MEETING	Communities Scrutiny Committee
DATE	19 November 2026
TITLE AND REPORTING PERIOD	Environment Cabinet Member Performance Report: April – August 2026
CABINET MEMBER	Councillor Craig ab Iago

GENERAL SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION
What is your overall assessment of the Department's performance?
I am pleased with the performance of the Environment Department during the period from April to August 2026. While some services have faced significant challenges relating to staffing capacity, workforce changes and increasing operational pressures, arrangements have been put in place to manage these risks and maintain service delivery. There has been continued progress against the milestones that have been set for Cyngor Gwynedd's priorities which are part of the Council's Plan 2023-28. The discussions at the Challenging and Supporting Performance meeting have provided assurance that the main risks are being identified and managed appropriately.
Are you satisfied with the overall performance of the Department?
I am satisfied with the Department's performance, which remains stable, with evidence of progress against the Council's priorities and clear work being done to respond to the areas where challenges remain. I would like to thank the Department's staff for their commitment and ongoing work in providing essential services to the residents of Gwynedd. All matters have been the subject of discussion at the Environment Department's Challenge and Performance Support Meeting on 5 October which included a Corporate Director, Head of Department, Assistant Heads and Service Managers, along with representatives from the Communities Scrutiny Committee.

MAIN PERFORMANCE MATTERS
What are the main performance matters that should be highlighted?

PRIORITY PROJECTS FROM THE COUNCIL'S PLAN

The Department for the Environment is leading on or contributing towards four priorities in the Council's Plan 2023-28, namely:

- Management of second homes and short-term holiday accommodation;
- New Local Development Plan;
- Waste and Recycling;
- Active Travel.

I welcome the work achieved so far this year, and the progress against the milestones set for the four priorities is outlined in Appendix 2.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Appendix 3 contains the performance measures for Services across the Department. The comprehensive report contains data for the most recent period, together with further context and explanation which provides more detail on the bone for the performance of all areas.

During the recent Challenge and Support Performance meeting, there was discussion of a period of change in the **Planning Service** workforce over the last 18 months, with several experienced officers retiring, leaving for other opportunities or being absent from work for an extended period.

In response, the Service has continued to invest in workforce planning and new talent development, appointing and developing several new trainees and officers, as well as filling senior positions internally. Although the level of staffing of the Service is now in a more stable position, the loss of a significant number of experienced members of staff in a short period of time has led to a reduction in experience, expertise and organisational knowledge.

To respond to these challenges, the Planning Service's Action Plan and Priorities for capacity management, workforce development and performance maintenance is being prepared, and a note will be shared with Members shortly.

It was also noted that enforcement issues on specific cases had resulted in the diversion of **Building Control Service** staff time in the period under consideration. This has included work on dangerous structure cases (Corbett Arms, Tywyn and others) which required immediate complex interventions, which in turn had some impact on performance in deciding on applications within a given period.

It was also noted that further clarity is expected from the Welsh Government in the coming months on the future of Building Control. It was noted that national changes to the operating and regulatory arrangements could have an impact on the service in the future, and therefore these developments will need to be considered when planning the Council's next steps.

In the area of **Environmental Health**, it was noted that there has been an adjustment to some metrics in terms of food standards and hygiene inspections. While the current performance reflects the prioritisation of high-risk inspections in line with the requirements of the Food Standards Agency, it was noted that including information on progress against the annual inspection programme and identifying the performance in the context of an ongoing backlog, would be

useful. Work is underway to ensure that this information is available into the future in order to provide useful additional context to aid the interpretation of the indicator.

Attention was drawn to work by the Department's **Business Service (Administration)** which was among the first in Wales to migrate to the HMLR system for processing land charge applications. Officers were thanked for their work on the scheme. It was noted that the number of land charge applications had decreased significantly but that the measure now includes Building Control searches. In the future, the Service will highlight this change in reporting and highlight the split in land charge applications and Building Control searches.

KEY RISKS
Any issues of concern in terms of the Department's risks?
The main areas where there are current challenges and the mitigation measures and development steps that have been introduced where necessary are noted above.

Appendix 1 – Scrutiny Members' Comments

Appendix 2 – Progress on Council Plan project milestones

Appendix 3 – Departmental Performance Measures