
COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: CRIME AND DISORDER, 23 JANUARY 2025

Present:

COUNCILLORS: Annwen Hughes (Chair)

Elwyn Edwards, Elin Hywel, Arwyn Herald Roberts, Beca Brown, Linda Morgan, Beca Roberts, Berwyn Parry Jones, Edgar Wyn Owen, Delyth Lloyd Griffiths, Jina Gwyrfai, Robert Glyn Daniels, Peter Thomas, Gruffydd Williams, Elfed Powell Roberts, Rob Triggs, Elfed Williams and Stephen Churchman.

Officers present:

Geraint Owen (Corporate Director), Bethan Adams (Scrutiny Advisor) and Rhodri Jones (Democracy Services Officer).

Present for Item 6:

Councillor Dilwyn Morgan (Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Well-being), Mannon Trappe (Senior Manager for Safeguarding, Quality Assurance and Mental Health), Daron Marged Owens (Senior Operational Officer Gwynedd and Anglesey Community Safety Partnership), Dylan Owen (Statutory Director of Social Services) and Stephen Pawson (Chief Inspector, North Wales Police).

Present for Item 7:

Councillor Nia Jeffreys (Council Leader), Dafydd Gibbard (Chief Executive) and Bethan Richardson (Climate Change Programme Manager).

Present for Item 8:

Councillor Nia Jeffreys (Council Leader) and Sandra Lynne Thomas (Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board Programme Manager).

1. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

RESOLVED to elect Councillor Delyth Lloyd Griffiths as Vice-Chair of the Committee for the year 2024/25.

2. APOLOGIES

No apologies were received.

3. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received.

4. URGENT ITEMS

None to note.

5. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 07 November 2024, as a true record.

6. ANNUAL UPDATE BY THE GWYNEDD AND ANGLESEY COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

The report was presented by the Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Well-being, Senior Manager for Safeguarding, Quality Assurance and Mental Health, Senior Operational Officer of the Gwynedd and Anglesey Community Safety Partnership, Statutory Director of Social Services and Chief Inspector of North Wales Police.

All were reminded that submitting an annual update on the implementation of the Safety Partnership was a statutory requirement for Local Authorities in accordance with the Police and Criminal Justice Act 2002 and 2006.

It was explained that Community Safety Partnerships had been established in 1988 to ensure that crime and disorder was considered as a problem for everyone within society, not just for the police. It was added that the Partnership had a responsibility to formulate and implement a strategy to prevent and reduce serious violence and this was being done regionally across north Wales.

It was emphasised that no funds were permanently allocated for community safety and the Partnership was dependent on ad-hoc funding opportunities following the submission of detailed bids. It was noted that the only service directly commissioned by the Partnership were the Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHR). It was explained that the Domestic Homicide Reviews were a statutory duty as a result of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2024. It was confirmed that two reviews had been submitted to the Home Office and had been approved. Members were updated that the Partnership had submitted a bid to the Self-Harm and Suicide Prevention Fund to deliver a joint project with the Domestic Abuse Safety Unit, North Wales Police, and the 'Live Fear Free' helpline to provide support to victims of domestic abuse. Pride was expressed that this bid had been approved and the project would be developed during 2025.

Several priority issues were highlighted for the partnership during 2024-25, based on the regional priorities of the Safer North Wales Board Strategy. It was explained that these included:

- Prevention of crime and anti-social behaviour
- Tackling violent crime
- Tackling serious organised crime
- Safeguarding and building resilient communities and maintaining public safety.

Data was shared data on several different types of crime and compared with the 2023/24 data statistics to look if Gwynedd's statistics were similar to what was seen across north Wales. It was recognised that there was a significant increase in the rates of stalking and harassment (+11.5%) and sex offences (+27.9%) compared with 2023/24 rates. It was considered that this increase derived from the fact that more cases were being reported as victims were more confident to do so following recent campaigns. It was added that there was an increase in the number of offences being reported after more than 12 months had elapsed since the offence. Reference was also made to hate crime rates, and it was also noted that these were 16.3% higher in Gwynedd compared to 2023/24. It was emphasised that a 10.9% increase in this type of crime appeared to be regional. However, it was assured that the rates of all types of crime were not on the rise, such as domestic incidents (-1.3% compared to 2023/24) and rates of individuals offending under the influence of alcohol or drugs (-28.5% regionally compared to 2023/24).

It was reported that the North Wales Serious Violence Strategy had been published in January 2024. It was explained that this Strategy imposed a Serious Violence Duty on specified authorities to work together to prevent and reduce serious crime in their communities. It was emphasised that the Partnership had played a central role in developing this Strategy. The Partnership received £82,000 for this work which was designated to fund eight new projects.

Pride was expressed that the Partnership had received £450,000 through the Shared Prosperity Fund to install and upgrade close circuit television (CCTV) in areas of Caernarfon, Bangor and Pwllheli. Thanks were given for the close collaboration with the Highways, Engineering and YGC Department who had been assisting with the installation of the cameras. It was added that the Partnership intended to submit applications for additional funding from the Shared Prosperity Fund so that more CCTV cameras could be installed in other areas of Gwynedd.

An update was given that Public Spaces Protection Orders had been issued in areas of Caernarfon, Cricieth and Pwllheli in August 2024 following the Cabinet's approval. It was noted that these had been introduced to ensure the public felt safe within their communities and to give police extra powers to tackle anti-social behaviour.

During the discussion, the following observations were made:-

Concern was raised that the data presented within the report indicated that sex offences had increased significantly more in Gwynedd (+27.9%) than regionally (+14.6%) compared to the 2023/24 data. The Partnership was thanked for the work being done to support victims of sex offences. However, it was considered that the Partnership should ensure that preventative work in this area was a future priority to ensure that rates are reduced. In response to the comments, the Senior Manager for Safeguarding, Quality Assurance and Mental Health confirmed that preventative work was being implemented such as the programmes undertaken in schools to learn about acceptable behaviours and healthy relationships.

The Partnership was congratulated on their success in refurbishing CCTV systems in the Caernarfon, Bangor and Pwllheli areas. It was considered that if work was being carried out to assess crime rates before the new cameras were installed and to compare these to see if this project had resulted in fewer offences. In response to the comments, the Senior Operational Officer of the Gwynedd and Anglesey Community Safety Partnership confirmed that this was an important element of the project and positive data would give information to support additional applications to the Shared Prosperity Fund. It was confirmed that the Wavehill company had been commissioned to ascertain the relevant data and confirm that the information would be included in the Partnership's 2025/26 annual update, and it would be possible to share information with this Committee if desired.

Reference was made to the North Wales Vulnerability and Exploitation Strategy 2021-24 which involved violence against women, domestic abuse, sexual abuse and modern slavery, and it was asked what work was taking place to support communities to recognise signs that individuals were victims of modern slavery. In response to the query, the Senior Safeguarding, Quality Assurance and Mental Health Manager confirmed that this work was not being implemented directly by the Partnership but that a Vulnerability Board was looking into these issues and educating residents on the awareness of modern slavery and how they could recognise signs that someone was suffering.

It was highlighted that hate crime was a growing issue in Gwynedd and regionally, with statistics increasing annually. In response to a query on how to deal with this challenge,

the Senior Operational Officer of Gwynedd and Anglesey Community Safety Partnership confirmed that the Partnership was aware of the challenge. It was noted that it was difficult to deal with this using one specific method as there were several different aspects to the offences. However, it was emphasised that the Partnership was working together to develop powerful plans to respond to the challenge with a view of reducing the number of this type of crime in the future.

It was considered that rates of domestic, sexual offences and stalking could fall if more resources were earmarked to deal with them, such as ensuring more police officers were on patrol in our communities. In response to the comments, the Senior Operational Officer of the Gwynedd and Anglesey Community Safety Partnership agreed that this could be an effective way of lowering the crime rates. However, it was confirmed that the Welsh Government was responsible for the various grants that fund the Partnership and there were limits as to how those funds could be spent. It was emphasised that lobbying work was happening to see an increase in the grants available to the Partnership this year and that officers were enquiring about the grants' forecasts for the 2025/26 financial year.

It was noted that house and business burglary crime statistics were relatively similar to those seen in 2023/24. It was asked whether it was possible to receive data to outline how many of these crimes occur in rural settings compared to urban areas. It was also considered whether any consideration had been given to a mobile CCTV device which can be used in different areas as required. In response to the comments, the Senior Operational Officer of Gwynedd and Anglesey Community Safety Partnership explained that due to the complexity of the task and that there was only one analyst carrying out the work across north Wales that this data could not be received for the whole of the County, but that data could be provided if information about a particular area was requested. The Chief Inspector elaborated that the Police and CSP welcomed the idea of a mobile CCTV device but financial considerations were a barrier to purchase.

It was asked whether the locations where crime takes place were assessed (such as the quality of the streetlight, if it was a shaded or hidden area) and being considered following crimes, to consider improvements to prevent future crime. In response to the question, the Chief Inspector confirmed that this was a very important part of police investigations and led to adjustments in the way those spaces were protected.

It was considered whether the increase in sexual offences figures was due to any changes to crime reporting. In response to the query the Senior Manager for Safeguarding, Quality Assurance and Mental Health confirmed that victims felt more confident to report crime following campaigns to raise awareness about this process. It was added that this has led to victims reporting historical crimes which had been included in the figures in the report.

It was mentioned that the statistics presented in the report reflected the crimes reported. It was discussed that a number of offences had not been included in the report as no one had reported them, and to consider what work was being done by the Partnership to try to ensure that as many crimes as possible were detected and that data was processed annually. In response to the query, the Senior Manager for Safeguarding, Quality Assurance and Mental Health confirmed that collecting this data could be challenging but the Partnership was working with support services such as the Live Fear Free Helpline, North Wales Violence and Sexual Abuse Support Centre, Gorwel and the Domestic Abuse Safety Unit (DASU) to be able to consider the type of challenges that affect them. The Chief Inspector added that offenders were often not caught when undertaking their first offence and work was being done to try to catch offenders sooner and to encourage victims to report offences earlier.

The members expressed their thanks for the report.

RESOLVED

- 1. To accept the report, noting the observations made during the discussion.**
- 2. To support the priorities and the future direction of the work.**
- 3. To recommend that the Partnership adds preventative work linked to sexual offences as a specific future priority.**

7. 2023/24 CLIMATE AND NATURE EMERGENCY PLAN ANNUAL REPORT

The report was presented by the Leader of the Council, the Chief Executive and Climate Change Programme Manager.

Members were reminded that a Climate and Nature Emergency Plan was adopted by Cabinet on 8 March 2022 with the ambition that 'Cyngor Gwynedd will be carbon net zero and ecologically positive by 2030'. It was added that the issue of responding to a climate change crisis was one of the priorities of 'Improving the Council' within the 2023-28 Cyngor Gwynedd Plan.

It was explained that the Council's carbon emissions had been reduced by 16% compared to the baseline established in 2019/20, including procurement. It was recognised that carbon emissions from procurement processes presented a challenge to achieving this ambition as it was purely expenditure-based and did not take into account the locations where the Council purchased goods. It was noted that this painted a misleading picture of the true impact of climate expenditure.

It was noted that £3million had been earmarked for the creation of a Climate Plan fund through the one-time revenue bid process. An update was provided that £792,015 remained in this fund at the end of December 2024 as £2,207,984 had been spent or earmarked for expenditure. It was explained that this expenditure included £500,000 on electric car charging points and £2.1million on a low carbon heating scheme.

It was explained that issues relevant to the Plan were developing rapidly and that it was timely to consider reviewing the Plan. Members were encouraged to share any appropriate ideas and developments to consider them when reviewing the Plan.

During the discussion, the following observations were made: -

Reference was made to the proposed review of the Plan. It was proposed and seconded that conclusions from the Plan review be submitted to this Committee when timely so that the Committee could provide input before submitting the review to the Cabinet.

It was asked whether the Board was effectively realising the needs of the objectives of the Plan, or whether other options need to be considered to ensure that the ambition was addressed. The Chief Executive noted that the review of this Plan would assess whether the projects that are in place are sufficient to meet the ambition, or whether new plans need to be developed. It was added that other aspects of the Plan would be assessed to consider if it was fit for purpose, to save money and protect services. It was also confirmed that consideration would be given to establish if the Board was the best vehicle to drive the Plan forward or if there was a need to re-consider the structure.

It was noted that investing in schemes to reduce carbon emissions had saved the Council a great deal of money. The Council was encouraged to continue to invest in these schemes in the future.

It was asked how this Committee or Elected Members could help lobby the Government in relation to the challenges of the Procurement processes to call for a change to how procurement was recorded in the pursuit of reducing carbon emissions. In response to the comments, the Climate Change Programme Manager confirmed that work was being undertaken to reduce carbon emissions in the procurement field despite challenges within the processes. It was detailed that officers were working with Business Wales to hold specific seminars within the care field to see how they could reduce their carbon emissions. It was elaborated that support was available for external providers to encourage them to de-carbonise, in the hope that they would see the benefit of this. Pride was expressed that most providers working with the Council within the care area see value from these schemes but that financial challenges were preventing some companies from realising the changes.

Reference was made to the chart on page 8 of the annual report which demonstrated that 'Buildings' were responsible for 45% of carbon emissions (excluding procurement) during 2023/24. It was noted that it would be useful to have more detailed data to be able to identify what challenges were contributing to carbon emissions. It was thought that detailing this data would lead to solutions to the current challenges.

It was noted that the Report confirmed that the construction of solar panel farms had been removed from the Plan due to financial issues. It was mentioned this would have had a major impact on the area's landscape, and it was considered whether the Council had considered putting solar panels on other locations such as on buildings or car parks. In response to the comments, the Chief Executive confirmed that not all areas were suitable for solar panels but extended work was being carried out on car parks to install solar panels in appropriate spaces.

It was highlighted that the Report identified an 11% increase in carbon emissions from street lighting since 2022/23. In response to the comments, the Chief Executive confirmed that this figure has increased this year due to the Council inheriting more street lighting following developments such as the Caernarfon bypass. It was confirmed that this figure was expected to fall by the next annual report.

Reference was made to integrated public transport plans as part of the Plan's 'Moving and Transport' priority, noting that bus timetables were creating problems in some communities. It was detailed that residents' confidence in using public transport needed to be gained, by confirming that bus timetables allow them to come and go from the workplace, socialise and travel around with certainty in order to increase the use made of the services. It was also considered that this would discourage residents from buying personal cars as public transport addressed their needs.

Comments were noted which questioned the need to try to reduce carbon emissions. In response, it was confirmed that the Council had decided to strive to make the Plan a reality in line with the recommendations of experts.

It was asked how much of the money saved by implementing the Scheme's projects was invested back into the Plan for funding future projects. In response, the Chief Executive confirmed that the money saved was not currently being reinvested in the scheme due to the current financial pressures on the Council. However, it had been confirmed that the financial saving was being made to ensure that other services offered by the Council were protected when trying to cope with the situation.

It was asked what developments were underway in connection with the Council's 'Green Fleet' plan. In response to the query, the Chief Executive confirmed that consideration was being given to see if the Council's fleet could be reduced by considering what jobs required their use and what impact reducing the fleet would have on services provided by the Council. It was also noted that efforts were being made to purchase electric vehicles when replacing vehicles but it was acknowledged that this could currently be done for all vehicles, such as waste collection lorries. It was ensured that all Council electric vehicles would be charged at the centres where the vehicles were stored and there would be no expectation for any member of staff to do so in a personal household.

Several ideas which could be developed as part of the future Plan were shared, such as letting the Rural Energy Developments (DEG) social enterprise to rent car parks from the Council for the installation of solar panels with the agreement that they would sell the electricity to the Council at a discounted price. Reference was also made to community energy enterprises stating that working with these would be able to benefit the Plan. In response to these ideas, the Chief Executive confirmed they would be considered and he welcomed that community energy enterprises and other organisations be invited to attend Board meetings to share information and presentations.

The members expressed their thanks for the report.

RESOLVED

- 1. To accept the report, noting the observations made during the discussion.**
- 2. To recommend that more information should be included in the Annual Report regarding what was responsible for the carbon emissions percentages.**
- 3. That the committee scrutinises the conclusions of the review of the Climate and Nature Emergency Plan prior to being considered by the Cabinet.**
- 4. To request that the Council Leader lobbies the Welsh Government in the context of reviewing the methodology of measuring carbon emissions that derive from procurement processes.**

8. GWYNEDD AND ANGLESEY PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD PROGRESS REPORT

The report was presented by the Council Leader, Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board Programme Manager and the Corporate Director.

The members were reminded that Cyngor Gwynedd was one of the five statutory members of the Board, noting that a total of 15 organisations were members of it. Further details were given that these included the Chief Executives and Senior Officers of the Fire Service, Natural Resources Wales, Mantell Gwynedd, Coleg Llandrillo Menai, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board and the Isle of Anglesey County Council.

It was noted that Gwynedd and Anglesey's Well-being Plan 2023-28 was published in May 2023. It was elaborated that this Plan set out three objectives where Board Members would work together to achieve them, namely:

- Mitigate the impact of poverty on the well-being of communities.
- Improving the well-being and success of children and young people to realise their full potential.
- Support services and communities to move towards carbon net zero.

It was announced that the Board's delivery arrangements had been modified following comments received from Cyngor Gwynedd's Scrutiny Committees and the Isle of Anglesey Council. It was elaborated that the only Sub-group accountable to the Board

was the Welsh Language Sub-Group. It was explained that this permanent Sub-group had been working closely with the Language Commissioner and the ARFOR project to solve bilingual workforce planning challenges, developing a good practice checklist for employers to follow. It was added that the Sub-group had presented ideas for a 'myth-busting' project soon to continue to address workforce planning challenges.

It was confirmed that the Board was committed to the Healthy Weight scheme. It was detailed that the Board was working together at a regional level to ensure that the scheme adds value and that procedures are in place to assess the future impact of the scheme.

Pride was expressed that the Board was leading on an Active Travel Charter, noting that an event had been organised for March where Board Members will officially commit to the Plan in the presence of the Welsh Government's Cabinet Secretary for Transport and North Wales. It was added that an active Task and Finish Group was in place for the implementation of this Charter, ensuring that good practice and resources were shared with all Members.

It was reported that a delivery plan had been developed by the Board, noting that reports on the progress of the Board's Objectives were received on a regular basis. It was explained that this information enabled the Board to identify whether there was any timeframe slipping to complete any Objective, and the reasons for this.

Attention was drawn to the engagement work the Board had undertaken with communities. It was explained that this included visits to four secondary schools in Gwynedd to discuss the implications of the Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Well-being Plan. It was added that work had been carried out at Hafod y Gest, Porthmadog to establish how 'age-friendly' the area was, at the request of Cyngor Gwynedd's Adults, Health and Well-being Department. It was confirmed that further engagement activities were planned in the future in preparation for the development of new well-being assessments in 2025/26.

During the discussion, the following observations were made: -

The Board was thanked for acting on this Committee's comments following the Progress Report submitted to the Committee in 2024/25 by ensuring that project progress monitoring arrangements were included in the Report. It was asked whether future Reports could include information showing whether the plans were delivering to ensure that the Scrutiny process was as effective as possible. In response to the query, the Programme Manager for the Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board confirmed that the Committee was able to receive this data as it was being shared with the Board as part of a new arrangement. Assurance was given that this information would be included in future Progress Reports.

It was asked why Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board had not been identified as Members of the Welsh Language Sub-group or the Healthy Weight Sub-group. It was also asked what the arrangements were in terms of determining membership and how the Health Board could be encouraged to get involved in the work in these key areas as they had an important input to deliver. In response, the Programme Manager for Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board confirmed that this was due to staffing issues this year, but they had committed to being part of the Welsh Language Sub-group. It was explained that Public Health Wales was leading on the work of the Healthy Weight Sub-group and the Board's work on healthy weight was being fed into the work of the Regional Strategic Group led by the Health Board. For clarity, it was confirmed that future Reports would detail whether there were any vacancies on the Sub-groups by any of the

Board Members. Similarly, it was noted that the Housing Associations currently had a vacant seat on the Board and were striving to find the right person to attend meetings.

It was pointed out that the Trauma-Informed training session for Board Members, to enable the objective of 'Improving the well-being and success of children and young people to realise their full potential' had slipped. In response to the comments, the Programme Manager for the Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board confirmed that there had been a slippage in the timetable to provide this training to Board Members and this delay had arisen due to difficulty in securing a convenient date for each Member. It was emphasised that it was hoped that this training session would take place before the end of the summer and the Isle of Anglesey Council were thanked for their pledge to provide free training to Board Members. It was expressed that this Public Service Board would be the first Board to become Trauma Informed when this training had been undertaken and Members would complete the work with enhanced awareness of the issue.

The members expressed their thanks for the report.

RESOLVED

- 1. To accept the report, noting the observations made during the discussion.**
- 2. To request that future reports contain information/data on progress in terms of delivering**

9. COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD PROGRAMME

The report was presented by the Scrutiny Advisor.

The members were reminded that a revised Forward Programme for 2024/25 had been approved at the meeting of this Committee on 07 November 2024.

It was explained that the item 'New Local Development Plan – Strategic Choices, Vision with Objectives' had slipped from this meeting and was to be scheduled for 2025/26. It was noted that it would be timelier to scrutinise this following the completion of detailed research and consideration of data to be published by the Welsh Government.

It was resolved, following a consultation with the Chair, that scheduling this item during 2025/26 would ensure that scrutiny took place in a timely manner and could add value. It was added that this meant that the item 'New Local Development Plan – Favourite Strategy' would slip from the 20 March 2025 meeting and would be scheduled for scrutiny during 2025/26.

In response to comments regarding the impact of refusing affordable housing planning applications on future learner numbers in Gwynedd schools, the Scrutiny Advisor noted that the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee had identified the need to scrutinise the Education Strategy. She added that a draft Strategy was being developed and learner numbers were an issue that was being addressed during the development of the Strategy.

RESOLVED

To adopt the Communities Scrutiny Committee's revised programme of work for 2024/25.

10. ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT PERFORMANCE CHALLENGE MEETING

The report was presented by the Scrutiny Advisor.

It was explained that members who represented the Committee at the Environment Department's Performance Challenge meetings were no longer Members of the Committee. The need to nominate members to represent the Committee at the next Performance Challenge meeting, to be held at 9:30am on Wednesday, 26 March 2025 via Microsoft Teams, was noted. It was emphasised that Members were expected to report back to this Committee on any Performance Challenge matters relevant to the work of this Committee.

It was reported that this meeting would be the last Performance Challenge meeting attended by representatives from the Committee, before Performance Challenge arrangements at formal Scrutiny Committee meetings come into effect in 2025/26.

RESOLVED to elect Councillors Beca Roberts and Berwyn Parry Jones to represent the Committee at the Environment Department's Performance Challenge meeting on 26 March 2025.

The meeting commenced at 10:30am and concluded at 13:00pm

CHAIR