

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL 1/5/25

Present: Councillor Ioan Thomas (Chair)
Councillor Elin Walker Jones (Vice-chair).

Councillors:- Craig ab Iago, Menna Baines, Beca Brown, Stephen Churchman, Glyn Daniels, Anwen Davies, Dafydd Owen Davies, Elwyn Edwards, Elfed Wyn ap Elwyn, Alan Jones Evans, Gwilym Evans, Dylan Fernley, Delyth Lloyd Griffiths, Jina Gwyrfai, Annwen Hughes, John Brynmor Hughes, Louise Hughes, Medwyn Hughes, Iwan Huws, Elin Hywel, Nia Wyn Jeffreys, Anne Lloyd Jones, Berwyn Parry Jones, Dawn Lynne Jones, Dewi Jones, Elwyn Jones, Gwilym Jones, Gareth Tudor Jones, Huw Wyn Jones, June Jones, Eryl Jones-Williams, Cai Larsen, Dafydd Meurig, Dilwyn Morgan, Linda Morgan, Dewi Owen, Gwynfor Owen, Llio Elenid Owen, Gareth Coj Parry, Geraint Parry, Rheinallt Puw, Arwyn Herald Roberts, Beca Roberts, Elfed P Roberts, John Pughe Roberts, Meryl Roberts, Richard Glyn Roberts, Huw Llwyd Rowlands, Paul Rowlinson, Angela Russell, Dyfrig Siencyn, Peter Thomas, Menna Trenholme, Rob Triggs, Rhys Tudur, Hefin Underwood, Einir Wyn Williams, Elfed Williams, Gareth Williams, Gruffydd Williams, Sasha Williams and Sian Williams.

Officers: Dafydd Gibbard (Chief Executive), Geraint Owen (Corporate Director), Dylan Owen (Corporate Director and Statutory Director of Social Services), Dewi Morgan (Head of Finance Department), Iwan Evans (Monitoring Officer), Carys Fôn Williams (Head of Housing and Property Department), Vera Jones (Democracy and Language Service Manager), Siôn Huws (Propriety and Elections Manager), Arwel Evans (Procurement Manager) and Eirian Roberts (Democracy Services Officer).

1. CHAIR

RESOLVED to appoint Councillor Ioan Thomas as Chair for 2025/26.

Councillor Ioan Thomas read and signed the declaration accepting the post of Chair of Cyngor Gwynedd for 2025/26, in the presence of the Chief Executive.

2. VICE-CHAIR

Two names were proposed and seconded for the post of vice-chair, namely Councillor Beth Lawton and Councillor Elin Walker Jones.

RESOLVED to appoint Councillor Elin Walker Jones as Vice-chair for 2025/26.

Councillor Elin Walker Jones read and signed the declaration accepting the post of Vice-chair of Cyngor Gwynedd for 2025/26, in the presence of the Chief Executive.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Beth Lawton, Edgar Owen, Nigel Pickavance, John Pughe and Gareth Roberts.

4. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous Council meeting held on 6 March 2025 as a true record.

5. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received.

6. THE CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Deepest condolences were extended to Councillor Angela Russell and family following the loss of her husband in March, and her brother-in-law last month.

Condolences were also extended to the families of two community benefactors who had passed away recently, namely:-

- The family of Selwyn Williams, Blaenau Ffestiniog, a campaigner and academic who had been at the forefront of the establishment of community initiatives.
- The family of Gareth Roberts, Deiniolen, a local historian who brought the past to life in the quarry areas.

It was also noted that the Council wished to sympathise with everyone in the county's communities who had recently lost loved ones.

The Council stood in silence as a mark of respect and remembrance.

It was noted that several Council members had been ill recently and they were all wished a full and speedy recovery.

Councillor Geraint Wyn Parry was welcomed to his first meeting of this Council as the Member for Teigl, and former Councillor Linda Ann Jones was once again thanked for all her work over the years.

Councillor Gwilym Jones was congratulated on becoming a grandfather again, to a little girl called Nansi.

Caernarfon Rugby Club (Men) were congratulated on winning the Welsh Rugby Union Division 1 Cup – the first North Wales club to win it.

Following the recent announcement that the Senedd Election would be held on 7 May 2026, it was noted that the Council's 2026 Annual Meeting would be moved from that date to May 14.

It was noted that this was the last meeting of the Full Council where Eirian Roberts (Democracy Services Officer) would be taking the minutes as she would be retiring at the end of July. She was thanked for her service taking the minutes in Council meetings over a number of years, and having worked in her position for over forty years.

7. URGENT ITEMS

None to note.

8. QUESTIONS

(The Cabinet Members' written responses to the questions had been published in advance.)

(1) Question from Councillor Gruffydd Williams

In the context of the latest decision by the Supreme Court, what arrangements are in place to confirm that women in Gwynedd have access to places and opportunities of all kinds for women only?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Corporate and Legal Services and for the Welsh Language, Councillor Llio Elenid Owen

I will read the official answer first.

"The Council is in the process of considering the implications of the ruling taking into account further information e.g. the Equality and Human Rights Commission's Interim Guidance, published on 25 April. It should be noted that the Commission is looking to update their guidance after consultation, and put it before the Westminster Government before the summer recess. According to the Commission *"We know that many people have questions about the ruling and what it means for them. Our updated guidance will provide more clarity."*

We will look at our policies, guidelines, procedures and so on, to see if they align with the ruling."

As has been stated in the response, the Equality and Human Rights Commission's Interim Guidance, which was published last week, follows the Supreme Court's ruling on the legal definition of a woman, and the final guidance that will go before the Government before the summer will need to be awaited for further clarity and guidance on the situation.

I would like to draw your attention to what the Supreme Court has stated, which is that this is not a victory for either side. This is a definition within the Equality Act only. It is extremely important to emphasise that this legal opinion does not diminish trans people's legal rights against discrimination, and gender reassignment is one of the 9 features protected in the Equality Act 2010.

Supplementary question from Councillor Gruffydd Williams

According to the Equality Act, gender means biological sex, and women have a legal right to public changing rooms, bathrooms and single-sex crisis centres, and a gender recognition certificate does not make a man a woman under the law. The ruling cannot be clearer than that, and as a result I would like to ask what arrangements, facilities need to be made, and where and when will we see the change to reflect the decision?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Corporate and Legal Services and for the Welsh Language, Councillor Llio Elenid Owen

To emphasise what was said in the answer to the first question, we, like all other organisations, need further guidance to be able to respond fully and legally to this ruling.

I would also like to take this opportunity to declare our support and solidarity here with the trans community. Everyone should be free to choose their own gender identity and we should respect that, and we certainly shouldn't exclude trans people from society. To quote and complement what Councillor Beca Roberts said at the beginning of this meeting, everyone has the right to be themselves. We are fully committed here at Cyngor Gwynedd to supporting women's rights and the rights of trans people, and fighting for women's rights means fighting for the rights of working class women, disabled women, women from ethnic minority backgrounds and LGBTQ+ women. Rights for all need to be supported and respected and equal rights for others do not mean fewer rights for you.

Protecting and safeguarding everyone's rights underpins Plaid Cymru's position and that is why I am a member of Plaid Cymru.

There are a lot of questions arising and wider conversations following the ruling, and especially where this leaves 'intersex' and 'non-binary' people, and women who don't conform to the norm of what a woman is. And more than anything, it's critical that the voices of trans people are included in these discussions.

There is great concern that some are taking advantage of this ruling to give them the leeway to express prejudice against the trans community, a small community that is already vulnerable, and that is only trying to live their lives with dignity. It is heartbreaking for me to think that some of the people of Gwynedd could misuse this ruling to make the lives of a community that is on the margins more difficult. We are here as councillors to support all residents of Gwynedd to live together and to live their lives with dignity and respect. To conclude, from my first-hand experience as a woman, and growing up as a woman, I don't feel that trans people's rights have taken anything at all away from my rights as a woman.

(2) Question from Councillor Sian Williams

An important issue that has come to my attention in the last year, particularly in my own town, Cricieth, is anti-social behaviour among young people. It is a topic that concerns me greatly, as it is our responsibility, as a society, to nurture and support the next generation to be well-rounded and responsible citizens who have hope and value in themselves, and in their villages, towns and areas.

Cricieth is not unique. There are other areas in Gwynedd that are experiencing similar challenges, and other counties across Wales and beyond are struggling. You only need to open a newspaper or read messages on social media to see how things are.

It's important for us to get to the root of the problem. Why do young people behave like this and what can we, as a community, do to support them or tackle the problems? In Cricieth, we have seen damage to the public toilets and the maes, climbing fences to private gardens; stealing from local shops and sleeping overnight in car parks.

Obviously, the police and other agencies are aware of the situation and there is action and cooperation.

But with the recent fine weather, the situation has exacerbated. The small minority of young people who behave in this way have been excluded from school. The punishment is proving to be ineffective as they do not receive support or guidance through the schools or from other services during this period.

My question is, is it possible to open a discussion with the council's education department and other support agencies to consider another way of tackling the challenges faced by these young people and their families? A process of offering guidance and support, rather than excluding young people, who are obviously experiencing life's challenges? A system that would protect these young people and lead them along a better path, so that the community in Cricieth can sleep quieter at night and take pride in having extended a hand, rather than tarring all the young people of the area with the same brush? After all, only a handful behave in this way, most of our young people are responsible and courteous.

This is the future of our society, they are valuable and important individuals, and in my opinion, investing in the next generation is crucial for us, here, in Gwynedd.

Response from the Cabinet Member for Education, Councillor Dewi Jones

Thank you for the question. I agree with much of what was said in the question. I think this is a crucial topic, and any issue relating to children and young people is very close to my heart personally, which is why it is such a privilege for me to be fulfilling the role that I am currently doing.

Also, I am fully sympathetic to some of the things that you in Cricieth are suffering, and also aware that there are troubles like this in many villages and towns in Gwynedd, and

also beyond Gwynedd. But that doesn't make it right. As for the response, the written response has been provided, and as it says, a cross-departmental response is needed. It's a responsibility for all of us, I think, in terms of the Council, but more than just us as an organisation, as a Council, it includes a host of other organisations as well, and I'm glad that the member and I are coming from the same side on this because of what's in the question. We don't want to be pointing a finger or punishing, but we want to solve the problem rather than just responding and punishing, and as the member said, it's clear that punishment doesn't work. We've been doing this for years, and the same problems arise over and over again.

As for the Department of Education and exclusions, I certainly think exclusions don't work. They're being used as a method of punishment – a traditional method of punishment some people might say, but maybe it's high time that we look again at all of this and consider whether this is a method that we want to be using for the future. The only thing that excludes a child or a young person or an individual does is remove their ability to access support, to positive role models, to the sub-structures that are there to support them, and the last thing we want to do is exclude them, get rid of them, because it doesn't solve the problem. It may solve the problem for one individual or one group for a short time, but all it does is move the problem somewhere else. So I'm keen to meet and see what solutions we can put together to try and make a difference to the lives of children and young people in Cricieth and the whole of Gwynedd.

(3) Question from Councillor Elfed Williams.

Gwynedd residents continue to suffer and it has been over ten years since the Welsh Government's fuel poverty scheme caused damage to their homes leaving them damp, untidy and in need of repair.

Some residents of private houses in Deiniolen, Dinorwig, Clwt y Bont and Fachwen are financially at a loss and others are struggling to pay for repairs.

The Arbed project, funded by the Welsh Government, aimed to improve the energy efficiency of the houses while ensuring that the owners would have lower energy bills. But inferior works in the Deiniolen area have left the owners with damp houses developing into mould, with incorrectly reinstalled drainage pipes, untidy render and cracks in the walls.

Recently, 42 houses in Arfon have been approved for repairs by the Welsh Government. I very much welcome this work for the homes of residents in the community, but I remain concerned about the residents who will not be eligible for the repairs under this year's Welsh Government scheme.

It's high time all the residents of Deiniolen saw their homes repaired, having suffered damage to their property for so many years. It is the responsibility of the Welsh Government to rectify this, as a result of inferior work undertaken due to their Arbed project.

Therefore, my question is this: is the Council committed to ensuring that all Arfon housing residents receive repairs from the Welsh Government and receive the appropriate support they are due?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Housing and Property, Councillor Paul Rowlinson

Thank you for asking the question for the residents of your ward, people who have joined the Arbed Scheme to improve their houses and reduce the bills, but due to the faulty work, have found themselves in a situation where the houses are worse.

I would like to highlight that Arbed is the Welsh Government's scheme, and many homes across Wales had been affected by defective work under that Scheme, not only in Arfon but in many other places across Wales. The process of securing a fair settlement by following the claims process set by the Government has been long, and often very complex. The property owners themselves have put a lot of their time and effort into doing so.

Siân Gwenllïan, the Member of the Senedd for Arfon, has been raising the issue with the Government since 2017, and last year the Welsh Government agreed to look into the cases of the residents who had contacted her. Unfortunately, the Welsh Government has stated that no new cases will be added to the list.

While the Council has no part in this process, I am happy to write to the Government to ask why they are not willing to consider any new cases.

(4) Question from Councillor Rhys Tudur

When making decisions relating to the procurement of goods and subcontracting of services, this Council has a scoring criteria which give companies /businesses/organisations points for:

- community benefits that they provide and would provide for the Welsh language;
- their use of the Welsh language;
- having a high percentage of staff who speak Welsh;
- demonstrating that they have commitments to the Welsh language and language policies;
- having a training plan for improving Welsh language skills;
- supporting Welsh-medium apprenticeships;
- using Welsh as the language of internal and external correspondence?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Corporate and Legal Services and for the Welsh Language, Councillor Llio Elenid Owen

Thank you for the question. The procurement arrangements and internal evaluation process are legally managed under national procurement regulations (Procurement Act 2023). According to those regulations, the assessment and criteria must be equivalent and related to the purpose of what is desired to be procured.

The Council has a way of using different criteria to assess the proposals. Typically, the criteria include price and quality assessments along with any other specific requirements.

The Cabinet approved an amendment to the current Sustainable Procurement Policy at its meeting on November 7, 2023, and as a result, the Council has developed and adopted social value assessment arrangements, and the Welsh language is one of those measures. This requirement is now additional to the price and quality criteria.

Consequently, we can assess businesses' commitment to investing time and money to promote and develop the Welsh language while fulfilling the agreement with the Council. The commitment can be varied depending on the size and nature of the company that has tendered, and we do not currently limit them to specific proposals. The proposals can offer apprenticeships, training, Welsh signage within the company, or any other proposal that demonstrates their commitment to promoting the language.

The Council purchases a wide variety of goods and services from different fields and occasionally purchases unique and specialised goods and services. Often, only non-Welsh companies from outside the County can meet those needs. Nevertheless, where it is necessary to have services or systems through the medium of Welsh, the Council

specifies this need in the tender, and as a result, we will not accept applications that do not meet those requirements.

The Sustainable Procurement Policy is currently being reviewed due to recent national legislative changes, and is intended to be submitted to the Language Committee for comments, and it will also be submitted to the Cabinet.

Supplementary Question from Councillor Rhys Tudur

Given that this Council internally places good weight on the Welsh language, and that my question identifies several additional aspects that can be scored in terms of the value given to the Welsh language, the use of Welsh, and to the Welsh language as a community language in the context of procurement, and given that the sustainable procurement policy only gives a small and tokenistic score to the Welsh language, is this Council fully prepared to realise that, by adapting and adding to the procurement scoring measures and making the viability of the Welsh language a valid objective, we could be able to encourage as many businesses and bodies with which we interact as we can to make a serious contribution to the strengthening of the Welsh language?

Response of the Cabinet Member for Corporate and Legal Services and for the Welsh Language, Councillor Llio Elenid Owen

The Welsh language is clearly crucial in all aspects of the Council and the procurement procedure is no exception. Where there is a specific requirement for the Welsh language, it is possible for the Council to include it as a specific requirement in its agreement, and in this regard, the Council will only appoint Welsh language companies. There is an effort by the Council to put more emphasis on the social value of scoring contracts and this will become apparent as the Council and local companies become more familiar with these arrangements. As the procurement policy is reviewed there will be an opportunity for members and officers to influence the emphasis placed on social value. As has already been mentioned in the first response, we as a Council have to weigh and measure several things – value for money, quality, data protection and meeting equality and ethical requirements, but the Welsh language is also taken into account when assessing tenders.

If the member wants a further conversation about this, I would welcome that, and we can also arrange that with the Procurement Team.

9. ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S POLITICAL BALANCE

The Democracy and Language Services Manager presented a report setting out the annual review of the Council's political balance.

The Leader of the Independent Group noted that in order to ensure succession, it was vital that the vice-chairpersonship of each scrutiny committee went to the same group as the chairpersonship. In response, the Monitoring Officer noted:-

- That the scrutiny committees were unique because the chairpersonships were allocated on the basis of statutory political balance.
- That the chairpersonships and other vice-chairpersonships, and the vice-chairpersonships of the scrutiny committees were a decision for the individual committees in statute.

It was noted that there had been a number of vacant seats on committees for years and the Democracy Services Committee was asked to look into that.

RESOLVED

- **To adopt the list of committees and sub-committees to be established for**

the municipal year as noted in Appendix A (below), and adopt the allocation of seats and senior salaries as noted in the Appendix.

- To delegate the authority to the Head of Democracy Services to make appointments to the committees on the basis of political balance, and in accordance with the wishes of the political groups.
- To allocate the chairpersonships of scrutiny committees on the basis of political balance as follows:-

Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee - Plaid Cymru Group
Communities Scrutiny Committee – Plaid Cymru Group
Care Scrutiny Committee - Independent Group

- To adopt the seat allocation for the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee Overview and Scrutiny Joint Committee for the term of this Council unless there is a significant change in the political balance – there is 1 seat for the Plaid Cymru Group and 1 seat for the Independent Group

APPENDIX A - ALLOCATION OF SEATS ON COMMITTEES

A	Plaid Cymru	Independent	Labour / Liberal	Total
Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee	12	6	0	18
Communities Scrutiny Committee	12	5	1	18
Care Scrutiny Committee	12	5	1	18
Governance and Audit	8	4	0	12

B	Plaid Cymru	Independent	Labour / Liberal	Total
Democracy Services	10	4	1	15
Planning	10	4	1	15
Central / General Licensing	10	5	0	15
Language	10	5	0	15
Chief Officers Appointment	10	5	0	15
Employment Appeals	5	2	0	7
Number of seats	99	45	4	148

C	Plaid Cymru	Independent	Labour / Liberal	Total
Pensions	4	2	1	7
Local Joint Consultative	7	4	0	11

Committee				
SACRE	5	2	0	7
Total seats	115	53	5	173

Senior Salaries

In accordance with the previous decision of the Council, the senior salaries are paid as follows:

- Leader
- Deputy Leader
- 8 other Cabinet members
- The Leader of the largest Opposition
- Committee Chairs
 - Scrutiny Committee (x3)
 - Planning Committee
 - Licensing Committee (Central and General counts as one Committee)
 - Pensions Committee
- Civic head (Chair of the Council)
- Deputy civic head (Vice-chair of the Council)

10. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR TO THE DEMOCRACY SERVICES COMMITTEE

The Council was invited to appoint a chair for the Democracy Services Committee for 2025/26.

RESOLVED to appoint Councillor Anne Lloyd Jones as Chair of the Democracy Services Committee for 2025/26.

11. APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE - INTERVIEW PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS

Submitted – the Monitoring Officer's report recommending that the Council appoint Non Gibson and Sonal Khade as Independent Members of the Standards Committee for a period of 6 years.

RESOLVED that the Council appoints Non Gibson and Sonal Khade as Independent Members of the Standards Committee for a period of 6 years.

12. AMENDMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION

Submitted – the Monitoring Officer's report reporting on delegated amendments to the Scheme of Delegation in Section 13 of the Constitution (included in Appendix 1 to the report).

RESOLVED to accept the report on the delegated amendments in Appendix 1 to the report submitted to the Council.

13. URGENT CABINET DECISION

Submitted – the report of the Monitoring Officer, for information only, stating that:-

- An exempt report was submitted to Cabinet on 8 April 2025 regarding the judicial review of the Cabinet's decision in 2024 to confirm the Article 4 Direction, and seeking Cabinet direction on the matter.
- Due to the timetable for the submission of documentation and evidence to the Court it was necessary to make an urgent decision in accordance with Section

7.25.2 of the Constitution so that the call-in procedure would not apply to allow for a Cabinet decision to come into immediate effect.

A member stated that he did not understand why the report had gone out for public comments, but that the comments did not come back to the full Council, and he questioned how the Council had come to this situation, and why. In response, the Monitoring Officer explained:-

- The report was not related to the judicial review and that item was not on the agenda.
- That a public case was ongoing and that he could send details to the member as to the grounds being argued before the Court.
- That this was a Cabinet decision, and that was not the subject of a legal challenge at all, nor part of the case before the council.

RESOLVED to accept and note the report.

14. NOTICES OF MOTION

- (A) The following notice of motion was submitted by Councillor Elfed Wyn ap Elwyn in accordance with Section 4.19 of the Constitution, and it was seconded:-

The Council calls upon the Westminster Government to devolve powers over water reservoirs and the water network in Wales, which will allow Wales to benefit from one of its most important resources.

The member set out the context to his motion, noting:-

- That the cost-of-living crisis had hit most people terribly hard, and that seeing the water bill almost doubled had thrown many families into panic and anxiety.
- It was therefore disheartening to see that water was being sold from Wales without this country receiving fair money for it.
- It was outrageous that such an amount of money was literally being pumped out of Wales, adding next to nothing to the Welsh economy.
- As noted by a Parliamentary committee, charging less than a penny per litre on water could bring £400m to Wales to use to invest in the water network and lower prices for customers.

RESOLVED to adopt the motion, namely:-

The Council calls upon the Westminster Government to devolve powers over water reservoirs and the water network in Wales, which will allow Wales to benefit from one of its most important resources.

- (B) The following notice of motion was submitted by Councillor Beca Brown under Section 4.19 of the Constitution and seconded:-

1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men have experienced sexual abuse during their childhood, and this figure could be even higher.

Not only were these experiences horrific to them at the time, but they must live with the effects of these dreadful crimes throughout their lives.

Victims of sexual abuse consistently say that there is not enough support available to them, and that there is insufficient awareness of the trauma they carry every day, forever.

1 May is an annual day to remember the victims; to raise awareness of this appalling crime, and to remind us that sexual abuse can happen to any child, in any community.

Sexual abuse does not recognise cultural, social, linguistic, religious, gender or racial differences. It can happen anywhere, to anyone.

Not My Shame is the campaign group that organises this annual event, holding a minute's silence on this date each year to remember the pain of sexual abuse victims around the world.

We call upon Cyngor Gwynedd to recognise this date every year from now on, and to adopt it as a day of remembrance for victims. We call on the Council to fly the campaign flag above its headquarters on 1 May every year to clearly state that sexual abuse is not the victim's shame, it is the offender's shame. We call upon Cyngor Gwynedd to draw public attention on 1 May every year to the support available to victims, and to explain to the public how and where they can report sexual abuse or child protection concerns.

The member set out the context to her motion, noting:-

- That victims of sexual violence often carried the shame of the crime, as well as deep pain for the rest of their lives, and that the aim of the Not my Shame campaign was to put the shame back where it should be, which was on the shoulders of the offender.
- That sexual abuse shattered lives, tore families apart and scarred communities and had a negative impact on mental health, physical health, on the ability to form relationships, on the ability to parent effectively and on educational and economic attainment.
- That receiving a supportive response greatly improved the world of victims who exposed their abuse, and that professionals (including politicians) could play a part, not insignificantly, in mitigating the effects of abuse if they responded appropriately, in a timely manner, supportively, and compassionately.
- That sexual abuse had cast its shadow over this county, as it was everywhere, and because institutions where a high number of children accumulated could attract criminals, it was important to always be alert to those risks.
- It was also important to remember that child sexual abuse could occur in any context, and more often than not, in their own homes.
- 'Project 90-10', which offered support to schools to highlight ways to keep children safe, referred to the alarming statistic that 90% of children who were victims of abuse are abused by someone they know.
- Education played a very important role in all of this and that was why the Code of Education, Relationships and Sexuality was so crucial to keeping children safe.
- That the motion before the council:-
 - reminded us of our responsibility towards the safety of the children of this county and to the well-being of those who had suffered in the past.
 - ensured that victims of sexual abuse were treated with respect and compassion and that the Council gave a prominent and public place to their needs, taking every opportunity to promote the principles of child protection as well as where and how to report concerns.
 - reminded victims that what happened was not their shame, but the shame of those who had stolen their childhood and changed their lives forever.

Enthusiastic support for the motion was expressed by members and the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children and Supporting Families noted that it would ensure that Council officers implemented the proposal and built on the good work already underway.

In her closing comments, the proposer noted that this was an opportunity for Gwynedd to innovate once again by being the first county in Wales, and the second through Britain, to publicly support this campaign.

RESOLVED to adopt the motion, namely:-

1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men have experienced sexual abuse during their childhood, and this figure could be even higher.

Not only were these experiences horrific to them at the time, but they must live with the effects of these dreadful crimes throughout their lives.

Victims of sexual abuse consistently say that there is not enough support available to them, and that there is insufficient awareness of the trauma they carry every day, forever.

1 May is an annual day to remember the victims; to raise awareness of this appalling crime, and to remind us that sexual abuse can happen to any child, in any community. Sexual abuse does not recognise cultural, social, linguistic, religious, gender or racial differences. It can happen anywhere, to anyone.

Not My Shame is the campaign group that organises this annual event, holding a minute's silence on this date each year to remember the pain of sexual abuse victims around the world.

We call upon Cyngor Gwynedd to recognise this date every year from now on, and to adopt it as a day of remembrance for victims. We call on the Council to fly the campaign flag above its headquarters on 1 May every year to clearly state that sexual abuse is not the victim's shame, it is the offender's shame. We call upon Cyngor Gwynedd to draw public attention on 1 May every year to the support available to victims, and to explain to the public how and where they can report sexual abuse or child protection concerns.

- (C) Submitted - the following notice of motion by Councillor Gwynfor Owen under Section 4.19 of the Constitution, and it was seconded:-

Welsh public services are facing a loss of up to £65m due to the increase to national insurance announced by the Labour Government in Westminster.

Once again, Welsh Councils will experience an actual loss as the government uses the Barnett formula to determine how much funding is allocated to devolved countries. The Barnett formula is based on population size rather than on need.

It is unfair that Welsh public services will not receive full funding for the increase. This is another example of how Wales is at a total disadvantage as a result of a Labour government in the Senedd in Wales and in Westminster.

As we are still awaiting details from the two governments it is not possible to calculate the exact figure at present, but Cyngor Gwynedd is likely to be at a loss of around £1m, which is an amount we have had to pass on to our taxpayers.

Cyngor Gwynedd is therefore calling on the Welsh Government to demand a fairer method of funding our country from their masters in London.

The member set out the context to his motion, noting:-

- That the Central Government contributed 81.8% of the Council's budget in 1997, but by this year, that figure had fallen to 69.5%.
- That clearly showed how the Westminster Government had gradually changed the way local government was funded, slowly moving from an income tax system, which was progressive tax, to a council tax system, which was a non-progressive tax. That meant shifting the tax burden from the rich to the poor.
- When the UK Government announced the national insurance rise for employers, they were promised that they would compensate public services for the extra cost they faced. That had happened in England, but not in Wales.

- That this was just one example of how Wales is underfunded by the UK Government, and that the Welsh Government should demand that the UK Government change the funding formula, not just for national insurance compensation, but for the financing of our country as a whole.

Support for the proposal was expressed by members on the grounds that there was a need for an appropriate funding system that identified a need and that the Barnett Formula worked against rural communities.

RESOLVED to adopt the motion, namely:-

Welsh public services are facing a loss of up to £65m due to the increase to national insurance announced by the Labour Government in Westminster.

Once again, Welsh Councils will experience an actual loss as the government uses the Barnett formula to determine how much funding is allocated to devolved countries. The Barnett formula is based on population size rather than on need.

It is unfair that Welsh public services will not receive full funding for the increase. This is another example of how Wales is at a total disadvantage as a result of a Labour government in the Senedd in Wales and in Westminster.

As we are still awaiting details from the two governments it is not possible to calculate the exact figure at present, but Cyngor Gwynedd is likely to be at a loss of around £1m, which is an amount we have had to pass on to our taxpayers.

Cyngor Gwynedd is therefore calling on the Welsh Government to demand a fairer method of funding our country from their masters in London.

- (D) Submitted - the following notice of motion by Councillor Elin Hywel under Section 4.19 of the Constitution, and it was seconded:-

This Council notes the disproportionate and cumulative effects of austerity policies on the most vulnerable inhabitants of our society by successive UK governments – whether Conservative or Labour governments.

Following the UK Government's recent announcement of further cuts to benefits totalling £5 billion, this Council recognises that these cuts are the continuation and progression of austerity policies. With a proportion of 18.1% of Gwynedd's population considered as being disabled, the people of Gwynedd will be hit particularly hard by the cuts. Furthermore, people considered as disabled in Gwynedd are less likely to be in employment, with only 50.5% in a paid job, and are therefore more likely to rely on benefits as their only source of income.

The Council notes our growing responsibility to mitigate the brutal effects of austerity policies through the Council's services. We are seeing an increase in demand for services such as social housing, emergency accommodation and social care, and the subsequent increasing cost of maintaining these services. We recognise the pressure this places on the Council's budgets.

For the sake of the residents of Gwynedd, Cyngor Gwynedd calls upon the Welsh Government to stand up for Wales and demand that their fellow Labour members in the UK Government make a U-turn on their plans to cut benefits.

In order to ensure respect and dignity for all, Cyngor Gwynedd calls upon the Welsh Government and the UK Government to adequately fund benefits and social services.

In order to end austerity in Wales, this Council demands that the Welsh Government calls upon the UK Government to devolve welfare and benefits, together with all the necessary levers to enable the Welsh Government to protect, care for and sustain our society.

The member set out the context to her motion, noting:-

- That she was tabling this motion because she was appalled by the living circumstances of our most vulnerable residents, due to cruel and ideological decisions by the Westminster Government, which have turned their backs on the people of Gwynedd.
- That there had been further cuts to the benefits system in recent months, including Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), Universal Credit and housing cost support, and that these cuts had come without any meaningful consultation, without a thorough social impact assessment, and completely unaccounted for in terms of their impact on real people's lives.
- The number of people in Gwynedd receiving Universal Credit had remained high over the years, with many of them in work, yet unable to afford to live.
- The cuts to housing cost support were creating unprecedented pressures, with private rents rising and options decreasing.
- That the cuts were increasing demand on our welfare services, housing, debt advice, and even our libraries, which had developed over the past few years into a place of refuge and support.
- That this Council, year after year, had to step into the gap that had been created by the Westminster Government and their poor decisions, providing support that was not a statutory responsibility, but a moral requirement, and that brought direct financial pressure on our budgets.
- The benefits system was no longer there to support people, and was a system designed to undermine confidence, harm mental health and create barriers.
- Recent reports from Shelter Cymru, Citizens Advice and even Westminster Committees themselves recognised that the assessment process for Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and Personal Independence Payment (PIP) caused serious harm to vulnerable people, including increased stress, depression and much worse situations as well.
- That the Council saw an increasing, unprecedented and unsustainable demand for:-
 - social services, including support for older people, people with disabilities and families.
 - emergency housing and emergency accommodation.
 - mental health and counselling services, which often failed to keep up with demand.
- That this created a situation where councils like Gwynedd were paying for the consequences of policies that were being made over 200 miles away by a Labour Government that had no understanding of our communities or local context.
- That the proposal was a call for morality, justice and support.
- These decisions by the Government were not due to financial cuts and lack of funds, but to a lack of political will.
- It was hypocritical that the Government could create a tax system that was of value to the wealthy and to the biggest companies, but at the same time failed to maintain a basic income for people living on less than £80 a week.

Enthusiastic support for the proposal was expressed by members.

A member referred to a recent speech by Ann Davies, MP in Westminster which stated:-

- That very extensive research into the numbers of people registered with disabilities showed that in Wales this figure was 28%, with 50% of those people unable to work.

- This compared to a figure of 22% registered with disabilities in the South East of England, with 61% of those people in work.
- The impact of £5m cuts in benefits was going to have a significantly greater impact on the devolved governments, than other areas of the UK.
- That the Personal Independence Payment (PIP) situation, where people received money to live more independently, was going to get worse in Wales because higher numbers were receiving this payment.
- That the Welsh Government was going to have to shoulder the serious cost and the major difficulties that would result from cutting the £5m benefits budget.
- That Wales was second from bottom in terms of numbers in working age who were disabled.
- It would have been very easy for the Westminster Government to put a 2% levy on assets over £10m, thereby bringing £24bn into their fund, but instead they had decided to hit the most disabled people who were already suffering.

The Leader noted:-

- That the Supporting the People of Gwynedd programme was a priority for the Cabinet and made a difference to people's lives. However, that could never be enough because, as this motion, and other motions on the agenda of this meeting had highlighted, the problem had been caused far from Gwynedd.
- That the fact that Wales did not benefit from its natural resources and that we were underfunded by the Barnett Formula had a direct impact on our economy, on poverty in Wales, on people's health and on the future of our children.
- Research by Policy and Practice showed that the latest cuts meant Wales faced 3 times the economic impact compared to London and the South East of England, with almost 200,000 people in Wales affected, or 6.1% of the population, and some losing up to £9,000 a year.
- These changes would not come into effect immediately and anyone concerned about the situation would be encouraged to contact the Council or their local councillor for assistance.

RESOLVED to adopt the motion, namely:-

This Council notes the disproportionate and cumulative effects of austerity policies on the most vulnerable inhabitants of our society by successive UK governments – whether Conservative or Labour governments.

Following the UK Government's recent announcement of further cuts to benefits totalling £5 billion, this Council recognises that these cuts are the continuation and progression of austerity policies. With a proportion of 18.1% of Gwynedd's population considered as being disabled, the people of Gwynedd will be hit particularly hard by the cuts. Furthermore, people considered as disabled in Gwynedd are less likely to be in employment, with only 50.5% in a paid job, and are therefore more likely to rely on benefits as their only source of income.

The Council notes our growing responsibility to mitigate the brutal effects of austerity policies through the Council's services. We are seeing an increase in demand for services such as social housing, emergency accommodation and social care, and the subsequent increasing cost of maintaining these services. We recognise the pressure this places on the Council's budgets.

For the sake of the residents of Gwynedd, Cyngor Gwynedd calls upon the Welsh Government to stand up for Wales and demand that their fellow Labour members in the UK Government make a U-turn on their plans to cut benefits.

THE COUNCIL Thursday, 1 May 2025

In order to ensure respect and dignity for all, Cyngor Gwynedd calls upon the Welsh Government and the UK Government to adequately fund benefits and social services.

In order to end austerity in Wales, this Council demands that the Welsh Government calls upon the UK Government to devolve welfare and benefits, together with all the necessary levers to enable the Welsh Government to protect, care for and sustain our society.

The meeting commenced at 1:30pm and concluded at 3:45pm.

CHAIR