THE COUNCIL 24/09/26

Attendance:

Councillors: Elin Walker Jones (Chair)
Delyth Lloyd Griffiths (Vice-chair)

Craig ab Iago, Menna Baines, Rhys Parry, Stephen Churchman, Wendy Cleaver, Dafydd Owen Davies, Elwyn Edwards, Elfed Wyn ap Elwyn, Gwion Emyr, Dylan Fernley, Jina Gwyrfai, John Brynmor Hughes, R. Medwyn Hughes, Elin Hywel, Nia Wyn Jeffreys, Anne Lloyd Jones, Berwyn Parry Jones, Dawn Lynne Jones, Dewi Jones, Elwyn Jones, Gwilym Jones, Gareth Tudor Jones, June Jones, Eryl Jones-Williams, Cai Larsen, Beth Lawton, Dafydd Meurig, Dilwyn Morgan, Edgar Wyn Owen, Gwynfor Owen, Gareth Coj Parry, Geraint Parry, Arwyn Herald Roberts, Elfed P Roberts, Gareth Anthony Roberts, John Pughe Roberts, Meryl Roberts, Richard Glyn Roberts, Huw Llwyd Rowlands, Paul Rowlinson, Angela Russell, Dyfrig Siencyn, Ioan Thomas, Peter Thomas, Menna Trenholme, Rhys Tudur, Hefin Underwood, Einir Wyn Williams, Elfed Williams, Gareth Williams, Gruffydd Williams, Sasha Williams and Sian Williams.

Officers:

Dafydd Gibbard (Chief Executive), Catrin Thomas (Corporate Director), Dylan Owen (Corporate Director), Dewi Morgan (Head of Finance), Iwan Evans (Monitoring Officer), Ian Jones (Head of Corporate Services), Sioned Williams (Head of Economy and Community Department), Steffan Jones (Head of Highways, Engineering and YGC Department), Nia Grisdale (Legal Service Manager), Sion Huws (Propriety and Elections Manager), Vera Jones (Democracy and Language Service Manager) and Rhodri Jones (Democracy Services Officer).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors:- Alan Jones Evans, Annwen Hughes, Huw Rowlands, Robert Glyn Daniels, Rheinallt Puw, Gwilym Evans, Huw Wyn Jones, Louise Hughes, Llio Elenid Owen, Beca Roberts and Dewi Owen.

2. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of the Council held on 2 July 2026 as a true record.

3. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

Declarations of personal interests were received for Item 7 from Councillors Anne Lloyd Jones, Beth Lawton, Elfed Williams, Dyfrig Siencyn, Elwyn Edwards, Wendy Cleaver, Gruffydd Williams, Elwyn Jones, John Pughe Roberts and Dafydd Davies.

4. THE CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Vice-chair extended condolences to the Chair following her recent bereavement. The Chair thanked everyone who had supported her during this period and to St. David's Hospice who provided gentle and respectful end-of-life care to her mother. Condolences were extended to the Head of Finance following his recent bereavement. Best wishes were expressed to everyone within the County's communities who were facing similar situations and condolences were expressed to everyone within the County's communities who had recently lost loved ones.

Councillor Rhys Parry was welcomed to his first meeting of the Full Council. It was explained that he represented the Llanrug Ward, following a recent by-election.

Congratulations were extended to everyone who was successful at the Garreg Las National Eisteddfod, including:

- Dr Gareth Evans-Jones, Bangor University lecturer, on winning the Prose Medal.
- Dr Caroline Jones, Head of Children's Clinical Psychology Service in Gwynedd, on reaching the final of the Welsh Learner of the Year.
- Penri Williams, who was born in Porthmadog, on winning the R Alun Medal following 40 years of voluntary service supporting, sustaining and enriching culture in his local area.

The following were congratulated:

- All Gwynedd athletes who were members of Team Wales in the Commonwealth Games, including Ela Letton-Jones from Felinheli, who won the silver medal in the para-swimming competition.
- Right Reverend Dr Manon Ceridwen James on being established as the Bishop of Bangor.
- Morgan Mace, from Carmel, on winning the Young Hero award in the BBC's Make a Difference awards.
- Leisa Gwenllian, who had been selected as one of Screen International's Stars of Tomorrow programme.
- Everyone who took part in cultural events over the summer. Praise was expressed for the representation from the County at this year's Royal Welsh Show, including the participation of farmers, businesses and young people.

Best wishes were extended to Elfyn Evans as he participated in the final race of the World Rally Championships in Sardinia

5. URGENT ITEMS

None to note.

6. QUESTIONS

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

advance.)

1. **Question from Councillor Dawn Lynne Jones**

Referring to the latest data on young people aged 16-25 who are sleeping rough or who have been assessed as intentionally homeless, what assessment has the Cabinet Member made of the extent of homelessness among young people in Gwynedd? Is he satisfied that the Council's existing policies and services are adequate, and what further action is being taken to prevent young people becoming homeless?

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

No young person between 16 and 25 years old has currently been identified as sleeping rough in Gwynedd. The Housing and Property Department commissions a range of housing support services specifically aimed at young people from 16 to 25 years old. These services extend from drop-in projects to mobile support in the community, offering temporary supported accommodation and then floating support in supported accommodation in the community. This range of services provides a full circle of support to young people.

The Council commissions outreach service through North Wales Housing to identify and respond to any cases of rough sleeping. If an individual is found to be sleeping rough, the outreach service makes contact and offers support to help them access housing and support services. The Council also uses the StreetLink system, which allows members of the public to bring attention to any individuals they suspect to be sleeping rough. Every StreetLink referral is considered, and where appropriate, officers or the outreach service will offer support.

GISDA and Cyfle provides floating support services to young people across the county. This support is an important part of the wider provision trying to prevent homelessness by tackling issues before they reach a crisis point. However, there are circumstances where temporary supported accommodation is required, and this is commissioned from GISDA in several locations across Gwynedd. The provision includes using hostels and individual accommodation units across the county, and positive results can be seen as a result of these schemes.

Currently, Cyfle and GISDA provides drop-in services, however it was decided that this was a field in which the provision could be expanded and developed, therefore a wider, much more comprehensive drop-in service was commissioned. Following a recent tendering process, Cyfle was successful and they will be providing a county-wide drop-in service from the 1st December. Part of this contract will be seeking a better understanding of the support needs of young people and identifying opportunities to develop and further expand the service. The drop-in service will also introduce a new app for young people – “Showt” – an innovative and exciting development for the county, and we look forward to seeing it when the contract commences.

The Council also provides a SPOA (Single Point of Access) service which plays a

key part in the prevention of homelessness among young people. The SPOA provides an early intervention route which enables the identification of young people who needs support as soon as possible and refer them to the most appropriate services according to their individual needs. This can include housing advice, family mediation, mental health services, help with substance misuse, employability services, welfare advice and a range of other specialist services. By coordinating referrals and facilitating access to relevant support, the SPOA service helps to tackle problems before they develop into a housing crisis and supports young people to maintain stable accommodation wherever able.

A specific post in the Education Department focuses on prevention work in schools and other locations, aiming to identify risks early, and support individuals before their situations worsens to the point of being at risk of homelessness.

I believe the housing support provision for young people is comprehensive and robust in Gwynedd and I will ensure that the provision is reviewed regularly.

2. **Question from Councillor Elin Hywel**

We know that compact, dry land that has hardened during extreme dry weather is unable to absorb water at a normal rate. We know that this significantly increases the risk of surface water when heavy rainfall follows. This year saw the driest July in 190 years. NRW declared the whole of Wales to be in drought, and this included the catchments of Gwynedd.

Although we cannot predict with certainty what the weather will bring this autumn and winter, we do know that a significant El Niño weather pattern is expected this year, and that this weather pattern increases the possibility of very rough and wet weather here in Wales. We have received several warnings from the UK government and organisations such as the Met Office to this effect.

What additional cross-departmental preparations have been made this year to respond to the known and increased risk of harsh wet weather which increases the risk of flooding – in Pwllheli in particular, and Gwynedd more widely, in light of factors such as the expected weather and the possibilities of post-drought run-off which increases the risk of severe flooding?

In addition, taking into account the Council's published position on the issue of flooding which states that "in many cases prevention is impossible" and the Council's emphasis on what we as individuals can do to prevent flooding in our homes, what communication has been planned for this year to ensure that residents understand the risk to their own property, know what to do in advance if flooding comes, and where they can get support?

Answer from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Engineering and Gwynedd Consultancy, Councillor June Jones

Thank you for the question. It is a valid point that soil properties can change during prolonged periods of drought, with land becoming more compacted and, in some circumstances, less able to absorb water. This can lead to a temporary increase in surface water following heavy rainfall. However, following the more

unsettled and wetter conditions experienced since the end of August, it is likely that much of the ground has now returned closer to its normal condition. As we move into the winter period, the principal concern is often land that has already become waterlogged by previous rainfall and therefore has a reduced capacity to absorb further heavy rain.

In terms of the Council's preparedness, established arrangements are already in place within our highways maintenance and water asset services to enable us to respond to severe weather events and flooding incidents. In addition to these arrangements, further work has been undertaken during the year to strengthen our ability to anticipate and respond to flood risks. This includes the development of detailed area-based rainfall forecasting templates using data from monitoring systems such as Hydromaster sensors, strengthening flood asset management arrangements during events, and prioritising work programmes to improve and upgrade a number of debris screens at locations where issues have occurred in the past.

Work is also ongoing to strengthen the process for making use of information and warnings issued by the Met Office and Natural Resources Wales. While clear arrangements are already in place for responding to coastal storm events, we continue to develop our arrangements for managing the impacts of heavy rainfall. This includes exploring how historical data and local knowledge can be used to establish rainfall thresholds that are likely to trigger issues in specific areas, helping to inform operational discussions and responses at the appropriate time.

With regard to Pwllheli specifically, we are keen to ensure that local plans remain up to date and relevant. The review and updating of local community flood arrangements continues to form an important part of the Council's preparedness work, undertaken in collaboration with partner organisations.

In relation to communication with the public, we recognise the importance of ensuring that residents understand the risks relevant to their local areas and are aware of the actions they can take to prepare. We will continue to explore opportunities to work with partners such as Natural Resources Wales and the Met Office to remind residents, particularly those living in areas with a history of flooding, of the practical steps they can take ahead of the winter period. This may include directing people to information on personal flood plans, flood warning services, and sources of local support and supplies that may be of assistance should a flooding incident occur.

The Warning and Informing team within Natural Resources Wales (NRW), also manages and delivers the local flood warning service to professional partners and the public alongside incident preparedness for all incidents. They also lead on coordinating NRW's response post flood, ensuring that recovery and lesson learning activities are effectively managed.
Although it is not possible to prevent every flooding event, our aim is to continue strengthening our monitoring arrangements, response procedures and engagement with communities in order to reduce risks where possible and ensure a coordinated response when severe weather events occur.

Supplementary Question from Councillor Elin Hywel

Thank you for the very useful information. I am glad to hear that work is progressing to develop a specific rainfall threshold for different areas, as this is important. But, considering the risks discussed, I hope that it would be possible to move quickly from the inspection step to action.

In my original question, I asked what additional cross-departmental preparations that have been made this year. I do not feel that this has been answered in full. Residents need to know that the Council is ready for what will happen in the event of extreme weather. Therefore, can the Cabinet Member confirm what additional steps will be taken before the winter, and how this work will be coordinated across Council departments?

As the lead local flood authority, how will the Council warn the residents about surface water flooding, considering that the flood warnings of Natural Resources Wales do not encompass these risks?

What will trigger these warnings and how will residents be informed in advance, what to do and where to get assistance?

Answer from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Engineering and Gwynedd Consultancy, Councillor June Jones

Thank you for the supplementary question. Preparing for extreme weather is an ongoing task across several Council services and partners. As the lead local flood authority, we work closely with Natural Resources Wales, who are responsible for publishing official flood warnings where relevant.

In addition to these warning arrangements, we are continuing to review and inspect our own assets, including culverts, drains, debris screens and sites where we are aware of historical problems or risks. Maintenance work and targeted intervention is prioritised in these locations to reduce the risk as much as possible, before the winter.

Operationally, the Council, through the Highway Maintenance service, is preparing to respond to incidents through the routine arrangements we have in place. This includes ensuring that sandbags are available in every strategic depot across the County, in order to be able to respond swiftly to local problems, during periods of heavy rain or flooding.

Although we cannot prevent every extreme weather event, our aim is to combine information and warnings from Natural Resources Wales, with local monitoring, inspection and maintaining our assets and effective operational preparedness so that the Council is in the best possible position to respond and support communities throughout the winter.

3. **Question from Councillor Richard Glyn Roberts**

Given that:

- The current local development plan is based on incorrect forecasts regarding population growth and the number of jobs during the plan period;
- And that Gwynedd's planning officers realise this and have conveyed it in presentations to elected members;
- And that the housing associations are scrambling to submit planning applications for social housing estates in the villages and towns of Llŷn and Eifionydd before the period of the current plan ends;
- And that the size and scale of such developments is endangering the fragile socio-linguistic fabric of those communities – Botwnnog, Nefyn, Trefor, Chwilog, Y Ffôr, Abererch – and are subject to strong local opposition;
- But that the hands of the officers and the planning committee are bound by the existing plan, although knowing that it is founded on an erroneous evidence base;

What steps are planned to be taken to break this absurd cycle of falsehood?

Response from the Cabinet Member for the Environment, Councillor Craig ab Iago

Before responding to the question, it is important to address a misconception in some of the points raised as well as the question asked.

With regard to the (current) Gwynedd and Anglesey Joint Local Development Plan which was adopted by the Full Council in 2017, it was based on the evidence and forecasts that were available at the time in relation to matters including population growth and job numbers. Changes in circumstances due to various reasons are inevitable during the Plan's 15-year plan, and there is flexibility within the Plan which means that this can be responded to. That has happened and continues to happen during the life of the Plan, and I am confident that this is what has been conveyed in presentations to Members.

To address the thrust of the question, there is no doubt that Gwynedd is facing a housing crisis, with young families unable to access suitable housing in their communities. That includes all sorts of different homes that include open market housing, affordable housing and social housing.

As a Council, we are leading the way by ensuring that consideration of the Welsh language is a key part of local planning policies, with detailed guidance in the current Development Plan's Supplementary Planning Guidance on how to take the language into account when dealing with applications for new developments.

Each application is assessed individually and on its own merits against the policies of the Local Development Plan and national policies, assessing the relevant evidence, and giving consideration to all the relevant planning issues including the need for housing and consideration of the Welsh language.

As all members will be aware, work is progressing on a new Local Development Plan and I emphasise that the Plan must be evidence-based across many areas

of work, and consideration of the Welsh language will be central to the preparation of the new Plan.

Supplementary Question from Councillor Richard Glyn Roberts

I understand that the Cabinet has a lead role in the Housing Partnership, which makes the major decisions in this field. How can you justify turning a deaf ear and disregarding the views of local Councillors, Community Councils, petitions from residents and objections based on census data, which shows that the size and scale of developments will weaken the Welsh language in Llŷn and Eifionydd?

Response from the Cabinet Member for the Environment, Councillor Craig ab Iago

It was noted that it was not possible to provide a factual answer to the supplementary question, as it was based on individual opinion.

4. **Question from Councillor Gruffydd Williams**

In 2020 Councillor, and former leader of Cyngor Gwynedd, Dyfrig Siencyn, Chair of the North Wales Ambition Board said: "We are delighted to support this recommendation to enable these five exciting projects to progress to the next stage of securing funding from the Growth Deal. They are all transformational projects that have the potential to contribute to the North Wales economy by bringing in additional investment and job opportunities in key sectors. The projects also reflect our vision to promote innovative and sustainable economic prosperity in the area by encouraging cooperation between the public and private sectors."

To what degree did his claims of creating up to 4,300 jobs turn out to be a huge failure?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Economy and Community, Councillor R Medwyn Hughes

Ambition North Wales acknowledges that the North Wales Growth Deal has faced many challenges and delays since the Final Deal Agreement was signed with Welsh Government and UK Government in December 2020. While some of these factors were internal including overly optimistic project timescales and planning challenges, external factors have also contributed to delays including the economic impact of Covid-19, international conflicts and cost inflation pressures. In 2025, the Economic Well-being Sub-Committee agreed a number of changes to the Growth Deal designed to improve the pace of delivery including the removal of stalled projects, the creation of a new reserve list of potential projects and a streamlined assurance and approval process. These changes have had a positive impact on performance with the number of business cases being approved increasing significantly.

It is important to remember that this is a 15-year programme with 10 years of investment yet to come to achieve the outcomes. As of quarter 1 2026-27, there

are now 8 projects in delivery across North Wales, including the following projects within Gwynedd - Parc Bryn Cegin, Digital Signal Processing Centre and Centre for Environmental Biotechnology projects with Bangor University and the Sheep Milk Wales element of the Glynllifon Rural Economy Hub. A further 10 projects have been approved for the region but are not yet in delivery. While investment and job creation figures remain relatively low at present, these will increase significantly over the next few years as the projects in delivery move through construction into their operational phases. These 18 projects have made commitments to deliver 2003 jobs by 2036 with the remainder of the target to be met by projects that are yet to be approved.

Supplementary question from Councillor Gruffydd Williams

Considering the lack of population growth, and the vulnerability of the Welsh language, is it not now necessary to have a Local Economic Plan that is based on the reality of the drop in births, instead of foolish dreams of growth.

Response from the Cabinet Member for Economy and Community, Councillor R Medwyn Hughes

Of the plans in the pipeline, 11 plans will invest directly in Gwynedd. Should these plans be realised, over £57 million of Growth Deal funding will have been invested in Gwynedd over the period, leading to a total investment of almost £115 million in Gwynedd over the next 15 years. This is a significant amount, and it is anticipated that the investment will lead to the creation of over 650 jobs across the County. Gratitude was expressed for the interesting observations presented in the questions.

5. **Question from Councillor Gwynfor Owen**

There are major concerns in the Llanbedr area and more widely about what is happening at Llanbedr Airfield. The unpleasant noise that drones make while flying in circles around the village is causing great distress to residents and visitors alike. There is also concern about the military use of the site that could put Llanbedr at risk of being a target for enemies of the United Kingdom. May I therefore ask Cyngor Gwynedd what monitoring/supervision is taking place of the use of the site either by the Council or any other agency?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Economy and Community, Councillor R Medwyn Hughes

Cyngor Gwynedd does not monitor the day-to-day activities of Llanbedr Airfield tenants or carry out direct supervision of the nature of their operations. General information is available about which companies are based on the site, but the Council does not have access to detailed information about their activities or customers.

This is partly due to confidentiality and the commercial arrangements that are in place between the landlord and the tenants. As a result, the Council is not in a position to comment in detail on the nature of the work being carried out by individual companies on the site.

On the question of monitoring or supervision of the site, the Council does not conduct a specific monitoring programme of the airfield's operational use. However, activities on the site are subject to the relevant regulatory and licensing frameworks applicable to the operators and their activities.

Residents were encouraged to contact the Council with any concerns and complaints, so that action could be taken.

Supplementary Question from Councillor Gwynfor Owen

Thank you very much for the response. It seems that the answer clearly shows that there is a lack of local democracy here, which means that Cyngor Gwynedd cannot look at what is happening here in more depth. Bearing in mind that the Welsh Government, as site owners, and the fact that they have poured millions of pounds in grants to the airfield in recent times to promote the economy, no jobs have been created for local residents. I ask whether the Council will write to the Government to ask them what monitoring or supervision has been carried out into what is happening on the site, and what monitoring has been conducted of the grants provided to the site? Have the grants been used correctly?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Economy and Community, Councillor R Medwyn Hughes

He agreed with the comments made in the supplementary question. He provided reassurances that discussions were progressing to ensure that appropriate arrangements were in place from the correct source, in order to send a letter to the Government.

6. **Question from Councillor Rhys Tudur**

Considering the well-being of children living equally between two households and the lack of policy clarity for those circumstances, in what way will and does the Council consider the two households combined when dealing with the transport of children to school and the empty seats scheme?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Education, Councillor Dewi Jones

The Council recognises that an increasing number of children are living between two households and divide their time equally between the two households. In implementing the Education Transport Policy and the Empty Seating Scheme, however, there is a need to adopt a procedure that is clear, consistent and fair for all families. The policy therefore uses one primary residential address in assessing eligibility.

This approach avoids the need to try to calculate entitlements based on two addresses or a central point between two homes, which would be very complex to administrate and likely to lead to discrepancies. It is also a long-established method widely used by other local authorities.

Where a child divides their time between two households, the Council relies on

the primary residential address used for administrative and educational purposes. That may include the address that is recognised on official records such as Child Benefit, school registration or other official documents. By acting on the basis of one primary address, the Council can ensure that the policy is applied consistently and fairly across the whole county.

He did not agree that the policy was unclear and noted that much more clarity was now included in the current policy.

It was confirmed that the Department was committed to continue to hold discussions on this subject, as done in the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee recently as well as a public consultation.

It was considered that finding a geographical point between two households was not practically possible and it could cause confusion to the Council and families.

Supplementary Question from Councillor Rhys Tudur

Considering that Clause 1.55 of the Learner Travel Statutory Guidance states that where learners have a dual residency, both locations should be considered as the learner's usual residence.

Should the new transport policy be reviewed so that the current emphasis, on one main administrative address, places too much freedom for individual officers to interpret the policy in a specific way, and give less consideration to the second residence, or second residence together, when assessing eligibility for transport, and thus, place children with dual residences, and balanced dual residences, at a disadvantage?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Education, Councillor Dewi Jones

As explained in the past, no work was being actioned for dual residences. By now, a consideration of 5 miles has been noted within the policy. This means that the Council gives an advantage to learners with a dual residence, and considers that they have two homes.

It was asked how the proposed changes would be implemented in a practical sense, as it caused confusion. In an ideal world, more would be done to support residents, but it was acknowledged that it was not possible to achieve everything. Satisfaction that more consideration had been given to these families, confirming that there is a need to continue to provide reasonable policies.

It was elaborated that the Department continued to hold discussions on this matter, confirming that he was open to positive changes in order to offer a fair service.

7. **Question from Councillor Beca Roberts**

The question was asked by the Chair in the absence of Councillor Beca Roberts.

Many of my constituents have contacted me with concerns regarding the

possibility of data centres being developed in Gwynedd, particularly in light of Trawsfynydd being designated as a key site within the North Wales Artificial Intelligence Growth Zone. My constituents are asking what safety measures will be in place to ensure that such developments do not become extractive only; using our land, our energy and water resources while the economic benefits largely leave the area.

Can the Cabinet Member state whether the Council is developing any framework or specific expectations for data centre developments in Gwynedd so that if these developments come here, they will secure real and permanent benefits to our communities? Specifically, how will the Council ensure that expectations in terms of local economic benefit, employment, infrastructure and the use of local resources are met, and how will the Council seek to ensure that any developments are proportionate to the needs and priorities of Gwynedd communities rather than mainly serving an external demand?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Economy and Community, Councillor R Medwyn Hughes

'There is no framework in place yet for the development of data centres on the Trawsfynydd Science Park site.

It is important to point out that there is no development framework in place for Data Centres in Wales, unlike England and Scotland. They have guidance that is used in considering planning applications.

Each application for new development on a site in Gwynedd would be assessed individually and on its merits against the policies of the Local Development Plan and national policies, assessing the relevant evidence, and considering all planning issues, including social, environmental and economic considerations. Therefore, by assessing all the relevant planning considerations, the potential impacts of any new development are considered as part of the process of dealing with the planning application.

Although the North Wales AI Zone application refers to an opportunity to consider the future development of a data centre on the Trawsfynydd site, we are not aware of any specific proposal for developing a data centre on the site at this time.

Phase one of the establishment of Trawsfynydd Science Park is to establish a Skills, Business and Innovation Centre on site. The aim of the scheme is to protect and retain high-quality jobs in Trawsfynydd; and then working with partners to identify new opportunities for the future. This centre will be a space for small businesses to establish and develop with the support of investors and specialist partners. The centre will also be a catalyst for developing different zones on the Science Park over a period of years in preparation for the time when on-site decommissioning work comes to an end. Research on science parks shows the importance of rooting the work locally and growing steadily over time; with local skills and innovation driving the work. It should be considered a long-term investment, and it can take up to 25 years to achieve its full potential.

Cyngor Gwynedd officers have begun a discussion with officers from Eryri National Park Authority to understand more about what would be suitable to develop on the site in future.

The Trawsfynydd business case shows that the identification of suitable development options for the rest of the land in order to achieve the long-term vision will take place between 2027 and 2029 and ensuring there will be clear local benefits are central to this work.

You will recall that we adopted the Gwynedd Economy Strategy 2035 at our meeting in May. The ambition in this document is clear; to create an innovative, productive and low-carbon economy that strengthens the Welsh language, creates new opportunities and contributes to everyone's well-being. But the goal isn't just economic growth. We want to see an economy that supports our communities, retains more benefit locally, and helps people to live and thrive here in Gwynedd. This is what we will be promoting for the Trawsfynydd site.'

7. VISITOR LEVY

The Chair reminded members that it was not possible to make a decision in favour or against the levy at this meeting and noted the need to share views on the features of the levy only. It was emphasised that there would be an opportunity in the future to hold a further discussion.

The report was submitted by the Cabinet Member for the Economy and Community, Councillor R Medwyn Hughes.

Members were reminded that the Full Council had agreed at its meeting on 14 May 2026, to hold a public consultation on the possibility of introducing a Visitor Levy in Gwynedd. It was elaborated that the proposal was to gather the views of residents, businesses, visitors and stakeholders before making a decision. It was confirmed that the consultation had been held between 20 May and 26 July this year, noting that the consultation period had been extended by an additional 11 days following comments and a request from the Gwynedd and Eryri 2035 Partnership, during their extraordinary meeting to discuss the matter on 12 June 2026. Gratitude was expressed to everyone who took part in the public consultation, as it allowed the Council to understand the impact that any support or objection would have on communities.

It was confirmed that 6,856 responses had been submitted to the consultation, which is substantially higher than the number of responses to nearby local authorities, such as 2,000 responses in Anglesey and 1,300 responses in Conwy. It was noted that the content of the responses was mixed and that initial considerations suggested that residents supported the proposal, and that businesses and visitors opposed it.

Every contributor was thanked for providing a view and evidence on:

- The potential economic impact on tourism businesses.
- Impact on visitors and travel decisions.
- The most appropriate use of any income collected.

- Impact on local communities, the environment and the Welsh language.
- How the levy could be implemented effectively in Gwynedd.
- Views on support for the introduction of the Gwynedd Visitor Levy Proposal.

It was emphasised that there was a need to delay before making a decision on the introduction of the Tourism Levy in Gwynedd, in order to have adequate time to process every response and identify the main themes affecting communities. It was noted that this is necessary to ensure that any further information is done with full information available.

Members were given an opportunity to ask questions and offer observations.

In response to considering a specific timetable to resubmit the report to the Full Council, the Cabinet Member explained that no definitive timetable had been created to date, emphasising the need to ensure that adequate time was provided to weigh-up the content of every response. It was considered that nearby local authorities had made a decision on the matter, but it was felt that this process needed to be slowed down in order to obtain the full picture. A member commented that this would be a good opportunity to look at any good practice and decisions from nearby authorities, in order to ensure that the correct decision and procedures are adopted in Gwynedd.

RESOLVED to accept the report.

To agree to receive a complete report to decide whether or not to introduce a Visitor Levy in Gwynedd once the analysis, consideration and response to the content of the Consultation have been fully and appropriately completed.

8. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC SAFEGUARDING PANEL 2025-26

The report was submitted by the Cabinet Member for Education and the Chair of the Safeguarding Strategic Panel, Councillor Dewi Jones, confirming that the purpose of the report was to provide an update on what has been achieved at the Safeguarding Strategic Panel during 2025/26, and present a review to the safeguarding policy, to all members of the Council.

Members were reminded that this annual report had been submitted to the Care Scrutiny Committee in June.

It was noted that the Panel's Work merged the Children and Supporting Families Department, Adults, Health and Well-being Department, and elements of the Corporate Services Department, in order to discuss safeguarding-related matters and how to protect children and adults in the best possible way.

Gratitude was expressed to all Council staff who had been very active within their

teams and services in order to achieve this key work.

The incidents emerging over the past year were acknowledged. There was trust that the procedures had been amended, ensuring that several aspects of the safeguarding field were more resilient. The need to ensure that these adjustments were embedded and had an actual influence on the Council's operation and culture in the future was emphasised. It was noted that these changes had derived following the publication of the Our Bravery Brought Justice Report, and the need to ensure that these changes succeeded was stated, in order to provide justice for those individuals who had been abused whilst in the care of a Headteacher in Gwynedd. It was believed that this would ensure that they would reduce any risks that anything like this would happen again in the future.

Some of the successes seen during 2025/26 were detailed, such as:

- 75.9% of Council staff had completed the Safeguarding Training (an increase of 39.5%)
- 100% of Gwynedd schools had introduced safeguarding training to all staff (an increase of 3%)
- 74.7% of Council staff had completed the VAWDASV (Violence Against Women, Domestic Assault and Sexual Violence) Training (an increase of 15.2%).

However, it was acknowledged that an increase had been seen in the numbers of adult safeguarding referrals (792 - an increase of 42) and child safeguarding referrals (8,069 - an increase of 284). Sadness was expressed that abuse continued to exist in Society, but the importance of the key training and awareness raising of the Support available was highlighted.

Pride was expressed that there was an improvement in the time taken to respond to requests, despite the increase in the demand for support. However, it was acknowledged that the increase in the demand for Resources placed the service's resources under pressure, explaining that this was an extended challenge nationally. Praise was expressed that Cyngor Gwynedd had invested an additional £600,000 in critical services this year, and gratitude was expressed to the Welsh Government for additional support.

Attention was drawn to an easy-read version of the report, in order to include information in various formats to ensure that the information reached everyone.

It was reported that the safeguarding policy had been updated, and that it had been considered in detail by the Care Scrutiny Committee, before being approved by the Cabinet. It was emphasised that ongoing changes would be made to policies to ensure that the best actions derived from them.

Members were reminded that all Members and Officers had safeguarding responsibilities, in order to secure a safe, resilient and sound Gwynedd.

Members were given an opportunity to ask questions and offer observations.

The Panel was thanked for an honest report, at a time where major changes had

been seen.

In response to an enquiry, the Cabinet Member for Education explained that there was no reference to the Brynffynnon Unit in the report. It was noted that this report detailed developments up to March 2026 and noted that the unit's history had not come into the public eye until later on in the summer. He emphasised that details about the Unit would be included within the panel's annual report for 2026/27. The opportunity was taken to note that the Council regretted the suffering and abuse that had occurred within the Unit, emphasising that independent investigators had been appointed to look into everything associated with the case, and submit recommendations to the Council in the future. It was confirmed that each of those recommendations had been delivered or were on track to be delivered soon, following the publication of the Our Bravery Brought Justice report.

Pride was expressed that progress could be seen in many aspects of the safeguarding field, despite the increasing workload.

In response to an enquiry about the wording of the report where it noted that 'every department required to include safeguarding as a standing item on their departmental management team agendas', the Cabinet Member for Education stated that he was not happy with this turn of phrase and emphasised that it was expected for this item to be included as a part of every Agenda. The Chief Executive added that he agreed that this part of the report should be amended to note that the Council 'Instructs every department to include safeguarding as a standing item on their departmental management team agendas'. It was added that this was an important adjustment that had been included as a part of the amended safeguarding policy. Nevertheless, pride was expressed that these discussions were being included on every occasion, whether it was on the agenda or not.

It was noted that 75.9% of staff had completed safeguarding training, explaining that this was double the rate since the previous annual report. It was noted that 87% of Gwynedd Councillors had completed it. In response to an enquiry on how these rates could be increased to 100%, the Cabinet Member for Education explained that an officer had been appointed to be a 'Safeguarding Champion'. It was explained that this meant that the Safeguarding Champion provided Training for staff members who did not have technological equipment as a part of their posts, so that they received the information and that the rates of staff members completing the training was increasing. Reference was also made to other concepts to assist with this, such as the provision of technological equipment for work locations, so that staff could share them to complete key training. It was emphasised that the hope was that 100% of staff and councillors would have completed the Training by the next annual report.

It was accepted that an increase had been seen in the number of children being educated at home (282 - an increase of 7.63%). In response enquiries, the Cabinet Member for Education explained that the rates of the numbers of children receiving home education varied throughout the year, as the circumstances of individuals changed. However, it was acknowledged that an increase could be seen this year, noting that this was a national pattern. It was

reported that the rates seen in Gwynedd were similar to these rates, ensuring that an improvement wished to be seen in the future. It was emphasised that the wish was to see all children in the County attending school as they provided support for additional learning needs, unidentified or un-assessed conditions, as well as emotional support and security. However, it was acknowledged that the Council did not have the ability to transform this situation as it was not possible to force anyone to take their children to school. It was reported that there was no quick or easy solution to this and that budgetary factors were also being affected. He gave reassurance that this situation was being considered continuously within the department's performance challenge meetings, noting that this was not being forgotten.

RESOLVED To accept the report presented reporting on the work of the Safeguarding Strategic Panel for the 2025/26 year.

The amended Safeguarding Policy was noted.

9. SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2025-26

It was explained that the report detailed the work of the Scrutiny Committees, rather than detailed individual topics discussed within those committees.

The report was presented by the Chair of the Scrutiny Forum for 2025/26.

He gave a reminder that the purpose of Scrutiny in Gwynedd was to contribute towards driving service improvements for the residents of Gwynedd. He noted the need for the Scrutiny Committees to act as a critical friend to the Cabinet, ask difficult questions, listen to the experiences of local residents and present recommendations that could lead to change.

It was reported that 43 items had been Scrutinised during 2025/26. He noted that 44 Members were a part of that Scrutiny work.
Examples were provided to provide evidence of the difference that Scrutiny made in Gwynedd:

Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee:

- When scrutinising the Schools Strategy, the members asked to strengthen the safeguarding, poverty, social equity, voice of parents, voice of staff, governance and Welsh language aspects.
- When scrutinising the Growth Deal, concern was expressed about the slow pace of plan development, as well as the difference in investment between rural and urban areas. It was noted that the members had asked for future reports to highlight more clearly the number of jobs created specifically in Gwynedd.
- When scrutinising the Immersion Education System, the members asked for further consideration to the length of the provision, well-being of pupils and the possibility of returning to 5 days at the centres.
- When scrutinising the Tourism Levy, the Members emphasised the

need for thorough consultation and clarity on how any income would be spent.

- A Task and Finish Group was formulated to scrutinise the Draft Education Language Policy in more detail. It was confirmed that this work had contributed towards amending the wording of the policy, reinforcing the role of the Welsh language as the main medium of education and highlighting the expectations on schools.

Communities Scrutiny Committee

- When scrutinising the Waste and Recycling Services, the members discussed the need to improve performance and reach the Welsh Government's targets. It was also considered important to educate and inform people of the importance of recycling to encourage individuals to recycle effectively.
- When scrutinising Active Travel, questions were asked about path maintenance, their safety and enquiries on how the views of local people were considered.
- Pride was expressed that a member of the public had requested to scrutinise the funding arrangements of the Climate and Nature Emergency Plan. Subsequently, the Members scrutinised the governance and transparency of the Plan before recommending to ensure more Engagement with the public and for more information on expenditure within the annual report.

Care Scrutiny Committee

- When scrutinising arrangements for hospital discharges, attention was drawn to the fact that any provision should include the residents returning home from hospitals located outside Gwynedd. It was noted that the Members had requested a progress report to highlight any changes.
- When scrutinising the Keeping Families Together Strategy, the value of early support for children and families was highlighted, whilst also drawing attention to the risks of relying on short-term grants.
- It was highlighted that the Members had had to discuss accommodation or homelessness challenges facing young people who left care, when scrutinising the relevant services.
- A Task and Finish Group had been established to look at complaints within the social services field, and the lessons to be learnt from them.

It was confirmed that child safeguarding was a priority for the Care Scrutiny Committee and Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee. Extraordinary meetings had been held to scrutinise the Council's Response Plan following Our Bravery Brought Justice. It was stated that 37 recommendations had derived from those extraordinary meetings, for the attention of the Cabinet. A reminder was given that the Cabinet had adopted an amended Response Plan in March 2026 and the relevant annual report detailed the changes made following the Scrutiny process.

It was noted that a Scrutiny investigation on the safeguarding arrangements in schools was progressing during the year, with 11 schools and 88 staff members and governors taking part in the discussions. A reminder was given that the investigation report had been published, noting that Members would track the recommendations and consider whether they had been implemented.

Attention was drawn to a significant change to performance challenge arrangements during the year, explaining that full reports would be submitted before the Committees twice a year. It was explained that this gave members an opportunity to challenge Cabinet Members and departmental chief officers in public, whilst also identifying matters requiring further scrutiny. However, these arrangements had had a significant impact on the Committees' workload, confirming that this was being assessed continuously to ensure adequate space within the work programme to scrutinise important matters, at the time when Scrutiny could make the most difference.

It was confirmed that the Scrutiny Members self-assessed the work and noted that the Committees had noted that they had failed to scrutinise effectively on some occasions. It was emphasised that the aim of this self-assessment was to ensure that the Members remembered about the need to make appropriate recommendations that could be monitored over time.

Gratitude was expressed to the Chairs and Vice-chairs, Members, Officers and everyone who had contributed to the key work of Scrutiny Committees.

Members were given an opportunity to ask questions and offer observations.

Gratitude was expressed for the annual report, expressing pride that positive work had been achieved for the benefit of Gwynedd residents.

Comments were received on the Chairpersonship of Scrutiny Committees, considering the need to ensure that various political groups were fairly represented within Scrutiny roles. Concern was expressed that it could be considered that the same political group led the Cabinet and Scrutiny Committees, which blurred the lines as to whether transparent and genuine challenge was being achieved.

It was reported that the Chairs of the Scrutiny Committees now attended Cabinet Meetings to present the observations of Members on specific matters. The Leader of the Council noted that those contributions were very valuable to the Cabinet's discussions.

RESOLVED to accept the report.

10. NOTICES OF MOTION

A. The notice of motion was submitted by Councillor Cai Larsen under Section 4.19 of the Constitution, and it was seconded.

The member set the context to his proposal, and noted:-

- That more touring caravans were using lay-bys and car parks as places to stay overnight and for extended periods.
- The notice was not against motorhomes or visitors, as they contributed to the local economy. He noted that the motion highlighted the need for them to use the resources available for them and respect the areas they were visiting.
- He hoped that this notice would protect the interests of the Council, motorhome visitors, other visitors and local people.
- He highlighted that this problem affected communities across the County. He stated that providing facilities was not enough and noted the need for reasonable control and enforcement to ensure compliance.
- This problem led to other side-effects, such as waste being left behind, people misusing the area and chemical toilets being disposed of into rivers. This meant that the problem had an environmental and public health impact and had a direct impact on residents' quality of life.
- He gave a reminder that the Council had already invested in bespoke parking places with suitable facilities, but the lack of control in public areas that were available for free, undermined that investment. Furthermore, it was expressed that it was unfair on private businesses who provided these facilities.
- It was acknowledged that the Council did not have the capacity to implement controls in all locations in the County every day, but it was emphasised that this did not provide grounds to not regulate the situation at all.
- It was noted that if residents breached parking rules, it was likely that enforcement steps would be taken. Although these arrangements should be implemented, it highlighted the need to introduce similar controls for touring caravans.
- He wished to introduce a scheme to address this challenge, prioritising sensitive environmental areas and situations where there was an actual impact on the lives of local residents.

Members expressed support to the proposal, noting:

- Members shared the concerns of Councillor Cai Larsen.
- It was noted that the Council did not have enough powers in this area as paying a fee for parking breaches could cost less than the cost of using a campsite.
- Asked Members and Officers to consider how other authorities addressed this challenge.
- It was agreed that what was noted in the motion would lead to a balance between residents and visitors.
- It was emphasised that the Members were very supportive of tourism within the Area.
- It was confirmed that the proposal nor support intended to prosecute visitors who used touring caravans, but that it wished to regulate their use and ensure safety and fairness.
- A discussion was held on the definitions of parking and camping, considering that highlighting these differences could be useful when

considering any action.

- It was agreed with the concept of targeting regulation and enforcement in specific areas.

RESOLVED to adopt the motion, namely:-

This Council:

Notes the increase in the number of motorhomes and campervans using locations across Gwynedd for parking and overnight stays, including lay-bys, car parks, coastal areas and beautiful places;

Recognises the important contribution that visitors who use motorhomes and camper vans can make to the economy of Gwynedd, and welcomes visitors who use appropriate facilities and respect our communities and environment;

Expresses concern, however, regarding cases where vehicles stay for extended periods in places not intended for that purpose, occupying parking spaces, causing problems for residents and other users, and putting pressure on some of the county's most sensitive and popular areas;

Notes that the Council has already established dedicated Arosfan (overnight stopover) sites for motor homes, but that parking issues and inappropriate overnight stays persist in a number of locations;

Recognises that constraints on the Council's capacity and human resources can make it difficult to operate in all locations at the same time, but does not accept that a lack of capacity to operate everywhere should mean that obvious and persistent problems cannot be addressed in certain locations.

Therefore, the Council calls on the Cabinet and the relevant Cabinet Member to address the problems arising from inappropriate overnight stays and parking by motor homes and campervans across Gwynedd, and to consider what action can be taken to bring the situation under better control.

B. The following notice of motion was submitted by Councillor Paul Rowlinson under Section 4.19 of the Constitution and it was seconded.

The member set the context to his proposal, and noted:-

- He emphasised that ensuring that children and young people had fun outside their homes was very important, but that several concerns had emerged that e-scooters could be dangerous.
- It was reported that the use of e-scooters on public roads was illegal.
- He was concerned that some e-scooters could travel as fast as 70mph, and that there were reports of more than one person using

them at once, and users often failing to wear a helmet. Although the e-scooters were unlikely to travel as fast as that, they continued to be dangerous, particularly in the hands of young people and inexperienced users.

- Attention was drawn to the risk to other residents as the e-scooters were used on pavements, placing pedestrians and vulnerable people at risk.
- E-scooters were defined as a motor/mechanical vehicle, which meant that you needed a licence to drive them, be insured and pay vehicle tax. Currently, it was not possible to obtain e-scooter insurance or licences at present, and as a result, they should not be used on public roads and paths. It was emphasised that it was not unlawful to purchase, own or sell e-scooters.
- The only way of using them lawfully was on private land with the landowner's permission.
- It was reported that the police could stop the scooters if caught driven on the road, as well as issue 6 points on a driving licence and a £300 fine for using an unlicensed vehicle on a public road. He elaborated that many e-scooter users did not have a driving licence, which led to an additional offence of driving a vehicle on a public road without a licence, and any penalty points would be added to their licence when they would obtain one.
- It was confirmed that the police were working to raise awareness and educate people about e-scooters via social media and posters, in order to ensure road safety.
- He expressed a wish for the Council to arrange publicity campaigns to highlight the dangers of e-scooters, and the fact that they could not be used lawfully on public roads. An aspiration to collaborate with the County's schools to reiterate this message was shared.
- The Council was requested to hold discussions with the Welsh Government and UK Government to ask them to address this challenge, as the Council did not have direct powers to resolve this national challenge. Some solutions were proposed, such as better regulations, ensuring that warnings were given upon purchase.

Members expressed enthusiastic support to the motion.

RESOLVED to adopt the motion, namely:-

The Council

- **is concerned about the number of children and young people riding e-scooters on pavements and public roads;**
- **believes that this endangers the safety of those who use them and the safety of pedestrians, especially those with visual impairments;**
- **states that e-scooters fall within the legal definition of 'motor vehicle'. As a result, they are subject to the same requirements as are required for other motor vehicles, such as licensing and insuring them and the need to have a driver's licence for use on public roads. As a result, they cannot be lawfully used except**

on private land with the landowner's consent;

- **notes that e-scooters are being trialled by the UK government and are allowed on roads within some areas but none of these are within Gwynedd;**
- **believes that many parents and young people do not realise that the use of e-scooters on public roads is illegal and that the police can confiscate the e-scooter and file a traffic offence report of 'driving a motor vehicle without third party insurance', resulting in a fine of £300 and 6 points on the driver's driving licence.**

To address this problem, the Council is calling on the Welsh Government and UK Government to consider what action they could take / what regulations they could introduce, to tackle the problem.

13. RESPONSES / UPDATES TO PREVIOUS NOTICES OF MOTION

Submitted – for information:-
Letter from the Welsh Government in response to Councillor Huw Rowlands' Notice of Motion to the 2nd of July Council meeting regarding Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board.

The meeting commenced at 13:30 and concluded at 16:20

CHAIRMAN