

CYNGOR GWYNEDD - Report to Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet

Title of Item:	Performance Report of the Cabinet Member for the Environment
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Craig ab Iago
Relevant officer:	Dafydd Wyn Williams, Head of Environment Department
Date of meeting:	11 March 2025

1. THE DECISION SOUGHT:

To accept and note the information in the report.

2. THE REASON FOR THE DECISION:

To ensure effective performance management.

3. INTRODUCTION

3.1 The purpose of this report is to update my fellow members on developments in the fields within my remit as Cabinet Member for the Environment. It outlines the latest developments against the commitments within the 2023-2028 Cyngor Gwynedd Plan; and where we are with the performance measures.

3.2 I would like to remind you that all matters have already been discussed between me, the Chief Executive and a representation of senior officers of the Environment Department in January.

3.3 Overall, I am very satisfied with the progress to date on the Council Plan projects led by the Department and the work of the officers in the day-to-day work of the Environment Department's Services.

4. PRIORITIES OF THE CYNGOR GWYNEDD PLAN 2023-2028

4.1 The Department is leading on five priorities in the 2023-2028 Council Plan, namely:

- Management of second homes and short-term holiday accommodation;
- New Local Development Plan;
- Waste and Recycling;
- Active Travel;
- Public Transport.

4.2 I am very satisfied with the progress that has been achieved this year, and the progress against the milestones set for the five priorities is outlined in Appendix A.

5. PERFORMANCE

I outline below the main issues arising from the Department's performance in the latest period. The information does not refer to all services, rather, it focuses on the issues I feel that need to be brought to your attention.

5.1 Waste and Recycling

5.1.1 Together, we have successfully met the Welsh Government's target of recycling 64% of the waste we collect. However, recycling performance has levelled off for a few years now, and with the expectations to increase to 70% by the end of the year, reaching this level is unlikely this year. But as outlined above, the Waste Strategy for 2025-2030 will set a clear direction for Gwynedd as a county to deliver improvements in recycling levels and meet the 70% target.

5.1.2 We monitor the number of queries relating to missed waste collections and it is good to be able to report there have been clear improvements over the current year (See Figure 1). This coincides with the introduction of a new computer system to facilitate back office arrangements, which also facilitates the work of the workforce on the routes. This system is currently being rolled out across the county, and such arrangements are planned to be used for the Commercial Waste Service soon, to improve communication with customers.

Figure 1



5.2 Public Protection

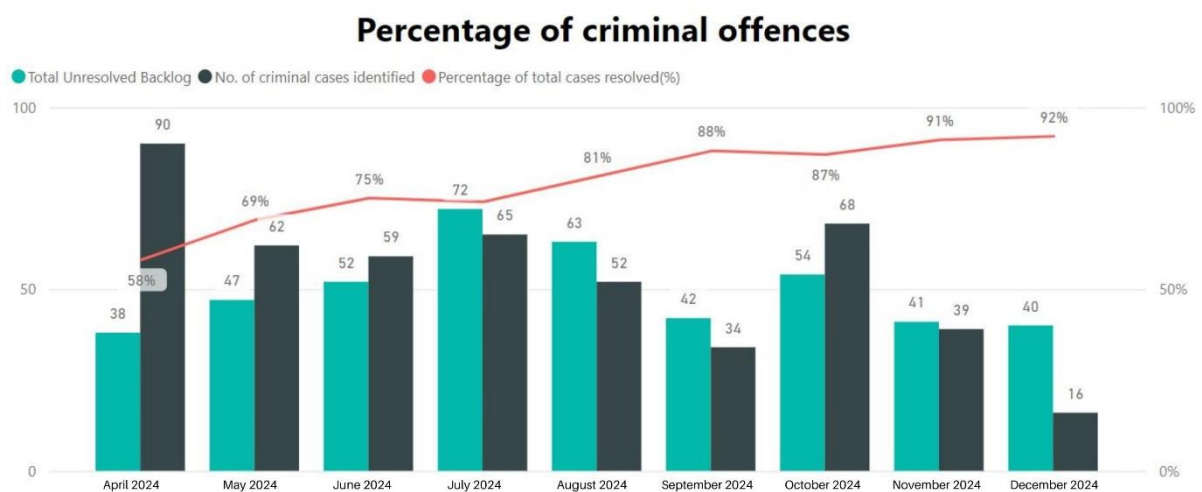
5.2.1 The **Trading Standards Service** safeguards the public's health and well-being from business practices (including farms) that have the potential to be harmful, by ensuring that businesses adopt and maintain systems and comply with the legal requirements that apply to them. The Service achieves this by monitoring, influencing and ensuring animal health and welfare standards, preventing dangerous infections and ensuring the tracing of farm animals.

5.2.2 This year, a new measure has been introduced that monitors the percentage of criminal offences identified by the Service that have been resolved.

5.2.3 Cases are identified through a combination of reports or complaints brought to the service's attention by members of the public and businesses, as well as the proactive work of officers as part of premises inspections.

5.2.4 As the graph demonstrates (Figure 2), the performance of the Service is very positive, and includes a range of work to ensure the welfare of farm animals, together with consumer protection work. This includes energy performance certificates/standards for private rental properties, carrying out inspections of premises that are licensed to store and sell fireworks to ensure compliance with the requirements.

Figure 2

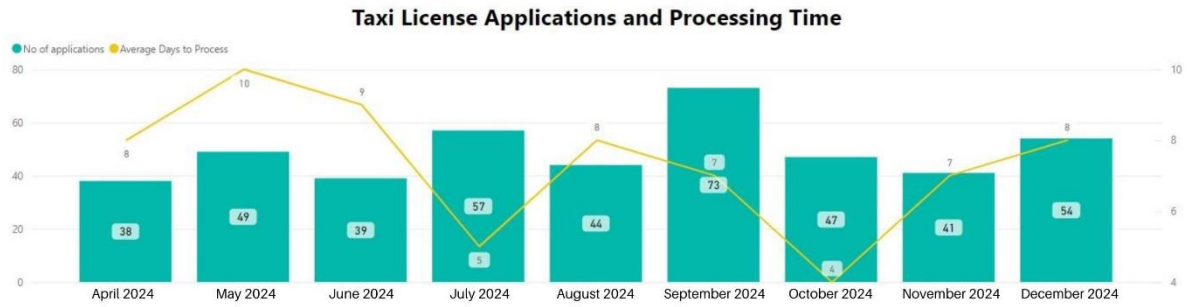


5.2.5 The team also carried out 'test purchase' exercises in a sample of the county's shops and on age-restricted goods - with particular attention on trying to purchase 'fireworks'. The results of the campaign were positive, with no sales reported.

5.2.6 The **Pollution and Licensing Service** ensures that licensed activities relating to taxis, alcohol, gambling and entertaining are provided in a way that protects the public and supports businesses.

5.2.3 During the last year, more taxi vehicle licensing applications are now being submitted through the on-line system on the Council website. The current level of performance is good, and it can be seen from the graph (Figure 3) that the time taken to process applications is very fast, with applications that are submitted in full being processed the same day.

Figure 3



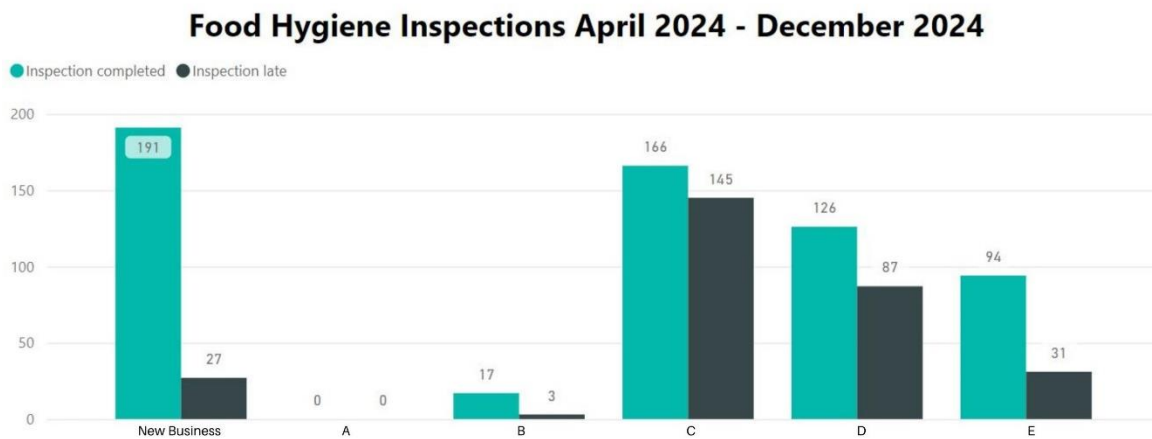
5.2.4 Modifications have also been agreed to the delegated rights process in relation to determinations of the Council's licensing applications. This could result in fewer applications having to be referred to Committee for a decision, thus accelerating the process for applicants. There are delays with some applications as the information submitted may be incomplete or more information is required in addition to the fact that some applications still need to be reported to the Licensing Committee for a decision.

5.2.5 The **Food and Safety Service** ensures that food and drink that is sold for consumption is produced, stored, distributed and handled in a safe manner and complies with statutory requirements.

5.2.6 While 99% of the county's food businesses meet food hygiene standards of a score of 3 or higher, there is currently a backlog in food hygiene standards inspections. This follows significant changes in the Service's organisation over the past 18 months, with a number of experienced officers retiring or moving into other roles and challenges with recruiting qualified officers.

5.2.7 The Service prioritises inspections of high/higher risk food businesses (A/B in the graph in Figure 4 below), and new businesses and there are also efforts to try to secure resources to recruit a trainee who would assist with capacity and planning the future workforce.

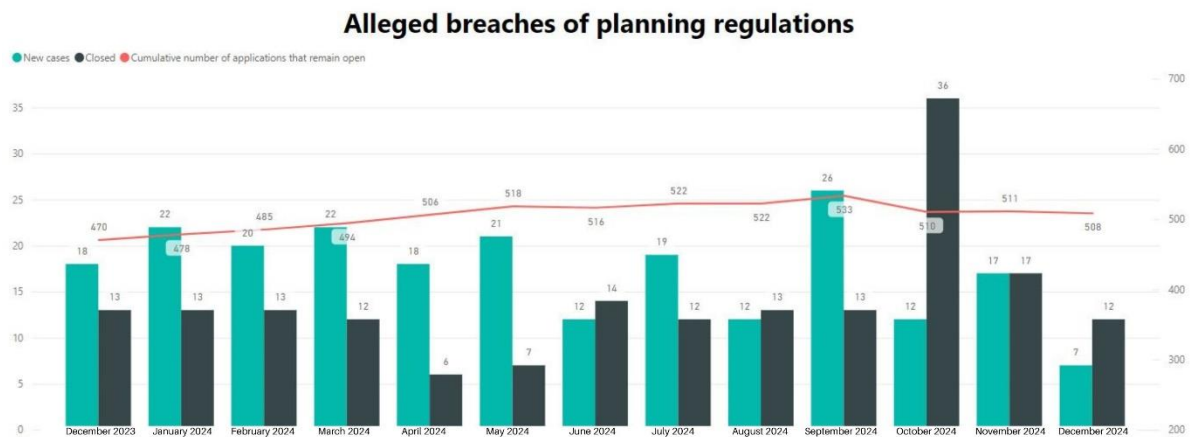
Figure 4



5.3 Planning and Building Control

- 5.3.1 The performance of the **Planning Service** in terms of the average time taken to determine a planning application remains relatively stable, although there is an increase this year in specific applications relating to air source heat pumps and for agricultural developments. The increase in agricultural applications is due to the need for farms to store and treat waste in a way that protects the environment and to comply with relevant legislation.
- 5.3.2 The average application determination time is 105 days, with the latest figures showing that 85% of determinations are made within the statutory time (either under 56 days or with an agreed extension). This highlights that, generally, officers communicate effectively with applicants and understand why it is not always possible to issue a determination within the statutory period.
- 5.3.3 As part of workforce planning efforts, it is gratifying to report there are 4 trainees in the Planning Service, developing their skills and experience.
- 5.3.4 In relation to the number of alleged breaches of planning regulations, it appears that arrangements to strengthen the resource in the field are now having a positive impact on performance. As can be seen from the graph (Figure 5), a good number of cases are now being closed in a timely manner.

Figure 5



- 5.3.5 The **Building Control Service** ensures that building work meets the expected health and safety standards. The Service has been given additional responsibilities in light of the Buildings Safety Act 2022 including the need for officers to register with the Building Safety Regulator as 'Registered Building Inspectors'.
- 5.3.6 However, the latest performance data shows that the Service has shown good progress in the decisions made on applications within statutory deadlines (See Figure 6 below). This has been achieved following an increase in capacity with the recruitment of 2 Assistant Building Control officers, and a LABC Trainee Building Inspector. This has proven to be a great boost to the service, and we will ensure that new team members are fully supported.

Figure 6



5.4 Transport

5.4.1 There is an enforcement team of 9 officers within the **Parking Service** who operate across the county, with officers working 7 days a week with the intention of having a positive influence on motorists' practices to park in a responsible, safe and compliant manner. Officers respond to complaints or concerns about illegal parking at specific locations, and for the latest period, officers have successfully visited 70% of locations within 1 day, with all locations receiving a visit within three days.

5.4.2 When there are incidents of motorists parking in breach of restrictions, the enforcement officers deal with each case in a consistent, fair and transparent manner, with a right for all those who receive a fine to appeal should they feel that any unfairness or error has occurred.

5.4.3 Looking at the situation for the current year it is seen that there is a clear division between the notices issued to on- and off-street (car parks) vehicles. The team's work focuses on on-street parking (57%), with 43% relating to Council car parks.

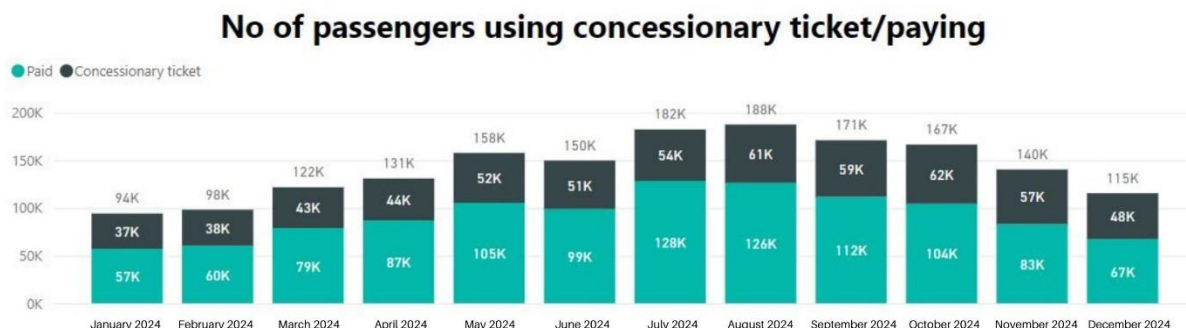
5.4.2 As set out under the Council Plan Priorities, significant work has been undertaken in the field of **Public Transport** over the past two years reviewing and rolling out a new public transport network to communities across the county.

5.4.3 A new measure has been introduced this year to monitor punctuality and ensure that planned journeys travel along the routes on time. I hope passengers will be able to be confident that the bus arrives on time and can rely on the service since the changes to the network, with well over 80% of local bus journeys arriving on time (which is up to 1 minute early or 5 minutes late).

5.4.4 It is also encouraging that a significant percentage (64%) of passengers on the bus network in Gwynedd pay to use the bus rather than use a concessionary

travel ticket (See Figure 7 below). This again reflects that the current network is attractive, and hopefully helps to ensure that the services remain environmentally and financially sustainable.

Figure 7



6. FINANCIAL POSITION / SAVINGS

- 6.1 It was reported to the Cabinet on 21 January (Revenue Budget 2024/25 – End of November 2024 Review), that an overspend of £970,000 is forecast for the Environment Department for the current year.
- 6.2 There is a combination of reasons for that, including the pattern of overspending in waste collection and recycling. Although an overspend of £667,000 is forecast for this area this year, improvements are being made and levels of overspending continue to fall. The Cabinet has recommended that £400,000 of permanent revenue be earmarked to meet part of the ongoing overspend and the Department has plans to restructure to try to meet the remaining amount.
- 6.3 Parking income projections are below the target set, but the impact of this is reduced by underspending from other areas. Members will also be aware that the Cabinet has approved an increase in parking fees effective from April 2025 as part of the effort to address this.
- 6.4 At its meeting on 21 January, the Cabinet approved the deletion of a nappy collection savings scheme worth £146,910 for 2025/26, using the provision set aside in the budget to do so. It was also noted that alternative schemes are being proposed for a savings scheme worth £300,000 by reviewing waste contracts worth £400,000.
- 6.5 We anticipate risks in realising 4 savings schemes worth a total of £388,000 - Standardising departmental support arrangements (£150,000), increasing income by collecting Commercial Waste from holiday accommodation (£120,000), Parking and Streetworks - Extending Parking Enforcement Hours in the Council's Short Stay Car Parks (£38,000) and Parking and Streetworks -

adjusting the Band 2 Long Stay Fees Structure (£80,000). There is a delay on 8 schemes worth £402,000 but work is moving forward, with 1 scheme on track to be realised on time.

The Statutory Officers' observations

Chief Finance Officer:

I am satisfied that the report is a fair reflection of the financial situation of the Environment Department.

Monitoring Officer:

No observations to add in relation to propriety

Appendices:

Appendix A: Council Plan Priorities (Environment)

Background Documents:

[The-Council-Plan-2023-28](#)

[Revenue Budget 2024/25 – End of November 2024 Review](#)

[Savings Overview: Progress Report on Realising Savings Schemes](#)