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding means making sure that children, young people and vulnerable adults are protected from abuse and harm. Cyngor Gwynedd has a responsibility to help keep people safe.

There are different types of abuse:

Emotional

When someone makes a person feel frightened, worthless, or unhappy over a long period of time.

Physical

When someone deliberately hurts the body of a child or vulnerable adult.

Neglect

When a person does not receive the care, food, clothing, or support they need.

Sexual

When someone behaves in a sexual way towards a child or vulnerable adult, or makes them take part in something inappropriate.

Exploitation

When someone takes advantage of or influences another person unfairly for their own benefit.

Domestic Abuse

When someone is made to feel frightened or unsafe at home because of another person's behaviour.

Abuse is not always easy to spot. It is important to tell a trusted adult if you are worried about yourself or someone else.

How does Cyngor Gwynedd safeguard people?

Safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone who works for Cyngor Gwynedd.

A group of Councillors and Senior Officers from across Cyngor Gwynedd meet regularly to discuss safeguarding. This group is called the **Strategic Safeguarding Panel**.



The role of the **Strategic Safeguarding Panel** is to:

- Make sure safeguarding rules and policies are appropriate
- Make sure staff receive training.
- Review safeguarding concerns and risks.
- Learn from things that have happened in the past.
- Plan how to improve things in the future.

The Chair of the Strategic Safeguarding Panel is **Councillor Dewi Jones, Cabinet Member for Education**. His role is to lead the Panel's meetings.



How has Cyngor Gwynedd helped to keep people safe during the year?

Listening and Improving

An important report called *Our Bravery Brought Justice* showed that more needs to be done to help keep children and young people safe. This includes the need to:

- Listen to the voices of children and young people.
- Improve the way we respond to safeguarding concerns.
- Make sure staff understand their responsibilities and know what to do when a safeguarding concern arises.
- Improve the way the Council works with partners such as the Police and the Health Board.

A lot of good progress has already been made, and a group of experts, known as the Response Board, helps make sure this work continues.

There's more information about the Response Board below:

[Click here to see the work of the Response Board.](#)



How has Cyngor Gwynedd helped to keep people safe during the year?

Safeguarding in Schools

SCHOOL SAFEGUARDING AND WELLBEING TEAM

The Gwynedd Education Safeguarding and Wellbeing Team supports schools to keep pupils safe. During the year, a new member joined the team to provide additional support to schools across the county.

[Click here for more information about the team.](#)

NEW POSTERS

The Gwynedd Education Safeguarding and Wellbeing Team has created simple posters and step-by-step guidance to help pupils and staff know what to do if they have concerns about a child's safety. These resources have been provided to every school.

SAFE INTERVENTION

Every school now has a policy to help keep pupils and staff safe and to support schools in dealing with difficult situations in a fair and safe way. This policy is called the Safe Intervention (Reasonable Force) Policy.



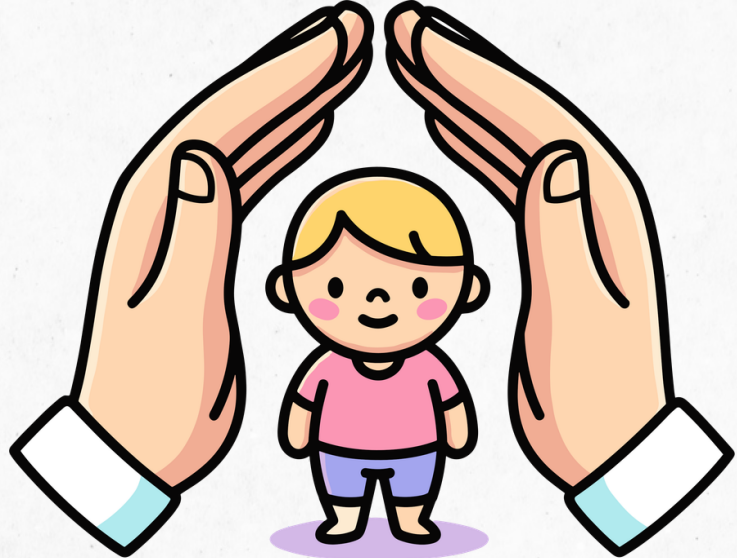
100%

Schools have provided safeguarding training to all members of staff.



Every School

Schools have received visits to check that the right arrangements are in place to keep children safe.



How has Cyngor Gwynedd helped to keep people safe during the year?

Children's Services

MORE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES NEED SUPPORT

Between April 2025 and March 2026, Children's Services received around 155 requests for support every week. **Five years ago, the service received around 6,000 referrals in a year. Today, that number has risen to more than 8,000.**

The team has been working hard to make sure the right support is available when it is needed.

HOMES FOR CHILDREN IN CARE

Not every child is able to live at home with their family. When this happens, Cyngor Gwynedd helps to care for them. New children's homes have opened in Morfa Bychan and Deiniolen to help children stay close to the people and places that are important to them.

STRENGTHENING THE SAFEGUARDING TEAM

During the year, there was an increase in concerns raised about adults who work or volunteer with children. This type of concern is known as a Part 5 investigation. To help respond to this, Cyngor Gwynedd has invested additional funding in the Safeguarding Team, enabling it to recruit more staff.



8,069

of referrals to
Children's Services
during the year



98%

of referrals to the Intake
Team were responded
to within 24 hours.



293

children in care

How has Cyngor Gwynedd helped to keep people safe during the year?

Adult Services

SAFEGUARDING REFERRALS

Cyngor Gwynedd helps to safeguard adults who need additional support because of their age, health, disability, or personal circumstances.

During the year, 792 reports were received where concerns about an adult's safety or wellbeing needed to be considered. **In all of these cases**, action was taken to manage the risk and support the individuals involved.

MONITORING SERVICES

Staff regularly visit care homes and monitor services to help ensure that people receive safe, high-quality care.

INDIVIDUALS' RIGHTS TO FREEDOM

Cyngor Gwynedd works to ensure that adults who receive care and support are kept safe, and that important decisions are made in their best interests.



792

adult safeguarding
referrals



94%

of adult safeguarding
referrals were
responded to within
7 days.

How has Cyngor Gwynedd helped to keep people safe during the year?

Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence

LEARNING ABOUT HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Staff have received training to help them have positive conversations with children and young people about topics such as healthy relationships, online safety, self-confidence, and wellbeing.

SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE EXPERIENCING ABUSE

Cyngor Gwynedd and its partners work to help people stay safe from abuse, violence, and bullying within relationships. Specialist organisations are available to provide support to people who need help.

Safety cameras have also been provided to help some people at risk feel safer.

WHITE RIBBON

Gwynedd supports the White Ribbon campaign, which encourages everyone to play their part in challenging abuse and promoting relationships based on respect and kindness.



How has Cyngor Gwynedd helped to keep people safe during the year?

Crime

A number of organisations, such as Cyngor Gwynedd and the Police, work together to help keep people and communities safe.

This year, funding was secured to support new projects aimed at helping children and young people, including:

- **"Don't Steal My Future"** - sessions in schools to help young people understand the importance of healthy relationships, respect, and safety.
- An awareness-raising campaign about the **dangers of illegal vapes and exploitation** on children and young people.
- More opportunities for young people to take part in **safe and positive activities** in their communities during the school holidays.



3.6%



increase in the
number of crimes in
Gwynedd compared
with the previous year



How has Cyngor Gwynedd helped to keep people safe during the year?

Cyngor Gwynedd Workforce

STAFF CHECKS (DBS)

Cyngor Gwynedd carries out DBS checks to help ensure that people who work or volunteer with children and vulnerable adults are suitable to do so.

SAFEGUARDING TRAINING

More staff and Councillors have completed safeguarding training during the year. New video-based training has been developed for staff working in frontline roles, for example, waste collection workers and cleaners.

APPOINTING A SAFEGUARDING CHAMPION

A new Corporate Safeguarding Champion has been appointed to help staff understand their role in keeping people safe and to raise awareness of safeguarding across Cyngor Gwynedd.

REVIEWING THE SAFEGUARDING POLICY

The Safeguarding Policy was updated to make it easier to understand and to ensure that everyone knows how to raise safeguarding concerns.



What will Cyngor Gwynedd do next year?



- ✓ Continue to make improvements following the ***Our Bravery Brought Justice*** report to help keep children and young people safe.
- ✓ **Increase training and raise awareness of safeguarding** across Cyngor Gwynedd so that all staff understand what safeguarding is and their role in keeping people safe.
- ✓ **Recruit more staff to strengthen safeguarding teams** and provide additional support for children and young people who need help.
- ✓ **Continue working with the Police, schools, the Health Board, and other partners** to respond effectively to safeguarding concerns.

CYNGOR GWYNEDD



A report to a meeting of Cyngor Gwynedd

Date of meeting:	24 September 2026
Title of Item:	Scrutiny Annual Report 2025-26
Member:	Councillor Cai Larsen, Chair of the Scrutiny Forum for 2025-26
Contact Officer:	Ian Jones, Head of Democracy Services (Head of Corporate Services)

THE DECISION SOUGHT

To accept the report.

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

1. In accordance with the constitution, a report shall be submitted to a meeting of the Council elaborating on the scrutiny work carried out during the year.
2. The report which gives an overview of the scrutiny carried out during 2025-26, is split under these headings:
 - Forward Work Programme
 - Scrutiny Forum
 - Scrutiny Committees
 - Scrutinising the Response Plan - Our Bravery Brought Justice
 - Scrutiny Investigation
 - Task and Finish Groups
 - Performance Scrutiny
 - Evaluation
 - Tracking Arrangements
 - Facts about Scrutiny in Gwynedd in 2025/26
 - Looking ahead to 2026/27
3. The purpose of scrutiny in Gwynedd is 'To contribute to driving improvement in services for the people of Gwynedd'. The annual report highlights the impact of scrutiny on delivering in accordance with the purpose.
4. A concise version of the report will be produced to present the 2025-26 scrutiny work, in an easy-to-read and concise format.

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 – Scrutiny Annual Report 2025-26

ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO RECOMMENDING THE DECISION

The potential contents of the Annual Report were discussed at the Scrutiny Forum meeting on 23 February 2026. The draft report was shared with members of the 2025/26 Scrutiny Forum to receive their comments.

THE STATUTORY OFFICERS' OBSERVATIONS

Monitoring Officer:

Overview and scrutiny committees have a key role in the Council's governance arrangements. The report reflects the range of this work which the committees deliver and also keeping an overview of the Cabinet. I'm content that the information presented shows that this role is being addressed appropriately.

Statutory Finance Officer:

The decision sought does not create a new spending commitment. I have no further comment from the perspective of financial propriety.

Scrutiny Annual Report 2025-26



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.



Cyngor **Gwynedd**

Foreword

The purpose of scrutiny in Gwynedd is 'To contribute to driving improvement in services for the people of Gwynedd'. During 2025/26, scrutiny members have scrutinised a range of different matters across the Council's areas of work, through formal committees, scrutiny investigation and task and finish groups.

To ensure that scrutiny arrangements are effective, members across the political groups work as a team to investigate concerns about the quality of services; acting as a Critical Friend ensuring that proper attention is given to the citizen's voice; identifying good practice and weaknesses and holding the Cabinet and its members to account.

New arrangements were introduced for performance scrutiny, scrutiny evaluation and chairs or vice-chairs attend Cabinet meetings to report on discussions and decisions/recommendations following the pre-scrutiny of a matter before Cabinet reaches a decision.

It is vitally important that the people of Gwynedd have the opportunity to participate in scrutiny. Three requests for scrutiny were received from members of the public this year. Although only one request was timely for scrutiny, it was pleasing to see the request to scrutinise funding matters of the Climate Change and Nature Emergency Plan leading to recommendations from the Communities Scrutiny Committee.

Particular attention was paid to safeguarding matters and extraordinary meetings of the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee and the Care Scrutiny Committee were held to scrutinise the Council's Response Plan to the child practice review, the 'Our Bravery Brought Justice' report. The work of the Safeguarding Arrangements in Schools Scrutiny Investigation was ongoing in 2025/26.

Safeguarding has been a clear priority in the 2025/26 scrutiny work programme and will certainly continue to be a priority in 2026/27. The scrutiny investigation will report to the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee on 14 July 2026. Also, the scrutiny committees will receive a progress update on the Response Plan.

I would like to sincerely thank my fellow scrutiny chairs and vice-chairs, scrutiny members, cabinet members, officers and everyone who has been involved in the scrutiny work during the year.



Councillor Cai Larsen, Chair of the Scrutiny Forum

Contents

Forward Scrutiny Programme	3
Scrutiny Forum	4 – 6
Scrutiny Committees	7 - 14
Scrutinising the Response Plan - Our Bravery Brought Justice	15 - 16
Scrutiny Investigation	17 - 18
Task and Finish Groups	19 - 20
Performance Scrutiny	21
Evaluation	22
Tracking Arrangements	23
Facts about Scrutiny in Gwynedd in 2025/26	24
Looking ahead to 2026/27	25
List of items scrutinised at formal meetings	26 - 28

Forward work programme

At the beginning of the Council year, members of the scrutiny committees draw up a work programme for the coming year.

All Council members, the public, Cabinet Members and Heads of Council Departments were given the opportunity to suggest potential items for scrutiny. The scrutiny advisers bring together a list of all the possible items suggested per committee including information about the items:



At the informal meetings of the scrutiny committees in July 2025, a draft work programme for 2025/26 was drawn up by the Scrutiny Committee taking into account this information and the following factors:

- 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?

Open discussions were held and an initial version of the draft work programme was produced. The aim was to prioritise a maximum of three items per meeting to ensure that the items were addressed properly.

The next step was for the Scrutiny Forum to take an overview of the work programme as a whole before the individual scrutiny committees adopted their work programme.

The forward scrutiny programme is a live programme. During the year, the content of the forward programme was reviewed to ensure that the right matters were addressed.

On page 26, you will find the 2025-26 work programme in its entirety. The annual report details the scrutiny work during the year.

Scrutiny Forum

The Scrutiny Forum meets regularly to take an overview of all the Council's scrutiny work, with the members (Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Scrutiny Committees) challenging each other to ensure that the right issues are prioritised.

The chairs and vice-chairs per committee for 2025/26 were:

Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee	 Councillor Cai Larsen	 Councillor Rhys Tudur
Communities Scrutiny Committee	 Councillor Annwen Hughes	 Councillor Delyth Lloyd Griffiths
Care Scrutiny Committee	 Councillor Elwyn Jones	 Councillor Sian Williams

At the first meeting of the Forum on 8 September 2025, members were given a presentation regarding the role of the Scrutiny Forum:

- Advise to PRIORITISE scrutiny items (majority being formal scrutiny with a small number of investigations) and challenge the basis of identifying matters to scrutinise.
- Identify the most effective scrutiny method within the resources available (formal scrutiny / investigation).
- Identify items that are purely for information, seeking to avoid using scrutiny arrangements to fulfil the information-sharing role.
- Assess the contributions of the individual committees and assess the IMPACT of the scrutiny work, and review our scrutiny arrangements continually.

The members considered the draft scrutiny forward programme before the individual scrutiny committees adopted their work programme. Particular attention was paid to the role of the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee and the Care Scrutiny Committee in scrutinising the Crime Response Plan following the publication of the Child Practice Review, 'Our Bravery Brought Justice'. It was stressed that constructive and transparent scrutiny discussions would highlight the key matters to be addressed and lead to progress reports to the appropriate scrutiny committee.

Scrutiny members' initial impressions of the revised performance scrutiny arrangements were considered. Since June 2025, the scrutiny committees consider performance reports twice a year. The changes to the arrangements are detailed on page 21 of the annual report. The Scrutiny Forum supported the new arrangements.

The Forum also gave its seal of approval to use an evaluation table for self-evaluation of scrutiny at committee meetings. The table is used to evaluate the scrutiny per item by designating the scrutiny as effective scrutiny, acceptable scrutiny or basic scrutiny (see page 22). It was agreed that the scrutiny Chairs and Vice-chairs and the relevant scrutiny adviser undertake an evaluation as a first step. Before sharing the evaluation with the rest of the committee members and discussing it at the informal meetings.

The next meeting of the Forum was held on 17 December 2025. Consideration was given to the scrutiny forward programme. Resources were prioritised to support and maintain a Social Services Complaints Task and Finish Group. The efficiency of the new arrangements for scrutiny evaluation and performance scrutiny in scrutiny committee meetings was discussed. It was concluded that the new evaluation arrangements should be continued and the impact of departments' performance scrutiny on the committees' workload should continue to be monitored.

A presentation was given on the arrangements for conducting a Performance Assessment by a panel in accordance with the requirement under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

At the Forum meeting on 23 February 2026, the forward scrutiny programme was considered to ensure that the right matters were prioritised. It was decided to reschedule the meetings of the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee (23 April 2026) and the Care Scrutiny Committee (26 March 2026) to July due to the Senedd pre-election period.

The performance scrutiny arrangements were addressed taking into account the comments of committee members on the arrangements. The need to discuss different options for adapting the arrangements was noted taking into account the panel Performance Assessment report.

The content of the annual report was discussed and it was decided to take the following steps to produce a scrutiny work programme for 2026/27:

- 1** Consider the Cabinet's forward programme and hold liaison meetings with the relevant Heads of Department and Cabinet Member to seek to identify potential items for scrutiny.
- 2** Send an e-mail to all Council members giving them the opportunity to submit suggestions of potential items for scrutiny.
- 3** An opportunity for residents to suggest potential items for scrutiny by providing information on social media and the Council's website.
- 4** Hold annual workshops in May to consider potential items and draw up a work programme.
- 5** Consult with the Heads of Department following the workshops and give them the opportunity to comment on the scheduling of the items.
- 6** Scrutiny Forum to take an overview of the forward programme to ensure the right matters are prioritised.
- 7** Scrutiny Committees to adopt their work programmes for 2026/27.

Scrutiny Committees

There are three scrutiny committees in Gwynedd, and each has a role to scrutinise specific areas of work. This year, new arrangements for performance scrutiny were established. Further details of these arrangements can be found under the heading 'Performance Scrutiny' on page 21.

In this section, there is information about which work areas each different committee is responsible for scrutinising and the items scrutinised during 2025-26 in a Committee meeting in addition to the performance reports and the Response Plan - Our Bravery Brought Justice (see page 15).

The reason for scrutiny, the evaluation of committee members and a scrutiny adviser (effective scrutiny, acceptable scrutiny or basic scrutiny) and the impact of the scrutiny is detailed per item.

Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee

Education Department, Economy and Community Department, Ambition North Wales, Leadership and Legal Team, Corporate Services Department, Finance Department, The Council's Internal Operations and Partnerships

Gwynedd Economy Strategy

Pre-decision scrutiny / Strategic Plan

Acceptable Scrutiny

The Strategy for the development of Gwynedd's economy between 2025 and 2035 was pre-scrutinised to ensure that the vision is sufficiently clear, that there is sufficient detail in terms of implementation and how the progress and impact of the Strategy is intended to be measured.

Impact of Scrutiny

Expressed concern regarding the availability of grants for deprived areas; noting the importance of collaboration and recognising the need to put in place a clear structure to review what was achieved at the end of a year against the delivery plan.

Immersion Education System

Council Plan 2023-28 – A Welsh Gwynedd

Acceptable Scrutiny

Scrutinise the efficiency of immersion provision taking into account the findings of Estyn and Bangor University and the arrangements of the current model of pupils attending an immersion centre four days a week.

Impact of Scrutiny

Recognised the need to further lobby the Welsh Government for additional financial resources; that further consideration needs to be given to the option of returning to five days and/or consideration of the length of the period in the language centres, taking into account the welfare of the pupils; and the need to further consult with stakeholders and ensure flexibility in provision.

Procurement Strategy

Pre-decision scrutiny / Council Plan 2023-28 – A Prosperous Gwynedd

Acceptable Scrutiny

Scrutinise the draft strategy addressing the legislative context and ensure that it delivers value for money, social benefit, de-carbonisation and support for the local economy.

Impact of Scrutiny

Highlight specific matters to the Cabinet Member that need to be addressed in the implementation of the strategy – doing everything possible to maintain the economic benefit locally, supporting small businesses, increasing social value and strengthening the use of the Welsh language.

Schools Strategy

Pre-decision scrutiny / Council Plan 2023-28 – Tomorrow's Gwynedd

Effective Scrutiny

The draft strategy was scrutinised to ensure that the priorities are suitable and responsive to challenges and opportunities in education and that there is a clear vision for the future.

Impact of Scrutiny

Recommendations to strengthen the strategy by including more information about safeguarding, poverty, social equity, voice of the parents, faith schools, inclusion, staff welfare, governance and the Welsh language.

The Benefit of the Growth Plan for Gwynedd

Acceptable Scrutiny

Matter arising from performance scrutiny

Scrutinised the benefits provided by the North Wales Growth Plan to Gwynedd, assess value for money, impact on jobs, regional investment, and ensure that communities across Gwynedd benefit.

Impact of Scrutiny

Expressed concern about the slowness of some of the plans to maturity and about the balance of rural and urban investment. Took action to improve future reporting - request that future progress reports include more detail in relation to the jobs that have been created specifically in Gwynedd.

Visitor Levy

Effective Scrutiny

Impact on Gwynedd

The rationale for introducing a Visitor Levy was scrutinised, taking into account the potential impact on businesses, visitors, communities, the environment and the visitor economy.

Impact of Scrutiny

Highlighted the need to give full consideration to the operational complexities and economic impacts. Emphasised that if it is decided to introduce a visitor levy there needs to be a clear commitment to income spending, thorough consultation, transparency in the use of the money, and sensitive communication of exceptions.

Communities Scrutiny Committee

Environment Department, Highways, Engineering and YGC Department, Local Development Plan, Public Services Board, Crime & Disorder and Climate and Nature Emergency Plan

Climate and Nature Emergency Plan: 2024/25 Annual Report

Effective Scrutiny

The Council Plan 2023-28 - A Green Gwynedd

Scrutinise the Council's progress towards achieving its climate and nature objectives including reaching the net zero carbon target by 2030.

Impact of Scrutiny

Recommendation to revisit the Council's ambition to be net zero carbon by 2030 and set a realistic target for reducing carbon emissions. The need to continue to develop practical solutions for transport, the Council's fleet and the de-carbonisation of buildings was highlighted.

Salt Bins and Gritting Arrangements

A follow-up to the scrutiny at the 28 September 2022 meeting

Acceptable Scrutiny

Scrutinise the effectiveness of the Council's winter maintenance arrangements, including gritting circuits, salt bin management, use of new technology and road network safety.

Impact of Scrutiny

Recommended that safe access to school grounds during severe weather should be considered as part of the review of gritting circuits.

Request for scrutiny by a member of the public – Climate and Nature Emergency Plan Funding Matters

Assurance in terms of funding arrangements

Effective Scrutiny

Consider a member of the public's concerns about governance, transparency, project prioritisation arrangements and expenditure within the Climate and Nature Emergency Plan.

Impact of Scrutiny

Pay attention to the citizen's voice and confirm that appropriate governance and scrutiny arrangements are in place. Recommended to the Cabinet Member that there was a need for more public engagement and to request more details of expenditure in the annual report to increase transparency.

Review of the Climate and Nature Emergency Plan

Pre-decision Scrutiny / The Council Plan 2023-28 - A Green Gwynedd

Effective Scrutiny

Scrutinise the revised plan, consider its ambitions, projects and ability to achieve the Council's climate and nature objectives.

Impact of Scrutiny

Welcome the intention to reconsider the 2030 net zero carbon target in line with the Committee's recommendation. Recommend that the successes of the scheme be communicated, more open questions used in consultations, and wording reviewed to be more ambitious.

Active Travel

The Council Plan 2023-28 - A Green Gwynedd

Effective Scrutiny

Scrutinise the progress of active travel schemes, benefits, funding sources and challenges relating to network maintenance.

Impact of Scrutiny

Recommend that expenditure for maintenance and potential savings need to be examined; include questions about maintenance as well as local matters in the public consultation; and examine risk assessment arrangements.

Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board Progress Report

The Committee's role to scrutinise the Public Services Board's work

Acceptable Scrutiny

Scrutinise the Board's progress on the implementation of the Well-being Plan and to monitor the impact of partnership work on areas such as poverty, children's rights, the Welsh language and trauma-informed.

Impact of Scrutiny

Recognised the Public Services Board's work on poverty, children's rights and trauma-informed approaches, providing support and assurance in the direction of the work.

Annual Update by the Gwynedd and Anglesey Community Safety Partnership

The Committee's role as a Crime and Disorder Committee

Acceptable Scrutiny

Scrutinise the Partnership's work to prevent crime and disorder, promote community safety, tackle violence, domestic abuse, organised crime and protect vulnerable people.

Impact of Scrutiny

Took action to improve future reporting – more performance data and a map highlighting the location of crimes. Asked for more information about violence prevention projects to receive reassurance. Support to accelerate the work of ensuring a "Trauma Informed Council" accreditation for the Council.

Waste Collection and Recycling Services

The Council Plan 2023-28 - A Green Gwynedd

Effective Scrutiny

Scrutinise the performance of the waste and recycling service, meeting the Welsh Government's recycling target, efficiency of operational arrangements and the development of the new Waste Strategy.

Impact of Scrutiny

Emphasise the need to increase education and awareness about recycling. Recommend that consideration be given to the introduction of financial penalties for failing to recycle appropriately to support better performance and avoid financial risks to the Council. Recommendations that will help the Council meet the Welsh Government's target of 70% recycling of waste.

Footpaths

Assurance in terms of implementation

Acceptable Scrutiny

Scrutinise the condition, accessibility and management of Gwynedd's public rights of way network, taking into account resources, maintenance and the impact of climate change.

Impact of Scrutiny

Highlight the need to prioritise resources based on route usage, and improve accessibility and access for all through relevant stakeholder input.

Care Scrutiny Committee

Adults, Health and Well-being Department, Children and Supporting Families Department, Health and the Housing and Property Department

Annual Report 2024-25 - Complaints, Enquiries and Expressions of Gratitude Procedure – Children and Supporting Families Department and the Adults Department

Acceptable Scrutiny

Assurance in respect of the arrangements for handling complaints in care work

Scrutinise the arrangements of the Children and Supporting Families Department and the Adults, Health and Well-being Department in dealing with complaints, enquiries and praise, and using the information to improve services.

Impact of Scrutiny

Establish a Task and Finish Group to scrutinise complaints, enquiries and expressions of gratitude in more detail to identify lessons and further opportunities to improve services.

Hospital Discharges

Council Plan 2023-28 - A Caring Gwynedd

Acceptable Scrutiny

Scrutinise the multi-agency arrangements that support people to return home safely and in a timely manner after a period in hospital, promoting independence and reducing pressure on services.

Impact of Scrutiny

Highlight the need to expand the provision beyond Ysbyty Gwynedd to serve residents returning from other hospitals. Request a progress report in 18 months' time to assess the results.

Working with the community

Pre-decision scrutiny / Council Plan 2023-28 - A Caring Gwynedd

Acceptable Scrutiny

Scrutinise Dyffryn Nantlle's community collaboration model which is designed to help people access support locally and prevent increased demand on health and care services.

Impact of Scrutiny

Support the approach and encourage implementation of the scheme in other parts of Gwynedd, recognising the potential of the model to strengthen community resilience and preventative support.

Empty Houses

Council Plan 2023-28 - A Homely Gwynedd

Basic Scrutiny

Scrutinise the Council's work to bring empty homes back into use, increase the local housing stock and support the objectives of the Housing Action Plan.

Impact of Scrutiny

Receive assurances and highlight the need to continue to address long-term empty homes and their impact on communities and the Welsh language.

A Strategy for Keeping Families Together

The existing provision and the resources available to realise the strategy

Acceptable Scrutiny

Scrutinise the Children and Supporting Families Department's preventative approach of supporting families at an early stage to avoid a crisis, reducing the need for statutory care and keeping children safe at home where possible.

Impact of Scrutiny

The scrutiny highlighted the importance of preventative services and the risk arising from reliance on short-term grants. The committee asked for more information on collaboration with the Education Department; assurance that services continue during maternity leave and how this is achieved.

Youth Justice Service

Assurance that the service is efficient

Acceptable Scrutiny

Scrutinise the performance and arrangements of the Gwynedd and Anglesey Youth Justice Service, focusing on crime prevention, early intervention and supporting young people through a "Child First" approach.

Impact of Scrutiny

Receive assurances that the service has made significant progress in implementing inspection recommendations. Highlight the lack of speech and language provision for young people in the justice system and ask the Cabinet Member to write to the Welsh Government to press for additional resources to provide the speech and language support.

16+ Team

Assurance in terms of the provision for those aged 16+

Acceptable Scrutiny

Scrutinise the support provided to young people aged 16-25 who are looked after or have left care, including accommodation, education, well-being and developing independence.

Impact of Scrutiny

Receive assurances about the support arrangements and multi-agency work to support vulnerable young people. Highlight the challenges associated with accommodation, homelessness and supporting young asylum seekers who receive support from the service.

The agendas and minutes of Scrutiny Committee meetings can be viewed under this link –

www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/scrutiny

Page 70

Scrutinising the Response Plan

A Response Plan to the crime of a former school headteacher was adopted by the Cabinet on 21 January 2025. The report of the Child Practice Review 'Our Bravery Brought Justice' was published on 4 November 2025. The Council's Response Plan was revised in response to the report.

Extraordinary meetings of the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee and the Care Scrutiny Committee were held in January 2026. The revised Plan was scrutinised to ensure that it responds appropriately and fully to the 'Our Bravery Brought Justice' report and to scrutinise the work programme.

The content of the Response Plan was considered with regard to the work streams:



Work Stream 1

**The Voice of the Child and
Supporting Victims**



Work Stream 2

**Managing Allegations and
Concerns About Adults
Working with Children**



Work Stream 3

Training and Policies



Work Stream 4

School Governance



Work Stream 5

Restrictive Practices



Work Stream 6

**Crisis Planning and
Crisis Response**



Work Stream 7

Ysgol Friars

The scrutiny committees made **37 recommendations** to the Cabinet. All recommendations and minutes of the Care Scrutiny Committee meetings ([13 January 2026](#)) and the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee ([19 January 2026](#)) can be found on the Council's website.

In addition to the scrutiny committees, the Governance and Audit Committee considered the Response Plan. A report was presented to an extraordinary meeting of the Full Council on [5 February 2026](#) and the committee chairs were given an opportunity to convey the discussions and recommendations.

Here is a summary of the amendments to the Response Plan as a result of the scrutiny:

- Note that the door would not close if a victim wished to receive a support package in the future.
- Reference to the Estyn inspection in 2023 was removed.
- Well-being of children and young people added to the description of Work Stream 7.
- Address the voice of the family as well as the child's voice in safeguarding arrangements as part of Work Stream 1.
- External female contact name added to posters sharing information about concerns and ensure contact details are available on schools websites and the Council's website.
- A number of amendments related to training, empowerment and behaviour change on topics such as fostering inappropriate relationships 'grooming' and the use of reasonable force.
- Introduce arrangements to measure that training changes behaviour and decisions in practice.
- Arrangements to measure how the voice of the child and victims' experience influence decisions and outcomes as part of Work Stream 1.
- Appropriate attention to children facing challenges and avoiding unconscious bias.
- Consider the suitability of adults to work with children and vulnerable adults as part of safeguarding arrangements.
- Audit of Part 5 allegations, Wales Safeguarding Procedures, extended to a five-year period.
- Review arrangements to check safeguarding records.
- Ensure transparency by releasing as much information as possible.

The Cabinet adopted the revised Response Plan at its meeting on [10 March 2026](#). The chairs of the scrutiny committees were present at the meeting to convey the discussions and recommendations of the extraordinary meetings of the scrutiny committees.

To receive assurances that progress has been made and to receive confirmation of what has been done in response to the recommendations of the scrutiny committees. The Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee and the Care Scrutiny Committee will receive an update in 2026/27.

Scrutiny Investigation

The purpose of a Scrutiny Investigation is to assess the impact of current policies and/or service performance. This is achieved by gathering essential evidence which includes listening to people’s experiences.

The Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee adopted a brief for a **Scrutiny Investigation into Safeguarding Arrangements in Schools** on [13 February 2025](#). The work of the investigation up to the end of April 2025 was reported in the 2024-25 annual report.

The main question that the investigation addresses is:

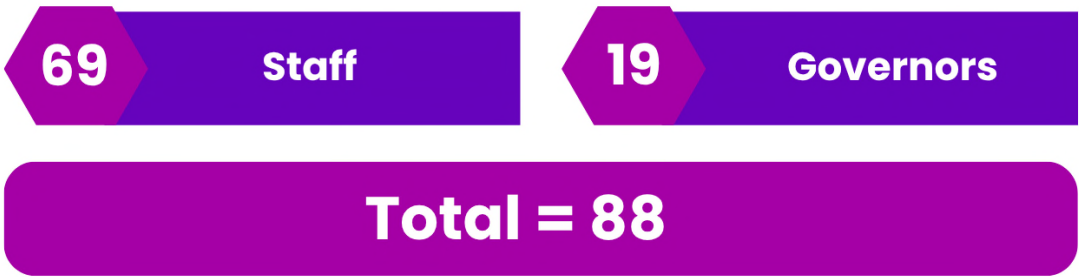
‘Are safeguarding arrangements in the county’s schools appropriate and implemented consistently?’

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)

During May to July 2025, visits were carried out to 11 schools to understand how safeguarding arrangements are implemented in schools. Members and a scrutiny officer visited a sample which included six Primary Schools, three Secondary Schools, 1 Special School and 1 All-through School.

Informal open conversations were held with Headteachers, Designated Safeguarding Persons, Designated Safeguarding Deputies, Teachers, Support Staff as well as Chairs of Governors and Designated Safeguarding Governors.



As well as holding conversations, members took note of the schools' environment and culture of safeguarding. At the end of the visits members discussed and recorded their impressions.

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.

A meeting was held to discuss members' initial impressions of the visits on 22 July 2025. Potential findings and recommendations arising from the school visits on 10 September 2025 were discussed.

The themes that arose when discussing the members' findings were:

Safeguarding **Matters under the safeguarding threshold** **Systems**

Training **Governors** **Staff** **Parents**

Pupils **Attendance** **Visual / Building Matters**

Contact with the Education Department and the Children and Supporting Families Department

In subsequent meetings, attention was given to:

- matters that had arisen in light of the visits to the schools.
- appointing a provider to complete work to hear the voices of pupils.
- human resources matters.
- the collaborative relationship between the Education Department and the Children and Supporting Families Department.
- matters relating to assessing an individual's suitability to work with children.
- possible recommendations arising from the meetings of the investigation.

The need to ensure that the voice of pupils is given the attention it deserves as part of the investigation has been central to the work. It was stressed that due to the sensitivity of the situation, professional officers need to undertake this work as they have the necessary training and qualifications to deal with such a situation. A provider was appointed to carry out the work on behalf of the investigation in April 2026. Arrangements were put in place to complete the work during May 2026.

Next Steps....

- Receive a presentation on the work of hearing the voice of pupils.
- Consider the findings and recommendations of the pupils' voice work.
- Analyse the evidence gathered and conclude on the recommendations arising from the work of the investigation.
- Prepare a draft report.
- Meeting to share the final draft of the scrutiny investigation report with the relevant Cabinet Members and Heads of Department.
- Submit the draft report of the scrutiny investigation to the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee on 14 July 2026.

We will report on the recommendations of the scrutiny investigation in the next annual report.

Task and Finish Groups

A Task and Finish Group examines a particular topic in a little more detail than is possible in a formal committee meeting. A maximum of 5 members can participate in a task and finish group.

During 2025-26, two Task and Finish Groups were held:

Education Language Policy

The Draft Education Language Policy was submitted to the meeting of the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee on [10 April 2025](#). During the discussion, possible amendments to the wording of the draft policy were suggested. As a result, it was decided to hold a Task and Finish Group to examine the wording of the Policy considering whether suggestions needed to be made to the Cabinet Member/Education Department, and report back to the committee.

A meeting of the Task and Finish Group was held on 2 June 2025. Councillors Rhys Tudur (Chair), Jina Gwyrfai, Richard Glyn Roberts and Huw Rowlands were members of the group.

The Draft Education Language Policy and suggestions from Councillors Rhys Tudur and Richard Glyn Roberts regarding the wording of the policy were shared with the agenda. The Chair of the task group guided the members and officers through the suggestions explaining the rationale behind the amendments. Members were given the opportunity to make observations and propose further amendments and officers were invited to offer comments.

The recommendations of the Task and Finish Group in relation to amendments to the wording of the draft policy and the Education Department's response to the recommendations were submitted to the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee meeting on [19 June 2025](#).

The Cabinet Member for Education was asked to consider the range of comments submitted by members at the meeting when formulating the final policy.

The Cabinet Member for Education submitted the draft policy to the Cabinet on [16 December 2025](#) to engage publicly on the policy. The Chair of the Committee was present at the meeting to elaborate on the discussion in the committee and the decision.

Here are some of the amendments to the draft Policy following the scrutiny:

- Highlight at the beginning of the document that Cyngor Gwynedd's strong recommendation would be that all schools in the county use the wording of Cyngor Gwynedd's Model Education Language Policy.
- References to the school language categories defined in the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025.

- Pre-school Provision – To note that this formative period is essential to the introduction of the Welsh language through play and through natural experiences, creating a solid foundation for children to use and acquire the Language.
- Foundation Phase up to Year 2 – Note that Welsh will be the sole medium of education, assessment and extra-curricular activities for pupils.
- Years 3 to 6 and Secondary Schools – Note that English will be introduced as a subject, and as a medium for certain tasks in specific work units specified by the school, in accordance with the school's Delivery Plan.
- Identify the requirement in terms of provision for new speakers and refer them to the Immersion System.
- Identify the transitional schools and make it clear that the long-term aim is for all schools in Gwynedd with support from the Council to become a Primarily Welsh Language School, in accordance with the latest legislation.

The Cabinet will come to a decision on the Language Education Policy at its meeting on 9 June 2026.

Social Services Complaints

The Annual Report on Social Services' Complaints, Enquiries and Expressions of Gratitude 2024-25 (Children and Supporting Families Department and the Adults, Health and Well-being Department) was scrutinised at the Care Scrutiny Committee meeting on [25 September 2025](#).

It was decided to establish a Task and Finish Group to discuss it further. A brief for the work was developed and adopted on [18 December 2025](#) by the Care Scrutiny Committee.

Five members were elected to be part of the task and finish group namely Councillors Menna Baines, Elin Walker Jones, Elwyn Jones, Angela Russell and Sian Williams.

The Task and Finish Group met on 27 February 2026 to:

- understand the arrangements to deal with complaints
- receive concise information about all complaints received during 2024-25
- have a better understanding of the reasons behind individuals' choice to complain in English and whether something could be done to encourage more to complain in Welsh
- ensure that there is adequate safeguarding support for staff dealing with persistent complainants.

There was an opportunity to receive an overview of the complaints procedure, further information on the complaints of the two departments involved, the complaint record sheet, and the persistent complainants policy. All members were also given the opportunity to ask questions to the officers.

The findings and recommendations of the Task and Finish Group will be considered by the Care Scrutiny Committee on 16 July 2026.

Performance Scrutiny

Since June 2025, the scrutiny committees consider performance reports twice a year. The differences in the former and new arrangements are highlighted here:

Former Arrangements	New Arrangements
Cabinet Member challenges the service (5 meetings)	Cabinet Member challenges the service (4 meetings)
2 scrutiny members attend the meetings (2 times a year)	Report to the 3 Scrutiny Committees (2 times per year)
Summary report to the Cabinet	Full report to the Scrutiny Committees
Cabinet Member and Head of Department accountable to their fellow Cabinet members	Cabinet Member and Head of Department accountable to scrutiny

The purpose of this change is:

- to be more transparent and an independent challenge to the performance.
- hold Cabinet Members to account in public.
- committee members all see the performance of departments consistently.
- identify matters for further scrutiny / in more detail.
- final step in terms of improvements to scrutiny arrangements following the Audit Wales report.

Scrutiny members were given a presentation on the new system and training in terms of what would be presented to committee meetings and the role of members in May 2025.

During the first year of implementing the arrangements, progress and next steps were scrutinised to realise priority projects in the Council's Plan 2023-28 and performance against the performance measures of Council departments. Challenges, matters to be considered to improve performance were highlighted and the cabinet members were publicly held to account.

Here are specific examples of matters that arose following performance scrutiny:

- Identified the need to scrutinise the benefit of the Growth Plan for Gwynedd (Scrutinised on 12 February 2026).
- Encouraged the Housing and Property Department to publicise specialist new housing developments for people with specific needs.
- Asked the Children and Supporting Families Department to develop a new performance measure to show that looked after children are regularly seen by Council staff.

Evaluation

This year, new arrangements were established for evaluating scrutiny at committee meetings.

A procedure has been developed whereby the members of the individual committees self-evaluate the scrutiny in meetings per item.

This is done in two stages:

- Chair, Vice-chair and scrutiny adviser evaluate the scrutiny
- Committee members have the opportunity to consider the evaluation and amend if necessary

In order to ensure that the methodology of the self-evaluation is consistent across the three scrutiny committees, an evaluation table is used:

Effective Scrutiny	• Structured scrutiny of the topic undertaken by one team through insightful questioning, no repetition and avoidance of local questions. • Formulated SMART recommendations (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound) to the Cabinet Member, which should lead to improvements for the residents of Gwynedd.
Acceptable Scrutiny	• Scrutinised the topic in a fairly structured way with a combination of insightful questions, but some repetition and some local questions. • Provided feedback and comments to the Cabinet Member during the discussion.
Basic Scrutiny	• Asked questions about the topic and understood the field better. • Accepted the report and no specific recommendations.

It is noted per item if the scrutiny is considered to be effective scrutiny, acceptable scrutiny or basic scrutiny and the rationale for this.

It is important that members of the scrutiny committees reflect on the scrutiny and self-evaluate to learn as they are going forward and identify how the scrutiny can be improved so that scrutiny recommendations lead to driving improvement in services for the people of Gwynedd.

Tracking Arrangements

Scrutiny decisions and recommendations are tracked to ensure implementation and to track the impact of scrutiny over the short and long term.

Here are examples of scrutiny decisions/recommendations in 2024/25 and what has been done in response:

Education Transport

Request that the Cabinet Member for Education contacts the Welsh Government in the context of introducing a free travel pass for young people 16-21 years old to reduce the pressure on the Council to provide free transport, and to facilitate travel to work, to college or sixth form.



The Cabinet Member sent a letter to the Welsh Government in accordance with the request. A response was received acknowledging good practice by Cyngor Gwynedd in providing free transport for post-16 learners. While sympathetic to the request for Welsh Government funding, such a scheme would not be affordable in the current financial climate.

Planning and Welsh-speaking Communities

Request that the Housing Associations provide data to the Council to assess information about the Welsh language in planning.



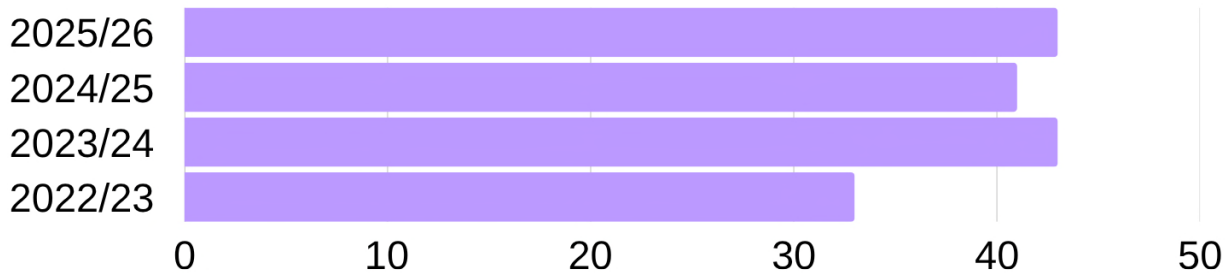
The Planning Policy Service contacted the housing associations. Confirmation was received from Adra that they are undertaking a survey of the language skills of households that have moved into recent housing developments. This practice was highlighted to Grŵp Cynefin and North Wales Housing and they were also encouraged to carry out such surveys.

Information was received on recent housing developments which included the percentage of Welsh as the preferred language of the principal tenants and any joint tenant along with the percentage of Welsh speakers (aged 20+) in the relevant ward.

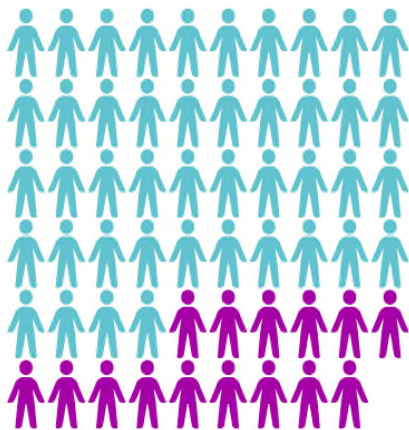
Tracking decisions/recommendations is a means to ensure they are addressed. While they do not always lead to significant change, they do contribute to driving improvement in services.

Facts about Scrutiny in Gwynedd in 2025/26

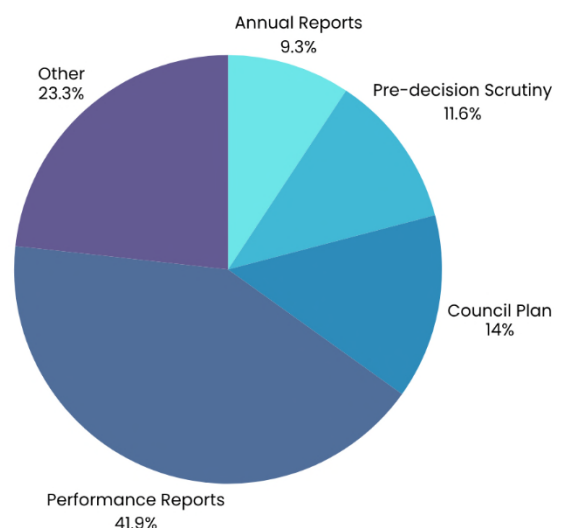
43 items scrutinised at formal meetings (24/25 = 41; 23/24 = 43, 22/23 = 33)



44 members (out of a possible 59) have been involved in carrying out the scrutiny



Percentages - Reason for Scrutiny



Number of times a Chair has reported to Cabinet following pre-decision scrutiny

4

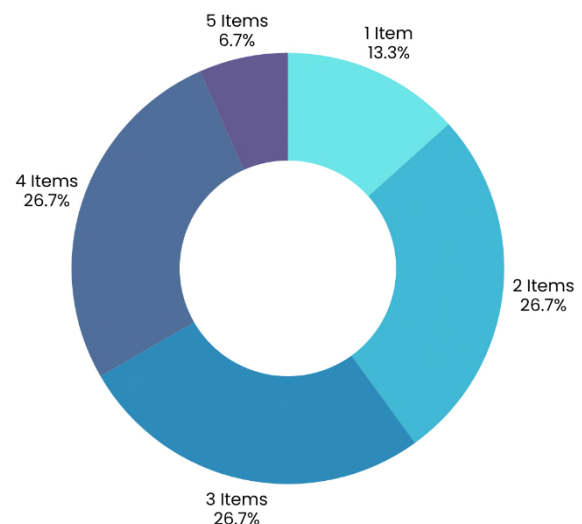
Education Language Policy

Schools Strategy

Response Plan

Economy Strategy

Number of items scrutinised at a meeting



Looking ahead to 2026/27

1

Scrutiny Workshops – May 2026

2

Safeguarding Arrangements in Schools Scrutiny Investigation reports back to the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee – 14 July 2026

3

Social Services Complaints Task and Finish Group report to be submitted to the Care Scrutiny Committee – 16 July 2026

4

Consider amendments to performance scrutiny arrangements

5

Housing Association Representatives attend the Care Scrutiny Committee to answer members' questions

6

Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee and the Care Scrutiny Committee to receive a Response Plan update

Scrutiny Work Programme 2025–26

EDUCATION AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date	Items	Reason for Scrutiny
19/6/25	• Draft Education Language Policy Task and Finish Group Report	Task and Finish Group
	• Cabinet Member for Education - Performance Report	Scrutiny of the performance of Council departments
	• Cabinet Member for the Economy - Performance Report	Scrutiny of the performance of Council departments
	• Cabinet Member for Finance - Performance Report	Scrutiny of the performance of Council departments
	• Cabinet Member for Corporate and Legal Services and the Welsh Language - Performance Report	Scrutiny of the performance of Council departments
16/10/25	• Gwynedd Economy Strategy	Pre-decision scrutiny / Strategic Plan
	• Immersion Education System	Council Plan 2023-28 – Gwynedd Gymraeg (A Welsh Gwynedd)
	• Procurement Strategy	Pre-decision scrutiny / Council Plan 2023-28 – A Prosperous Gwynedd
	• Cabinet Member for Corporate and Legal Services and the Welsh Language - Performance Report	Scrutiny of the performance of Council departments
11/12/25	• Schools Strategy	Pre-decision scrutiny / Council Plan 2023-28 – Tomorrow's Gwynedd
	• Cabinet Member for Education - Performance Report	Scrutiny of the performance of Council departments
	• Cabinet Member for the Economy - Performance Report	Scrutiny of the performance of Council departments
	• Cabinet Member for Finance - Performance Report	Scrutiny of the performance of Council departments
19/1/26 (Extraordinary Meeting)	• Response Plan	Assurance in relation to implementation
12/3/26	• Benefit of the Growth Plan for Gwynedd	Matter arising from performance scrutiny
	• Visitor Levy	Impact on Gwynedd

COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date	Items	Reason for Scrutiny
5/6/25	• Performance Report of the Cabinet Member for the Environment	Scrutiny of the performance of Council departments
	• Performance Report of the Cabinet Member for Highways, Engineering and Gwynedd Consultancy	Scrutiny of the performance of Council departments
18/9/25	• Climate and Nature Emergency Plan: 2024/25 Annual Report	The Council Plan 2023-28 - A Green Gwynedd
	• Salt Bins and Gritting Arrangements	Follow-up following scrutiny at the 28 September 2022 meeting
6/11/25	• Performance Report of the Cabinet Member for Highways, Engineering and Gwynedd Consultancy	Scrutiny of the performance of Council departments
	• Performance Report of the Cabinet Member for the Environment	Scrutiny of the performance of Council departments
22/1/26	• Request for scrutiny from a member of the public – Climate and Nature Emergency Plan funding matters	Assurance in terms of funding arrangements
	• Review of the Climate and Nature Emergency Plan	Pre-decision scrutiny / The Council Plan 2023-28 - A Green Gwynedd
	• Active Travel	The Council Plan 2023-28 – A Green Gwynedd
	• Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board Progress Report	The Committee's role to scrutinise the Public Services Board's work
19/3/26	• Annual Update by the Gwynedd and Anglesey Community Safety Partnership	The Committee's role as a Crime and Disorder Committee
	• Waste Collection and Recycling Services	The Council Plan 2023-28 - A Green Gwynedd
	• Footpaths	Assurance in terms of implementation

CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date	Items	Reason for Scrutiny
12/6/25	Housing and Property Cabinet Member Performance Report	Scrutiny of the performance of Council departments
	Adults Cabinet Member Performance Report	Scrutiny of the performance of Council departments
	Children Cabinet Member Performance Report	Scrutiny of the performance of Council departments
25/9/25	Annual Report 2024-25 - Complaints, Enquiries and Expressions of Gratitude Procedure – Children and Supporting Families Department and the Adults Department	Assurance in terms of the arrangements to deal with complaints in care work
	Hospital Discharges	Council Plan 2023-28 - A Caring Gwynedd
	Working with the community	Pre-decision scrutiny / Council Plan 2023-28 - A Caring Gwynedd
	Empty Houses	Council Plan 2023-28 - A Homely Gwynedd
18/12/25	Housing and Property Cabinet Member Performance Report	Scrutiny of the performance of Council departments
	Adults Cabinet Member Performance Report	Scrutiny of the performance of Council departments
	Children Cabinet Member Performance Report	Scrutiny of the performance of Council departments
	Task and Finish Group Draft Brief – Social Services Complaints	Task and Finish Group
13/1/26 (Extraordinary Meeting)	Response Plan	Assurance in relation to implementation
29/1/26	A Strategy for Keeping Families Together	The existing provision and the resources available to realise the strategy
	Youth Justice Service	Assurance that the service is efficient
	16+ Team	Assurance in terms of the provision for those aged 16+

TRANSLATED BY CYNGOR GWYNEDD

Mabon ap Gwynfor AS/MS
Gweinidog Cabinet dros Iechyd a Gofal
Cabinet Minister for Health and Care

Ein cyf/Our ref MG/06237/26

Elin Walker Jones

AnnesSion@gwynedd.gov.wales

14 September 2026

Dear Elin Walker Jones,

Thank you for your letter dated 6 August on behalf of Cyngor Gwynedd regarding Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board.

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board has been at the highest level of escalation in NHS Wales since February 2023 due to significant concerns around governance, leadership, patient safety, and performance. While some progress has been made by the health board, we know that there are ongoing challenges in providing safe, timely, and effective care to people in North Wales.

As part of level 5 escalation, the health board is subject to increased oversight and scrutiny by the Welsh Government, as well as targeted support to drive the necessary improvements in care and the provision of services to patients. In a statement to the Senedd on 30 June, I announced new measures to stabilise services, strengthen leadership, and hold Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board accountable for implementing continuous improvement, as part of the health board's ongoing level 5 escalation arrangements.

This will include directly targeted support from NHS Wales Performance and Improvement, bringing together operational and clinical experts to drive urgent improvement with a focus on the most pressing risk areas that are currently affecting the organisation. The Welsh Government has also commissioned a leadership quality review which will provide a full picture of the health board's current situation, including operational, leadership, and culture challenges. A nationally appointed expert panel has now convened to carry out the review.

The final report of the leadership review is due to be presented to the Welsh Government in October 2026. I have been clear that I expect this report to provide clear evidence-based recommendations, ensuring transparency about the changes needed to help me decide on the most appropriate next steps for seeing improvements delivered for the benefit of the people of North Wales.

Yours sincerely,

Mabon ap Gwynfor AS

Gweinidog Cabinet dros Iechyd a Gofal

Cabinet Minister for Health and Care

Welsh Government Offices, Cathays Park, Cardiff. CF10 3NQ Welsh Government Offices,
Cathays Park, Cardiff. CF10 3NQ