
THE CABINET, TUESDAY, 14 OCTOBER 2025

Present -

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

Also present -

Catrin Thomas (Corporate Director), Iwan Evans (Monitoring Officer), Ffion Madog Evans (Assistant Head of Finance), Steffan Jones (Head of Highways, Engineering and YGC Department), Amanda Murray (Municipal Asset Manager), Gwern ap Rhisiart (Head of Education Department), Debbie Jones (Assistant Head of Education Services), Dafydd Wyn Williams (Head of Environment Department), Heledd Williams (Planning Policy Team Leader), Bob Thomas (Planning Policy Team Leader), Bethan Richardson (Climate Change Programme Manager), Sioned Eirian Williams (Head of Economy and Community Department), Cllr Dafydd Davies (Local Member, Clynnog Ward), Cllr Peter Thomas (Local Member, Llanllyfni Ward) and Gwen Roberts (Democracy Services Officer).

1. APOLOGIES

Everyone was welcomed to the meeting, and the staff who had been out looking after the streets during the storm a week earlier were thanked.

No apologies were received.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

Councillor Llio Elenid Owen declared a personal interest in relation to Item 12, as she was a Local Member. The member did not consider it to be a prejudicial interest, and did not leave the meeting during the discussion.

3. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

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 16 September 2025 were accepted as a true record.

6. LOCAL TOILETS STRATEGY

The report was presented by Cllr June Jones.

DECISION

To accept the report.

DISCUSSION

The Report was presented, highlighting that the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017 places a duty on all local authorities in Wales to produce and publish a local toilets strategy for their area. She noted that the current Strategy dated back to 2019 so it needed to be upgraded.

She was pleased that there were 60 public toilets across Gwynedd and added that this was due to the support received through the Partnerships Scheme. She noted that the Scheme was going well, thanks to financial support from community and town councils. The member drew attention to the community toilets, where businesses within the county received a grant that enabled them to open their toilets for public use.

The financial challenge of maintaining the public toilets was reiterated, but it was confirmed that grants had been received to improve this provision. She referred to the examples in the report of this work being underway, drawing particular attention to the work that was currently being carried out in Abersoch and Barmouth.

She talked about the *Changing Places* provision that was available in the county, for meeting the needs of those with multiple learning disabilities. She stated that the stock of public toilets in Gwynedd was old and therefore challenging to adapt without significant financial investment. She raised the issue of these buildings needing to be staffed, so it was intended to work with other departments to discuss further steps.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- The department was thanked for considering the Age Friendly aspect in the report, allowing the input of other departments into the plan in order to develop other aspects of this plan.

- It was questioned whether smaller toilets and sinks for children could be created, going forward. It was explained that there had been discussions about this, and that adapting some toilets for children would form part of the future strategy.
- Reference was made to the *Changing Places* provision, noting that it was great to see such a provision in the county. It was reiterated that the premises where these toilets were based needed to be staffed, so it was proposed to work with other departments to be able to create more of these toilets in Gwynedd.
- It was noted that the Welsh Government had carried out a consultation to obtain information on what people wanted to see in *Changing Places* toilets.
- The role of businesses in the strategy was mentioned, explaining that there were currently 41 community toilets in Gwynedd receiving a grant to enable the facilities to be used by the public. The members were assured that the Council carried out assessments of these toilets.

7. MODERNISING EDUCATION – YSGOL NEBO

The report was presented by Cllr Dewi Jones.

DECISION

To accept the report.

DISCUSSION

The importance of this item to the local area and the strong feelings around the item were emphasised.

The members were reminded that the decision before the Cabinet at this meeting was the decision to hold a statutory consultation.

He talked about the challenge facing the whole county due to declining pupil numbers, rising costs, and the need to ensure the best education and social opportunities for all children.

He assured the members that the consultation process would be open, transparent and meaningful, with all concerns being considered before a final decision was made. He explained that discussions had taken place with the school community about the possible options, and he pointed out that the school's ideas for possible ways forward had been included in the supplementary papers. He reiterated that full consideration had been given to all options.

The participants who had been involved in the discussions held at the school were thanked, and he noted that those discussions had been constructive. It was noted that the department was required to balance things against a specific set of measures.

While constructive options had been proposed as ways forward, it was confirmed that the issue of pupil numbers at the school had led to this proposal.

The Local Member for Clynnog Ward was welcomed to the meeting. He acknowledged that the School Organisation Code laid down a procedural presumption against the closure of rural schools and added that he did not believe that the evidence presented before the Cabinet satisfied the test for closing the school.

He noted that Ysgol Nebo was not failing as the number of pupils had increased by 50% in the last year and that a number of these pupils came from outside the catchment area as well.

He referred to the financial argument for closing Ysgol Nebo, reiterating that the potential savings from closing the School were smaller than they seemed. He added the need to consider the costs of redundancy and the risk of a higher number of children receiving home education, which would put long-term pressure on the Council.

He talked about the Governing Body's proposal to develop Ysgol Nebo into a pilot site for children with additional learning, emotional and social needs, in order to try to keep more children in mainstream education.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- A member asked how the voices of these children who were currently attending Ysgol Nebo will be heard in the consultation. The member was assured that the voices of children and young people would be heard, as had been done previously, and that specific sessions would be conducted with children from Ysgol Nebo as well as children from Ysgol Llanllyfni.
- It was acknowledged that this was a challenging decision, and it was asked if the Local Member's comments would be included in the consultation and whether other options would be considered. It was noted that the options proposed had been interpreted in a way that aligned with the criteria for a mainstream school, which would therefore enable Ysgol Nebo to remain open at the same time as offering a provision to certain groups of children.
- A member asked about the use of the school building should a decision be made to close it. Reference was made to the After-use Policy, which meant that consideration would be given to the use of the building by the Council, and there would be a discussion about community use.
- It was pointed out that the numbers of pupils had been decreasing for decades now. It was noted that Ysgol Nebo had been through difficulties of low pupil numbers before, but the figure was not rising. It was added that there were fewer children within communities to fill many schools.

8. MODERNISING EDUCATION – YSGOL BALADEULYN

The report was presented by Cllr Dewi Jones

DECISION

To accept the report.

DISCUSSION

He presented the item and emphasised how difficult and sensitive discussions of this kind were, and the emotion that was attached to this item as well.

He talked about the Cabinet's duty to consider several factors in reaching a decision – the reduced number of children in our communities and the falling birth rate, the financial challenges facing the Council, and the need to ensure that the education system was sustainable.

He assured the members that everything would be done so that the consultation process was open, accessible and that all voices would be heard and respected.

He revealed that discussions had been held with the School community in order to consider all available options. Reference was made to the content of the papers outlining the comments received at these meetings, and ideas by the School about possible ways forward.

The school community was thanked, and the member noted that the engagement sessions had been helpful. It was reiterated that this had come about because of the reality of declining numbers of children in schools, and that this proposal was not a reflection of the school.

The Local Member for Llanllyfni Ward expressed disappointment at the proposal to close Ysgol Baladeulyn, stating that it would be a blow to the school community if it were to close.

He acknowledged the financial challenge of maintaining a small school but noted the impact on the village if the school closed.

Concerns were raised about the impact of closing the school on the number of people who would want to move to the village, and the potential impact on the Welsh language locally.

It was noted that clarification regarding the use of the building would be required in the event of the school closing.

Queries were made about federation with Ysgol Talysarn and the addition of a specialist unit to Ysgol Baladeulyn for children with additional learning needs. It was proposed that this model would save resources and make better use of the setting.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- There were concerns about the impact that closing the school would have on the area's Welsh-speaking community. It was confirmed that impact

assessments had been carried out and it was noted that there may be an impact on the children's social use of Welsh. It was mentioned that mitigation measures would be needed to ensure that the Welsh language remained strong should the proposal be accepted.

- A member asked about staff redundancies should the proposal be accepted. It was emphasised that no decision had been made at the moment, but there was a team of human resources experts to support the School. It was reiterated that the intention would be to find alternative jobs for those people, but it was added that this was not a straightforward process as it was the responsibility of School Governors to appoint staff.
- It was questioned how the projections for pupil numbers were calculated. It was noted that these projections were submitted annually by the headteachers, and that the number of births in the area was also used to calculate these projections.
- The importance of the School building to the community was reiterated, and reference was made to the Council's after-use policy. In addition, a member talked about holding discussions with the community to see if they had a use in mind for the building.

9. GWYNEDD AND ANGLESEY ALN AND INCLUSION AGREEMENT

The report was presented by Cllr Dewi Jones.

DECISION

To accept the report.

DISCUSSION

It was revealed that Gwynedd and Anglesey had been sharing one ALN service since 2017 and while there were strengths to this, it was noted that the ALN service was not managing to meet the needs of every child.

It was explained that the number of these needs had increased significantly and had changed in nature over the last few years. He added that there had been a 37% increase in the demand for this ALN team between 2022 and 2024.

He indicated that Gwynedd and Anglesey had gone in slightly different directions since 2017, which therefore made this service more difficult to run.

He emphasised that the priority in the wake of this proposal was to ensure that a better service is offered to the people of Gwynedd. It was proposed that a smaller service would be better for children and families, as well as being easier for staff to work within.

He said that this proposal was about a joint ALN and inclusion service. He confirmed that this was not a proposal to separate the ALN Service from Anglesey immediately, but an opportunity for discussions with the Head and staff of the Anglesey Education department in order to propose possible ideas for moving forward.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- A member asked why choose to address this now? It was highlighted that what lay behind this was the need to listen to the voice of schools and the residents of Gwynedd, and the need to improve the service and provision offered.

10. ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT - LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2024-2025

The report was presented by Cllr Craig ab Iago.

DECISION

To accept the report.

DISCUSSION

The report was presented, stating that it was a statutory requirement to submit this report and submit it to the Welsh Government every year.

He explained that the Plan had focused primarily on developments within the local planning area of Gwynedd only since 2023.

He noted that it was primarily based on planning applications that had been determined or implemented over the year.

He set out the purpose of the annual Monitoring Report, stating that it assessed to see whether a review of the Plan was required. He added that a review report had been published and work was underway to prepare a new development plan for the local planning area of Gwynedd.

Reference was made to the table in the report which provided an overview of how the indicators had performed, stating that it confirmed that the planning policies met the main objectives of the plan.

It was highlighted that permission for 173 new residential units had been granted in the 2024/25 period, of which 75 were affordable housing. It was reiterated that 140 of the 212 houses that had been completed during the year, were also affordable homes.

Reference was made to the recommendations of the Planning Policy Working Group, which were included in the report.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- It was stated that the development of the plan was a lengthy process, and that the plan would need to be brought back to the Cabinet and the Full Council in due course.
- A member queried the discrepancy in the figures for the numbers of Welsh speakers that were noted in the report. It was noted that the figures provided by the Welsh Government often differed from the conclusions of the census. It was added that the Government had commissioned work to find out why there was a difference in the figures, but there were no clear answers at the moment.
- Members expressed pride in the high number of affordable homes that had been built.
- Clarification was sought regarding the figure for houses completed on the sites allocated for housing. It was explained that the percentage stated in the report referred to those houses that had been completed on designated sites. As this was the end of the Plan, it was reiterated that several of the designated sites had already obtained planning permission, or that work had previously taken place on that site. It was confirmed that the remainder of the completed houses aligned with the Plan's policies, as they could be on windfall sites. It was noted that small sites were not designated, but that many of the developments were carried out on these sites.
- Referring to the target of houses that need to be built, it was questioned why so many houses need to be built if Gwynedd's population was decreasing. It was noted that the Government's projections along with a number of other factors had been taken into account. It was added that, at the time of producing the Joint Plan, there was talk of major developments such as the new Wylfa, which would likely affect the north of Gwynedd. It was reiterated that much had changed in the meantime and that the new plan would consider what the Government's projections were as well as local need, before proposing a figure in the Plan.

11. CLIMATE AND NATURE EMERGENCY PLAN: ANNUAL REPORT 2024/2025

The report was presented by Cllr Craig ab Iago.

DECISION

To accept the report.

DISCUSSION

The member was proud of the work that had been undertaken over a number of years, noting that the Council was at the forefront in this field.

It was noted that the period of this annual report covered the third year of operation for the Plan.

He drew attention to the fact that the Report set out how the Council responded to Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 in each chapter.

He explained that there had been an increase in the levels of carbon emissions since the previous year. It was stated that it may be misleading to make one-year comparisons in a field where long-term action was required. It was reiterated that the work carried out by the department would take time to come to fruition.

It was confirmed that this Report had already received comments from the Communities Scrutiny committee, which were included in the Report, but there had been no change to the Report as a result.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- It was noted that contractors were not statutorily required to collect data on their carbon emissions, but new guidance was on the way to set out how public bodies can help their contractors to collect the data. It was reiterated that it was hoped that the largest contractors would be able to provide carbon management plans, but it would take more time and support for smaller contractors to do so.
- A member queried what was being done to reduce the emissions arising from energy use in buildings and from travel. It was explained that heating was responsible for the high emissions from the buildings, because gas was currently the main source of heating for many Council buildings. In terms of travel, it was reiterated that the Council's fleet of electric cars had grown. As there were no suitable electric vehicles available for HGVs, there was not much the Council could do in this area at the moment.
- The Cabinet Member for the Environment was asked for his response to the Scrutiny Committee's recommendation. He expressed that he does not believe targets were appropriate here, adding that he would like to find another way to ensure that the work was achieved, without setting unrealistic targets. The need to be ambitious and pioneering was emphasised.
- It was pointed out that the project's funding had almost run out, and it was questioned what plans were there to attract more funding to implement the project. It was noted that internal discussions were taking place and added that the Plan relied on being able to attract a number of grants.
- Reference was made to the lack of suitable charging points in the area, questioning what were the challenges that prevented the Council from being able to increase this number across Gwynedd. It was confirmed that the Council was not responsible for the infrastructure to be able to offer a large number of charging points. It was explained that the Council had been providing charging points, but that different types of charging machines were needed to meet the needs of different cohorts of people. It was reiterated that the grid provision also created challenges.

12. DINAS DINLLE CAR PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN

The report was presented by Cllr R Medwyn Hughes.

DECISION

To accept the report.

DISCUSSION

He drew attention to the previous report on this item that was submitted to the Cabinet in June. He added that the report before this meeting of the Cabinet provided an update following detailed legal work to introduce a permanent off-street parking order at Dinas Dinlle Car Park.

The Monitoring Officer noted that the report followed the standard process for creating a parking order, therefore the proposal requested delegated rights to proceed with the process for creating a parking order.

The meeting commenced at 1:00pm and concluded at 3:15pm.