

Assessing the Impact on Equality Characteristics, the Welsh language and the Socio-Economic Disadvantage

Please see the leaflet *How to Make an Equality Impact Assessment* for support to complete this form. You are also welcome to contact Delyth Williams, Policy and Equality Officer on ext. 32708, or DelythGadlysWilliams@gwynedd.llyw.cymru for further assistance

The Council is required (under the Equality Act 2010) to consider the impact that any changes in any policy or procedures (or the creation of a new policy or procedure) will have on people with protected equality characteristics. The Council also has additional general duties to ensure fairness and to foster good relationships. Therefore, a timely assessment should be made before any decision is taken on any relevant change (i.e., that affects people with protected equality characteristics). The Council also has additional general duties to ensure fairness and to foster good relationships. Therefore, a timely assessment must be made before a decision is taken on any relevant change (i.e. that affects people with protected equality characteristics).

The Council is also required, under the requirements of 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 the creation of 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. This document therefore ensures that these decisions safeguard and promote the use made of the Welsh language. This document therefore ensures that these decisions safeguard and promote the use made of the Welsh language.

From 1 April 2021 onwards, the Council has a duty to give due attention to addressing socio-economic disadvantage in strategic decisions.

1) Details

1.1 What is the name of the policy / service in question?

Cuts 2025/2026

1.2 What is the purpose of the policy/service that is being created or amended? What changes are being considered?

Cuts to meet the financial gap the Council faces in the 2025/2026 budget.

1.3 Who is responsible for this assessment?

Dafydd Gibbard

1.4 When did you commence the assessment? Which version is this?

There was an informal assessment by the departments in June 2024. This formal assessment was started in October 2024.

2) Implementation

2.1 Who are the stakeholders or partners with whom we will have to work to carry out this assessment?

Council Departments
The People of Gwynedd
The Cabinet
Elected members in savings workshops

2.2 What steps have you taken to engage with people with protected characteristics, regarding the Welsh language or with communities (either due to location or due to need), who are living with a socio-economic disadvantage?

The public consultation 'Gwynedd Council's Financial Strategy 2025-2026' was live on the Council's website from 28 November until 20 December 2024. The purpose of the questionnaire was to collect the public's opinion on which public services were most important to them. The results will assist the councillors with the work of establishing a financial strategy and setting a budget for the 2025-2026 financial year.

It was promoted by sharing it with the Gwynedd Residents Panel, with the Members through an article in the Members' bulletin and messages on the Council's social media.

In addition, a corporate engagement process has meant that the Elected Members have had an opportunity to give input based on their awareness of their areas and what their constituents are raising with them.

Departments will need to decide what level of engagement will be required to carry out their individual impact assessments and that will feed into the method of implementation.

2.3 What was the outcome of the engagement?

The plan has been developed and co-planned to include the views of the members and the public.

The respondents were asked to choose up to 5 services that Cyngor Gwynedd should prioritize in terms of spending. The table below shows the results of the five main priorities from greatest to least.

Services	Number	%
Education – Primary and secondary schools	350	55.8
Adult Social Services - providing support and care for adults with care needs / disability e.g. home care / care homes	296	47.2
Highways - road maintenance	235	37.5
Children's Social Services - providing support, safeguarding and care for vulnerable / disabled children	234	37.3
Housing – building social housing, housing schemes for local people	213	34.0
Waste and Recycling - waste collection and recycling	206	32.9

After the respondents had chosen their 5 priority areas, there was a box for them to comment if they wished to do so. Comments were received from almost half of the respondents (47.4%, N=297). The table below summarizes those comments by area. No comments were received from 52.6% (N=330) of the respondents.

Area	Number	%
Social Care / Children's care / Health	44	14.8
Education (with early years education referred to several times)	27	9.1
Social housing / Affordable housing / Better housing for local people	23	7.7
Consider effects on specific groups of each e.g. Disability, children, vulnerable adults	21	7.1
Less pay for councillors / Less councillors	19	6.4
Economic growth / Job development / good employment locally	20	6.7
Tourism - No raising tourism tax / Gwynedd is a place dependent on tourism / Helping the tourism industry	18	6.1
Road improvements needed	13	4.4
Looking at the value of each officer / function	13	4.4
No spending on specific projects e.g. Dinas Dinlle Parking, marine defence costs, pavement widening	13	4.4
Improved communication of activities / Coordinating volunteers to do certain functions / Community activities to improve well-being	12	4.0
Combining services with neighbouring councils / other partners / Need to be bold to try different things / Map out what is already being done by other organisations	12	4.0

2.4 On the basis of what other evidence are you acting?

We now know what our Welsh Government Revenue Support Grant (RSG) level will be for 2025/26 (an increase of 3.2%), and that it will be significantly below the level of inflation and well below what we will need to maintain our current level of services.

We also face a situation where departments are overspending, mainly due to continued increases in demand for their services and that it is now impossible for some services such as homelessness, children care services, adults care services and school transport to be able to operate within their current budget. It results in overspending this year in the region of £7.6M.

The result of increased demand, the need to provide a higher budget for departments that are now unable to cope with their current budget, and the Government's low RSG, is that the Council faces a funding gap this year of £8.77M.

When submitting their proposals, the Departments included an assessment of the impact of each proposal on Gwynedd residents along with an initial consideration of equality considerations. Over two sessions the Chief Executive presented the proposals to workshops of elected Members of the Council.

There are proposals relating to raising income through fees. Due to the cumulative effect and the fact that increased payments like this inevitably have a greater impact on people living with socio-economic disadvantage than others this is going to have a greater impact on some people.

2.5 Are there any gaps in the evidence that needs to be collected?

It is possible that, due to a lack of adequate information, there is an impact on certain characteristics, and it is important to look at them individually to identify if a full assessment needs to be undertaken. Of course, an impact assessment may have been done on a number of these already.

3) Identifying the Impact

3.1 The Council must duly address the impact that any changes will have on people with the following equality characteristics. What impact will the new policy/service or the proposed changes in the policy or service have on people with these characteristics? It is also necessary to consider the impact on Socio-Economic disadvantage and on the Welsh Language.

Characteristics	What type of impact?	In what way? What is the evidence?
Race (including nationality)	Neutral	The impact appears to be neutral in terms of the scheme, but it is necessary for departments to ensure that they carry out an impact assessment on the individual issues.
Disability	Neutral	The impact appears to be neutral in terms of the scheme, but it is necessary for departments to ensure that they carry out an impact assessment on the individual issues.
Gender	Neutral	The impact appears to be neutral in terms of the scheme, but it is necessary for departments to ensure that they carry out an impact assessment on the individual issues.
Age	Neutral	The impact appears to be neutral in terms of the scheme, but it is necessary for departments to ensure that they carry out an impact assessment on the individual issues.
Sexual orientation	Neutral	The impact appears to be neutral in terms of the scheme, but it is necessary for departments to ensure that they carry out an impact assessment on the individual issues.
Religion or belief (or non-belief)	Neutral	The impact appears to be neutral in terms of the scheme, but it is necessary for departments to ensure that they carry out an impact assessment on the individual issues.
Gender reassignment	Neutral	The impact appears to be neutral in terms of the scheme, but it is necessary for departments to ensure that they carry out an impact assessment on the individual issues.
Pregnancy and maternity	Neutral	The impact appears to be neutral in terms of the scheme, but it is necessary for departments to ensure that they carry out an impact assessment on the individual issues.
Marriage and civil partnership	Neutral	The impact appears to be neutral in terms of the scheme, but it is necessary for departments to ensure that they carry out an impact assessment on the individual issues.
The Welsh language	Neutral	The impact appears to be neutral in terms of the scheme, but it is necessary for departments to ensure that they carry out an impact assessment on the individual issues.
Socio-Economic Disadvantage	Negative	There are proposals relating to raising income through fees. Due to the cumulative effect and the fact that increased payments like this inevitably have a greater impact on people living with socio-economic disadvantage than others this is going to have a greater impact on some people. We will ensure that the relevant departments mitigate any negative effects when implementing.

3.2 The Council has a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to contribute positively to a fairer society through advancing equality and good relations in its activities in the fields of age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, race, transgender, disability and pregnancy and maternity. The Council must duly address the way any change impacts on these duties. The Council must duly address the way any change impacts on these duties.

General Duties of the Equality Act	Does it have an impact?	In what way? What is the evidence?
Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation	No	The effect mentioned in 3.1 is not thought to be sufficient to lead to discrimination, harassment or persecution.
Promote equal opportunities	Possible	As an impact has been identified, careful action will have to be taken to ensure that the changes do not affect this duty.
Building good relationships	Possible	As an impact has been identified, careful action will have to be taken to ensure that the changes do not affect this duty.

3.3 How does your proposal ensure that you work in accordance with the Welsh Language Standards (Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011), to ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than English, and that every opportunity to promote the Welsh language is taken (beyond providing bilingual services) and increase opportunities to use and learn the language in the community?

This Integrated Impact Assessment looks at the Cuts Plan as a whole. It is likely that the same services will be available in Welsh and English following the cuts so the Welsh language will not be treated less favourably than English.

The public consultation held in November / December 2024 asked if the consultees believed that reducing expenditure in the 5 priority services they had chosen would have a possible impact on the Welsh language, the opportunities to use it and its status within the community. 38.4% of respondents believed it would have no effect, 41.3% believed it would have a negative effect and 18.6% believed it would have a positive effect. It is noted that the cuts plan does not propose cuts in the 5 areas ranked most important to the consultees.

Each individual cut is expected to have a separate Assessment on the plan as a whole and/or on specific parts of it. These assessments will need to identify any further opportunities to promote the Welsh language in their areas. It is the duty of the person responsible for the individual plan to make that Assessment(s).

3.4 What other measures or changes could you include to strengthen or change the policy / practice to have a positive impact on people's

opportunities to use the Welsh language, and to reduce or prevent any detrimental impacts that the policy/practice could have on the Welsh language?

n/a

3.5 How does the proposal show that you have given due regard to the need to address inequality due to socio-economic disadvantage? (Please note that this relates to closing the inequality gap, rather than improving outcomes for everyone only).

Many characteristic groups are also more prone to living in poverty. But they will also be affected by other forms of poverty, which relate to access to services, digital poverty etc.

There are proposals relating to raising income through fees. Due to the cumulative effect and the fact that increased payments like this inevitably have a greater impact on people living with socio-economic disadvantage than others this is going to have a greater impact on some people.

The public consultation held in November / December 2024 asked if the consultee believed that reducing expenditure in the 5 priority services they had chosen would have a possible impact on people facing socio-economic disadvantage. 15.3% of respondents believed it would have no effect, 64.9% believed it would have a negative effect and 17.5% believed it would have a positive effect. It is noted that the cuts plan does not propose cuts in the 5 areas that were most important to the consultee.

3.6 What other measures or changes can you include to strengthen or change the policy / practice to demonstrate that you have given due regard to the need to reduce disproportionate outcomes as a result of socio-economic disadvantage, in accordance with the Socio-Economic Act?

This will be addressed more thoroughly in the individual assessments

4) Analysing the results

4.1 Is the policy therefore likely to have a significant, positive impact on any of the above? What is the reason for this?

These have varying impact and will be constantly monitored in their implementation, but it must be accepted that they are savings schemes in response to a National financial austerity

situation.

4.2 Is the policy therefore likely to have a significant, negative impact on any of the above? What is the reason for this?

No

4.3 What should be done?

Select one of the following:

Continue with the policy / service as it is robust	
Revise the policy to remove any barriers	
Suspend and abolish the policy as the harmful impacts are too great	
Continue with the policy as any harmful impact can be justified	X
No further steps at present, it is premature to decide, or there is insufficient evidence	

4.4 If you continue with the plan, what steps will you take to reduce or mitigate any negative impacts?

The departments will work to ensure they mitigate any negative impacts.

4.5 If you are not taking any further action to remove or reduce the negative impacts, please explain why here.

n/a

5) Monitoring

5.1 What steps will you take to monitor the impact and effectiveness of the policy or service (action plan)?

The savings will be challenged at the performance monitoring meeting 4 times a year. In addition, a Savings Overview report will be presented to Cabinet 3 times a year.