
THE CABINET, TUESDAY, 10 MARCH 2026

Present -

Councillors: Nia Jeffreys, Menna Trenholme, R. Medwyn Hughes, Craig ab Iago, Huw Wyn Jones, June Jones, Dilwyn Morgan, Llio Elenid Owen, Dewi Jones and Paul Rowlinson.

Also present -

Dafydd Gibbard (Chief Executive), Catrin Thomas (Corporate Director), Dylan Owen (Corporate Director), Iwan Evans (Monitoring Officer), Dewi Morgan (Head of Finance Department), Professor Sally Holland (Chair of the Response Plan Programme Board), Cllr Elwyn Jones (Chair of the Care Scrutiny Committee), Cllr Cai Larsen (Chair of the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee), Dewi Wyn Jones (Council Business Support Service Manager), Bethan Richardson (Climate Change Manager), Sioned Williams (Head of Economy and Community Department), Dylan Rhys Griffiths (Manager of the North Wales Shared Prosperity Fund), Siwan Evans (Manager of the Gwynedd Shared Prosperity Fund).

1. APOLOGIES

Everyone was welcomed to the meeting, and it was highlighted that it had been International Women's Day earlier in the week, and all female staff and councillors were thanked for their valuable work.

No apologies were received.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

There were no declarations of personal interest.

3. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent matters.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

There were no matters arising from overview and scrutiny.

5. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2026 were accepted as a true record.

6. OUR BRAVERY BROUGHT JUSTICE: CYNGOR GWYNEDD'S RESPONSE PLAN

The report was submitted by Cllr Nia Jeffreys.

DECISION

To approve and adopt the revamped Response Plan (Appendix 1).

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted and the opportunity was taken to acknowledge the bravery of the victims, and it was emphasised that they were at the forefront of everyone's minds when discussing this difficult subject.

The background to the report was provided and it was noted that the Plan was live and had evolved over time, particularly since the publication of the Our Bravery Brought Justice report.

Reference was made to the Council's vow to implement all of the recommendations in the Our Bravery Brought Justice report, noting that the Response Plan had been revamped in order to address all of these recommendations. It was explained that the Plan followed seven Work Streams, to correspond with the main themes of the Our Bravery Brought Justice report.

It was confirmed that this Response Plan, in its new form, had been submitted before the Care Scrutiny Committee, the Governance and Audit Committee and the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee. It was highlighted that the recommendations of these Committees were included in appendix 3 of the pack. In addition, the Response Plan had been submitted before the Full Council last month to ensure that every councillor within the Council had been given the chance to provide their input, and to offer any further suggestions to strengthen the Plan. In thanking all members who had been a part of that, reassurances were given that all members' comments had been considered before this Plan had been submitted to this meeting of the Cabinet.

The Chief Executive highlighted that the response to what happened continued to be a main priority for the Council, and that every effort would be made to ensure the best possible Response Plan. Reference was made to the Quarterly Report by the Chair of the Response Plan Programme Board, and it was acknowledged that the Council was fortunate to receive this input from the Chair, and all agencies and organisations serving on this Board.

It was confirmed that the next steps would be to continue with the achievements that were progressing, and the encouraging progress that continued to be made was acknowledged.

It was noted that the narrative of the Plan explained what would be done by the Council to deliver under all fields identified.

Attention was drawn to the concise version of the Response Plan in the pack, noting that it was a response to the comments within committees for the need to

summarise what had been done, and what continued to be done by the Council in response.

Reference was made to two further documents that were in development, in order to ensure that the information was being seen and understood by all within our society.

It was noted that resources had been allocated within the Council's budget to deliver the improvements identified, drawing attention to the Voice of the Child field in particular.

The Chair of the Care Scrutiny Committee was welcomed to the meeting to present the committee's recommendations to the Cabinet. Pride was expressed that the call for an extraordinary meeting of the Full Council had been met. The recommendations of the Committee, included in appendix 3 of the pack, were considered, and several of those recommendations that had already been addressed and incorporated into the Plan were identified. The full-time appointment of the new Headteacher of Ysgol Friars was welcomed.

The Chair of the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee was welcomed to the meeting to present the committee's recommendations to the Cabinet. Reference was made to the substantial number of recommendations made by the Committee at its extraordinary meeting, noting that they encompassed a broad range of issues across the 7 Work Streams and broader matters. It was noted that the recommendations submitted to the Cabinet sought to strengthen and expand some elements of the Response Plan, in order to ensure that the lessons were fully reflected in the implementation work. It was acknowledged that the Cabinet report submitted before them reflected several of those changes deriving from the Scrutiny work, including the restructuring of the Plan around clearer systems, and placing more emphasis on monitoring progress. It was emphasised that the genuine test over time will be whether these changes will lead to definitive change in systems, in practice and in organisational culture within the Council.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- The revamped Plan was welcomed, and it was underlined that it was a live Plan. Pride was expressed that the public could see the relationship between the Response Plan and the Our Bravery Brought Justice report as a result of corresponding Work Streams, and that there was a leader for each Stream. Reference was also made to the section of the Council's website which offered information about what had been achieved to date, and what would be achieved in the long-term. It was acknowledged that this contributed towards ensuring that the Council was transparent and open in terms of their response. The pride on the permanent appointment to the Headteacher post at Ysgol Friars was reiterated, and the new Headteacher and the School were wished well.
- Reference was made to the opportunities lost that had been identified in the Our Bravery Brought Justice report, and confirmation was sought that a robust system was now in place to ensure that any concerns were dealt with formally. In response, reassurances were given that several lessons had been learnt as a result of the Report. It was identified that Welsh Government were looking to develop a Low-Level Concerns Policy for the field of Education and County Councils, noting that there was collaboration

between the Council and officers within the Government to discuss how the Policy would be developed. It was confirmed that the Council was in the progress of renewing an internal system to keep a record of concerns, and it was added that two systems were about to be submitted to the Council to enable them to keep a better record of any allegation.

- Attention was drawn to the description of Work Stream 1, and members asked how confident officers were that the Council were satisfying this description. It was identified that the Head of Education Department was leading that Stream, and reassurances were given that the Council listened to every child. It was confirmed that should a Part 5 referral be made, then this child would receive a visit from a social worker. It was highlighted that this theme looks beyond the responses to allegations only, reiterating that it considers how the Council as a corporation considers and listens to the voice of the child. Reference was made to the Youth Forums, and the challenge of being able to measure their effectiveness when ensuring that the voice of the child is heard. It was noted that work was progressing, in order to understand the views of the children. The importance of ensuring that various groups of children from different backgrounds were included in these Forums and Focus Groups was emphasised.
- The high number of members who had an opportunity to provide their input to this Plan, and the importance of that, was acknowledged. Members asked about who the grooming training would be targeted towards, and it was proposed that the training should be a part of the safeguarding training of all of the Council's workforce. In response, it was confirmed that it had been added to the general training for staff, drawing attention to the developments progressing to provide for those people who needed a higher level of training.
- As several children were transported to school in taxis, members asked whether the training was mandatory for the taxi drivers to complete also. It was noted that safeguarding arrangements were in place when awarding contracts for education transport. It was confirmed that it was mandatory for taxi drivers to complete safeguarding training, and that the Council verified that. It was added that the Council were not the ones who provided this training.
- Members asked about the next steps in terms of reporting on progress with the Response Plan, and the arrangements to enable members to challenge that progress. In response, reassurances were given that many arrangements were in place, highlighting the arrangement with the scrutiny committee to report back within 6 months on this progress. The key role of the Response Board when challenging the progress of the work programme was highlighted, reiterating the importance that everything was public also. Attention was drawn to the Ministerial Assurance Group that had been established to report on the progress from the Response Plan.
- By referring to ensuring that training and associated matters remained live within the Council, it was disclosed that the Council's Corporate Safeguarding Policy would be reviewed, and that safeguarding matters were a standing item on the agenda of every department's management team meetings. It was also noted that statistics regarding safeguarding training were now a part of the performance challenge data of every

Council department. It was highlighted that work was also progressing to provide different forms of training in this field to impose across the Council, ensuring the accessibility of the training for all parts of the workforce. It was emphasised that this was ongoing work and the importance of embedding this culture change within the Council was emphasised. Reference was made to long-term projects within the Response Plan such as being a Trauma-informed Council and a Child-friendly county.

7. QUARTERLY REPORT - CHAIR OF THE RESPONSE PLAN PROGRAMME BOARD (MARCH 2025)

The report was submitted by Cllr Nia Jeffreys.

DECISION

To accept the report which is the third quarterly report from the Chair of the Response Plan Programme Board.

DISCUSSION

It was explained that this was the third quarterly report of the Chair of the Response Plan Programme Board, and its purpose was to give the Cabinet an update on the progress of the work programme and implementation of the Response Board.

It was identified that the report raised awareness of the developments, what had been achieved, and what remained to be achieved by the Board.

The Chair of the Response Plan Programme Board was welcomed to the meeting. It was disclosed that the Board now met every two months in order to give officers more time to work on the Plan between meetings. After the publication of the Our Bravery Brought Justice report, it was highlighted that the Board had agreed to publish its papers in order to increase the transparency of the work. It was identified that the Board had moved to a more strategic period.

It was highlighted that the victims and survivors continued to be at the forefront of the Board's minds, and it was added that the Board also continued to offer support and scrutiny for Cyngor Gwynedd.

Attention was drawn to the excellent engagement with the Board by its members and external observers, with full attendance at every meeting. Reference was made to the meetings being held by the Chair with key partners, external observers, and Cabinet members, to note the information deriving from the Board.

It was confirmed that the Chair of the Board continued to receive information and good support from the officers and Cabinet Members of Cyngor Gwynedd.

The key developments made in the last quarter were discussed, with attention drawn to the regular progress made in several key areas, for example, developing and monitoring safeguarding in schools, and including children and young people when developing policies.

Pride was expressed that the new headteacher of Ysgol Friars had been appointed permanently, and it was noted that she was also a member of the Board.

Pride was expressed from seeing more senior officers of the Council becoming a part of the leadership of the Response Plan, and more resources earmarked for the safeguarding field in the Council.

It was reported that new impact measures for the amended Response Plan had now been agreed, and the Board was starting to receive reports on these. When elaborating on the Board's next steps, it was stated that another two reviews were in progress on a national level, which would affect this work. It was declared that there would be further scrutiny of the Response Plan within Cyngor Gwynedd, and it was highlighted that much more work was still to be done to regain the trust of the people of Gwynedd.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- Reference was made to the history of broader bullying at Ysgol Friars, and it was asked whether such bullying was being identified as a matter of concern. It was noted that such behaviour was common in many offenders, therefore it was identified in grooming training. It was hoped that the new training would identify and draw attention to these characteristic behaviours. It was explained that concerns could be raised about these behaviours through the systems within the Council, and if a concern did not receive a suitable response, the Whistleblowing Policy could be used. The importance of the Whistleblowing Policy was reiterated, and the need for staff to understand how to raise concerns across the continuum.
- Attention was drawn to the breadth of training that the Council provided and was about to provide for its workforce, and they listed and detailed many aspects of this training.
- When discussing the Whistleblowing Policy and with whom to raise whistleblowing concerns, it was noted that the Whistleblowing Policies noted that it was appropriate to go outside the corporation you worked for in order to blow the whistle. It was added that there was legal protection for the staff who did so. In addition, it was highlighted that there were external organisations where concerns could be referred in order to see whether a case was suitable.
- It was asked whether the Chair of the Programme Board was satisfied that the progress made in relation to the tasks identified in the Plan, were timely. It was noted that the delay in publishing the Our Bravery Brought Justice report had made it difficult to continue with the work at the same pace for a time. It was identified that the adaptation to the Plan to ensure that additional senior officers led on different parts of the Plan, enabled work to progress more quickly. It was confirmed that important steps forward had been taken in relation to the work on the Voice of the Child, noting that the strategy that had been drafted and input received from the Board thereon, was notable and comprehensive. The fact that the draft strategy included an opportunity for children to contribute to decisions on an individual level and at strategic level, was praised. It was proposed that

being accountable to children and young people would be key, and praise was expressed that this was included in the strategy. It was confirmed that a vast proportion of the feedback on this would be qualitative, but it was explained that quantitative data could also be looked at in various ways.

- Enquiries were made on the future of the Board after the summer period, and questions were asked about what would happen to the scrutiny work once the Board came to an end. It was expressed that discussions had been held on the future of the Board, but that no formal decision had been reached at this point. It was highlighted that the Council would need to make a decision in terms of the role that the Board wished to take, and the Council's confidence in its scrutiny processes.
- When the Board would decide that its work had reached a safe place, it was noted that it would be possible to be proud of what had been achieved. It was added that the Council would have to convince the Board and itself that effective internal arrangements were in place to do this work.

8. CYNGOR GWYNEDD PLAN 2023-28 - 2026/27 REVIEW

The report was submitted by Cllr Nia Jeffreys.

DECISION

To accept the report as a record of the technical changes to date in the review of the Council's Plan requesting further editorial work before submitting the review in its final form to the Full Council.

DISCUSSION

It was recognised that the Cyngor Gwynedd Plan 2023-28 was the Council's public statement of what was intended to achieve for the benefit of the people of the County. It was stated that there was a change to the decision sought from what was noted in the report.

It was highlighted that two workshop sessions had been held for the Cabinet members, and further sessions held for the Elected members and Corporate Management Team, to receive their input on modifications to the Plan.

It was explained that the proposed amendments to the Plan could be seen in Appendix 1. Some of those amendments were expanded upon, and it was noted that there was a new section within the Plan to acknowledge the work of the Response Plan, and that a new priority field was being proposed, namely *An Equal Gwynedd*.

The next steps in terms of adopting the Plan were then referred to, which was to develop milestones for the final two years of the Plan, and then attempt to establish the actual impact on the people of Gwynedd. It was mentioned that departments would be required to place more emphasis on outlining the impact that the projects had on the County's residents when reporting on performance.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- Attention was drawn to the Women in Leadership project, stating that the number of women within the senior team had increased substantially since the beginning of the project. The hope was that this could be extended to include other groups of society that were under-represented in leadership roles.
- Seeing projects developing within the new priority field was eagerly awaited.
- Gratitude was expressed to all who had been involved in the workshops, and attention was drawn to the fact that several of the adaptations named in the report were as a result of the achievements that had taken place in several fields across the year.
- It was explained that the current Plan was a sign of strong strategic planning, and that the report was a record of the technical amendments made. It was noted that there would be an opportunity to expand upon the explanations before being submitted to the Full Council in due course. Pride was also expressed from seeing new matters being included within the Plan.
- Pride was expressed that several people over 55 years of age had responded to the engagement questionnaire. On the other hand, there was concern that only a small number of young people had responded to the questionnaire, and it was suggested that consideration should be given to how to communicate with young people in order to obtain their input. In response, reference was made to the Youth Forum as a way of ensuring that the voices of children and young people were heard and included in decisions across the Council. It was mentioned that the data from this engagement was dated as no public consultation was held on the review. It was highlighted that specific groups of the population could be targeted when engaging, and that the intention was to continue with this, moving forward.

9. ONE-OFF BIDS 2026/27

The report was submitted by Cllr Nia Jeffreys.

DECISION

To approve the one-off bids of £2,870,280 for 2026/27, to be financed from the Transformation Fund.

DISCUSSION

It was reported that the bids listed in the report were to be financed from the transformation fund.

It was further noted that this was temporary funding to respond to temporary matters, which did not need to be financed permanently through the revenue budget. Some of the bids noted in the report were elaborated upon.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- The report was welcomed, noting that the better-than-expected settlement received this year had enabled matters that were not key matters to also be included in the bids, for the first time in a long time.

10. DELEGATION OF EXPENDITURE RESPONSIBILITIES ARRANGEMENTS

The report was submitted by Cllr Craig ab Iago.

DECISION

That the Cabinet approves a change in the right to delegate expenditure of the climate plan fund from the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader and members of the Climate and Nature Board, to the Cabinet Member leading the climate and nature portfolio, in consultation with the members of the Climate and Nature Board and the Social Services Director (Lead Director of the Climate and Nature Board).

DISCUSSION

It was noted that this was only an operational matter. It was stated that a question had been raised about this matter by a member of the public, questioning how these decisions were delegated. It was disclosed that this had been a part of the consideration in relation to discussing the best way forward.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- Members of the Climate and Nature Board were thanked for their key work in implementing the Climate and Nature Emergency Plan, and ensuring that spending decisions were made in accordance with the Council's priorities.

11. UK LOCAL GROWTH FUND IN WALES: GOVERNANCE AND OPERATING ARRANGEMENTS 2026/27

The report was submitted by Cllr R. Medwyn Hughes.

DECISION

That Cyngor Gwynedd continues to act as the lead local authority for the Shared Prosperity Fund in north Wales until the end of the programme (30 September 2026) and completes its administration (01 January 2027).

That the Gwynedd Shared Prosperity Fund Panel continues until the revised end date of the Fund; with the Economy and Community Cabinet Member, the Finance Cabinet Member, and the Corporate Services and Legal Cabinet Member together with the Chief Executive, Head of Economy and Community, Head of Finance and the Head of Legal Services (or their representatives) as members.

That Cyngor Gwynedd agrees to act as the lead local authority for north Wales on behalf of the UK Local Growth Fund in Wales for the first year of the programme (2026/27).

That Cyngor Gwynedd agrees to continue the regional governance arrangements of the Shared Prosperity Fund for the purposes of the Local Growth Fund for the first year (2026/27), by submitting a plan outlining the intention to the Welsh Government.

The Head of Economy and Community – in consultation with the Head of Finance, Head of Legal Service and Chief Executive subject to 1.6 below was authorised to agree and complete the agreements with the government(s) for the purposes of carrying out the lead authority function.

The Head of Economy and Community Department was authorised - in consultation with the Head of Finance Department and the Head of Legal Services and the Chief Executive – to establish inter-authority legal agreements and funding conditions with the other North Wales authorities to protect Cyngor Gwynedd's interests.

That Cyngor Gwynedd agrees to continue the local governance arrangements for the purposes of the Local Growth Fund in Gwynedd as outlined in the report.

DISCUSSION

Attention was drawn to the two matters at hand, namely to ensure arrangements to bring the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) to an end, and to establish new arrangements for the first year of the Local Growth Fund that would replace it.

It was reported that the UK Government had extended the period of the Shared Prosperity Fund for 6 months and Cyngor Gwynedd was required to continue as the lead local authority for the programme for the duration of this extension. Its successor, the Local Growth Fund, would become operational from 1 April 2026.

It was mentioned that Gwynedd had received £8.19 million through the Shared Prosperity Fund this year. It was stated that the UK Government had announced that they would allow SPF-funded activity to continue up to 30 September 2026, but without any additional funding.

It was identified that less money would be received under the Local Growth Fund. Attention was then drawn to the fact that 70% of the funding from the Local Growth Fund would come in the form of capital, and 30% of it would come in the form of revenue. It was highlighted that this was very different to the current

procedure and that it was likely to have a major influence, considering that there was less money as well.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- Clarity was sought about the impact of receiving a higher percentage of money in the form of capital, and a lower percentage in the form of revenue. It was explained that this was a shift away from projects which provided support for people and businesses, offering more money for construction. It was highlighted that this meant a substantial change in the emphasis of the activities that had been happening through the Shared Prosperity Fund. It was identified that jobs within the Council and across north Wales were funded through Shared Prosperity Fund money, and it was noted that it would be difficult to continue with all of these posts as a result of less revenue funding.
- Reference was made to the fact that current projects now had an extra 6 months to wind-down and members questioned what would happen if these projects could not be completed, and how they would be supported. In response, it was acknowledged that several of the projects in Gwynedd had been planned to be concluded by the end of the financial year. It was added that the extra time would be useful for several projects to complete their spending or to gather evidence of the outputs and what had been achieved. It was anticipated that approximately half of the projects within the county would take advantage of this extra time, but there were no concerns in terms of failing to bring the projects to a close. It was disclosed that this extra time gave an opportunity to forward plan, prioritise and restructure some activities to correspond with the new situation.
- It was explained that capital projects needed time to be prepared, which made it challenging to spend an amount in one financial year. Frustration was expressed that the funding was coming to the Welsh Government over three years, but the Council was restricted to year-one funding only at this point. It was disclosed that the challenge anticipated would be how to prioritise projects, knowing that there would be less money, and ensuring that those projects made a difference under the criteria set by the Government. It was highlighted that there were new priorities as a result of the new programme, which would make it difficult to ensure the continuation of some of the activities of the Shared Prosperity Fund in the new programme.
- Reassurance was given that further reports would be submitted on the proposed projects. It was reiterated that these would not be completely new projects as a result of the tight time-frame, but there was a desire to continue with Welsh Government discussions in an attempt to enable some projects to be held over years two and three.
- An explanation was provided that Cyngor Gwynedd currently acted as host authority for the Shared Prosperity Fund and that it would continue to do so for the programme's period of extension. In addition, it was noted that the Council would lead on the Local Growth Fund during its first transitional year, and that the intention after that would be to transfer it to the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee for the programme's second and third year. It was noted that it would be a matter for the Corporate

Joint Committee to decide whether to create a county fund or keep the money regional.

12. ADOPTION OF A NEW ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR GWYNEDD

The report was submitted by Cllr R. Medwyn Hughes.

DECISION

To approve the content of 'An Economy that Works for All: Gwynedd 2035' as set out in Appendix 1.

It was agreed to recommend the adoption of a 'Working Economy for All': Gwynedd 2035' to the full council of Cyngor Gwynedd.

The Head of Economy and Community was authorised to complete any minor adjustments necessary and agree the design of the Strategy in consultation with the Cabinet Member.

It was agreed to establish a 'Gwynedd Economy Forum' on the basis outlined in sections 4.19 to 4.24 of the report.

DISCUSSION

Reference was made to Section 4 of the Cyngor Gwynedd Constitution which notes that the economic development strategy was a part of the Policy Framework, and that it was required for the Full Council to approve it by means of a Cabinet recommendation. It was emphasised that the Strategy had also been pre-scrutinised.

It was mentioned that the Strategy's form followed a logical order to guide the reader from the case for action, to the priorities and then onwards to the implementation method and measure success.

A report was provided on the Strategy's vision, and reference was made to the themes within the Strategy, namely Enterprise, People and Place.

The Chair of the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee was welcomed to the meeting to present the committee's recommendations to the Cabinet. He noted that the committee welcomed the work of seeking to set a long-term strategic direction for Gwynedd, at a challenging economic time. The Committee expressed concern regarding the increasing uncertainty in terms of grants, and the potential implications of that to the deprived rural areas of the County. It was noted that Committee members were eager to see a greater emphasis on economic development in the west and south of the County, in order to ensure that opportunities and investment were distributed fairly across the geographical area. The Committee emphasised the importance of ensuring clear progress

monitoring arrangements against the Strategy, including being able to show over time what jobs were created or safeguarded, and the impact of the investment on the communities of Gwynedd.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- It was noted that several local businesses in Gwynedd employed fewer than 10 people, and enquiries were made about the support offered to those businesses. In response, it was confirmed that the vast majority of recent support package grants had gone to small businesses. Reference was made to the uncertainty in terms of the future of support packages, however, assurances were expressed that should there be an opportunity to bring a support package forward under this Strategy, it would be tailored to try to support businesses and small enterprises who employ across the County.
- Pride was expressed in the Strategy, and they eagerly awaited seeing it developing.
- It was noted that an evaluation and monitoring framework, which corresponded with the Strategy, had been developed. It was highlighted that this offered a series of results and outcomes that needed to be achieved through the projects, which would offer a means to measure what proposals actually made a difference. In addition, reference was made to the Gwynedd Economy Forum which would assist with steering and delivering the Strategy.

13. THE CABINET'S FORWARD PROGRAMME

The report was submitted by Cllr Nia Jeffreys.

DECISION

To approve the Forward Work Programme included with the meeting papers.

DISCUSSION

It was noted that the Forward Work Programme could be viewed in the pack for information.

The meeting commenced at 1.00pm and concluded at 2.30pm.

CHAIR