



CYNGOR GWYNEDD – Report to Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet

Title of Item	Housing Action Plan
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Paul Rowlinson
Relevant Officer:	Carys Fôn Williams, Head of Housing and Property
Date of meeting:	13 May, 2025

1. Decision Sought:

- i. Extending the period of the Housing Action Plan for another two years until the end of the 2028/29 financial year
- ii. Commit the usual annual sum of £6m from the Council Tax Premium fund towards funding the extra two years.

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

To enable the Housing and Property Department to forward plan to ensure that key projects and plans are delivered on time and to their full potential.

3. Introduction and Rationale

3.1. Background and context

- 3.1.1. At a meeting of the Full Council on 8 December 2016, it was resolved that the Council's intention would be to use a percentage of the money received from charging a premium to provide houses for young people in our communities.
- 3.1.2. To put this into practice, the Cyngor Gwynedd Housing Action Plan 2020/21-2026/27 was submitted to the Cabinet on 15 December 2020 and the Plan was approved, which includes 33 projects across five key areas to ensure that the people of Gwynedd have a suitable, affordable and quality home.
- 3.1.3. Those five key areas continue to be as relevant today, i.e.:
 - Ensure that no-one is homeless in Gwynedd
 - Increase the opportunities for Gwynedd residents to secure a social tenancy
 - Help the residents of Gwynedd to own an affordable home in their community
 - Housing in Gwynedd is environmentally friendly
 - Houses in Gwynedd have a positive influence on the health and well-being of residents
- 3.1.4. Many of the projects of the Housing Action Plan are a core part of enabling the Council to deliver the Council Plan 2023-28 – 'Increasing the supply of houses for local people', 'Ensuring that nobody is homeless in Gwynedd', and 'Dealing with the energy costs and fuel poverty crisis', are a key part of the 'Gwynedd Glyd' priority area.
- 3.1.5. Following changes to the housing situation, the needs of the people of Gwynedd and financial sources over the past years, particularly as a result of Covid-19 and Brexit, an opportunity was taken to review the Plan, taking advantage of new opportunities to extend and help even more residents in the county with their housing situation.

Contact: 01286 679666
cabinet@gwynedd.llyw.cymru



- 3.1.6. Then, at its meeting on 13 June 2023, the Cabinet approved financial additions to individual projects within the Plan as a result of the Full Council's decision to increase the Premium on Second Homes from 50% to 100%. In addition, approval was given to merging some projects to reflect how the schemes will now be implemented, e.g. merging 2c and 3b into one project entitled Buy to Let Scheme.
- 3.1.7. Now, over £190m will be invested over the extended life of the Plan, by drawing on many financial sources including the Housing Support Grant, Welsh Government Social Housing Grant, the Council's Asset Management Plan and of course, the Council Tax Premium on Second Homes and Empty Houses.
- 3.1.8. With the additional funding as a result of the above modifications, it was possible to increase the target units of a number of schemes, and we are confident that we will add another 380 units to the outputs of the Plan before it concludes.
- 3.1.9. The funding received from the Council Tax Premium fund (around 26% of the entire value of the Plan) has been earmarked in full against projects in the Housing Action Plan, such as supported accommodation schemes, building our own houses, contributing to residential elements in community schemes, bringing empty houses in the county back into use, and ensuring that disabled people can continue to live in their existing homes.
- 3.1.10. Being able to include the Premium as a financial source has enabled the Department to attract many additional grants. Priority was afforded to spending those grants first as there is a deadline on them, and this in turn has allowed us to prioritise expenditure from the premium and ensure that this brings the greatest benefit to the people of Gwynedd.

3.2. The reasoning and justification for recommending the decision

Highlights and progress update

- 3.2.1. The Housing Action Plan has made good progress with several projects already bearing fruit and helping the people of Gwynedd to find a home in their community.
- 3.2.2. Thus far, over 800 units have been built, bought or refurbished since the beginning of the Plan, including building over 350 social housing units, bringing 269 empty houses back into use, buying 45 houses, and giving support to 59 households to buy a house through the Homebuy Scheme.
- 3.2.3. All of this has meant that the activity of the Plan has helped 8,834 people to date.
- 3.2.4. To date, nearly £70m has been invested in all schemes, from a number of different sources, including the Council Tax Premium, Housing Support Grant, Social Housing Grant, and other grants.
- 3.2.5. Of all the expenditure/financial commitments of the Plan to date, around £10.5m has come from the Premium fund.
- 3.2.6. See below details of some of the highlights, as well as an update of what has been completed and the number of units in the pipeline. A full overview of all schemes can be found at the end of this report.

Supported accommodation (1a):

- 3.2.7. Our first development of 5 supported accommodation units was completed, **Dôl Sadler** (former Ysgol Glan Wnion site on Pont yr Aran) last year. The project was nominated for the

Contact: 01286 679666
cabinet@gwynedd.llyw.cymru



Inside Housing Development awards in the Best Supported Housing Development category: Rural/Suburban.

- 3.2.8. There are many other work streams in the pipeline, including 35 College Road, Bangor (3 units), 137 High Street, Bangor (12 units), and the former Government building in the Penrallt area, Caernarfon (up to 40 units), as well as ongoing work to identify other sites across the county for development.
- 3.2.9. To this, the Department has been successful in receiving substantial grant money through the *Transitional Accommodation Capital Programme* or *TACP*, Welsh Government.
- 3.2.10. 17 properties have been approved through the Programme across the county and 34 individuals have been accommodated in these at present. Furthermore, another 6 properties are currently in the pipeline.

Construction of social housing (2a):

- 3.2.11. Since the start of the Housing Action Plan, 359 social housing have been built across Gwynedd and another 351 are in the pipeline on the main programme. Recently, the Council received recognition from the Welsh Government for the collaboration and positive relationship that we have with the Housing Associations. Indeed, due to the Council's reputation in this field, we have succeeded to attract additional funding when there is slippage in the national budget. This shows the excellent collaboration that is happening between the Council and the Housing Associations.

Tŷ Gwynedd Scheme – building our own houses (3a):

- 3.2.12. Work on the Tŷ Gwynedd scheme has been quickly gaining momentum, with behind-the-scenes work to identify sites, completion of feasibility work, tendering for contractors and preparing and submission of planning applications taking place over the past years. Now, work is happening on two sites, namely **the former library site in Llanberis (3 units)** and **the site of the former Ysgol Babanod Coed Mawr, Bangor (10 units)**. The former library came down in Llanberis during the summer 2024, and the [work began in October 2024](#). A [turf cutting event on the Coed Mawr site](#) was held in December 2024.
- 3.2.13. The development of the **Maes Twnti site, Morfa Nefyn (9 units)**, received planning permission [at the Council's Planning Committee on 13 January 2025](#) and sites in **Llanystumdwy (5 units)**, **Rhoshirwaun (5 units)**, **Llanrug (2 units)**, and **Mynytho (4 units)** are at different stages of the process and are making good progress. The team is also considering other appropriate sites across the county to move the programme forward between now and the end of the Plan.

Buy to Let Scheme (2c/3b):

- 3.2.14. To date, 45 houses have been bought, and 11 of them are now new homes for local families. Essential refurbishment/upgrading work is happening on the rest; there is potential for up to 161 individuals to benefit from these houses. Three other purchases are in the pipeline, with continuous work taking place to identify further suitable properties. This means that the target set for purchases last year (namely 43) has been reached.

Empty housing schemes (3dd):

Contact: 01286 679666
cabinet@gwynedd.llyw.cymru



- 3.2.15. 269 empty houses have come back into use across Gwynedd as a result of grant support and the support of our empty houses team, including 102 homes in which their owners have received empty homes grants to renovate to an acceptable living standard (scheme 3dd). Recently, the scheme was enhanced in response to residents' needs and an increase in construction costs seen nationally. The grant available has now increased from £15,000 to £20,000, and the grant is also available to all types of buyers, not first-time buyers only. The grant has already been expanded so that owners of empty homes formerly second homes are eligible for funding, in order to bring even more empty properties back across the county.
- 3.2.16. Over £1.1m worth of grants has now been provided, across the county, with the split for Arfon, Dwyfor and Meirionnydd as follows:
- Arfon – 49
 - Dwyfor – 23
 - Meirionnydd – 29
- 3.2.17. In addition, scheme 3e which proposes an additional exception of a year for first-time buyers to achieve essential restoration work, has been very successful with 123 exceptions approved up to the last quarter of 2024.

Homebuy Scheme (3f):

- 3.2.18. Since the launch of this scheme in its new guise in September 2022, 59 households (135 persons) have received support to buy their home, and another 35 applications are at different stages of the process, across Gwynedd.
- 3.2.19. An overview of all of the Plan's projects can be seen at the end of this report.

Earmark additional funding due to extending the Housing Action Plan up to 2028/29.

- 3.2.20. By extending the Plan for an additional two years, extra funding of £12m will be available through the Council Tax Premium on Second Homes and Empty Houses, which needs to be earmarked within the Housing Action Plan.
- 3.2.21. It is intended to earmark the funding from this additional Premium as follows (with an explanation and rationale under the table, corresponding to every line):

#	Scheme	Financial sum in the existing plan (Premium)	Additional funding (Premium)	New Budget
1	Supported accommodation (1a)	£9.5m	£2.7m	£12.2m
2	Buy to Let (2c)	£5.6m	£2.7m	£8.3m
3	Tŷ Gwynedd – building our own houses (3a)	£9m	£2m	£11m
4	Empty housing schemes (3dd)	£4m	£700k	£4.7m
5	Smallholdings	-	£2.1m	£2.1m

**Note – Only the Premium is noted above*

1 – Supported Accommodation (1a)

- 3.2.22. It has been known for some time that there is substantial pressure on our homelessness services. There has been a significant increase in the numbers who find themselves homeless, or who are at risk of becoming homeless for various reasons, such as a result of the cost-of-living crisis, domestic violence or a landlord ending a tenancy. This in turn

Contact: 01286 679666
cabinet@gwynedd.llyw.cymru



squeezes our scarce resources more than ever, and the lack of options to accommodate individuals around the county has been very obvious.

- 3.2.23. Through project 1a, it is aimed to bring 83 additional units (an increase of 45 units from the original Housing Action Plan) into use, for the purpose of accommodating homeless individuals in temporary accommodation, with support being provided by the specialist and experienced officers of the Homelessness Service. This will enable the Service to move individuals and families on from emergency accommodation sooner, and ensure that we have what individuals need in the right place at the right time.
- 3.2.24. An additional £2.7m is earmarked in this plan to create, buy or modify additional supported accommodation units across the county to enable the Department to move households on from emergency accommodation to more suitable accommodation, which in turn will reduce the Department's spending on the county's emergency accommodation. The additional funding would also address higher development costs.

2 – Buy to Let (2c)

- 3.2.25. The Buy to Let Scheme is a scheme to buy houses and let them to households on the county's intermediate register. The Plan is making very good progress and has reached this last year's ambition of buying 43 houses, with more in the pipeline towards the aim of buying 100 houses by the end of the Housing Action Plan period.
- 3.2.26. 11 houses are now homes for people who are in housing need, and others are in the process of being upgraded or refurbished to an acceptable living standard. The houses let will generate a rental income, which in turn will be reinvested in the Plan to buy more houses, and ensure the maintenance of our stock.
- 3.2.27. Originally, it was intended to fund this scheme through borrowing. However, since then, interest rates and costs have increased considerably – the original business case was based on interest rates of 1.6%, now rates have risen over 6%. The business case was revised in 2023 to include subsidy from the Premium until such a time the rates improved, and the Cabinet approved this in its meeting on 13 June 2023.
- 3.2.28. With interest rates still high, borrowing cannot be justified at present, so to continue on the current pace and to reach the Housing Action Plan's ambition of purchasing and letting 100 homes, a further subsidy will be required from the Premium.
- 3.2.29. Therefore, an additional £2.7m is earmarked to this Plan. We will continually review the situation during the year, and arrange to formally review the situation at the end of the financial year.

3 – Tŷ Gwynedd – building our own houses (3a)

- 3.2.30. As one of the main schemes of the Housing Action Plan, Tŷ Gwynedd is aiming to build 90 affordable homes, of quality, which can be easily adapted if needed, and which are cheap to run. This Scheme addresses different needs to scheme 2a, targeting those who are not eligible for a social house, but have difficulty finding a suitable house on the open market. These houses will therefore be available to buy through shared equity schemes, or some could be available at intermediate rent as well.
- 3.2.31. As mentioned above, there are two developments on-site at present, and there are more to come over the coming year.



- 3.2.32. It is known, however, that building costs have increased substantially over the last 5 years for many reasons, including Brexit and Covid-19.
- 3.2.33. In order to continue aiming for the goal of reaching 90 houses, an additional £2m will be earmarked for this Scheme.

4 – Empty Homes Schemes (3dd)

- 3.2.34. By allocating grants and loans, our empty homes schemes give owners an opportunity to bring those properties back into use and reduce the number of empty properties in Gwynedd communities. For example, 102 grants have been allocated which has helped over 190 individuals to upgrade an old empty house and make it a high-quality home.
- 3.2.35. However, it was highlighted that the buyers and owners of empty houses are facing higher construction costs, and therefore in response to this, the maximum grant value is increased to £20,000 (instead of £15,000).
- 3.2.36. We are also aware that a number of empty houses are bought by individuals who are not first-time buyers, and therefore they are missing the opportunity to obtain support, and as a result, the property might remain unoccupied for a long time. To address that, we have opened the scheme so that any empty house owner can apply for the Scheme.
- 3.2.37. An additional £700,000 is earmarked to address these alterations.

5 – Smallholdings

- 3.2.38. The Council's Smallholdings Estate offers homes to 39 families in the Dwyfor and Meirionnydd areas, and make a vast contribution to the rural industry and the local economy in those communities.
- 3.2.39. As we own a stock of houses that are linked to the Smallholdings, there is a statutory responsibility on us to ensure that the condition of the houses meet the requirements in terms of their condition and health and safety. We are therefore currently looking to add to our housing stock (e.g. the 43 that have been bought recently) and are investing to refurbish them to ensure that they are in a suitable condition for people to live in them.
- 3.2.40. No investment has been made in most of these houses for many years. This has led to a deterioration in the general condition of the estate, leading to a substantial increase in the responsive maintenance costs over recent years.
- 3.2.41. Without a capital investment in the condition of the estate over the coming years, it is anticipated that the requirement to carry out responsive maintenance work will continue to increase, as the general condition of the estate deteriorates, and the work of managing the estate effectively will become increasingly challenging.
- 3.2.42. Based on the current condition reports of the estate, £2.1m is earmarked to invest in the estate to protect these homes in the future.
- 3.2.43. When drawing up the Asset Management Plan, a decision was made to deal with the need to invest in these houses when we review the Housing Action Plan, as we did not have sufficient capital resources to be able to deliver all capital investment needs at the time.
- 3.2.44. See Appendix 2 for a draft of the new-look document, updated to the most current situation in accordance with the above-mentioned amendments.



Future Generations Act and Impact Assessment of Equality Characteristics, the Welsh language and the Socio-Economic Impact

- 3.2.45. The aim of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by aiming to achieve 7 well-being goals: namely a prosperous, resilient, healthier, more equal Wales with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language which is globally responsible.
- 3.2.46. Every project in the Housing Action Plan has been drawn up with these well-being goals in mind and the way that every plan relates to those goals is clearly noted on every page (see Appendix 2).
- 3.2.47. Also included is Appendix 3 – Equality Impact Assessment of the Plan.
- 3.2.48. An Impact Assessment was originally prepared to this end when the Housing Action Plan was launched in 2020, and again when the Plan was revised in June 2023 – this assessment can be seen by clicking [here](#).
- 3.2.49. The Plan is considered to have a positive impact on all the quality characteristics and the Welsh language by increasing the number and range of houses within the county for the needs of different communities.
- 3.2.50. For example, a positive effect on the Welsh language will be seen by helping approximately 63% of Gwynedd residents who have been priced out of the housing market access affordable homes, or by means of loans, grants, tax reliefs etc. Recent data collected by the Housing Association Adra on one of their new estates in Dinas, Llanwnda supports this, showing that 94% of new residents can speak Welsh. A similar survey was also conducted on a new estate in Tregarth, where 96% of residents on that estate could speak Welsh.
- 3.2.51. The Plan also has a positive impact on disabled people, with specific schemes to assist disabled children and adults access suitable, affordable and accessible homes. This is achieved either by making adaptations to homes, or introducing specialist temporary or permanent units.
- 3.2.52. Therefore, the Assessment finds that the Plan should continue and continuously monitoring over its lifetime.

Consultation

- 3.2.53. As a comprehensive consultation exercise was held when establishing the Plan originally, and as there are no substantial changes to the content, direction or principle of the Housing Action Plan, the draft Plan was shared internally with relevant officers and with our Housing Partners.
- 3.2.54. Of the responses received, they were positive and reinforced the spirit of collaboration in the Housing Action Plan.
- 3.2.55. One housing association expressed its readiness to work closer with the Council, specifically by partnering on developments such as Tŷ Gwynedd. This is welcomed, and discussions are already underway with the housing association in question to this end.
- 3.2.56. Additionally, the Housing Action Plan has been annually scrutinised since 2022 through the Council's scrutiny process, with the latest being on 3 April 2025. Positive comments were generally received, with several Members congratulating the Department on the Plan's successes this far.

Contact: 01286 679666
cabinet@gwynedd.llyw.cymru



- 3.2.57. When discussing “Tŷ Gwynedd – building our own homes”, one Member expressed his concerns about the pace of the developments, and whether it offers value for money compared to other schemes. Another Member in response expressed her support of the Scheme, wishing it well in its execution.
- 3.2.58. Other minor comments were received regarding elements such as under-occupancy in social housing, exemptions to Council Tax for empty home owners, the number of homeless households in the county, however responses were provided during the meeting, or a promise was made to send written responses to those questions which were not possible to answer at the time.
- 3.2.59. The Committee resolved to accept the report and ask the Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Department to look at the Tŷ Gwynedd Scheme, to ensure it continues to offer value for money or whether it would be better to invest the funds in other schemes within the Housing Action Plan.
- 3.2.60. This review has already been commissioned and initial findings note that this Plan meets a substantial need for intermediate homes. The Tŷ Gwynedd is considered one of the Housing Action Plan’s main schemes in order to tackle the need for intermediate housing – a specific kind of home available to those who find they are ineligible for social housing, but also can’t afford to buy a house on the open market. A strong engagement is received from communities when open days are held on a Tŷ Gwynedd site.
- 3.2.61. The data also supports this. Below is an overview of the number of households who have registered with Tai Teg for 2 and 3-bed houses for the 4 locations on the main Tŷ Gwynedd programme.

Location	Rent		Purchase	
	2-bedroom	3 bedroom	2 bedroom	3 bedroom
Bangor	226	167	139	163
Llanberis	9	7	8	13
Llanystumdwy	3	0	7	7
Morfa Nefyn	2	3	6	8

- 3.2.62. Also, although a separate scheme, an average of 10 households apply for each intermediate home we let through the Buy to Let Scheme, which shows the demand for intermediate housing within the county.
- 3.2.63. Furthermore, the homes being built adhere to essential principles which are in line with the Future Generations Act, namely that they will be homes of quality; flexible (should an extra room be required or need to be adapted as a family’s needs change over time); energy-efficient (therefore cheap to run for residents and friendly to our environment); and affordable (in order to be within reach of the intermediate market).
- 3.2.64. It’s important to note that the Housing Action Plan is a collection of various schemes addressing a wide range of Gwynedd people’s needs by various means, and it’s vital that this variety is available so that the support is not confined to one market or set of people.

Summary



- 3.2.65. We believe that good progress has been made on the Plan to date, with almost £70m invested to help the people of Gwynedd with their housing situation through the projects of this Plan.
- 3.2.66. It is important to note that new opportunities (or barriers) may arise during the plan period as national circumstances are changing quickly and continuously at present, therefore the flexibility already afforded to the Head of Housing and Property Department to vary the exact allocation for individual projects will enable the Department to act proactively in the face of any changes in the housing market over time.

Next Steps

- 3.2.67. Should the Cabinet's approval be received:
- Continue to implement the Plan in accordance with what is included in this report
 - Publish an amended document

4. Views of Statutory Officers

4.1. Chief Finance Officer

I welcome this report, which highlights the many projects within the Housing Action Plan. The Finance Department is working closely with the Housing and Property Department on the financial issues of the plan. I am satisfied with the information contained in the report and can confirm that the Council Tax Premium Fund had a balance of £16.9million as at 31 March 2025.

4.2. Monitoring Officer

The report appropriately sets out the direction for the Housing Action Plan for the Cabinet. The impacts have been considered in an appropriate manner and emphasises that the work has been carried out within the provisions of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The proposed use of the premium is within the Cabinet's decision-making powers.

An overview of the main progress figures of the Housing Action Plan

	Description	Unit Target	Completed units	Units in the pipeline	Individuals target	Individuals assisted	Budget	Expenditure
1a	Supported housing for the homeless schemes	83	20	62	83	22	£17,000,000	£3,546,495
1b	Supported housing for homeless young people (Lle Da)	4	4	-	4		£1,251,442	£1,005,608
1c	Self-serviced units for individuals with intensive social needs	5		5	5		£800,000	£442,058
1ch	Support packages for private landlords	140	23	11	331	64	£3,300,000	£243,465
1d	Specialist mental health support	0		40 individuals	200	62	£730,000	£45,158
1dd	Accommodation with extra support in Arfon	6		6	6		£818,000	£500
2a	Support the Social Housing Programme to maximise the number of units developed.	700	359	361	2,500	1,178	£58,700,000	£42,842,136
2b	Redevelopment of the Polish Home site, Penrhos	107			176			
2c	Buy to Let Scheme	100	43	3	300	164	£25,095,674	£5,288,907
3a	Tŷ Gwynedd – developing our own houses	90		43	330		£11,000,000	£360,350
3c	Communicate and engage with communities to establish their housing needs	0	-	-	0	158	£150,000	£1,360
3ch	Refuse applications to remove a local person condition on former "Council houses"	75	45	20	75	63		
3dd	Empty houses schemes	282	269		400	319	£5,580,000	£1,027,780
3e	Council Tax Exemption on empty houses for first-time buyers	120			120	123	£200,000	£165,061
3f	Gwynedd Homebuy Scheme	120	59	35	425	135	£11,500,000	£4,561,495
3ff	Buying construction land for the future	0			0	0	£1,200,000	£679,472
3g	Contribution towards an affordable unit in community regeneration plans	12	1		12	4	£600,000	£37,500
4a	New Energy Conservation Service for house owners	0			4000	2000	£500,000	£231,620
4b	Innovative Housing Pilot Scheme	4	4		4	4	£600,000	£839,269
5a	Supported Housing – children and youths	4	0		4		£500,000	
5b	Extra Care Housing – older persons	72	0		72		£30,000,000	
5ch	Supported Housing – adults with profound needs	10	0		10		£500,000	
5d	Suitable homes for children with severe physical needs	10	11	6	10	14	£1,200,000	£912,144
5dd	Frondeg Home, Caernarfon	20	0		20		£200,000	£2,552
5e	Interest-free loans to improve the condition of houses	0	19	20	35	19	£250,000	£137,335
5f	Home Safety	0	0	10	4000	3,684	£600,000	£400,000
5ff	Adaptations to make houses suitable homes for individuals with disabilities	0	0	-	900	820	£11,700,000	£5,706,294
6	One-stop shop for Housing matters	0	-		3,500		£480,000	
		1,964	857	582	17,522	8,834	£152,252,116	£69,014,737

**data based on the Housing Action Plan's situation in January 2025*

Contact: 01286 679666
cabinet@gwynedd.llyw.cymru