

---

## THE CABINET, TUESDAY, 11 FEBRUARY 2025

---

**Present-**

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

**Also present-**

Dafydd Gibbard (Chief Executive), Geraint Owen (Corporate Director), Dylan Owen, (Statutory Director of Social Services), Iwan Evans (Monitoring Officer), Dewi Morgan (Head of Finance) and Sioned Mai Jones (Democracy Team Leader).

- Item 6: Bethan Richardson (Climate Change Programme Manager).  
Item 7-8: Gwern ap Rhisiart (Head of Education Department).  
Item 11: Aled Davies (Head of Adults, Health and Well-being Department).  
Item 12: Gareth Jones (Assistant Head of Department) and Heledd Fflur Jones (Planning Policy Team Leader)  
Item 14: Ian Jones (Head of Corporate Services Department) and Catrin Love (Assistant Head of Corporate Services).

### 1. APOLOGIES

Cabinet Members and Officers were welcomed to the meeting by the Leader.

A tribute was paid to Dafydd Elis-Thomas and condolences were extended to his family in their grief. It was expressed that Dafydd's contribution to the nation and language had been invaluable, as well as his contribution to Wales. The Leader added that she had known Dafydd since the 90's and that it was a privilege to have known him.

Apologies were received from Councillor Dilwyn Morgan.

### 2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

Item 7: Councillors Llio Elenid Owen and Menna Trenholme declared they were authority-appointed Governors of Ysgol Llandwrog and Ysgol Bontnewydd. In addition, it was noted that Councillor Menna Trenholme had children at Ysgol Bontnewydd. This was not a prejudicial interest and therefore they did not withdraw from the meeting.

### 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 meetings held on 21 January 2025 were accepted as a true record.

## 6. 2023/24 CLIMATE AND NATURE EMERGENCY PLAN ANNUAL REPORT

The report was submitted by Councillor Nia Jeffreys.

### DECISION

To approve the 2023/24 Cyngor Gwynedd Climate and Nature Emergency Plan Annual Report.

### DISCUSSION

The Climate Change Programme Manager was welcomed to the meeting and she was thanked for her management of the programme and for a comprehensive report. The background to the Climate and Nature Emergency Plan was provided, stating that responding to the climate change crisis was one of 8 improvement priorities within the Council Plan (2023-28). It was noted that this report was the second annual report to be submitted since the Plan's inception at the start of the 2023/23 year and that the report had already been submitted before the Communities Scrutiny Committee in January.

Cabinet Members were guided through the report noting that carbon emission reductions were achieved during the year. It was noted that Cyngor Gwynedd's carbon emissions had fallen by 37% if procurement was ruled out. It was added that there had been a reduction of 16% since 2019/20 if procurement was included in the figures. It was noted that this difference was true of all organisations across the country.

It was noted that a number of exciting projects were underway such as investing in an electric minibus to provide transport to schools. Reference was made to the important task of changing behaviour, which was not always easy. It was noted that despite the progress, much work remained to ensure a greener future for Gwynedd.

Reference was made to the financial risk, and it was explained that a £3m Climate Plan fund had been set up through the one-off revenue bid process. It was elaborated that there was £792,015 left in the fund with £2,207,984 spent or set aside to be spent. It was explained that the Council had added money from several different funds towards the £3m over the years as well as having been very successful with grants which resulted in an additional £6m for the Plan.

It was explained that the report referred to headlines about other specific plans such as the Green Fleet plan to convert Council vehicles from diesel to electric vehicles to save carbon and money for the Council. Reference was also made to a successful grant application where confirmation had been received yesterday about the success of the application to undertake work on Plas Ogwen residential care home. It was noted that the Council had attracted £1.7 million grant monies towards converting the building and improving its energy performance. The Council would also contribute towards this plan and the energy conservation unit was congratulated.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- Congratulations were extended on the work undertaken so far.

- The view was expressed that the Council had tackled the easiest changes first and this had led to significant reductions at the start of the process. It was pointed out that the reduction in emissions had slowed down since 2022/23 with only a 1% increase being made in the reductions. It was thought that progress would slow down when moving forward to more difficult schemes and this may lead to the risk of not reaching the 0% target by 2030.
- It was thought that it was difficult for Local Authorities to prioritise this work because no funding was received from the Welsh Government in terms of revenue towards the work area. It was hoped that the Council's success in being able to attract grants would continue.
- It was thought that difficult decisions would have to be made in the long run by Cabinet Members when the time comes to complete a review of the upcoming scheme which will recognise the cost and recognise how little money is being received for this area. There was concern that a decision will need to be made between this area or other Council responsibilities.
- It was asked what other projects were in the pipeline and if comparisons could be made with what other Councils are doing.
  - In response it was noted that a review was underway to look at all projects on Gwynedd's register and new ideas that had been submitted by Departments as well as new ideas received by looking at the activity of other external bodies. It was noted that these schemes needed to be assessed to establish their practicality, cost and how much carbon they would save. This information will need to be shared with Cabinet Members shortly to prioritise and see how many of the schemes can be funded. Any new ideas were welcomed.

## 7. REVIEW OF THE YSGOL FELINWENDA CATCHMENT AREA

The report was submitted by Councillor Dewi Jones

### DECISION

The responses received to the consultation on reviewing the Ysgol Felinwenda catchment area were considered, as well as the evaluation of the options presented in the report. It was resolved to approve the preferred option, namely: *'Option 2: Transfer the entire Felinwenda catchment area to the catchment area of Ysgol Bontnewydd'*

### DISCUSSION

The report was submitted highlighting Appendix 5, namely the Local Member's comments. It was noted that the Local Member had apologised that he could not attend but was very keen to convey his comments. Cabinet Members were reminded that these comments would need to be taken into account when making today's decision.

It was noted that this report was part of the forward planning and noted that a consultation and evaluation of all options had taken place. Following this Option 2 was suggested as the preferred option, noting that Officers from the Education Department and the Cabinet Member for Education were of the opinion that this was the most suitable option.

It was noted that this option would enable all Ysgol Felinwnda catchment area learners to stay together and the option aligned with the current choice of the majority of catchment learners with 57% already choosing to attend Ysgol Bontnewydd. It was anticipated that this option would offer lower transportation costs than all other options except for option 3. It was expressed that due consideration had been given to the financial element although the financial element was not the main consideration in making the decision.

It was confirmed that, in accordance with Council Policy, parents had the right to enrol their children in any school with empty places. It was noted that establishing a catchment area did not mean that the Council required any child to go to a particular school. It was commented that the promise that the Council would provide transport for former Ysgol Felinwnda pupils to the school of their choice for the duration of their primary school remained.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- It was recognised that this decision was difficult, and it was hard to please everyone.
- Assurances were sought that parents would be given the choice of which school to send their children to if the school of their choice was in another catchment area.
  - It was confirmed that this was correct and that parents were entitled to enrol their children in any school provided there were empty places in the school in question.
- Disappointment was expressed that transferring the Felinwnda catchment area to Ysgol Llandwrog was not the recommendation and strong disagreement was expressed with the option before the Cabinet. Reference was made to the link that had existed between Ysgol Felinwnda and Ysgol Llandwrog for years and the points of the Local Member were echoed who also disagreed with the recommendation. There was concern that this recommendation would result in a negative impact on Cylch Meithrin Dinas and Llanwnda. It was confirmed that the Cabinet Member would vote against the decision today based on these reasons.
- The Council's vow on page 59 of the report to continue to offer transport to children in the area was welcomed.
  - It was stressed that any former pupil would continue to receive transport while they remained in primary school.
- It was expressed that the Education Department continued to support Ysgol Llandwrog.
- It was noted that education and children must be put ahead of the future of any school.
- It was believed that there would be no negative impact on the Cylch Meithrin adding that the Education Department was very supportive of the Cylch Meithrin and wished to see it continue to succeed and for the close relationship between Cylch Meithrin Llanwnda and Ysgol Llandwrog to continue.

## **8. YSGOL GYNRADD NEBO AND YSGOL BALADEULYN**

The report was submitted by Councillor Dewi Jones

### **DECISION**

It was agreed to commence formal discussions with the Governing Body and relevant stakeholders of Ysgol Gynradd Nebo, discussing the potential options relating to the school's future as a result of a low number of learners and the concerns about the school's sustainability.

It was agreed to commence formal discussions with the Governing Body and relevant stakeholders of Ysgol Baladeulyn, discussing the potential options relating to the school's future because of a low number of learners and the concerns about the school's sustainability.

## **DISCUSSION**

Reference was made to the severity of the County's demographic shifts with the ageing population and the number of children in the County decreasing annually. It was acknowledged that there had been successful efforts by the Council to attract young people back to Gwynedd to live but the problem of the reduction in the number of children in the County remained.

The report was submitted asking the Cabinet to initiate formal discussions relating to the future of Ysgol Nebo and Ysgol Baladeulyn due to low numbers of learners and concerns about the sustainability of both schools. It was confirmed that the Education Department would look at the two schools separately.

Reference was made to the background and what had led to the initiation of these discussions as noted in the report. It was stated that 10 full-time learners currently attended Ysgol Gynradd Nebo with one child in the nursery class. This meant that there was 80% empty places at the school. A similar situation was reported at Ysgol Baladeulyn with 13 full-time learners currently attending school and only one child in the nursery class. It was noted that this corresponded to 76% of empty places at the school when looking at the school's capacity.

Reference was made to the per capita cost per learner for both schools, which was significantly higher than the County average; almost three times the cost.

The Head of Education added that if the Cabinet approved the decision sought today, then discussions would take place with the schools over the coming months. He noted that an impact assessment would be conducted following those discussions on each of the possible options. It was explained that the items would come back before the Cabinet in June with the local feedback and the outcome of the discussions in order to discuss next steps.

There were no observations or questions.

## **9. SAVINGS AND CUTS PLAN 2025/26**

The report was submitted by Councillor Nia Jeffrey.

## **DECISION**

To approve the savings and cuts listed in Appendix A (£519k) to be used as a contribution towards our 2025/26 fiscal gap, and commission the Departments to move forward with implementing the plans while pointing out the issues highlighted in the report.

It was approved to delegate the right to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Council Leader and the Finance Cabinet Member, to make adjustments to this Savings and Cuts Plan within the Departmental totals as the maturity of the schemes listed in Appendix A develop, within the fiscal totals.

## **DISCUSSION**

The report was submitted stating that the Council now knew what the Revenue Support Grant level from the Welsh Government would be for 2025/26 and that it would be significantly lower than what was needed to maintain our current level of services. As a result of this and other factors e.g. Departmental overspending and increased staffing costs, it was reported that detailed work has been carried out to identify opportunities for savings or cuts.

Reference was made to the financial briefing sessions held for all elected members in January 2025 to prioritise savings cuts for 2025/26. It was added that this report was submitted to the Governance and Audit Committee last week and that the Committee had noted the contents of the report.

It was elaborated that the settlement was better than what had been predicted last year but that the Council's financial position remained very poor with a significant gap to fill. It was noted that the £3.5 million of cuts determined last year were already in the system. It was added that there were no further efficiency savings that could be made and therefore cuts of £519,000 had been identified as listed in Appendix A.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- Concern was expressed about the negative comments received by the Council, staff and Members in public e.g. on social media, and there was concern about the impact these comments were having on officers. It was added that Cyngor Gwynedd was lucky and better placed than many other Councils and were doing their best to protect services for the people of the County.
- The opportunity was taken to thank Council staff who were working hard and trying to achieve more but with fewer resources.

## **10. 2025/26 BUDGET**

The report was submitted by Councillor Huw Wyn Jones.

## **DECISION**

To recommend to the Council (at its meeting on 6 March 2025) that a budget of £355,243,800 should be established for 2025/26 to be funded by a £246,818,190 Government Grant and £108,425,610 of Council Tax income (which is an increase of 8.66%).

To recommend to the Council (at its meeting on 6 March 2025) that a capital programme of £53,736,190 should be established for 2025/26 to be funded from the sources noted in Appendix 4 of the report.

## DISCUSSION

The report was submitted noting that the budget was an attempt to invest in services that catered for the most vulnerable, such as adult social services and care services for children. This will be done by investing to reduce waiting lists and trying to rectify budgets that could not be invested in previously. The Finance Department were thanked for their hard work in preparing the budget.

A presentation summarising the main points of the report was shared. Reference was made to the overspend totalling £8.3 million with almost £7 million coming from the care services namely Adult, Health and Well-being and Children and Families. It was thought that this was partly due to people living longer with more intensive conditions, and it was noted that addressing these requirements were costly.

Reference was made to the revenue bids noting that £6.8 million has already been approved and many had also received support or were new issues in 2025/26. It was noted that this meant that a total of £7.7 million of additional resources needed to be found. Taking into account the increase in levies, salary inflation and an increase in the employer's national insurance, it was noted that the Council's total additional expenditure was £24 million.

It was confirmed by considering the basic budget and the additional expenditure and income from the Welsh Government Grant, that there was a financial gap of £109 million to be funded from savings and Council Tax. It was noted that after including the savings there was a residual gap to be addressed through Council Tax of £108,45,610. It was elaborated that Council Tax would have to be increased by 8.66% to meet this figure. It was acknowledged that this was not good news but that there were few other options.

The Head of Finance referred to Appendix 10, namely a statutory finance officer's statement on the resilience of the estimates and he elaborated that he was confident that the budgets submitted were sound and adequate.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- Gratitude was expressed for the presentation, and it was noted that the slides presented were of assistance to understand the figures.
- Reference was made to the costly services such as adults and school costs and it was noted that they are not obvious services but very costly ones to maintain.
  - The Cabinet Member reiterated that the Department had not disrupted the Education budget too much this year. It caused concern that County residents do not see the care work unless they are a care recipient and therefore do not understand how expensive it is.
- It was expressed that there was no pleasure in suggesting increases in Council Tax. It was added that Council Tax reduction schemes were available.

- The Head of Finance elaborated that there were limits to qualifying for this scheme but took the opportunity to note that it was important for those eligible to make a claim for any benefits or discounts.

## **11. MODIFICATION TO THE COUNCIL PLAN**

The report was submitted by Councillor Nia Jeffreys.

### **DECISION**

It was approved to add the Domiciliary Care project to the list of projects under the Gwynedd caring priority area in the Council's Plan 2023 – 2028.

### **DISCUSSION**

The report was submitted stating that the application stemmed from the finding and recommendation of the Adult Services Inspections that have been undertaken over the past few months. It was elaborated that Care Inspectorate Wales and the Welsh Audit Office carried out the inspections of care services provided by the Adults, Health and Well-being Department during the months of October and November 2024. In addition to this it was mentioned that the audit by the Welsh Local Government Association had taken place during the same period.

The findings of the inspections were detailed, and it was noted that the 3 organisations highlighted that domiciliary care issues should receive greater attention in the Council's strategic programmes. It was also noted that this topic should be given priority by being included in the Council's Plan. It was thought that this would help to deliver and provide a foundation for the issues, and it was important to include it as one of the Department's priorities. It was noted that the Caring Gwynedd priority field within the Council's Plan was an important one and this is where the home care field would be included. The next steps of introducing this modification were highlighted to a meeting of the Full Council on 6 March.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- Gratitude was expressed for the report and it was welcomed that such an important area should be given more priority in the Council's Plan.

## **12. DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE: MANAGING THE USE OF DWELLINGS AS HOLIDAY ACCOMMODATION**

The report was submitted by the Assistant Head of Department.

### **DECISION**

The Draft SPG: Managing the Use of Dwellings as Holiday Accommodation (Second Homes and Short-Term Holiday Accommodation), was considered and comments were provided as well as any necessary amendments as appropriate.



Approval was given to release the draft Supplementary Planning Guidance: Managing the Use of Dwellings as Holiday Accommodation (subject to any necessary amendments) for a public consultation period.

It was approved to delegate the right to the Head of the Environment Department to make any non-material amendments that may be required to the draft SPG.

## **DISCUSSION**

The report was submitted stating that the Article 4 Direction came into effect on 1 September 2024 following its confirmation at the Cabinet meeting of 16 July, 2024. Reference was made to the implications of the Article 4 Direction stating that planning permission is now required to be obtained for certain change of use developments. It was explained that the decisions on those applications were made in accordance with the Joint Local Development Plan namely the adopted plan for the area. It was explained that this was the statutory requirement as a result of recent legislative changes.

It was noted that the Department was in the process of preparing a new plan and that the work of creating new policies was currently underway. It was explained that the intention of the Draft Supplementary Planning Guide included in Appendix 1 was to provide detailed guidance as to the application of the Department's current planning policies that emanate from the Article 4 direction. It was deemed that this Guidance will aid the Authority in making decisions on planning applications.

It was added that the Guidance needed to be consistent with the Council's current planning policies and provide clear guidance. It was noted that the draft Guidance had already been reported to the Planning Policy Working Group twice with reference to the Working Group's comments included in part 3.7 of the report.

It was noted that the Guidance was effectively a temporary measure until the Department had completed the process of developing and adopting the new Local Development Plan. Reference was made on part 3.8 of the report which outlined the next steps in the process and undertaking a public consultation period of 6 weeks.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- The Assistant Head of Department was asked to elaborate on the role of the Working Group and their input.
  - In response it was explained that a draft version of the Supplementary Planning Guidance had been submitted to the Working Group in November 2024. It was noted that the Working Group had concerns about the guidance included for applications to change the use of a house to a second home; as a result of these concerns amendments were made to the Guidance. It was reported that the Working Group was pleased with the changes reported to them in December 2024 and supported releasing the Guidance for public consultation.

## **13. TRANSFER OF THE NORTH WALES GROWTH DEAL TO THE NORTH WALES CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEE**

The report was submitted by the Monitoring Officer.

## **DECISION**

- (1) It was agreed to draw up a Partnering and Funding Agreement (Appendix 1) whereby the role of the Accountable Body, the responsibility for achieving the North Wales Growth Deal and the funding arrangements for the Growth Deal are transferred to the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee on or before 31 March 2025.
- (2) It was agreed to novate and assign as required the delivery of the North Wales Growth Deal and rights and obligations in all incoming funding agreements held by Cyngor Gwynedd as an Accountable Body on behalf of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board ("NWEAB") transfer to the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee ("NWCJC").
- (3) It was agreed to transfer and novate and/or assign all interests in the portfolio of projects funded by the North Wales Growth Deal, together with any ancillary agreements, charges and leases from Cyngor Gwynedd as an Accountable Body on behalf of the NWEAB to the NWCJC.
- (4) It was agreed to transfer and / or assignment of all financial balances, monies due and assets as held on behalf of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board by Cyngor Gwynedd to the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee.
- (5) It was agreed to delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer, to agree and execute the final form agreements, deeds and all other legal documents necessary to implement the transfers referred to in paragraphs (1), (2) and (3) above.
- (6) On completion of the Partnership and Funding Agreement, it was agreed to terminate the GA2 agreement and to the winding up of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board Joint Committee.
- (7) It was agreed to transfer accountability to the CJC and that the CJC accepts responsibility for decision making for the implementation of the North Wales Growth Deal subject to novation of the Growth Deal and approval of the additional Standing Orders Page 251 incorporating the key terms of the Joint Working Agreement ("GA2") between the six Constituent Councils and the four Education parties. An additional 251 incorporating the key terms of the Co-working Agreement ("GA2") between the 6 Constituent Councils and the 4 Education parties.

## **DISCUSSION**

The report was submitted highlighting that it was a very technical report. The background was provided with reference to the decision to invest public funds in the region back in 2020 and the establishment of the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee in 2021. It was explained that the CJC currently has three distinct functions namely the development of regional transport policies, the preparation of a Strategic Development Plan and the Economic Well-being work. It was noted that there was a

decision in principle across the six authorities in North Wales to transfer the Growth Plan to the CJC.

Reference was made to the delay in moving the project forward and in setting up the CJC and the reasons for the delay such as the regulations and the system for the Corporate Joint Committee which were continuing to develop. It was highlighted that a project team was working on transferring the Growth Deal to the CJC; this will ultimately mean Gwynedd would be able to step back from the host authority role. It was explained that the grants would transfer to the responsibility of the CJC but Scrutiny would remain with the Councils.

It was explained that a similar report would be submitted before the Cabinet of other Councils soon and before the two universities to agree to transfer on 31 March 2025. It was noted that Cyngor Gwynedd was the first Council to make the decision.

There were no observations or questions.

#### **14. PERFORMANCE REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CORPORATE AND LEGAL SERVICES**

The report was submitted by Councillor Llio Elenid Owen.

##### **DECISION**

To accept and note the information in the report.

##### **DISCUSSION**

The report providing an update on what had happened recently presented in the Corporate and Legal Services Department. It was expressed that the Corporate Services Department was leading on six projects within the different priority areas of the Council's Plan 2023-28 namely Keeping the Benefit Local, Women In Leadership, Ensuring Fairness for All, Workforce Planning, Promoting the Use of the Welsh Language by Gwynedd Residents and a Strategic Review of Health and Safety Management. A summary was provided on what had been achieved to date within these projects.

It was highlighted that the Corporate Services Department was performing well and reference was made to some of the highlights as set out in part 5 of the report. In conclusion, reference was made to the Department's financial position.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- Reference was made to the Legal Service Performance Report and it was noted that it was encouraging to see the benefits of Cynllun Yfory.
- Concern was expressed about the reference to the appointment of a locum and the externalisation of work, further details were requested about the number of locums used by the Service and if they are able to undertake work in Welsh. It was also asked about the recruitment challenges and any resulting financial risks.

- In response it was confirmed that the staffing position had transformed for the better in the last two years. It was noted that a position was currently being advertised and the hope was that they could appoint.
- It was confirmed that the recruitment situation had improved and that this had led to a reduction in the Service's use of locums.
- It was noted that the Service was now able to recruit by offering a short-term contract rather than employing a locum.
- It was expressed that efforts were being made to use Welsh-speaking locums although it was recognised that these were scarce.
- It was explained that many issues and cases were open by the Legal team and that the use of locums allowed them to bridge gaps to cope with the work. It was added that the nature of the work was specialised with certain technical areas and that there was not enough of the work to appoint but that specific expertise was required for a period of time so that an element of locums use was inevitable.
- An update was requested on the effort to try to get more staff on board with the Equality Forum.
  - It was expressed that the initial work of finding out what the interest was had been carried out and an invitation had been sent to staff. It was noted that there was strong interest among staff and that the Department was waiting to see what the response would be following sending out a second invitation last week.
- Congratulations were expressed on the success of the Women in Leadership programme, and it was noted that it was pleasing to see the progress. The differences were highlighted in the division of men and women between Departments and between job tiers. It was questioned if it was timely to evaluate the programme and compare the differences between Departments to see what works well to continue to learn and look at new ways to push this long-term agenda forward.
  - In response it was noted that the data was constantly being updated. Reference was made to a new year-long regime of requests for Service Manager level positions or above to be submitted anonymously in an attempt to remove any unconscious bias. It was reported that 50% of appointments over the past year to Service Manager positions or above had been filled by women and this was very encouraging. It was further added that more women than men submitted an application form for the posts and that this was a vital part of the work of the Women in Leadership programme which was to encourage women to apply.

The meeting commenced at 1.00 pm and concluded at 3.00 pm.

---

**CHAIR**