

CYNGOR GWYNEDD – Report to Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet

Title of item:	Waste and Recycling Strategy
Cabinet Member:	Cllr. Craig ab Iago, Cabinet Member for the Environment
Relevant officer:	Dafydd Williams, Head of Department Roland Thomas, Assistant Head of Department
Date of meeting:	10 June 2025

1. DECISION SOUGHT

- 1.1 To approve the right to take the Waste and Recycling Strategy to public consultation, so that we receive feedback from the residents of Gwynedd on the draft document. This will then enable us to present the final document to the Cabinet for adoption as Cyngor Gwynedd's Waste and Recycling Strategy for the period up to 2030.

2. THE REASON WHY THE CABINET NEEDS TO MAKE A DECISION

- 2.1 The publication of a Waste and Recycling Strategy is a natural progression to the work that has taken place since the waste services transferred to the Environment Department in October 2022. At the time there was a clear set of priorities that needed attention:
- Improve customer care and handling of enquiries/complaints,
 - Address high sickness levels,
 - Management of the overspending,
 - Reach the national recycling target of 70%
- 2.2 To support the improvements that are already underway, there were aspirations since taking control of the Waste and Recycling Service to prepare a document that set out a vision, direction and objectives for the next 5 years, and this is also a priority in the Council Plan under 'A Green Gwynedd'.
- 2.3 We have been working closely with waste and recycling experts, Local Partnerships and Wrap Cymru to develop this Strategy. We are also preparing a business plan for the Welsh Government to ensure that schemes included in the Waste and Recycling Strategy take us towards recycling at least 70% of our waste. The Welsh Government expects councils to adopt a strategy that sets a local direction in this area, and which of course complements the Government's vision and targets. Having a clear plan that sets out a direction and vision will be helpful when applying for funding from the Welsh Government to realise schemes we have identified in the Strategy.
- 2.4 The Waste and Recycling Strategy details the current situation in terms of where we are now, and the context and drivers for change. Although we in Gwynedd have increased our recycling rate from 55% in 2014/15 to 64% in 2024/25, recent years have seen a lack of movement on the percentage, and this rate will not meet the Welsh Government's statutory target of 70%.

There is a real risk that, unless we meet the recycling target, Cyngor Gwynedd could face fines. For information, 8 out of the 22 local authorities in Wales managed to recycle 70% of their waste in 2023-24.

- 2.5 Not only do we want to meet the national target, but we are keen to go further than that, ensuring that Gwynedd moves towards a circular economy through reusing and repairing more materials by using our recycling centres as a means of doing so. We will also continue to encourage our residents and businesses to reduce their waste overall.
- 2.6 We present the Strategy taking into account local factors, such as the Local Nature and Climate Plan, the Council Plan 2023-28, the financial situation and pressures, and the condition and suitability of our infrastructure. We also give attention to national factors and legislation such as the Welsh Government's latest strategy, 'beyond recycling', the Extended Producer Responsibility Scheme, the Deposit Return Scheme and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
- 2.7 The details of the objectives and actions we intend to take can be found in the draft version of the Waste and Recycling Strategy (**Appendix 1**), and not all the details are repeated in the report, but briefly, six main objectives have been identified in the Strategy, which are:
- How we **communicate and engage** – one of our main strategic objectives is to ensure that residents, businesses and the wider community understand and are committed to our ambition. It is impossible for us to achieve our objectives in isolation as Cyngor Gwynedd, and we will need the help and dedication of every resident and business in Gwynedd to support us in achieving the vision. We will lead the way by putting in place a communication and engagement plan and assess the effectiveness of our campaigns and adapt following feedback and data analysis. We will also empower crews to identify properties that are struggling to recycle, improve accessibility and train site workers at our Recycling Centres, reinforce our Commercial Waste business, and consider enforcement under the powers of the Environmental Protection Act.
 - **Reduce waste and increase reuse and repair** – we need to manage our waste in line with the waste hierarchy, reducing the waste we produce and moving towards a circular economy mindset. We will use our Recycling Centres as a hub to promote the reuse and repair of materials. See the next point, which is also related to this.
 - **Increase Recycling** – we must meet the national target of recycling 70% of our waste. There is a threat that we could face fines for missing the target, but a recent analysis has shown that 57% of the waste in the green bin can be recycled. The recyclable materials in the green bin are costly to dispose of but also include fossil-based materials that release unnecessary carbon emissions. We will be looking at reducing the weekly capacity of the green bin, by considering collection frequency and the size of the bins in order to encourage more recycling, but we will also consider offering facilities to be able to recycle more materials. We will work with businesses through the Commercial Waste side to maximise recycling from the workplace and businesses in general.
 - Provide a **high-quality service** – we are passionate that we want to provide the best possible service for our residents and businesses here in Gwynedd and subsequently achieve a high level of satisfaction. We will protect the core services, but we will not be afraid to venture and take opportunities to stimulate progress in this area, such as using the latest technology.

- **Achieving net zero** – in line with the Council's strategic objectives we will actively reduce our carbon emissions and work towards creating a net zero service. This will mean switching our fleet to zero/low carbon (ULEV), improving the efficiency of our routes, looking for opportunities to install renewable energy at our sites and continuing to invest in the ecology of the old landfill sites.
- **Ensure a suitable infrastructure for the future** – another of our primary objectives for the short term is to improve the quality of our recyclables for the market, and this involves significant investment in our materials handling and processing sites in Harlech and Caernarfon. We will be looking for opportunities to process more of the materials ourselves rather than being too dependent on the private sector. We will also be looking to improve the accessibility and image of our Recycling Centres.

2.8 The Waste and Recycling Strategy will be a dedicated plan for meeting our objectives. We accept that significant work needs to be done in order to achieve the ambitious vision. The strategy will establish an annual monitoring and evaluation plan to ensure that all the objectives are achieved.

3. PROCESS OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION

3.1 The Council is committed to involving stakeholders and consulting with the public and recognises the benefits of doing this. This is especially true here as we depend on our residents to help us and change behaviours towards waste in order to realise the objectives and aspirations of this Strategy. Including stakeholders in this way and consulting more widely ensures that the Council is aware of the local issues and can obtain advice, support and new ideas that will lead to producing better guidance. It should also help to prevent issues and objections later on.

3.2 Stakeholder involvement is central to the arrangements and offers the opportunity for others to understand, influence and shape the content of the Strategy.

3.3 We will consult for a period of 12 weeks and encourage all our residents to complete an online consultation questionnaire where possible, but we will provide paper copies to those who need it through Siop Gwynedd and Libraries. Obviously, there is a risk of social 'bias' in responses found in questionnaires, and in that we will try to reach cohorts of society that can be difficult to engage with here in Gwynedd. In that we will need the help of our councillors to share this through community and town networks. We will also be reaching out to community and town councils, community hubs and dedicated organisations such as the refugee network, Bangor student union, the Council's Equality Core Group and schools. We will be holding a 'drop-in' session in some libraries to encourage face-to-face meetings.

4. CONSIDER THE IMPACT

4.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to consider the impact that a change in any policy or procedure (or the creation of a new policy or procedure) will have on people with protected equality characteristics. The Council also has additional general duties to ensure fairness and to foster good relationships. An Equality Impact Assessment must therefore be undertaken before making a decision on any relevant change (i.e. that affects people with protected characteristics). At present, the assessment does not highlight any specific incidents. However, as part of the consultation process, we will update and reappraise the assessment. A copy of the impact assessment can be seen in **Appendix 2**.

5. THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS (WALES) ACT (2015)

- 5.1 Another important consideration is the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The act seeks to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The act places a well-being duty on public bodies which is aimed at achieving the seven well-being goals by following the five ways of working. The Strategy will expand on the implications of the Act.

Views of the statutory officers

Chief Finance Officer:

"No objections to the decision sought from the perspective of financial propriety."

Monitoring Officer:

The importance of the Waste Strategy is highlighted in the report and appendices. Whether in terms of the Council's statutory duties, delivering sustainable development in line with the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and meeting targets for recycling. The intention to consult on the document is entirely appropriate. I have no further comments to add."

APPENDICIES

Appendix 1	Waste and Recycling Strategy 2025-2030 (draft)
Appendix 2	Equality Impact Assessment