

CYNGOR GWYNEDD CABINET



Report to the Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet

Meeting date:	15 October, 2024
Cabinet Members:	Cllr. Dilwyn Morgan
Contact Officers:	Aled Davies, Head of Department for Adults, Health and Wellbeing Dylan Owen, Corporate Director of Social Services
Item Title:	Llechen Lân (A Clean Slate) – Social Services for Older People for the Future

1 DECISION SOUGHT

- (1) That the Cabinet accepts the results of the Llechen Lân (A Clean Slate) research work - Social Services for Older People for the Future (**Appendix 1**).
- (2) That the Cabinet adopts the strategic direction and action plan of Llechen Lân (**Appendix 2**).

2 THE REASON WHY DECISION IS NEEDED

It is anticipated that the combination of financial challenges, the impact of demographic challenges on human resources, and the impact of demographic challenges on the demand for services will create a situation of failure for older people's services, unless something is urgently done to address the situation.

The initial step in addressing this was to acknowledge and fully grasp the challenge – this is highlighted in the Llechen Lân research report.

The next step is to establish a clear direction and plan for how we intend to work moving forward, in order to mitigate the impact of demographic changes on older people's services in Gwynedd.

3 INTRODUCTION

Current Situation

There are two key facts about Gwynedd's demographics that are likely to ring true across rural areas of Wales:

1. The population is aging, increasing the demand for social care services.
2. The number of working age population is falling, reducing the workforce available to provide this care.

As a result of these two factors, pressure on services is increasing.

Social Care is one of the largest areas of expenditure for Gwynedd Council, with nearly 25% of the Council's budget allocated to Adult Social Care in 2022/23. Despite several years of overspending in adult social services, waiting lists persist, and an increasing number of older individuals are facing delays in receiving Home, Residential, and Nursing care.

Currently, Social Services for older people primarily rely on traditional care approaches, whereas some other counties have adopted alternative methods to support independent living.

Llechen Lân

To build a robust evidence base, the Task and Finish group gathered and analyzed data at the local, county, and national levels, while also reviewing international literature.

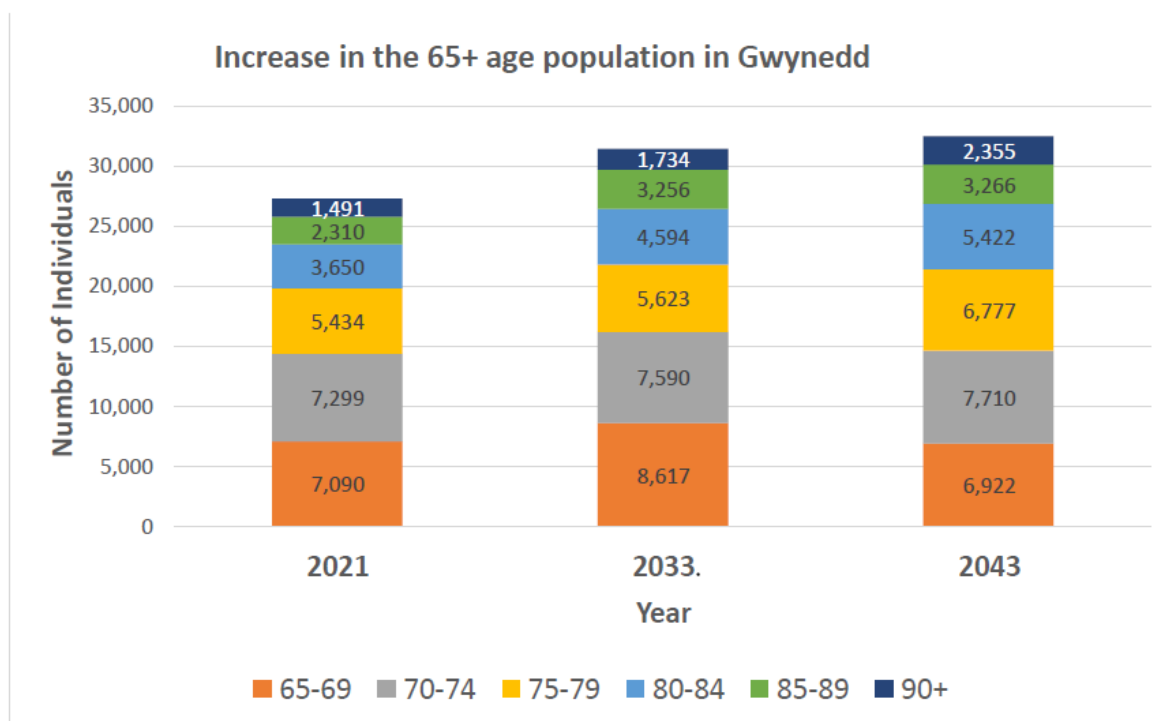
Llechen Lân elaborated on the current situation by:

- Predicting how the population will change over the next 20 years.
- Considering how these changes might affect demand for care.
- Looking at our ability to meet the need, comparing to other similar counties.
- Predicting expected financial pressures.

Conclusions

Population

Between the 2011 and 2021 Censuses, Gwynedd's population aged 65 and over rose from 25,100 to 27,300, reflecting an 8% increase. Population projections indicate that this upward trend will persist over the next two decades, with the figure expected to reach 32,500 by 2043.



While there are always uncertainties to consider, such as potential cures for diseases or the impact of pandemics, the Bevan Commission advise that "the average age at which major

illnesses are projected to develop is 70 years. With the increase in life expectancy, the years spent with ill health will increase too."

While we should celebrate our increased longevity and value the extended time we can spend with our families and loved ones, enriching our communities, these population increases also bring their own set of challenges.

Workforce Challenges

According to the census, Gwynedd's working age (16-64 years old) population fell from 75,800 in 2011 to 70,700 in 2021. This equated to an average reduction of 42 people of a working age in Gwynedd every month over the decade. During the same period there was a 7% reduction in the under 16 population (from 20,900 to 19,400).

THE WORKFORCE NEEDED TO PROVIDE CARE



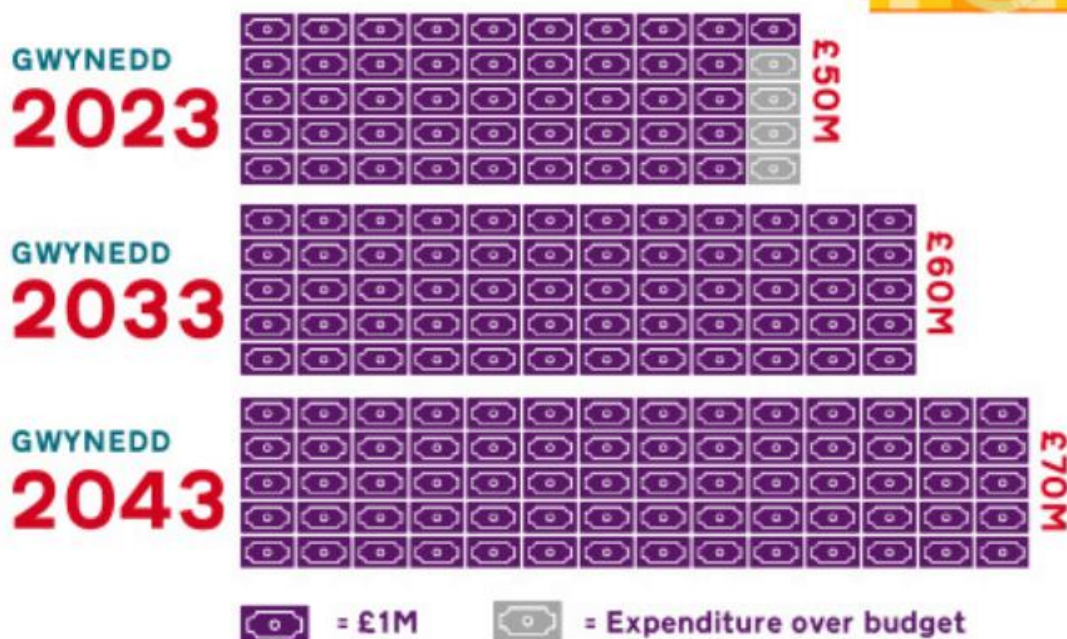
The combination of shifting demographics and a shrinking workforce is likely to expand the gap in what local authorities are able to provide. For instance, it's projected that demand for social care will rise by 57% by 2043, while an additional 1,000 workers will be required to meet this growing need.

Budget Challenges

Even if the workforce to provide the services were to miraculously materialise, the accompanying financial implications would be drastic. The projected additional costs for traditional care

services alone are estimated to reach £24.3m annually by 2043 (barring any inflationary increases).

THE FUNDING NEEDED TO PROVIDE HOME, RESIDENTIAL AND NURSING CARE



The overarching message from Llechen Lân is that social services for older people in Gwynedd has reached a tipping point. Assuming significant additional funding and growth in working population figures are highly unlikely, the need for a change in provision and practice is essential.

Method of service delivery

Considering the capacity of other rural counties in Wales, there are significant variations in service provision. By comparing with other areas, the potential impact of altering Gwynedd Council's delivery methods can be anticipated.

The second section of the Llechen Lân report models the potential effects of aligning service delivery with the average / mean across rural counties. This section of the report highlights approaches that could help alleviate the pressure on traditional social care services, specifically:

- Community Work
- Telecare, Technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI)
- Strength-based work

- Extra Care Housing
- Direct Payments

Implementing these changes is crucial sooner rather than later. If we do not change the way we operate, it will not be possible to provide social care as we currently know it.

The Action Plan and Future Work Programme

Recognising that neither the workforce nor funding will be available, the Council has embarked on a course to make radical changes to enable more people to live their best lives independently.

Shown in **Appendix 2**, is the Action Plan draft. This document aims to pull together the recommendations of the Llechen Lân Report, highlighting what we will do to try to address the challenge facing older people's social services over the next ten years.

Short-term (to be placed in the next year):

- Assess accommodation needs in conjunction with the Housing Department.
- Encourage strengths-based approaches and community support to help older people maintain independent living.
- Improve financial management and maximise the availability of care services.
- Simplify systems and encourage the use of direct payments and technology.
- Develop a care academy to boost care careers and attract a workforce.
- Working with other public services and the third sector to find solutions to reduce the demand for care.
- Expand support for unpaid carers.

Medium Term:

- Secure plans and capital funding to develop residential homes that provide high quality specialist care and nursing care.
- Promote collaboration with Public Health and other Council departments to reduce the demand for care through proactive interventions and prevention.

Long-term:

- Develop long-term fiscal plans based on the available evidence to ensure financial stability for the Council.

Raising awareness:

- Raise political awareness about the challenges of care services and the need for resources through local and national lobbying.
- Working with the Welsh Government to boost long-term funding, rather than relying on short-term grants.

This will be a working document and will be reviewed regularly as work and developments progress.

4 REASON AND JUSTIFICATION BEHIND THE DECISION

The current state of social care for older people in Gwynedd is neither viable nor sustainable, and without changes to how we operate, providing social care in the future will be impossible.

It's evident that the demand for care far outweighs the services' capacity to deliver it, and even with innovative approaches, this gap will persist into the future.

Our objective by adopting a strategic direction and working differently is to reduce this gap as much as possible.

Scrutiny Committee

This report has not been presented to the Care Scrutiny Committee in its entirety, but the work areas have been discussed individually over the past year, and there was support for the strategic directions.

It is intended to present the report and the action plan to the Scrutiny Committee over the coming period as part of the oversight of the development work.

Well-being of Future Generations Act

The whole purpose of Llechen Lân is to ensure that Social Services for older people in Gwynedd are sustainable for the future. Within the report, the need for Gwynedd to be prosperous, resilient, healthier, more equal, and full of cohesive communities and a vibrant culture is considered.

In this respect, the report fulfills what is required by the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

In terms of the expected approaches:

Long-term – Llechen Lân considers the need for social care over the next twenty years.

Prevention – In order to succeed, enabling people to live healthily in their community will be essential to prevent reliance on statutory services.

Integration – Llechen Lân considers that working in integrated ways is essential.

Collaboration – The need to work based on the strengths within our communities is discussed, empowering people to collaborate and engage with their communities.

Involvement – One of Llechen Lân recommendations is to support people to be active in their communities.

Equality Impact Assessment

It is anticipated that the work recommended by Llechen Lân will have a positive impact on the community as a whole and that no part of the work will negatively affect any group of people.

It appears that the priority areas should have a significantly positive impact on equality characteristics – disability, age, socio-economic disadvantage, and the Welsh language.

This Equality Impact Assessment (Appendix 3) looks at the Llechen Lân Action Plan as a whole. If an individual project or work stream within the Plan involves a change to a procedure that will have an impact on people with protected equality characteristics then a separate Impact Assessment will be needed.

5 NEXT STEPS AND TIMETABLE

Following the adoption of the programme of work it should be ensured that the Council's Cabinet and the Council's Care Scrutiny Committee keep a close eye on these developments over the coming years.

6 COMMENTS BY STATUTORY OFFICERS

Chief Finance Officer

The research and analysis found in the Llechen Lân Report is the result of close collaboration by officers from several services across the Council, including officers from the Finance Department who have contributed to the information presented. This study is a very important piece of work that will enable the Council to recognise the tremendous pressures it will have in the future in providing services to the people of Gwynedd. Without work like this, we will not be able to prepare knowledgeably for the financial challenges facing the Council in the years to come. While the messages coming out of this detailed work show that the financial pressure to deliver the service will increase, which is a cause for concern, I very much welcome it as an example of the Council undertaking a long-term study so that our transformation plans can be strongly underpinned.

This study will contribute to future iterations of the Medium-Term Financial Plan.

Monitoring Officer

I have had an opportunity of reading the comments of the Head of Finance which underlines the detailed and thorough work which has led to these recommendations for Cabinet. It underlines that this is an area which is subject to significant strategic and financial challenges. This is within a framework of a range of statutory duties in relation to service provision as well as working with commercial and third sector providers. I support the strategic direction and work programme as a response to these challenges.

7 APPENDICES

- 1. Llechen Lân - Social Services for Older People for the Future**
- 2. Llechen Lân Action Plan**
- 3. Equality Characteristics, Welsh Language and Socio-Economic Disadvantage Impact Assessment**