

## **ITEM 6 – QUESTIONS**

### **(1) Question by Councillor Angela Russell**

Given that Wales' climate is getting wetter year on year, I would like to ask, what steps are Cyngor Gwynedd taking to upgrade the A499 road between Pwllheli and Llanbedrog. This would save the residents of Llanbedrog, Abersoch, Botwnnog, Sarn and Aberdaron from having to use narrow lanes past Cefn Llanfair and Rhydyclafdy etc. which means congestion as lorries and buses come face to face on these narrow lanes.

### **Reply – Cabinet Member for Highways and Municipal and Gwynedd Consultancy, Councillor Berwyn Parry Jones**

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) is leading on the Project of managing flooding in Pwllheli and is working to discover solutions to manage long-term flood risk Management for the community of Pwllheli, alongside delivering wider environmental, social and economic opportunities.

Parts of Pwllheli which includes sections of the A499 road towards Llanbedrog are at risk of flooding from rivers and the sea. This is a significant project addressing the challenges of managing flooding and NRW are continuing to explore options to more effectively manage the long-term flood risk to Pwllheli and surrounding communities. Having looked at a long list of options for the area, these have now been evaluated and developed into a shortlist. The shortlisted options are now being confirmed and will be taken forward for more detailed appraisal in the next project phase.

We have received an update from NRW which states that the strategic business case has been approved, and that they will move on to the outline business case phase. We expect to receive an update in terms of the NRW programme on this work to the end of Autumn.

As part of a strategic consultation, a shortlist of broad options had been drawn up – these will be further assessed as part of the more detailed work. To respond to the Councillor's question, raising a level in the A499 is a measure that is being considered as an additional option to the main options to deal with flooding from the river on the western side of the study area. Further work is needed on the options before an improvement plan can be identified for the road. A link to the NRW website on the Pwllheli scheme is included.

[Managing flooding in Pwllheli - Natural Resources Wales Citizen Space - Citizen Space \(cyfoethnaturiol.cymru\)](http://cyfoethnaturiol.cymru)

### **(2) Question by Councillor Huw Rowlands**

What use does Cyngor Gwynedd's Highways, Engineering and YGC Department make of external contractors, and what monitoring takes place to ensure quality, value for money and compliance with their contracts?

### **Reply – Cabinet Member for Highways and Municipal and Gwynedd Consultancy, Councillor Berwyn Parry Jones**

Gwynedd Council's Highways, Engineering and YGC Department, use a range of external contractors to carry out work beyond the capacity of the in-house workforce or large

programmed works (e.g. road re-surfacing works), along with large-scale scheme work with significant timescales to complete which could effect the ability of our in-house workforce to carry out day-to-day core works. Examples on the use of external contractors are maintaining road verges, resurfacing roads, flood protection schemes, specialist work on maintaining bridges and re-installing road markings.

The Department ensures value for money by tendering these services through sources such as 'Sell2Wales' and direct tenders if specific work is required.

Monitoring is carried out by project officers and/or site engineers, who are familiar with the field and requirements of the specific contract. At times, there are problems with the availability of the contractors that interfere with adherence to work programmes. Some agreements are also dependent on work packages to ensure the best price.

The Department is currently undertaking work to look at opportunities of providing some of the above works in-house. This would ensure better management of work programmes and extend the expertise of our in-house workforce.

### **(3) Question by Councillor Rhys Tudur**

Considering the comments from the Officers and Cabinet Member of this Council that the procedure for active travel grant applications puts rural areas at a disadvantage, what means has this Council used to press on the Welsh Government to change the procedure, and to what extent has the pressure been effective?

**Reply – The Deputy Leader, Councillor Nia Jeffreys (in the absence of the Cabinet Member for the Environment, Councillor Dafydd Meurig)**

Thank you to Councillor Rhys Tudur for the question.

Below and appended are examples of engagement that has been held on matters relating to arrangements and criteria related to Active Travel schemes in Wales.

The letter and response to the consultation (see National Transport Delivery Plan below) outline the issues of concern about the ability of rural counties to be successful in securing grants to improve infrastructure and at the scale that meets local aspirations and expectations within our communities.

#### **Active Travel Board**

Letter dated 09 February 2024 by Cllr Dyfrig Siencyn, Leader of Cyngor Gwynedd, to Dr Dafydd Trystan Davies, Chair of the Active Travel Board.



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#### **National Transport Delivery Plan**

Cyngor Gwynedd's response to the consultation on the National Transport Delivery Plan which was submitted on 14 October 2022.



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## WLGA Rural Forum

These messages are consistent with those that have arisen within the Welsh Local Government Association's Rural Forum who received the following presentation at their meeting on the 04 March 2024.



Fforwm Gwledig  
CLILC 4 Mawrth 2024

There has been no significant change in the criteria of the Active Travel programme. Cyngor Gwynedd continues to deliver improvements to Active Travel infrastructure provision through the successful applications to the Local Transport Fund and the Safe Routes in Communities Fund. Recent examples include:

### 1. Completed:

- Ffordd Penrhos, Bangor - Part 1
- Lôn Las Ogwen
- Bike Shelters at Ysgol Cymerau, Pwllheli
- Ysgol Godre'r Berwyn, Bala

### 2. Work to develop schemes:

- Llanrug to Caernarfon
- Chwilog to Afonwen
- Tywyn to Aberdyfi

### 3. In progress

£500,000 of Core funding to develop Active Travel schemes in Gwynedd from the Active Travel Fund.

The following schemes have been approved for further development:

- Bike Shelters in Scool
- Development of the Active Travel Bethel to Caernarfon scheme
- Development of the Chwilog to Afonwen scheme
- Improvements to the current Ysgol Llanllechid path
- Development of the Ffôr to Pwllheli scheme
- Contribution towards Active Travel provision at Ysgol Trefarthyr, Cricieth
- Development of the Ysgol Maenofferen and Ffordd Glyndwr scheme
- Development of the Llanrug to Caernarfon Active Travel scheme

£900,000 has also been secured by the Government for the realisation of the second phase of the Ffordd Penrhos Active Travel scheme, Bangor

We have also attracted £440,000 for Safe Routes in Communities schemes. This money will be used for improvements outside Ysgol Treferyth, Cricieth and Ysgol Rhostryfan.

The total amount specified for these grants will be confirmed on a year-by-year basis and with this the total and allocations are subject to change.

**(4) Question by Councillor Jina Gwyrfai**

Rented social housing in Gwynedd is allocated through the Council's Housing Options list in collaboration with the housing associations, Adra, Cynefin etc. What are the arrangements to ensure equal rights and opportunities for tenants, specifically in contractual matters?

**Reply – Cabinet Member for Housing, Councillor Craig ab Iago**

On 1 December 2022, Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016 changed the way all landlords in Wales rent their properties, improving how we rent, manage and live in rented homes in Wales.

Now, housing associations are legally required to provide tenants with an occupation contract (secure contract), which includes all the details about the things that the contract-holder has to do if they want to stay in their home, such as paying rent to the landlord and making sure they take care of their home. It also includes the things the landlord has to do, such as making sure the home is safe and fit to live in. The occupation contract also says when and how a landlord might ask the contract-holder to leave their home.

Welsh Government has published detailed guidelines which includes structure and what details must be included in secure contracts, and all housing associations are expected to follow this procedure in order to comply with the requirements of the Act.

**(5) Question by Councillor Gruffydd Williams**

In light of the Welsh Government's white paper proposals to make local connection less of a consideration for social housing, and given that there are constant complaints on the ground that speaking Welsh or having roots in a community is not a sufficient consideration in relation to having priority for a social house here in Gwynedd, which is a stronghold of the language, what exactly are the efforts being made by Cabinet to try to change this extremely damaging prioritisation system?

**Reply – Cabinet Member for Housing, Councillor Craig ab Iago**

Local connection is one of the priority categories for applications, and Cyngor Gwynedd has already pushed these boundaries to the extreme within its Housing Allocations Policy to try to protect its communities and their characteristics.

In accordance with the White Paper published in 2023, it is expected that Welsh Government will consider legislative changes on homelessness and social housing allocations. It is anticipated that this new legislation will be published some time in 2026, and if Welsh Government does revise the law or the guidance with regards to this, Cyngor Gwynedd will consider the effect of this element on its policies.

The Council has already provided a formal response to a public consultation held by the Welsh Government, and concern has been raised on several occasions regarding matters that are raised in the White Paper, including possible changes to the local connection and its effect on our services and Gwynedd residents.

**(6) Question by Councillor Richard Glyn Roberts**

Considering that:

- all decisions made and all policies introduced by this Council are required to be subject to a Welsh language impact assessment
- and that it then follows that the measures to regulate holiday homes and the social housing allocation policy have both been subject to such assessments
- and that (i) information is not gathered about the language of applicants on the social housing waiting list and (ii) that we are still awaiting data on the linguistic impact of the premium in the context of movements from holiday homes to primary residences
- and that the impact cannot be assessed or monitored without this information,
- and that there are legitimate concerns on the ground regarding the impact of either policy on communities in Llŷn and Eifionydd (and Gwynedd more widely, no doubt),

What intention is there to remedy this situation so that resources are not wasted producing impact assessments in these fields that are so lacking as to give the impression that they are merely sophisticated exercises to distort and conceal the true and potential impacts, of the policies and decisions in question?

**Reply – Cabinet Member for Corporate Support, Councillor Menna Trenholme**

Cyngor Gwynedd does all it can to promote the Welsh language in our communities and gives this due consideration when creating policies. We take pride in the fact that we have reviewed our impact assessment arrangements including Welsh language impact assessments to ensure that we comply with the relevant legislations and address the equality, Welsh language and socio-economic disadvantage characteristics. The present arrangements have been developed with the co-operation of the offices of the relevant commissioners. We will soon move to using a new electronic version and arrange further training for staff.

The Council is required, under the Welsh Language Standards (Section 44 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011), to consider the impact that any change in policy or procedure (or creating a new policy or procedure), will have on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and to ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than English. It is also required (under the Equality Act 2010) to consider the impact that changes in any policy or procedures (or the creation of a new policy or procedure) will have on people with protected equality characteristics, ensure fairness and build good relationships and since April 2021 pay due attention to addressing socio-economic disadvantage in strategic decisions. All assessments are made based on the available data. The allegation that they are exercises to distort and hide the real, and potential, effects of the policies and decisions involved is incorrect.

We will continue to carry out assessments in line with the legal requirement and consider whether there are opportunities to develop and improve this in the future.