

THE COUNCIL 07/12/23

Present: Councillor R. Medwyn Hughes (Chair)
Councillor Beca Roberts (Vice-chair)

Councillors: Craig ab Iago, Menna Baines, Beca Brown, Glyn Daniels, Anwen J Davies, Dafydd Davies, Elwyn Edwards, Elfed Wyn ap Elwyn, Alan Jones Evans, Dylan Fernley, Delyth Lloyd Griffiths, Jina Gwyrfai, John Brynmor Hughes, Louise Hughes, Iwan Huws, Elin Hywel, Nia Wyn Jeffreys, Anne Lloyd Jones, Berwyn Parry Jones, Dawn Lynne Jones, Dewi Jones, Elin Walker Jones, Elwyn Jones, Gwilym Jones, Gareth Tudor Jones, Huw Wyn Jones, Kim Jones, June Jones, Cai Larsen, Beth Lawton, Dafydd Meurig, Dilwyn Morgan, Linda Morgan, Dewi Owen, Edgar Wyn Owen, Gwynfor Owen, Llio Elenid Owen, Gareth Coj Parry, Nigel Pickavance, John Pughe, Rheinallt Puw, Arwyn Herald Roberts, Elfed P Roberts, Gareth A. Roberts, John Pughe Roberts, Meryl Roberts, Richard Glyn Roberts, Huw Llwyd Rowlands, Paul Rowlinson, Angela Russell, Dyfrig Siencyn, Ioan Thomas, Peter Thomas, Menna Trenholme, Rob Triggs, Rhys Tudur, Hefin Underwood, Elfed Williams, Gareth Williams, Gruffydd Williams and Sasha Williams.

Officers: Dafydd Gibbard (Chief Executive), Dylan Owen and Geraint Owen (Corporate Directors), Dewi Morgan (Head of Finance Department), Iwan Evans (Monitoring Officer), Ian Jones (Head of Democracy Services), Carys Fôn Williams (Head of Housing and Property Department) Vera Jones (Democratic and Language Services Manager), Sion Huws (Propriety and Elections Manager), Debbie Anne Jones (Assistant Head: Education Corporate Services), Llywela Haf Owain (Senior Language and Scrutiny Advisor) and Eirian Roberts (Democracy Services Officer).

Also in Attendance: Dyfed Edwards and Carys Norgain (Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board) (item 6)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Stephen Churchman, Annwen Hughes, Linda Ann Jones, Eryl Jones-Williams and Einir Wyn Williams.

2. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of the Council, held on 28 September 2023 as a true record.

3. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

Members had received a briefing note from the Monitoring Officer in advance regarding item 8 - Discretionary Powers to Allow Discounts and / or Raise a Premium 2024-25 and item 9 - Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2024/25.

- (1) Councillor Rheinallt Puw declared a personal interest in item 6 on the agenda - Presentation by the Chair of Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board as he was employed by the Health Board.

The member was not of the opinion that it was a prejudicial interest, and he did not withdraw from the meeting during the discussion on the item.

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(2) The following members declared a personal interest in item 8 on the agenda - Discretionary Powers to Allow Discounts and / or Raise a Premium 2024/25 for the reasons noted:-

- Councillor Dewi Jones as a member of the family had inherited a house that continued to be in their possession, and paid the premium.
- Councillor Cai Larsen as he had inherited a house that had not yet been sold, and was empty.
- Councillor Huw Rowlands as a close family member had a house that fell into one of the categories.
- Councillor Gareth A. Roberts as he had a vacant property with no Council Tax payable on it for 6 months.
- Councillor Menna Baines as a close family member fell into one of the categories.

The members were of the opinion that they were prejudicial interests, and they withdrew from the meeting during the discussion on the item.

(3) Councillor Gareth A. Roberts declared a personal interest in item 9 on the agenda - Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2024/25 because a close member of his family had received Council Tax discount.

The member was not of the opinion that it was a prejudicial interest, and he did not withdraw from the meeting during the discussion on the item.

4. THE CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Condolences were extended to the following:-

- The family of Councillor Eirwyn Williams, Cricieth and Councillor Angela Russell paid tribute to him.
- The family of Carey Cartwright, Learning and Development Manager and Geraint Owen, Corporate Director paid tribute to him.
- The families of the four young boys from the Shrewsbury area who recently died in a tragic accident near Llanfrothen.

It was also noted that the Council wished to express condolences to everyone within the county's communities who had lost loved ones recently.

The Council stood in silence as a mark of respect and remembrance.

It was noted that several Council members had been ill recently and they were wished a full and speedy recovery.

The following were

- The Meirionnydd Young Farmers Federation on coming third in the National Young Farmers Eisteddfod held on Anglesey last month and also for winning the Choir Competition.
- The team from the Highways and Gwynedd Consultancy Department that had won an award at the NCE in London for using technology to manage assets, namely the Felinheli Flood Prevention scheme and it was pleasing to note that the competition was against major companies across the whole of the UK.

The news was welcomed that the extensive work, over a four-year period, of restoring the Barmouth Viaduct had been completed and it was noted that this was an investment and excellent news for the Cambrian Railway.

5. URGENT ITEMS

None to note.

6. PRESENTATION BY THE CHAIR OF BETSI CADWALADR UNIVERSITY HEALTH BOARD

Dyfed Edwards, the Chair of Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, as well as Carys Norgain, were welcomed to the meeting to give members a presentation on the main priorities of the Board to improve services for Gwynedd residents.

The Chair of the Health Board referred to a paper that had been sent to all members outlining the work of the Board, the challenges and the progress made, and noted:-

- As the new Chair of the Health Board, that he and other new independent members found an organisation that was unstable, with several challenges surrounding governance, finance and the quality of some services.
- At the same time, they also discovered that a large number of people worked in the Health Board who did excellent work. Therefore, the first step, when reflecting on the situation, was to try to create stability by undertaking steps to become visible.
- He believed that it was also fair to say that there were matters relating to the culture of the Health Board and this was one of the things that he personally wished to address, although it was not going to happen overnight.
- That the Board had a specific work programme, working with people such as Michael West in the field of compassionate leadership, and was very keen to create a context where people could succeed in their work and feel appreciated and part of a broader team that could provide the best possible health and well-being service.
- That the Board had recently made several key appointments permanent, namely the posts that would create stability in the Health Board and beyond.
- That the situation was almost similar to creating a new Health Board, and it was important to deliver the requirements of the Welsh Government's special measures, and also address other matters and create success that was going to be sustainable.
- Therefore, it was hoped that there was a future picture of the Health Board that would be ambitious, but realistic that understood the challenges.
- That the biggest challenge was access to services and clarity was needed about the way forward and what were the expectations, particularly expectations regarding standards.
- That there was a risk in a position of special measures to become very defensive but an attempt was being made to do the opposite, and that was one of the reasons why he was proud of this opportunity to address the Council and to be open and transparent about the challenges faced.
- That partners, like councils, had a very important role to play with the Health Board on this journey, as health and well-being did not belong to the Health Board alone. It was believed that there was an opportunity to do more with these partners to deliver what was needed to ensure that the people of Gwynedd and north Wales received the best possible services.
- That the Health Board would be happy to return before the Council, or any forum of the members' choice, to provide more details about some of the services and challenges and to ensure closer collaboration between both bodies.

Members were given an opportunity to ask questions to the Chair of the Health Board.

It was enquired what were the plans to attract more GPs to the areas of Dolgellau, Tywyn and Barmouth as there was a serious and dangerous shortage in these areas. In response, it was noted:-

- That life patterns had changed for many and, in light of the pandemic, that several people, including some GPs, had reassessed their lives and were eager to do something different or were looking for broader experiences than what they had years ago. In this respect, an attempt would be made to collaborate to find what broader experiences could be offered to GPs in terms of professional development and an opportunity to work on a wider level beyond the practice.
- In terms of the specific areas, new marketing methods would be examined. As well as using professional magazines such as the British Medical Journal, and videos would be used to try to show how excellent some of these areas are and to motivate people to relocate if they wished to do so.
- Beyond this, and in the long-term, there was a need to improve the job's image by ensuring better conditions for GPs and to make young people view the job as a career. In this respect, it was hoped that the new Medical School in Bangor would be a way of promoting the rural offer and to keep our young people here.
- As part of plans to recruit more staff in Tywyn, it was hoped to get therapists and nurses working to a higher level to shoulder some of the burden from the GP.

It was asked whether it was intended to extend the 'Tuag Adref' scheme which had been operating in Tywyn since the beds in the hospital had been temporarily closed while waiting for additional staff. In response, it was noted:-

- That the 'Tuag Adref' scheme was a very successful development and operational in Eryri, Alltwen and Tywyn Hospitals.
- That the scheme was sponsored by the Regional Integrated Fund and provided assistance to patients who required some support to live independently after being discharged from hospital.
- That there is evidence that the scheme assisted people to return home from hospital sooner, and that this released beds in the hospitals and released services.
- It was intended to continue developing the service across these areas, including the Tywyn Area and the Bro Dysynni Area.

As the Welsh Government was pushing for health centres / clinics across Wales to reduce the dependency on accident and emergency hospitals, it was asked whether there was a risk that converting community hospitals, such as the Dolgellau and Barmouth Community Hospital, into a health centre/clinic would lose inpatient hospital beds. In response, it was noted:-

- That the key question was what the services were and what was the variety of services required in the areas to ensure that people got the best out of health and well-being services. In some cases, this would include hospital beds and, in other cases, maybe this would not be included and that an open mind was needed with regards to how the future of the provision would look in all areas of Gwynedd.
- It was believed that local hospitals were needed to ensure that people who required additional care had somewhere to stay after being discharged from the main hospitals, but it was also possible to develop the services in the community hospitals on a broader level, and hospitals such as Alltwen and Eryri were excellent examples of this.
- That beds would still be needed in several cases, but the aim was always to try to ensure that people got the opportunity to return home.
- It was not always possible for people to return home and live entirely independent and this was why schemes such as 'Tuag Adref' existed, but there would be a future for centres locally, whatever the provision would be.

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It was enquired whether the First Minister, Mark Drakeford should apologise to Gwynedd residents and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board for not proceeding with a medical training centre in Bangor over ten years ago when the Health Minister at the time, Edwina Hart, supported the project. In response, it was noted:-

- That circumstances aligned occasionally which meant that it was possible for something to happen. It was believed that this is what had happened with regards to the Medical School and the University, with some political circumstances, some circumstances involved with a change of personnel in the University and some of the circumstances involved with the ambition of the Health Board and the ambition of the University to shift some of the mindset to find an opportunity to grow a workforce here locally.
- Thanks were paid to the First Minister and the Welsh Government for ensuring that we now had a Medical School in north Wales, while also thanking everyone who endeavoured to ensure this.
- That these things could not always happen within the preferred time-scale, but maybe the lesson was that perseverance was needed and this case had been a success.
- That we would monitor the Medical School so that we could ensure that we get a workforce in the health and well-being services here in North Wales.

It was asked when the public would be able to see the Ernst and Young report and find out where the missing £122m had gone in the Health Board. It was also asked why the Health Board had paid £400,000 to the Acting Head of Nursing and Midwifery Department for four months' work. In response, it was noted:-

- Historically, that the financial position of health boards in Wales had been different to local governments, and that health boards needed to learn some of the financial discipline of local government.
- Although he, as Chair of the Health Board, along with the Chief Executive, had said on several occasions that they were eager to publish the Ernst and Young report, it was not possible to do so at present as some people were going through a process, and that publishing the report would now undermine that process.
- That the other matters involving money were part of the investigation, but he wished to emphasise that £122m had not gone missing in the Health Board.

It was asked for assurance that urgent attention would be given to the crisis in the Ambulance Service, not only regarding the waiting time for an ambulance but also the waiting times outside hospitals. In response, it was noted:-

- That the Welsh Ambulance Service, rather than the Health Board, was responsible for the waiting times for an ambulance, but that the Health Board was responsible for the wait outside hospitals.
- That the entire ambulance service was under immense pressures, and that they certainly had statistics that could be shared with members about the use of the service in Gwynedd.
- In terms of waiting times outside hospitals, that the Government had a target that nobody should wait more than 4 hours in an ambulance until being admitted to hospital, and although the Health Service was working hard to reach the aim, it was not always possible, and it was very often due to a lack of beds.
- If the situation were to be improved, something would have to be done about how people were not only admitted to hospital, but also discharged from hospital and released beds.

The representatives of the Health Board were thanked for the presentation and their responses to the questions.

7. QUESTIONS

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

(1) Question by Councillor Rhys Tudur

Given that Research on New Housing that was published by the Council in 2021 has proved that linguistic assessments on planning applications are untruthful, highlighting that a high percentage of houses have become non-Welsh speaking households in an area that is a traditional stronghold of the language, 68% in Pen Llŷn and 41% in Penllyn, is it not time to overhaul the defective system we have for linguistic assessments so that the language assessor would not act on behalf and for the benefit of the developer, but rather be directed by the Council, with the developer paying commission towards the service?

Response - Cabinet Member for the Environment, Councillor Dafydd Meurig

This work was commissioned in 2019 and this was done as there was a lack of reliable information available about what groups of people tend to move into new houses in Gwynedd, where these people are moving from, and why they are choosing to move to a new house. As noted in the written response, the main conclusions of the research were as follows:

- Over 70% of the residents of new dwellings had moved there from another house in Gwynedd.
- The age profile of people moving into new builds was fairly 'young', with over 70% of the occupiers of new housing being under 45 years old.
- 69% of the occupiers of new housing are able to speak Welsh, which is very similar to the percentage of Welsh speakers across Gwynedd.

In the member's question, it noted that the percentages in Pen Llŷn and Penllyn are lower than the number who speak Welsh in those areas, but there is a need to emphasise that seven areas out of the 10 areas that were included in the research work showed higher percentages as shown in the graph in the written response. For example, the percentage of Welsh speakers who had moved into new houses in the Porthmadog area was 78%, which compares to 67%, namely the percentage of Welsh speakers in the area. In Arfon, for example, it was 91% compared to 81%, and very interestingly, in Bangor, it was 59% compared to 42%, namely the percentage of Welsh speakers in Bangor, and this was mainly due to a new housing estate in Goetre Uchaf in Penrhosgarnedd. And closer to home for me, it was 86% in Dyffryn Ogwen compared to 73% overall.

As part of the research, the chain was also followed in terms of who had moved into the houses as others moved out, and the statistics show that the figures are fairly similar when following the chain.

An important point was that the research included every new house that was completed in Gwynedd between 2015 and 2017, but there were some additional houses going back to 2012 in some areas to ensure that the samples were large enough.

Of course, these housing developments had been determined under the old Unitary Development Plan which was replaced in 2017, and since then, of course, the main basis of the policy for developments is the Joint Local Development Plan, and Supplementary Planning Guidance had been adopted which provided more details about the current planning policy.

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The current system was more resilient in terms of the Welsh language and also went much further than the requirements within Technical Advice Note 20 (TAN 20), Welsh Government. There were several examples of planning applications under current policies that had been refused for reasons relating to the Welsh language. However, as members were surely aware, the Council had determined to carry out a full review of the Joint Local Development Plan, which effectively meant preparing a new plan. The process had begun and this would be an opportunity for us to re-examine the policies and how consideration should be given to the Welsh language when dealing with planning applications.

The member and I are part of the Planning Policy Working Group which is leading this work, and as it happens, an important session of the working group will be held next week where we will set a direction and vision for the new policy.

Regarding whom should carry out the work of making a linguistic assessment of planning applications, the Council's role here was to assess planning applications and then determine them based on the Joint Local Development Plan, and any other planning considerations. It was not the Council's role to prepare assessments on behalf of the applicant, whether they are language assessments, transport assessments, ecological assessments or any other assessment or a report that must be submitted as part of the application. Of course, the Planning Service ensured that all the information submitted by applicants was assessed by experts within and outside the Council.

Supplementary Question from Councillor Rhys Tudur

Considering the new housing research and the Census, is the Cabinet willing to facilitate the way of imposing a language ability condition on new housing or even on a percentage of new housing that are constructed?

Response - Cabinet Member for the Environment, Councillor Dafydd Meurig

Of course, there was a desire to do everything we can in terms of ensuring that the houses go to local people. Of course, our hands are tied to an extent. I can explain this by referring to Paragraph 3.28 of Planning Policy Wales, as someone must consider this as part of any planning consideration:-

"Considerations relating to the use of the Welsh language may be taken into account by decision makers so far as they are material to applications for planning permission. Policies and decisions must not introduce any element of discrimination between individuals on the basis of their linguistic ability, and should not seek to control housing occupancy on linguistic grounds."

Therefore, a planning condition referring to people's linguistic ability cannot be introduced. Of course, beyond that, it was possible to use other policies to reach the aim, and this was part of the discussion in moving forward and as we develop a new planning policy. I am sure that we will have a discussion with each other and the rest of the Working Group members as we get to work on this.

(3) Question by Councillor John Brynmor Hughes

I would like to know why it takes so long to get tenants into social housing in the area. The examples I have is that a property on Ala Road, Pwllheli has been converted into two flats and they have been empty for a long time, as well as two houses on Abererch Road. If these properties were in the private sector the Council would earn money from tax and possibly a tax premium too.

Response - Cabinet Member for Housing, Councillor Craig ab Iago

A very timely question. Several councillors have raised this subject recently, some want to know why we have not purchased a thousand houses, some are worried about the time it takes to purchase them and others do not understand the plan in reality which, in my opinion, is something positive. It shows that as a Department, we are succeeding to get the message out there. Many councillors are aware of this plan and I understand that they see it as something innovative and exciting, and they wish that we would do more with it. I welcome this as the Cabinet Member for Housing but, on the other hand, perhaps it shows a lack of communication in terms of the Department.

We are doing our best to communicate the 'Housing' subject. I am always talking about the subject in the press. I have held housing forums with every group in the Council to discuss the subject. Of course, we send e-mails to councillors very often, but more important than that is that we have the Members' Intranet, and I am keen to use this opportunity to ensure that everyone has heard about the Members' Intranet and the fact that we, as a Housing Department, upload a lot of information on the 'Housing' tab on the site. If you access it, you will see that you can select your ward and see what happens there. We are still developing it but you can currently see if someone has purchased a house in your ward. Clearly, we are not fully succeeding in terms of communication, but we are working on it and are very keen to do more in this sense.

Going back to the question, the purpose of the Buy to Let Scheme is to purchase houses on the open market and rent them to intermediate local people, and not 'social' as the question refers to, namely people who are not allowed on the housing register as they do not tick the right boxes but cannot afford to rent on the open market either. We are attempting to fill this gap. Thus far, we have managed to purchase 23 houses and we have spent £4m on purchasing them and £1m on restoring them, and they are a total success in my opinion. We are on track to reach our target of 100 houses by the end of this plan, therefore, I am very happy. We discuss this very often and I am very happy with where we have reached. We have even appointed a specific officer to manage this plan. As I see it, there are two parts to this plan. One is purchasing the houses. We must ensure that we buy the houses in the right places which meet local need. We must ensure that we buy houses that are not going to cost too much to restore, and we must also ensure that we do not compete against local people, which is very difficult. From what I understand, every house has taken 4 months to purchase which is perhaps one month longer than it would have taken a local resident to buy a house. I recently asked the Department to provide some sort of flowchart so that councillors can understand exactly what the process is and all the steps the Department must follow to purchase a house. If you have not received it in the last two days, you will receive it very soon.

There are several steps in the process after purchasing a house. One is to undergo a tendering process to find people to carry out work on the houses, namely something that residents do not have to do. Unforeseen matters arise with every house we purchase, some more than others, but I am happy with the progress. Clearly, we discuss this at the performance challenge meetings, and I am very happy with where we have reached with everything. Both properties referred to in the question have gone through those processes and I understand that people will move into them early in the New Year.

I would like to assure everyone that we are moving as quickly as possible. I cannot see how it would be possible for us to go faster than we are at present.

The last sentence of the question notes that should this property be in the private sector, that the Council would earn tax, and possibly tax premium too, but of

course, the Council pays Council Tax on the houses like any resident, and should these houses pay a tax premium then this would mean that they would be in the hands of people who do not live in the area, or do not live in these houses. I believe that we have been very clear as a Council that our work is housing local people in our communities rather than earning our tax premium support.

(3) Question by Councillor Eryl Jones-Williams

Should Cyngor Gwynedd be asking Welsh Government First Minister Mark Drakeford for an apology for not going ahead with a Medical Training Centre in Bangor following a Notice of Motion by this Council over 10 years ago when the project had the support of the then Health Minister, Edwina Hart AM.

If Mark Drakeford had not stopped the project, Gwynedd would not be in the position of being short of doctors and nurses which is the position we find ourselves in today, which is having a negative effect on Gwynedd residents.

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

I believe that this is a very important question. It raises awareness of something that many have been campaigning for in recent years, and certainly I would like to thank Councillor Eryl Jones-Williams, as he submitted the motion before this Chamber back in September 2013 calling for this medical school here in North Wales. Fair play to him, he, as well as members of parliament and our members in the Welsh Government, have fought hard over the years to ensure that this school opens in 2024.

By now, it is pleasing to note that the Medical School is opening in Bangor and I am sure that all Gwynedd councillors would wish it all the best, along with all the students and prospective medical workforce that will begin their education in September next year. Indeed, a specific thank you as I said to Councillor Jones-Williams, among others, for all the tireless work they have done over the past decade.

I sympathise with the feeling of frustration felt in the question by the Councillor that this development was not supported ten years ago. As the Chinese proverb says, "*the best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago and the second best time is today.*" Therefore, although I accept the frustration, I am pleased that this development is happening.

Of course, this Council is not in any way responsible for the medical field and the development is a matter for the Health Service, the Government and the University, although its impact will be far-reaching for Gwynedd residents. Therefore, I do not see that there is any benefit for the people of Gwynedd from calling on the First Minister to apologise for a lack of action ten years ago, but I hope that the people of Gwynedd will benefit from the development for years to come.

So, to reiterate, all the best to the Medical School at Bangor University, and all the best to the students on their studies. I will also say this as it raises awareness of something that has been taking place, and maybe people do not fully realise it. Students have already been placed in Bangor University to be trained as doctors and employees with an emphasis on rural and community medicine and it is pleasing to note that 17 students have already graduated from Bangor University. Therefore, the work has been proceeding and we are grateful for this. Thank you once again to the Councillor for his tireless work on this matter.

(4) Question by Councillor Huw Rowlands

What effect is the limits on phosphorus emissions in river catchments in Gwynedd having on new developments, and what discussions has Cyngor Gwynedd had with the appropriate agencies to find a solution?

Response - Cabinet Member for the Environment, Councillor Dafydd Meurig

This is a matter that has clearly affected a housing estate development in my ward. This is a fairly complex problem, therefore, I draw your attention to the written response that has been provided. Apologies that it is lengthy and technical, but in essence, it notes that Natural Resources Wales has published a report in 2021 showing that a high number of rivers within Special Areas of Conservation are failing to meet the revised water quality targets for phosphorus. Although the two rivers in question in Gwynedd, namely the Gwyrfai and Glaslyn rivers, do not fail the targets, some new developments may lead to more phosphorus entering the river environment.

Currently, the Council has approximately 9 planning applications undetermined due to phosphate matters, which include a development of 16 affordable dwellings in Dinas. In terms of the Gwyrfai, studies have shown that approximately 80% of the phosphorus derives from Welsh Water treatment works. Natural Resources Wales is currently undertaking a review of existing water company permits against revised phosphorus targets and has a target in place to complete the work by July 2024 across Wales. To date, no revised permits have been issued for Gwynedd.

To answer the question, once the permits will be revised and issued, the Planning Service can hold a discussion with Welsh Water about the capacity of their water treatment works.

Supplementary Question from Councillor Huw Rowlands

Therefore, what pressures can Cyngor Gwynedd put on Welsh Water so that they upgrade their water treatment works so that there can be a solution to this matter?

Response - Cabinet Member for the Environment, Councillor Dafydd Meurig

To an extent, this is a matter between Natural Resources Wales and Welsh Water. The problem is worse in other councils but it is expected that these reviews will be completed by July 2024 I believe, but I am certainly very happy to write to both bodies as the Cabinet Member asking them to hasten the work in the hope that we can proceed with planning applications.

(5) Question by Councillor Richard Glyn Roberts

It will soon be the new year. How slow will this Council be in producing a new language policy for the county's schools or designating them as 3P schools?

Response - Cabinet Member for Education, Councillor Beca Brown

I will not elaborate too much when answering as this is a question on a familiar theme to this Chamber. I have stated my intention to update the Education Language Policy in several meetings of the Full Council, and at a recent meeting of the Scrutiny Committee. I have adopted the recommendations of the Gwynedd Category 3 Secondary Schools Scrutiny Investigation, which includes a specific recommendation regarding the Language Policy that relates to putting more emphasis on the Welsh language and making it clearer regarding what is meant by "bilingualism".

I do not accept the slightly peevish comment regarding the Council's slowness in updating the Language Policy. My commitment is clear. We have had a new Head of Education in post for nearly a week and congratulations to him on his appointment, and the work of updating the Education Language Policy will have been carried out by the end of this educational year, and there will be an opportunity for me to discuss progress on this work at the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee in March 2024.

Supplementary Question from Councillor Richard Glyn Roberts

Considering that heroes in the past, for example Dafydd Orwig, had acted with determination to safeguard the Welsh-speaking Gwynedd, is this snail-like slowness worthy of the name of the Chamber in which we sit today?

Response - Cabinet Member for Education, Councillor Beca Brown

As I noted, I do not accept the accusation of slowness, and to go back to the original question, where the member mentions the New Year, and in terms of commitment and determination, namely the words used by the member, next year will be full of opportunities in terms of the pieces of work that we face. These very important pieces of work will act as the foundation for us for years to come, the Language Policy, of course, as we have already mentioned, and the Education Strategy, which is a crucial piece of work, and also the very important work that will take place to support the linguistic journey of our transitional schools. I am really looking forward to every element of this work but I am particularly excited about the work that will take place with our transitional schools, namely those that have not yet reached the threshold in terms of Welsh language provision, and therefore, cannot be identified yet as category 3 schools, like the rest of the schools in the county. I believe that our support for these schools on their linguistic journeys is one of the most important things we will do in this Council in terms of the young people in those schools, but also in terms of the strength of the Welsh language in Gwynedd. I think this is one of the biggest favours we will do for our children and our language.

The peevish nature of this question suggests that we are dragging our feet with the Welsh language and I do not think that there is anything further from the truth to be honest. I would like to refer to one example of progressiveness recently, namely that we have managed to get 5 of our schools on a Welsh Government pilot with the 'Say Something in Welsh' Learn Welsh Company, which means they can now benefit from a course that has been specifically tailored for young people who are on their linguistic journeys. 3 out of 5 of those schools are transitional and 2 of them, as it happens, have a higher cohort than usual of latecomers, mainly due to their parents' work. English-medium schools from South Wales were previously on this pilot, but I was keen for some of our schools to benefit from this pilot which is funded by the Welsh Government, and getting the schools on this pilot means that they can now take advantage of the benefits of the course that builds on the good work that is already being done. This resulted from a request from me to the Department in recent weeks, and I am very grateful to the Head of Gwynedd's Welsh Language Immersion Education System for looking into it, getting a decision and with immediate effect, and indeed, the work has already commenced in Ysgol Friars, Ysgol Tywyn and Ysgol Glan y Môr, and it will commence in Our Lady's School and Ysgol Hiraël soon after Christmas.

Therefore, the Department and I are always on alert and always looking for any opportunities or resources to help our schools and young people to be confident speakers as they deserve and as we all wish to see the Welsh language thriving in this county.

8. COUNCIL TAX – DISCRETIONARY POWERS TO ALLOW DISCOUNTS AND/OR RAISE A PREMIUM 2024/25

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Councillor Ioan Thomas, presented a report asking the Council for formal ratification for 2024/25, of the previous decisions not to allow any discounts for second homes and to disallow discounts on empty properties, and to raise a Premium of 150% on periodically occupied dwellings and a Premium of 100% on long-term empty dwellings.

The Head of Finance then referred to the research work completed during the year to measure the impact of the Premium on individual wards and communities and noted:-

- In recent months, a reduction had been seen for the first time in the number of second homes and self-serviced holiday units.
- There was currently not enough data available to prove that this had resulted directly from the Premium. With that, no evidence currently existed that would justify setting a different level for the Premium in 2024/25.

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

Concern was expressed that the reduction in the number of second homes and the reduction in tourism as a result led to business closures, especially in seaside towns, and it was asked what support the Council could offer local businesses. In response, it was noted:-

- That the Research and Information Team, that gathered information from several different organisations on behalf of the Council, could bring the data received by the Economy and Community Department together to examine the impact.
- If the number of second homes was reducing, and people lived in those houses on a permanent basis, it was hoped that those people would support local businesses all-year round.
- The Council would examine the result of this over a long period.

The recommendation to continue charging a Premium of 150% on second homes was supported on the grounds that people moving into villages such as Abersoch did not understand our language or way of life or were making use of our local businesses, and that people from the area who had inherited houses had to leave their areas as they could not afford to keep hold of those houses.

It was enquired what information was available on the profile of those houses that had changed from holiday homes to permanent residential homes, and whether it was intended to find out if local residents had purchased the houses. In response, it was noted that this information was not currently available. Information regarding trends in different areas was available and undertaking this type of research would be the next step.

It was noted that people managed to obtain planning permission to demolish houses and build large houses in their place in areas such as Abersoch, but that local young people could not obtain planning permission to convert farm buildings into a home. In response, it was noted that this was a planning matter, but the observation was accepted.

It was noted that the reduction in tourism because of charging a premium on second homes would mean that young people would have to go over the border to look for employment, and without work in the area, and also with shops, restaurants and banks closing, there would only be very little here for locals.

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The observation was reiterated and it was also noted that the introduction of tourism tax and Article 4 etc. would exacerbate the situation.

Reference was made to the success of Menter y Tŵr, Pwllheli raising money to purchase the former Tower hotel for development as a community space, and it was noted that this responded to the problems that were the subject of this discussion. The recommendation to adhere to a Premium of 150% on second homes was supported and it was noted that it was very important for the Council to take action on data in such a situation. Everyone was encouraged not to change the situation until we knew what was best to do for the communities of Gwynedd.

It was noted that Gwynedd was more than tourism and that the Premium funding was being used to house local people in their communities. Reference was made to paragraph 4.4 of the report which noted that a total of 3,214 properties in Gwynedd had transferred from the Council Tax list to the Non-domestic Rate list until the end of October 2023, and it was asked whether the Council had the resources to check that those properties had been let for 182 days per year. In response, it was noted:-

- That the 182 days requirement was coming into force this year.
- In terms of policing this, the Valuation Office Agency concluded whether a property was the subject of Council Tax or Non-domestic Rate.
- That the Council had referred some cases to the Agency on the grounds that assessments had not been sufficiently thorough, but the Agency had adhered to its original decision.
- That evidencing six months of letting a property was quite a requirement and maybe it was too early to see the result in full, although it was beginning to appear that things were changing.
- That anecdotal evidence was available of people purchasing three homes during the pandemic, one to live in and two to let as holiday accommodation, and these houses would possibly come back on the market as the thresholds changed.

It was enquired when the Council would receive a linguistic assessment of the impact of increasing the Council Tax Premium. In response, it was noted:-

- That initial data in the report noted numbers and different trends to what had been seen in the past.
- As the new tax had not come into force until April this year, there had not been sufficient time and enough transfers done to be able to undertake more research, but more data would certainly be available to build on this over the coming year.

It was noted that there were homeless people in our county and that we had to do everything within our ability to ensure that every person in Gwynedd had a home. It was therefore even better if second homes were not second homes anymore and that they were returned to the community for people to be able to live in them.

RESOLVED that the Council makes no change to the Council Tax Premium for 2024/25. That is, for the financial Year 2024/25:-

- **Cyngor Gwynedd allows NO discount on class A second homes, under Section 12 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992;**
- **Cyngor Gwynedd allows NO discount and RAISES A PREMIUM OF 150% on class B second homes, under Section 12B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.**
- **Cyngor Gwynedd allows NO discount on homes that have been empty for 6 months or more and RAISES A PREMIUM OF 100% on homes that have been empty for 12 months or more, under Section 12A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.**

9. COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2024-25

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Councillor Ioan Thomas submitted a report asking the Council to confirm the continuation of the current Local Scheme to provide assistance towards paying Council Tax for the year commencing 1 April 2024.

RESOLVED

1. **That Cyngor Gwynedd's Local Scheme for the year commencing 1 April 2024 continues as it was during 2023/24. Therefore, the following conditions (a - c below) regarding the continuation of the discretionary elements would continue:**
 - a) **To apply a 100% disregard for war disablement pensions, war widows' pensions and war widowers' pensions, for both pensioners and working age claimants.**
 - b) **Not to increase the extended reduction periods for pensioners and working age claimants from the standard four weeks in the Prescribed Scheme.**
 - c) **Not to increase the backdate period for pensioners and working age claimants from the standard three months contained within the Prescribed Scheme.**
2. **Where appropriate, to delegate powers to the Head of Finance Department, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, to make minor amendments to the scheme for 2024/25, on condition that it will not change the substance of the scheme.**

10. GWYNEDD LANGUAGE STRATEGY 2023-2033

Submitted - the report of the Council Leader asking the Council to adopt a Language Strategy for 2023-2033 as the period of the current Language Strategy (Welsh Language Promotion Scheme in Gwynedd) was coming to an end.

In his presentation, the Leader referred to some successes that had derived from the previous strategy noting that he believed that the Welsh language should fly high in Gwynedd. He also noted that he refused the negativity often heard about the Welsh language in Gwynedd and that this would lead to the extinction of the language. He noted that the challenge in front of us would have to be faced confidently and inclusively by strengthening the Welsh language, promoting its use and taking pride in the fact that we in Gwynedd, at least, stood strong in terms of the language's future.

Members were given an opportunity to make observations and ask questions. The following matters were raised by individual members:-

Concern was expressed that only 159 people, and only 3 people under 34 years old, had responded to the consultation on the draft strategy. In response, it was noted:-

- It was agreed with the observation and that this was something that should be addressed further.
- That focus groups had been held at the National Eisteddfod etc. and that the Service collaborated with the Youth Service.
- There was an intention to improve the technology and that this was also part of the response to obtain the opinion of young people.

It was noted that the report included a lot of rhetoric, but it was easy to praise something without getting down to the nitty-gritty. In that sense, it was noted:-

- That 34% of respondents to the consultation had noted that they did not know whether the scheme in its entirety would have a positive impact on the Welsh

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language in Gwynedd. This in itself was damnable as well as the number of participants in the consultation.

- There was a lot of aspiring for things that, potentially, could not be measured in the report. For example, the Measuring Success column in the Actions for October 2023 to October 2024 included many gaps.
- That Gwynedd was downsizing the immersion provision with the number of days that children were immersed in a language centre reduced from 5 to 4 with the number of specialist teachers who taught in immersion centres halved from 2 to 1 teacher in every centre.
- That Gwynedd was scared to designate schools as predominantly Welsh-medium ones and that it was possible, in theory, for 40% of children in the county to avoid Welsh-medium education as the category definition we agreed on allowed this.
- That Gwynedd, unlike other counties such as Anglesey, Denbighshire and Powys, had abstained from funding a transition scheme that gave prominence to the Welsh language in the *cylchoedd meithrin*.
- That the strategy was weak in terms of robust measures and that no reference was made to what would happen should those targets not be achieved.
- That a reduction had been seen between 2016 and 2022 in the number of pupils studying 5 or more GCSE subjects through the medium of Welsh and that there had been no subsequent action.
- Rather than attempting to promote the Welsh language only, the Welsh language should be integral in Gwynedd, and if someone chose Gwynedd, that they chose the Welsh language, and if they chose a school in Gwynedd, that they unequivocally choose Welsh.
- That Gwynedd had been pioneering in the past, but it was now lagging and at risk of empty longing where deterioration had occurred, and unless there would be serious action, in light of the Census findings, we would severely let down the Welsh language.
- Although it was likely that we did better than any other county in Wales, we would severely let our own county down if we did not excel everyone else.

In response to the observations, the Leader noted:-

- That he totally disagreed with these observations and that they were a classic example of the negativity he referred to during his presentation.
- That the observations of the member regarding Welsh language provision in the county's schools was untrue and that all our children were taught through the medium of Welsh.

The observations of the previous speaker about the nitty-gritty of the report were reiterated, and it was also noted:-

- That it was very important for the Strategy to succeed but the Leader's joy in it could not be shared.
- That the objectives in the Actions for October 2023 to October 2024 table were honourable and the priorities were important ones in terms of the future of the Welsh language in Gwynedd, but there was a lack of clear and definite actions here. For example, the actions in relation to the objective to increase the number of school pupils who studied Welsh-medium courses (GCSE/A Level) included no more than awareness-raising, and nothing had been included under the Measure column, and no clear target had been set by October 2024.

In response to the observations, the Leader noted that he did not share the member's concerns about the quality of the document, but officers would examine it again and attempt to provide more details.

Another member noted that she did not share the Leader's optimism regarding the Strategy and noted:-

- That it must be acknowledged that the previous Language Strategy had failed and that Gwynedd had fewer Welsh speakers as people lost confidence to use the language and opportunities to use it had eroded.
- That the work programme for next year did not include anything and that she was heartbroken in seeing such little vision from Gwynedd of all places.
- That the Strategy did not have anything to offer, except for more of the same thing that had not borne fruition.
- That the Strategy was full of words such as 'attempt', 'hope', 'consider' etc., and that there was no decision to take firm action.
- That the Strategy noted that the Council was prioritising the Welsh language through all its schemes, but this was not seen in our current education system as we did not have category 3P schools as the norm. It could not be seen in our housing policies either as we were told that it was not possible to impose a language condition on every social house or only sell houses to local residents on the open market, and it was asked where was the will to act for the benefit of the Welsh language throughout the whole Council?
- That nursery schools, which had to close in Gwynedd because of demographic and Covid impacts, were not reopening and, although the Government had a policy to open 60 additional Welsh-medium nursery groups by 2026, Gwynedd was not doing any more than 'hoping' that some of them would be in this county.
- That children in Trefor had to travel 5 miles to reach a *cylch meithrin* and there was a desire for the Strategy to map the nursery provision and get to grips with these deficiencies and ensure that the Welsh language was used.
- That childcare provision was designated as bilingual nearly without exception and this prevented the Strategy from feeding the Welsh language in the early ages, and among parents.
- That communities were changing but there was no mention in the Strategy of what needed to be addressed in the field of community action, and did this mean that we had given up on looking for new solutions?
- Where was the vision to create Welsh zones, to be more positive and to acknowledge that bilingualism was detrimental to the confidence of native speakers, and to learners, who wished to have opportunities to speak Welsh and to be part of the community?
- That the Strategy should encourage monolingualism in Gwynedd once again, and in its current form it was weak, ineffective and only a desk-top exercise.

The Leader noted that he disagreed with nearly all of these observations, and noted:-

- It was accepted that there were substantial gaps in the county in terms of early years provision and that this was being examined.
- He fully refused any idea of creating Welsh zones as this would be a form of linguistic apartheid.

It was enquired whether the Leader knew that schools in the strongholds of the Basque language were equivalent to category 3P schools in Wales and would he insist that this happened in Gwynedd. In response, the Leader noted that he would not insist on doing so, and noted:-

- That the difference between 3P schools was that they were optional in all the other counties, and this is why it was a failure in the other counties.
- Although an increase had been seen in the number of Welsh speakers in counties such as Rhondda Cynon Taf, a quarter of the children did not attend Welsh-medium schools or heard much Welsh in the other schools, and the Welsh language had to be introduced in the other schools so that every child

received education that made them bilingual, and indeed trilingual and multi-lingual.

In response to an observation regarding the importance of ensuring that the young people of Gwynedd are proficient in English, as well as Welsh, to be able to ensure employment opportunities across the border, the Leader noted that the purpose of the Gwynedd education system was to teach pupils to be totally bilingual, and that there was no sign of weakness in children's ability to speak English.

It was enquired whether there was a funding source that could be used to resurrect the county's youth clubs and to assist the young farmers' clubs, as their influence on the use of the Welsh language was invaluable. In response, the Leader noted that no funding was available unfortunately as Gwynedd, like every other council, was facing the worst ever financial position.

RESOLVED to adopt the Language Strategy 2023-2033.

11. LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND ELECTIONS (WALES) ACT 2021 – OPTION TO ADOPT SINGLE TRANSFERABLE VOTE SYSTEM FOR CYNGOR GWYNEDD ELECTIONS

Submitted - the report of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Support asking the Council to consider whether a process which could lead to the adoption of a Single Transferable Vote System for Cyngor Gwynedd elections should be commenced.

The Chief Executive and the Monitoring Officer provided a detailed explanation of some aspects of the act and the process.

The Cabinet Member proposed that a process should not be commenced which could lead to the adoption of a STV system for Cyngor Gwynedd elections.

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

Although a few members expressed some concerns about the size of wards under the STV system, several other members objected to the proposal on the basis:-

- That the process needed to proceed for the Council to be able to make a meaningful decision on the way forward.
- That a STV system exceeded the current electoral system as it was a more contributory, fair and logical system that gave more consideration to people's votes, meaning fewer wasted votes and easier for the voter to use.
- Unlike most other contributory systems, that a STV system kept a close connection between elected members and their wards and gave more of the power to choose elected representatives in the hands of electors, and less so in the hands of political parties.
- That one of the main weaknesses of the current system was that it was possible for members to be chosen as councillors unopposed, and the STV system abolished that.
- That undertaking a consultation would not lead the Council down an irreversible path, but rather offer an opportunity to examine the whole matter and obtain the opinion of electors on it.
- That the system needed to be revolutionised if our electors were to be empowered, to increase people's interest in democracy, better engage with our electors and have a fairer system, and this is exactly what STV offered.

The Leader presented closing remarks on behalf of the Cabinet Member who had had to leave the meeting early. Although he supported the principle of having a new voting system for every election, he noted that the Welsh Labour Government's decision not to

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enforce the system on every council in Wales, as this would weaken the Labour Party's position, was unfair. On this basis, he was not supportive of moving forward with the matter at present.

Members voted on the proposal not to commence a process which could lead to the adoption of a STV system for Cyngor Gwynedd elections. The proposal fell.

It was proposed and seconded that the Council commenced a process which could lead to the adoption of a STV system for Cyngor Gwynedd elections. The proposer noted further:-

- That adopting this proposal would be a positive and historic step towards being more democratic.
- That a STV system removed the idea that there was no point in voting for a specific party and that every vote counted.
- That the system increased the number of people who got the opportunity to earnestly voice an opinion and, in doing so, strengthen democracy.
- That the Welsh Government did not have the backbone to say that this would be the system in Wales and that it feared that the people of Wales would wake up and choose an alternative system.

Another member noted that the first past the post system had led to two arrogant main parties in the UK and that there was an opportunity here to change this. This should be further examined as the current political system was broken and people did not bother to turn out to vote.

A vote was taken on the proposal and it carried.

As the proposal was carried, the Monitoring Officer explained therefore that the intention would be to submit a report to the Council meeting in March outlining the consultation process to proceed the matter to consideration or decision by the Council by means of an Extraordinary Council in due course.

RESOLVED that the Council commenced a process which could lead to the adoption of a Single Transferable Vote System for Cyngor Gwynedd elections.

12. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC SAFEGUARDING PANEL 2022-23

As it was late in the afternoon to allow a meaningful discussion, this item was deferred.

13. NOTICES OF MOTION

(A) NOTICE OF MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR JOHN PUGHE ROBERTS

Submitted - the following notice of motion by Councillor John Pughe Roberts under Section 4.19 of the Constitution, and it was seconded:-

Considering the impact of discovering tuberculosis on a farm and the importance of infection control, that the Council calls on the Welsh Government to ensure that wild animals that could be transferring the infection in rural areas in the vicinity of an affected farm are tested as a matter of course in order to ascertain whether they are carrying tuberculosis and to permit control measures.

A member expressed his support to the motion on the grounds that it was a step to remove some of the burden from farmers suffering from depression and mental health problems.

RESOLVED to adopt the motion, namely:-

Considering the impact of discovering tuberculosis on a farm and the importance of infection control, that the Council calls on the Welsh Government to ensure that wild animals that could be transferring the infection in rural areas in the vicinity of an affected farm are tested as a matter of course in order to ascertain whether they are carrying tuberculosis and to permit control measures.

(B) NOTICE OF MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR ELIN HYWEL

Submitted - the following notice of motion by Councillor Elin Hywel under Section 4.19 of the Constitution, and it was seconded:-

- 1. That the Council recognises our responsibility to protect the wellbeing and community cohesion of Gwynedd. That we want to see the communities and residents of Gwynedd living together in peace, through mutual respect and support. We see that recent events in Palestine and in Israel have a negative impact on our ability to be successful in fulfilling this responsibility. We see that wars have heart-breaking and disastrous effects here in Gwynedd. We reach out to the residents of Gwynedd at this time. We sympathise and mourn together.*
- 2. The Council notes our responsibility according to the Well-being of Future Generations Act to play our part to ensure that Wales is welcoming, safe and fair for everyone.*
- 3. As representatives of the residents of Gwynedd, we call for a peaceful response from the Welsh Government. We call on the Welsh Government, as our representatives on the international stage, to facilitate the establishment and immediate implementation of a humanitarian aid plan for the people of Gaza.*
- 4. That this motion declares that violence and acts of war against civilians cannot be justified. That this includes the violent actions of Hamas and their refusal to immediately release their hostages, together with Israel's disproportionate actions against the Palestinian people, which are in violation of international law.*
- 5. That we, Cyngor Gwynedd, call for a permanent and irreversible ceasefire in Gaza. We call on the Welsh Government, the UK and the international community to ensure a return to the negotiating table, and a fair and just solution for all the residents of Palestine and Israel, many who have settled, have family and loved ones here in Gwynedd.*

The member set out the context to her motion, noting that:

- That the BBC reported today that more than 16,200 people, including approximately 7,000 children, had died in the Gaza Strip since 7 October, with thousands more missing under the rubble.
- She hoped that her fellow members would support her motion to call on the Welsh Government to ensure an intense programme of humanitarian support for the people of Gaza, in the same way as the Council rightly chose to respond to an immense need in the past.
- That Cyngor Gwynedd has a responsibility to respond to events that affected the residents of Gwynedd, and also a responsibility on a global level as a Welsh public body that is subject to the Future Generations Act.
- That Gwynedd residents had been greatly affected by the war in Gaza, and that we had to state our viewpoint as a Council to facilitate a healthy, respectful and peaceful culture and to support the well-being development of our communities.
- With a complete lack of leadership from the Welsh Government and the Westminster Government that we, as Gwynedd Councillors, had to step in and fill the gap for our residents and for peace.

Strong support was expressed to the motion by several members on the grounds of:-

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- That the situation affected the well-being of Gwynedd residents and it was not believed that anyone had been untouched by the horrific images that appeared on the television on a daily basis.
- That some Gwynedd residents had personal connections in Gaza, and others were fearful of what might happen, and that we had a duty under equality legislation to promote community cohesion.
- Although no increase had been seen in antisemitic and Islamophobic offences here in Gwynedd, it was understood that at least one event, which had been arranged to build bridges between people of different faiths, had been cancelled.

Councillor Richard Glyn Roberts asked for his vote to be recorded against the motion as he could not support a motion that called for stipulating the right of the state of Israel to protect itself as this played into the hands of antisemitic tendencies, which were on the rise.

RESOLVED to adopt the motion, namely:-

- 1. That the Council recognises our responsibility to protect the wellbeing and community cohesion of Gwynedd. That we want to see the communities and residents of Gwynedd living together in peace, through mutual respect and support. We see that recent events in Palestine and in Israel have a negative impact on our ability to be successful in fulfilling this responsibility. We see that wars have heart-breaking and disastrous effects here in Gwynedd. We reach out to the residents of Gwynedd at this time. We sympathise and mourn together.**
- 2. The Council notes our responsibility according to the Well-being of Future Generations Act to play our part to ensure that Wales is welcoming, safe and fair for everyone.**
- 3. As representatives of the residents of Gwynedd, we call for a peaceful response from the Welsh Government. We call on the Welsh Government, as our representatives on the international stage, to facilitate the establishment and immediate implementation of a humanitarian aid plan for the people of Gaza.**
- 4. That this motion declares that violence and acts of war against civilians cannot be justified. That this includes the violent actions of Hamas and their refusal to immediately release their hostages, together with Israel's disproportionate actions against the Palestinian people, which are in violation of international law.**
- 5. That we, Cyngor Gwynedd, call for a permanent and irreversible ceasefire in Gaza. We call on the Welsh Government, the UK and the international community to ensure a return to the negotiating table, and a fair and just solution for all the residents of Palestine and Israel, many who have settled, have family and loved ones here in Gwynedd.**

14. RESPONSES / UPDATES TO PREVIOUS NOTICES OF MOTION

Submitted –

- (a) Update with regard to Councillor Rhys Tudur's notice of motion to the 4 May 2023 Council meeting regarding Welsh language provision in secondary schools.
- (b) Letter from the Ministry of Justice in response to Councillor Elfed Wyn ap Elwyn's notice of motion to the 6 July 2023 Council meeting regarding the devolvement of powers over justice and the creation of a Welsh Legal Jurisdiction.

The meeting commenced at 1.30pm and concluded at 6.10pm.

CHAIR