



CYNGOR GWYNEDD - Report to Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet

Title of Item:	Performance Report of the Cabinet Member for Highways, Engineering and YGC
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Berwyn Parry Jones
Relevant Officer:	Steffan Jones, Head of Highways, Engineering and YGC Department
Date of Meeting:	19 December, 2023

1. Decision Sought:

To accept and note the information in the report.

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

In order to ensure effective performance management.

3. Introduction and Rationale

The purpose of this report is to update my fellow members on what has taken place in the areas within my remit as Cabinet Member for Highways, Engineering and YGC. This report will outline the following:-

- What has been achieved as part of the priorities of the Cyngor Gwynedd Plan 2023-28.
- Overview of the department's performance measurements.
- The latest in terms of savings and cuts schemes.

4. Council Plan 2023-28 Projects (Improvement Priorities)

4.1 The table in APPENDIX 1 gives an update on the progress of the department's three priority projects which have been identified in the Cyngor Gwynedd Plan 2023-28.

4.2 From this information, you will note that the department has made good progress against the main milestones of the first year of the 2023/24 plan. There has been a delay in improvement priority 3, 'Extending play and socialising opportunities for children and young people in the County'. But we are confident that the Plan is on track and the work will be delivered in full.

5. Performance of Department Services

In terms of the department's measures, I am happy with the performance that has been delivered. Nevertheless, I draw your attention to the main issues that have arisen.

5.1 Highway Maintenance Service

5.1.1 A Highway Maintenance Manual was adopted at the beginning of the year, and the Service is working on introducing arrangements within their road asset system (WDM) to implement the following:

1. Implement Network Hierarchy	The previous network hierarchy of roads had to be made according to the recommendations of the 2016 highway code of practice	Completed
2. Defects Categories	The information recorded during road checks is used to determine defects categories. The main change of the manual is to see a safety defect (previously category 1), being dealt with by the end of the next working day	This is anticipated to be fully operational before the end of the calendar year
3. Budget Allocation	The highway maintenance budget is split between regular and planned work. The Service is working towards establishing a priority-based work procedure/program of the worst roads	The program is anticipated to be in place for the financial year 2024/2025

5.2 Street Scene Service

5.2.1 We have incorporated the following services within one new Service, the Street Scene Service, to focus on the look and image of our streets and roads:

- Street Cleaning
- Street Enforcement
- Tím Tacluso 'Ardal Ni'

5.2.2 Following last year's restructuring, the Department took the opportunity to undertake a high-level review of the Service to find out if there were any barriers preventing it from working effectively and efficiently.

5.2.3 A Street Scene Service Manager was appointed, and a Task Group was established to act on the recommendations/improvements resulting from the review.

5.2.4 The review highlighted several issues for improvement. However, ten main issues were deemed as necessary to be addressed. An update on these ten main issues was provided to the Leadership Team on the 14.11.23. A further update will be presented before the Cabinet and Scrutiny Committee within the next five months.

5.2.5 The Department will organise the launch of the new Street Scene Service on the 1 April, 2024 by:

- Informing all Members about the new structure and links to the Service
- Visiting community and town councils to discuss all the Service's work
- Attending Area Forums

5.2.6 As the cleaning routes will be on a digital system, details will be shared on the Council's website.

5.3 Grounds Maintenance Service

5.3.1 The service is responsible for a wide range of locations within towns and villages, mainly within the 20 and 30mph zones, across the County during the growing season. Including road verges, cemeteries, open spaces, play areas, care homes and sports facilities. The service coordinates the opening and closing of graves throughout the year in 12 cemeteries in the Arfon and Meirionnydd areas.

5.3.2 In addition to this, the service undertakes a range of additional work during the winter months, such as contracting work for other departments, fencing and concrete works, bench installation, street bin installation, public toilets refurbishment and painting, renovation and painting of play area equipment, maintenance of promenade benches in Tywyn and Barmouth, maintenance of public parks such as Parc Dre, Caernarfon.

5.3.3 This year, the service teamed up with the Environment Department on a road verges project. The project has been a successful one helping nature, especially pollinators to increase biodiversity. An article will be shared internally and with the public to further the work of this project over the next few weeks.

5.4 Fleet Service

5.4.1 Since the adoption of the Green Fleet Plan (2023/2029), the Fleet Service has engaged in discussions with departments/services to truly identify fleet size/true service needs. This was a vital step to carry out before looking at changes to the type of fleet we will need. One of the milestones of the scheme is to reduce the use of fossil fuel vehicles towards by introducing a fleet of vehicles (cars and vans) ULEV (Ultra Low Emission Vehicles).

5.4.2 To move this agenda forward, the Service has ordered 43 electric vehicles which will reach us before the end of the financial year. Another priority is to establish electric vehicle charging points for Council vehicles. It is anticipated that by the end of the financial year, the Council will have 16 charging points operational at four locations across the Council. There is still considerable work to be undertaken while also looking at changing working practices to ensure the best use of the Council's fleet.

5.4.3 The Service is also looking at setting up a corporate pool system. The Information Technology team will support the development of the system and will looking at running a trial in the Spring.

5.5 Closed Circuit Television Service (CCTV)

- 5.5.1 CCTV cameras are used in public places in Gwynedd to help keep our communities safe by assisting to prevent and fight crime, to help prevent anti-social behaviour, to provide recorded evidence to North Wales Police, to promote economic wellbeing within communities and to give the public a sense of security.
- 5.5.2 In addition, the authority has installed cameras connected to the same system in many of its working depots, to assist with health and safety responsibilities and day-to-day operation, as well as assisting the Police with theft.
- 5.5.3 This year we were successful in getting a bid for funding through the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) to extend our existing provision of CCTV systems in public places. We are busy making arrangements to further design the main projects in Bangor, Caernarfon and Pwllheli and are preparing to employ specialist consultants to produce tender documents for the market.

5.6 Public Toilets Service

- 5.6.1 The Council has 61 public toilets in Gwynedd which, in terms of numbers, is the highest provision in Wales managed by a Local Authority. We are striving to improve the condition of the assets and continue to meet the needs of the people of Gwynedd despite the depletion in the Council's resources.
- 5.6.2 To implement improvements, an internal funding bid has been submitted as well as taking advantage of grant opportunities e.g. (this year we successfully received £135,860 through the 'Brilliant Basics' fund to upgrade 4 toilets in Gwynedd).
- 5.6.3 A report was submitted to the Scrutiny Committee on the 05.10.23 outlining our intention to introduce payment doors with contactless technology. Should our funding bid be successful, we hope to introduce new doors at a minimum of 5 toilets.
- 5.6.4 In addition to the upgrades, the service manages a Public Facilities Grant Scheme which allows members of the public to use toilets at various local establishments during the hours they are open. The toilets can be used free of charge and there is no expectation for those using them to purchase goods or services during the period they are in the building. The organisations involved in the Scheme are expected to keep their toilets safe, clean, accessible and ensure they are adequately stocked. The maximum grant for one year is £500 per placement. The grant guidance on the Council's corporate website highlights the purpose of the Scheme and how to apply for the grant.

5.7 Gwynedd Consultancy (YGC) Project Delivery and Business Service

5.7.1 Since Gwynedd Consultancy joined the Department, there has been an opportunity to look at the two existing Business Units and centralise the administrative services. We have reviewed processes following the principles of 'Ffordd Gwynedd'. Through this work we are promoting and enhancing the use of technology by transferring processes from paper to digital. There has also been an opportunity to centralize the supervision and administration of the Department's core Information Technology systems. The main processes currently under review are:

- Invoice processing and payments
- Purchasing (orders)
- Invoice
- Staff Timetables
- Training

5.8 Gwynedd Consultancy (YGC) Water and Environment Service

5.8.1 The Council has published its Climate and Nature Emergency Plan and the plan refers to how we as a Council want to respond to the impacts of climate change, which include the impacts of flooding. As a result of this, the Water and Environment Service is leading on the formulation of a Local Flooding Strategy that runs parallel to the Climate Emergency Plan and helps to achieve mutual targets.

5.8.2 Over the past few months, the service has further developed the Strategy in line with the framework and guidance provided by the Welsh Government. The document discusses the roles and responsibilities of different authorities to manage the threat of flooding; the history of flooding across Gwynedd and the threat of future flooding as a result of the effects of climate change, and also what Cyngor Gwynedd are doing within their powers to manage the threats.

5.8.3 Underpinning the document over the next few years are 5 main objectives, and a list of actions that build on our current flood risk management tools to meet these objectives.

The objectives of the Strategy are:

Objective 1: Aim to reduce the level of risk of flooding and coastal erosion for Gwynedd residents.

Objective 2: Developing further understanding of flood risk to Gwynedd and the impacts of climate change.

Objective 3: Continue to work with all relevant bodies to ensure appropriate and sustainable development in Gwynedd.

Objective 4: Raising awareness of local flood and coastal erosion risk.

Objective 5: Work collaboratively with all other Risk Management Authorities and relevant groups/bodies to ensure a coordinated response to flooding and coastal erosion incidents.

- 5.8.4 The next steps will be to complete a full bilingual draft of the document along with the associated reports and undertake an engagement exercise early in the new year. Initial capital works programmes (inland and coastal) will be included as appendices to the main document. There is an outline programme below, but the timetable may change depending on the consultation.
- 5.8.5 The work of the Service is vital in protecting areas in Gwynedd from the effects of Flooding. We are pleased to report that our Felinheli Flood Protection Scheme has won an award for using technology to manage assets at the NCE (New Civilis Engineer) competitions in London on the 24.11.23. This was a great success for the Service and a great example of making use of technology within the field.

6. The Department's Business Plan / Accreditations

6.1 **Business Plan** - Work to update the Gwynedd Consultancy Business Plan (YGC) to incorporate it into the department-wide Plan (PP/YGC) continues. The plan is to launch the new plan in April 2024.

6.2 **Investors in People Accreditations (IIP)** - In 2022/23, the YGC Service received an "Investors in People" accreditation for the third time. The IIP report and the action plan will weave into the Service business plan.

6.3 **BSI accreditations** - The Department has managed to retain the accreditations below following the yearly BSI management audit:

- BSI 9001
- BSI 1401
- BSI 4501

6.4 These accreditations are crucial and essential to the work of services across the Department.

7. Financial Situation

7.1 Following a recent review of the Department's budgetary position submitted to the Cabinet (07/11/2023), an overspend of around £990 is anticipated this year. It was noted that a reduction in the work being commissioned by external agencies and also additional pressures on municipal budgets were leading to this overspending. The Department is taking steps to reduce the anticipated overspending amount.

7.2 The Department has delivered the majority of its savings plans worth £215,940 for 2023/24.

8. Views of the statutory officers

The Monitoring Officer:

No observations to add in relation to propriety.

Head of Finance Department:

I am satisfied that the report is a fair reflection of the financial situation of the Highways, Engineering and YGC Department.