



## GWYNEDD COUNCIL – Report to Gwynedd Council's Cabinet

<b>Item Title:</b>	Performance Report of the Cabinet Member for Highways, Engineering and YGC
<b>Aelod Cabinet:</b>	Cyng. June Jones
<b>Related Officer:</b>	Steffan Jones, Head of the Department for Highways, Engineering and YGC
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	11 March, 2025

### 1. Decision Sought:

To accept and note the information in the report.

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

In order to ensure effective performance management.

### 3. Introduction and Rationale

3.1. The purpose of this report is to update my fellow members on what has happened in the areas for which I am responsible as the 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.

3.2. Overall, I am satisfied that significant progress is being made with Department-led projects in line with the Council's Plan and the performance measures for which I am responsible. The Department continues to face challenges, but I am confident that the Department has suitable plans to greet these situations to the best of its ability.

3.3. All matters set out here are regularly discussed, and scrutinised by myself in conjunction with the Corporate Director, Head of Department along with Department Service Managers.

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

4.1 The table in APPENDIX 1 provides an update on the progress of the Department's three priority projects that have been identified in Gwynedd Council's Plan 2023-28.

4.2 From this information, you will note that the Department has made good progress against the main milestones of the Scheme. However, there has been a halt in improvement priority 3, 'Extending play and socialising opportunities for children and young people in the County'. Unfortunately, there has been no support for our bid for capital funding, therefore, we will try to maximise the revenue funding to introduce an improvement to the assets.

## 5. Department Services Performance

Here is an outline of some of the key issues arising from the last performance report submitted by the Department in July 2024. The information does not refer to all services in the department, only those that we feel need to be brought to your attention. I would like to say that I am pleased with the performance of the Services included in this report.

### 5.1 Highway Maintenance Service

5.1.1 It was reported last year that we had adopted a new Highway Maintenance Manual. The service has now completed the introduction of arrangements within their road asset system (WDM) to ensure they implement the following:

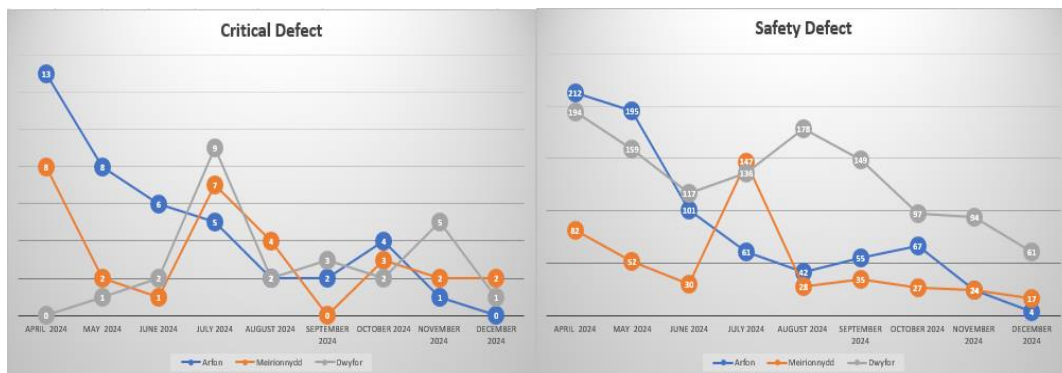
#### 5.1.2 Revise Network Hierarchy

The previous network hierarchy of roads had to be made according to the recommendations of the most recent highway code of practice. The changes have been completed and included within the new Highway Maintenance Manual.

#### 5.1.3 Defect 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. These changes in defect reporting are fully operational and the numbers are being reported as part of the department's performance meetings.

See below the measures related to the Defect Categories:



#### 5.1.4 Budget Allocation

The highway maintenance budget is split between regular and planned work. The Service is working towards establishing a priority-based work regime/programme for the worst roads across Gwynedd which will be effective from April 2025.

## 5.2 Street Scene Service

5.2.1 We have now incorporated the following services within a single service (Street Scene Service) this has enabled the department to focus on the look and image of our streets and roads. The three units within the Street Scene service are:

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

5.2.2 A high-level review of the Service was undertaken to establish whether there were any barriers preventing it from working effectively and efficiently following the principles of 'Ffordd Gwynedd'. The review included various elements to look at the overspending, overtime, health and safety situation and route efficiency.

5.2.3 In conducting the review, the need to invest in a route optimisation system was highlighted, and an internal bid was put forward to fund this investment. We have now invested in a system called Bartec that will play an integral role in the service's improvement plan.

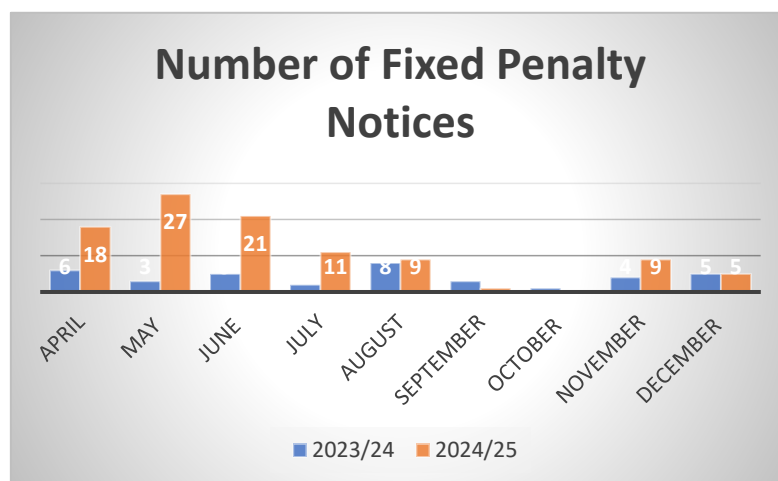
### Timau Tacluso 'Ardal Ni'

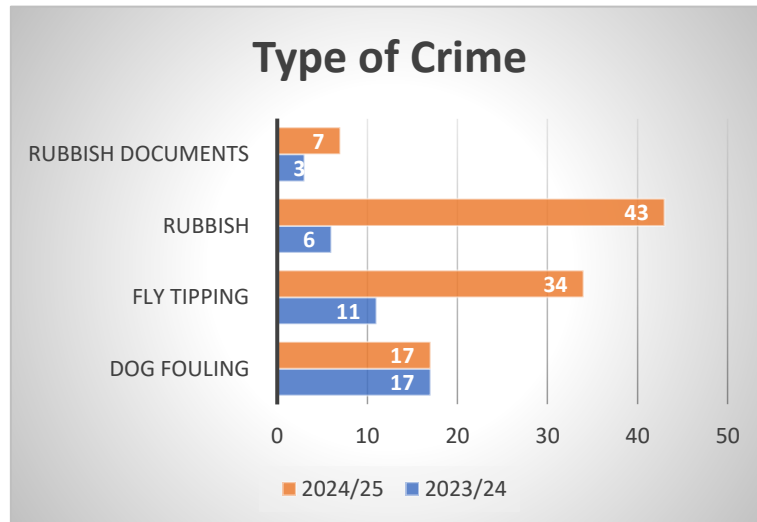
5.2.4 The Teams continue to go from strength to strength working closely with local members to beautify the County. Many job requests reach the teams, and they are able to cope with the demand by acting on the requests when visiting the different areas.

### Street Enforcement

5.2.5 The Enforcement Team continues to run campaigns and respond to any incidents affecting the cleanliness of the County. The team is very proactive in dealing with complaints and enquiries received from the public ensuring timely checks into the incidents.

Over the past year the number of fixed penalty notices has increased. It is believed that this is down to the ownership of the Enforcement Officers who are enthusiastic in their role to ensure improvement in the appearance of our environment. The numbers of penalty notices served over the past two years are highlighted below:





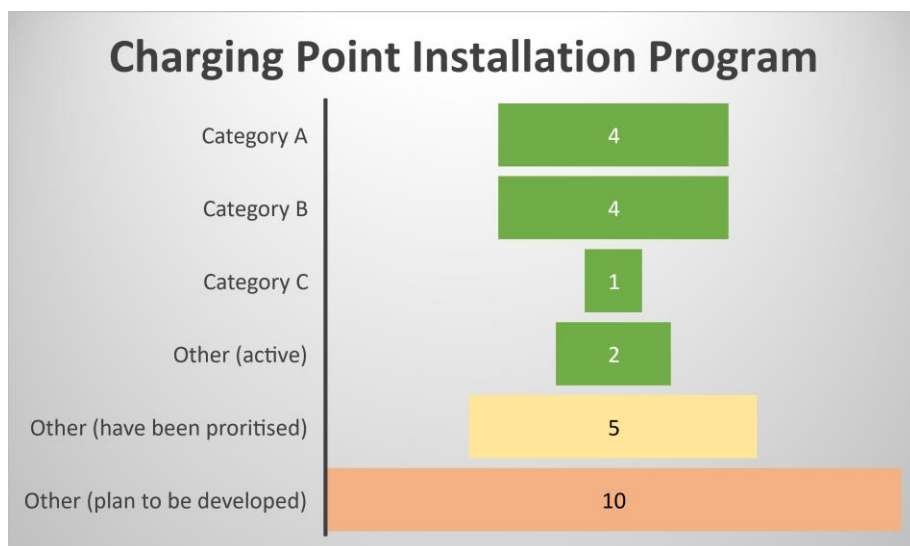
### 5.3 Grounds Maintenance Service

- 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 is responsible for 16 cemeteries across the County and coordinates the opening and closing of graves throughout the year in 12 cemeteries in the Arfon and Meirionnydd areas with different arrangements in the Dwyfor area where funeral directors undertake the work.
- 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 The Service is working with the Department for Environment on a roadside project, to promote the biodiversity of nature particularly pollinators.
- 5.3.4 We are currently undertaking a review of the Grounds Maintenance Service which follows the principles of 'Ffordd Gwynedd' that looks at the service through the service user's eyes. We will now move on to the second step by addressing any work that need to be done to improve the service.

### 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 by introducing a fleet of vehicles (cars and vans) ULEV (Ultra Low Emission Vehicles).
- 5.4.2 There has been significant progress with 70 (30%) of the Council's 232 cars or vans now fully electric.

5.4.3 This transition to green energy goes hand in hand with a department-led internal charging point installation programme and the programme is built around existing fleet vehicle orders.



5.4.4 The Service is also looking at setting up a corporate pool system and the Information Technology team will support the development of the system looking to run a trial soon this year.

## 5.5 CCTV Service (CCTV)

5.5.1 Grant funding is being used with the ongoing rollout and upgrading of CCTV software and hardware equipment, following a tender process. 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 receiving a request for funding (£450,000) through the Shared Prosperity fund (SPF) to extend on our existing provision of CCTV systems in public places. The project involved hiring specialist technical consultants to help write a comprehensive requirement brief for visiting the open market. The winning bidder is now drawing to the end of the submission period, with meetings taking place in the coming weeks to finalise the contract.

## **5.6 Public Toilet 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. Additionally, 37 toilets are available for public use as part of the Public Facilities Grant Scheme which allows members of the public to use toilets at various local establishments in 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 would be in the building. 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.
- 5.6.2. We strive to improve the condition of public toilets to meet the needs of residents and visitors despite declining Council resources. Upgrades this year for Y Maes, Pwllheli and Y Quay Toilets, Aberdyfi have been scheduled. Last year Criccieth toilet was upgraded through the Important Things Fund with an investment of £135,860.
- 5.6.3. Last year, we received internal funds following a bid for replacing payment doors from existing cash ones to offer the option of contactless and cash payment. The procurement process is now complete and new payment doors will be introduced in Pwllheli before the summer period.
- 5.6.4. The Welsh Government agreed to adopt the Public Health (Wales) Bill back in 2017. The overall aim of this legislation was to ensure that all local authorities in Wales assessed the needs of their communities in terms of public toilet provision. In line with these responsibilities, the 'Gwynedd Local Toilets' Strategy was formulated in May 2019. It is timely to review the current Strategy assessing its suitability and relevance to the needs of the Council and the needs of our communities today. We will report to the Scrutiny Committee and then to Cabinet.

## **5.7 Gwynedd Consultancy Business and Project Delivery Service (YGC)**

- 5.7.1 Since Gwynedd Consultancy joined the Department, there has been an opportunity to revisit the two existing Business Units centralising administrative services. Recently, we have reviewed processes following the principles of 'Ffordd Gwynedd'. Through this work we have been able to enhance the use of technology by changing processes from paper to digital. There has also been an opportunity to centralize the administration of the Department's core Information Technology systems. See here progress that has been over the past year:
- Order and Payment Processing – system is operational and has launched to 80% of the Highways and Engineering department. The system will be operational for the entire department by the end of March 2025.
  - Debtor and Client Billing – a new system in place for billing in electronics. Currently operational to Municipal works and Highways (Trunk Roads) works only.
  - Incident / Claims System – a medium-sized system in the process of being developed and aiming to be operational by the end of March 2025.
  - Project Management and Daily Works - a new system in place to track packages of work. Currently active to Municipal works only.

- Asset System – core system operational and used to track H&S assets (First Aid Kits, Defibrillators etc)
- Training System – we are in the process of disposing of the old paper systems and moving to full deployment of MODS.

## 5.8 Gwynedd Consultancy Water and Environment Service (YGC)

- 5.8.1. The Council has published its Climate and Nature Emergency Plan, which refers to how we as a Council respond to the impacts of climate change, which include the impacts of flooding. As a result of this, the Water and Environment Service has produced a Local Flooding Strategy that runs parallel to the Climate Emergency Plan in order to realise both targets.
- 5.8.2. The department submitted the strategy to the Welsh Government for approval and expects their response before the end of the financial year.
- 5.8.3. We are working with Natural Resources Wales on several projects in Pwllheli and Porthmadog to meet the objectives of our Local Flooding Strategy.
- 5.8.4. Two significant schemes are moving forward in the Barmouth area supported by Welsh Government grant funding.

## 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)** – YGC received the ‘Investors in People’ accreditation for the third time this year. The accreditation report and the Service’s action plan will weave into the Service’s 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 cabinet (23/01/24) an overspend of around £699k is anticipated this year. It has been noted that there is a reduction in the work being commissioned by external agencies which is negatively affecting the income of highway services. In municipalities, there is a combination of factors, including additional pressure on street cleaning budgets and cleaning public toilets.
- 7.2 Income losses are seen in maintaining public lands and toilets, but bereavement services are experiencing higher incomes which reduce reported overspending.
- 7.3 Total Savings plans 2024-25 are £419,500. The Department has or is on track to achieve savings of £278.5k with 141k either slipping or with a risk that they might not be delivered.

## **8. Statutory Officers' Views**

### **The Monitoring Officer:**

No observations to add in relation to propriety.

### **Head of Finance:**

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