

## CYNGOR GWYNEDD - Report to Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet



<b>Item title:</b>	Funding for making safe works on the Corbett Arms Building, Tywyn
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Cllr Craig ab Iago, Cabinet Member for the Environment
<b>Relevant officer:</b>	Dafydd Wyn Williams, Head of Environment Department
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	16 December 2025

### 1. Decision Sought:

To approve the use of £1.5 million from the Council's Financial Strategy Fund to fund works to make safe the Corbett Arms building in Tywyn.

### 2. The reason why the Cabinet needs to make the decision:

To fund the necessary making safe work of the Corbett Arms, Tywyn to protect the public and the building itself as a Grade II listed building.

### 3. Introduction and Rationale

#### 3.1 Background

3.1.1 The former Corbett Arms Hotel, Tywyn is a Grade II listed building which has been closed since approximately 2011.

3.1.2 The condition of the building has been a matter of concern to the Council and the local community for several years, and the Council's Building Control and Planning Services have been responding to concerns from local residents and carrying out inspections of this private building.

3.1.3 The legal owner of the building died in 2012, and no probate grant has been confirmed for the estate.

3.1.4 Due to concerns about public safety and the condition of the building in general, the Building Control Service has issued a series of notices to the representatives of the late owner but no compliance with the requirements has been obtained. It is noted that the action taken by the Council has been based on the evidence that was relevant at the time in relation to the condition of the building.

3.1.5 Despite efforts to make the building safe based on the evidence available at the time, the condition of the Corbett Arms has continued to deteriorate with a significant collapse at the rear of the building at the end of January 2025 and a further collapse of the ballroom roof at the end of February this year.

- 3.1.6 To bring together diverse expertise, the Council's Environment Department convened a project group with a range of expertise to manage and implement the response to the Corbett Arms situation, including cross-departmental representation, a specialist structural engineer, and regular consultation with Cadw and the Royal Commission as well.
- 3.1.7 Due to concerns about further collapse and for public safety, the Council took action after the first collapse in January 2025 to partially close part of the adjacent road, erect safety fencing to protect public safety while also considering the listed building status of the property.
- 3.1.8 Permanent monitoring of the building, and to protect public safety then required urgent action to temporarily close other neighbouring streets, namely Stryd Maengwyn, Sgwâr Corbett and Stryd y Llew Coch, to traffic in April 2025.
- 3.1.9 As a result of the concern about another collapse and to protect the safety of nearby residents and businesses and the general public, the Council commissioned a specialist company to erect scaffolding along Stryd Maengwyn and part of Sgwâr Corbett in Tywyn.
- 3.1.10 Advance preparatory work has been undertaken on site for the placement of specialist machinery to enable the Council to respond immediately should further emergency work be required due to another collapse or evidence arising from the ongoing monitoring of the structure.
- 3.1.11 The Council has been communicating with residents and businesses near the Corbett Arms building, along with representatives of the local community to update them on the situation throughout the process.

## **3.2 Rationale and justification for recommending the decision.**

- 3.2.1 As a responsible Council, we have been consistent in ensuring that we address conservation matters in relation to the Corbett Arms building, as well as our duties in relation to public safety, in an appropriate manner.
- 3.2.2 There are over 2,500 listed buildings in the Gwynedd Local Planning Authority Area. Of those, approximately 2,300 have a Grade II listed designation like the Corbett Arms, making them buildings of special interest, deserving of every effort to preserve/protect them.
- 3.2.3 In relation to the listed status of the building, the Council has been in discussions with Cadw throughout the process.
- 3.2.4 Having considered expert advice on the structural condition of the building, given public safety and the fact that the building is listed, it was decided that there was no option but to submit a listed building consent application (LBC) for the partial

deconstruction of the building, and the support works required to stabilise the remaining structure.

- 3.2.5 CADW confirmed that the application is delegated to Cyngor Gwynedd for determination and will therefore be submitted to the Planning Committee for a decision.
- 3.2.6 The application for LBC was submitted by specialist historic buildings consultants working on behalf of the Council, full details of the application can be found [here](#).
- 3.2.7 In accordance with the statutory procedure with a listed building consent application (LBC), consultation is required, a notice is posted in the press, notices are placed on site and letters are sent to local residents. This enables anyone to submit comments and several comments have been submitted to the Planning Service.
- 3.2.8 Having reviewed the details of the application and the responses to the consultation, the Case Officer has requested further information from the agent acting on behalf of the Council, and a response is awaited, which is likely to require a further period of public consultation.
- 3.2.9 In addition, the Council has arranged for a survey of the building and its curtilage by ecological experts who have received a permit from Natural Resources Wales (NRW), and are acting on the recommendations of the permit to ensure that the Council addresses any ecological matters in accordance with the statutory requirements.

### **3.3 Financial context**

- 3.3.1 As outlined above, the Council has acted to the best of its ability to ensure public safety as well as making a listed building safe.
- 3.3.2 In order to be able to take the steps to date to protect the public and the listed building, there are significant costs for the Council.
- 3.3.3 This has included costs associated with the erection of scaffolding to protect members of the public, road closures and traffic management, site and building safety, composite works and extensive on-site access, a specialist demolition contractor (CDM), structural engineer, quantity surveyor/project manager, LBC planning consultant, ecology work (NRW protected species Licence), and ongoing specialist building monitoring.
- 3.3.4 There will be further costs as a result of the partial deconstruction provided LBC is permitted, as well as the ongoing costs of the items listed above (3.3.3).
- 3.3.5 The costs to date and the expected cost for the making safe works are outlined below:
  - Cost to date (6.11.25): £938,348.41
  - Total estimated cost to make the building and site safe: £1.5 million (This is subject to LBC approval, and the extent of the work required to ensure the building is safe and the site secured to protect members of the public).

- 3.3.6 Of course, it is difficult to prepare for such cases where urgent action needs to be taken to make safe historic buildings and as has been noted there are over 2,500 listed buildings in the Gwynedd Planning Authority Area.
- 3.3.7 The Environment Department, in consultation with the Finance Department, have considered budgets and reviewed funds to bear the above expenditure.
- 3.3.8 There is no suitable fund in the Environment Department to deal with this type of case, which is why the application has been submitted to the Cabinet to request the right to use £1.5 million from the Council's Financial Strategy Fund to fund the work.
- 3.3.9 There are longer term cost implications for the Council as there will be ongoing responsibilities following the completion of any partial deconstruction works that may be permitted for the listed building – as a significant part of the building will remain and the public safety matters and concerns about the condition of the property as a listed building will continue to be the responsibility of the Council at this time.
- 3.3.10 The cost of the works is very likely to exceed the value of the remaining land and building, and the Department is considering the possible options for recovering costs hand in hand with further enforcement action.

### **3.4 Next steps**

- 3.4.1 Based on the latest information, the application for listed building consent (LBC) is intended to be submitted to a Planning Committee early in the new year, with any work on the site continuing for a period of approximately 20 weeks.
- 3.4.2 Thereafter, further evidence will be available regarding the condition of the remainder of the building which will inform the consideration and implementation of cost recovery options and further enforcement action.

## **Observations of the Statutory Officers**

### **Chief Finance Officer**

"I've been familiar with this building for some time, and the concern its condition has caused to the local community. I am satisfied that the Council has taken the steps that were possible within its powers and officers of the Finance Department, and I have advised the officers of the Environment Department on the financial options. I have concluded that there is no suitable source of funding within the Environment Department and therefore there is no

realistic alternative but to fund this urgent work from the Financial Strategy Fund. Of course, this means that £1.5million less is available to deal with in-year budget pressures or to strengthen our general reserves.”

### **Monitoring Officer**

The Environment Department has been working closely with Legal Services regarding the situation of the Corbett Arms. The intervention is based on notices and orders using the Council's powers to intervene for the protection of the public in relation to dangerous structures. The owner of a property has responsibility for its safety. The Council has power to serve statutory notices or apply for court orders to enforce this. However, in some situations the Council has to step in to take direct action under these powers to protect the public with the ability to claim the costs from the owners. In this case dealing with a listed building of significant size, there are complications involved in this action and obvious risks. But reality here means that it is necessary to step in to act through enforcement powers to ensure public safety subject.