

Complete Agenda

CABINET

CYNGOR GWYNEDD

DATE	Tuesday, 23rd January, 2024
TIME	1.00 pm
LOCATION	Hybrid - Siambr Dafydd Orwig, Swyddfeydd y Cyngor, Caernarfon LL55 1SH
CONTACT POINT	Annes Sion cabinet@gwynedd.llyw.cymru

GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET MEMBERS

Members	
Dyfrig Siencyn	Leader of the Council
Nia Wyn Jeffreys	Deputy Leader
Craig ab Iago	Cabinet Member for Housing
Beca Brown	Cabinet Member for Education
Berwyn Parry Jones	Cabinet Member for Highways, Engineering and YGC
Dafydd Meurig	Cabinet Member for Environment
Dilwyn Morgan	Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing
Elin Walker Jones	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People
Ioan Thomas	Cabinet Member for Finance
Menna Trenholme	Cabinet Member for Corporate Support

AGENDA

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THE CABINET 19/12/23

Present-

Councillors: Dyfrig Siencyn, Nia Jeffreys, Beca Brown, Berwyn Parry Jones, Craig ab Iago, Dafydd Meurig, Elin Walker Jones and Ioan Thomas.

Also present-

Dafydd Gibbard (Chief Executive), Huw Dylan Owen (Statutory Director of Social Services), Geraint Owen (Corporate Director), Iwan Evans (Head of Legal Services), Dewi Aeron Morgan (Head of Finance Department) and Rhodri Jones (Democracy Services Officer).

- Item 6: Daron Marged Owens (Senior Operational Officer Community Safety Partnership).
- Item 7: Bethan Richardson (Climate Change Programme Manager) and David Mark Lewis (Energy and Commercial Services Manager)
- Item 8: Dafydd Wyn Williams (Head of Environment Department)
- Item 9: Steffan Jones (Head of Highways, Engineering and YGC Department)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Menna Trenholme and Dilwyn Morgan.

The Cabinet Members and Officers were welcomed to the meeting.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received.

3. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

There were no matters arising from overview and scrutiny.

5. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28 NOVEMBER 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2023 were accepted as a true record.

6. CAERNARFON, PWLLHELI AND CRICIETH PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER (PSPO)

The report was presented by the Senior Operational Officer Community Safety Partnership

DECISION

- a. **To approve the undertaking of the process of considering the introduction of a new Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) for specific areas in Caernarfon, Cricieth and Pwllheli, in accordance with the draft Proposed Order in Appendix 1.**
- b. **To authorise the Head of Adults, Health and Well-being Department to undertake a consultation process for a period of 28 days, with the matter to return to Cabinet in due course for a decision whether a PSPO should be introduced in Caernarfon, Pwllheli and Cricieth.**

DISCUSSION

It was explained that the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 provides the powers for Local Authorities to introduce a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) to deal with particular nuisance or problems in a specific area. It was confirmed that the police had been in contact with the Council to try and introduce a PSPO in areas in Caernarfon, Pwllheli and Cricieth. Orders are intended to deal with specific problems in specific areas that are harmful to the quality of life. It was explained that the proposed PSPO areas have been noted because of the impact of behaviour on the community, businesses and visitors.

It was detailed that the Local Authority must be satisfied that there is reasonable ground for believing that these behaviours in a public place have had, or are likely to have, a detrimental impact on the quality of life of people in the neighbourhood. It was also explained that the activities needed to be persistent in nature and unreasonable. It was explained that the police had provided impact assessments from officers and businesses in these areas, noting evidence that antisocial behaviour by young individuals and adults included substance misuse, threatening behaviour and violence. It was detailed that this led to some individuals in the community avoiding going into businesses, and avoiding using bus shelters etc.

It was confirmed that the Council had consulted with Local Members and the relevant town councils. It was ensured that full support was given to the orders, as well as support from Arfon and Dwyfor Meirionnydd Members of Parliament. It was explained that the Council would hold a public consultation regarding the PSPO if they were approved, before presenting a further report to the Cabinet

when timely to do so. It was recognised that other options should be considered before introducing the PSPO and the Council has received comprehensive information by the police of their various commitments and the Council was satisfied that they had already used every method to address these behaviours.

It was reported that the restrictions under PSPO consideration had been developed specifically to deal with these types of behaviours that caused the most problems, and the following restrictions were considered suitable:

- A person shall not follow a course of conduct which causes, or which can reasonably be perceived to cause harassment, alarm, nuisance or distress.
- A person shall not consume alcohol, or anything which an Authorised Person reasonably believes to be alcohol or a container holding alcohol, if the Authorised Person asks the person to stop drinking or to surrender the alcohol or container.
- A person shall not loiter in a state of intoxication through consumption of alcohol or drugs. If an Authorised Person asks a person to leave the area in circumstances where the person has contravened this restriction, the person shall leave immediately.

It was emphasised that it is only when people who drink alcohol cause antisocial behaviour or likely to cause antisocial behaviour that officers will enforce this ban. It was learned that it is not a crime to drink alcohol in a PSPO area, but it was a crime to not cooperate with a request to stop drinking or surrender alcohol. It was confirmed that the order would not impact events such as the Food Festival in Caernarfon, unless individuals caused antisocial behaviour whilst drinking.

It was confirmed that the Equality Act 2010 set legal requirements to prepare an impact assessment for the PSPO and it was noted that there was no reason to not continue with the process deriving from the Council's impact assessment.

7. CLIMATE AND NATURE EMERGENCY PLAN: ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23 CYNGOR GWYNEDD

The report was submitted by Cllr Dyfrig Siencyn.

DECISION

The Climate and Nature Emergency Plan: Cyngor Gwynedd Annual Report 2022/23, was considered and approved.

DISCUSSION

Members were reminded that the Climate and Nature Emergency Plan had been adopted by the Council on 8 March 2023 following a Cabinet meeting.

Attention was drawn to the fact that the plan included two steps. It was detailed that the first phase was to implement the Council's projects to reduce the use of energy and reduce the Council's carbon emissions and the second phase would

be to look at the wider impact on the county, considering how the Council could help communities and how the county could respond to the impact of climate change.

It was emphasised that the Council had been working on measures to reduce carbon emissions for over 10 years and had succeeded to reduce the total carbon emissions by 43%. It was detailed that the Council had succeeded to do this by implementing in each area, including streetlights that has reduced 76% of the related carbon emissions, and changes to the fleet, reducing related carbon emissions by 23%.

It was explained that the Council's changes contributed towards the climate change emergency and contributed to the Council's aim to be net-zero carbon and ecologically positive by 2030. It was also noted that these changes led to the Council's financial savings. It was elaborated that the Council saw financial benefits when tackling the climate and nature emergency, saving around £15 million since 2010. It was emphasised that this meant that more cuts would need to be made as a result of the Council's current financial situation unless the work on the climate change and nature emergency had not been delivered, because there would be a need to meet £4.3million in additional costs. It was recognised that new considerations needed to be considered by now, such as challenges in the scrutiny field and the fact that more of the council's workforce worked from home.

Reference was made to a variety of projects within the plan's seven main workstreams namely: Buildings and energy, moving and transportation, waste, governance, scrutiny, land use and ecology. Attention was given to a solar panel project that was already underway with £2.8 million invested in solar panels to put on the Council's offices to save money in the future. It was also explained that the Council's fleet would be upgraded in the future to be electric vehicles in order to reduce the carbon emissions that the current vehicles released.

Concern was expressed regarding the method of calculating carbon emissions nationally. It was explained that buying local goods was calculated in the same way as buying goods from across the country, because the system focused on expenditure, despite the fact that there were major differences in the true carbon emissions. It was noted that this could impact the local economy in areas as there was no encouragement to buy locally. There was concern that it would not be possible to reach targets of becoming carbon neutral by 2030 if this calculating method would not be amended. It was confirmed that work was being done nationally to rectify this mistake to help local members to achieve their goal.

Thanks was given to the Communities Scrutiny Committee for their observations on the annual report, which had been taken into their consideration and implemented.

8. PERFORMANCE REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT

The report was submitted by Cllr Dyfrig Siencyn.

DECISION

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DISCUSSION

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9. PERFORMANCE REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS, ENGINEERING AND YGC

The report was submitted by Cllr Dyfrig Siencyn.

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that new considerations needed to be considered by now, such as challenges in the scrutiny field and the fact that more of the council's workforce worked from home.

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Thanks was given to the Communities Scrutiny Committee for their observations on the annual report, which had been taken into their consideration and implemented.

The meeting commenced at 1pm and concluded at 2:10pm

CHAIRMAN

CYNGOR GWYNEDD - Report to Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet

Title of item:	Revenue Budget 2023/24 - End of November Review 2023
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Ioan Thomas, Cabinet Member – Finance
Relevant Officer:	Ffion Madog Evans, Assistant Head of Finance Department - Accountancy and Pensions
Date of meeting:	23 January 2024

1. The Decision sought

- 1.1 To accept the report on the end of November 2023 review of the Revenue Budget and consider the latest financial situation regarding the budgets of each department / service.
- 1.2 To note that significant overspend is anticipated in the Adults, Health and Well-being Department, Children and Families Department, Highways, Engineering and YGC Department this year.
- 1.3 Approve the transfer of £4,241k of underspend on corporate budgets to the Council's Financial Strategy Reserve.

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

- 2.1 It is the Cabinet's responsibility to take action, as necessary, to secure appropriate control over the Council's budgets (e.g., approval of significant virements or supplementary budgets).

3. Introduction and Rationale

Background / Introduction

- 3.1 The end of November report is submitted on the latest review of the Council's revenue budget for 2023/24, and a summary of the situation per Department is outlined in **Appendix 1**. The current projections suggest that all ten departments will overspend by the end of the year. Significant overspend is anticipated in the Adults, Health and Well-being Department, Children and Families Department, Highways, Engineering and YGC Department.

3.2 In **Appendix 2**, further details are provided relating to the main issues and the budget headings where significant variances are anticipated, along with specific recommendations where appropriate.

4. The reasoning and justification for recommending the decision

The Savings Situation

4.1 In recent years, we have reported on risks to achieve savings, which were most prominent in the Adults, Health and Well-being Department and in the field of Waste. Following a recent review of the savings that were not being realised, £2 million worth of savings schemes were abolished. In terms of the remaining plans, there are still risks in terms of realising some of the schemes.

4.2 The latest situation in terms of savings is that £39.1 million, namely 96% of the amended savings schemes since 2015, have now been realised.

5. Council Departments

5.1 Adults, Health and Well-being Department

The latest projections suggest £5.4 million of overspend, which is a result of a combination of many factors including several new and costly supported accommodation cases in the learning disability service. In the Domiciliary Care field, higher staffing costs with high levels of sickness and rates of non-contact hours, while higher fees by private providers in Older People's services.

In light of the exceptional overspend projection by the Adults, Health and Well-being Department, noting that the work commissioned by the Chief Executive is now underway to clarify complex details in the picture of adult care, in order to gain a better understanding of the issues and establish a clear program to respond. The work is led by the Statutory Director of Social Services.

5.2 Children and Families Department

The financial position of the department has significantly deteriorated since the review at the end of August, following an increase in costs due to the complications of out of county packages provided. By now an overspend of £1.3m is being anticipated by the department by the end of the financial year.

5.3 Education Department

The trend of increasing pressures on the school taxi and bus budget are becoming more prominent this year, with an overspend of £1.5m anticipated. The transport field is the subject of a strategic review to try to control the increase in expenditure, it is suggested that the work continues, so that it is possible to reduce overspending and take advantage of opportunities for efficiencies. A combination of underspending in other areas together with the use of reserves reduces the reported departmental overspend.

5.4 Byw'n lach

In recent years, the impact of Covid affected the Byw'n lach company's income. The Welsh Government compensated them for the loss in 2020/21 and 2021/22 from its hardship fund. In 2022/23, the Council provided £550k financial support to Byw'n lach above the contractual payment of the contract, for Byw'n lach to maintain its services. The financial support continues this year, and the required amount has reduced further to £350k.

5.5 Highways, Engineering and YGC Department

An overspend of £780k is anticipated by the department, a reduction was seen in work being commissioned by external agencies, which has a negative impact on the income of highway services. In municipal, a combination of factors, including additional pressure on the budgets of street cleaning and cleaning public toilets. There are income losses in ground maintenance and public toilets but higher income by the bereavement services which reduces the overspend reported.

5.6 Environment Department

The annual trend of overspend in the waste collection and recycling fields continues. Additional circuits have resulted in overspending on employment and fleet costs. Sickness and overtime levels are also problematic, while there are additional costs in terms of vehicle hire.

5.7 Housing and Property

The trend of significant pressure on the temporary accommodation services in homelessness continues to be very intense; this year, £3m of council tax premium as well as £1.2m one-off corporate covid provision was allocated to address the additional costs.

5.8 Corporate

Underspend on corporate because of prudent projections when setting the 2023/24 budget and a reduction in the numbers who claim the council tax reduction compared with previous years. Impact of the current treasury management policy which has meant that

it was possible to avoid external borrowing, thus avoiding the associated costs. Underspend on other budgets assisting to alleviate the additional pressure in terms of the national increase to the salaries of Local Government employees that was confirmed in November.

6. Conclusion

6.1 It is anticipated that all the Council's departments will be overspending by the end of the year with significant overspend in some fields. Therefore, use will need to be made of the Council's reserves to fund the £8.1m financial deficit anticipated for 2023/24. This is an improvement from the £9.1m financial deficit forecasted in the end of August review.

6.2 Although it was premature to transfer money from funds until the financial position is finalised at the end of the year, it is recommended that the procedure in terms of using funds to fund the financial deficit at the time will be:

- firstly, use £3,800k from the post-Covid recovery arrangements fund
- with the rest funded from the Council's Financial Strategy Reserve.

7. Next steps and timetable

7.1 To act on the recommendations submitted and present a follow-up report to Cabinet in May on the end of year position.

8. Views of the Statutory Officers

8.1 Chief Finance Officer

I have collaborated with the Cabinet Member in the preparation of this report, and I confirm the content.

8.2 Monitoring Officer

No observations to add in relation to propriety.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Summary of departmental budgets' net positions

Appendix 2 - Details of budgets and the significant variances

Revenue Budget 2023/24 - Summary of each Department's position

	End of November Review				End of August Over / (Under) Spend Position 2023/24 £ '000
	Estimated Budget 2023/24 £'000	Gross Estimated Over / (Under) Spend 2023/24 £ '000	Recommended Adjustments £'000	Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2023/24 £ '000	
Adults, Health and Well-being	73,536	5,381	0	5,381	6,578
Children and Families	21,833	1,262	0	1,262	(35)
Education	110,266	77	0	77	757
Economy and Community	6,224	59	0	59	78
Highways, Engineering and YGC	17,767	780	0	780	998
Environment	18,689	338	0	338	511
Housing and Property	11,518	67	0	67	61
Corporate Management Team and Legal	2,608	41	0	41	37
Corporate Support	7,715	22	0	22	62
Finance (and Information Technology)	7,874	70	0	70	102
Corporate Budgets <i>(Differences only)</i>	*	(4,241)	4,241	0	0
Totals (net)	285,904	3,856	4,241	8,097	9,149

REVENUE BUDGET 2023/24 - END OF NOVEMBER REVIEW						
Adults, Health and Well-being Department	2023/24 Proposed Budget	2023/24 Estimated Position	Gross Under / (Over) Spend 2023/24	Use of Other Sources or Other Adjustments Recommended	Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2023/24	Estimated August Review Over / (Under) Spend 2023/24
Field:-	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<u>Adults Services</u>						
Older People's Services						
Residential and Nursing - Homes	21,114	21,248	134		134	1,000
Domiciliary Care	9,020	9,470	450		450	(244)
Others	859	1,244	385		385	692
	30,993	31,962	969	0	969	1,448
Physical Disabilities Services	3,174	2,763	(411)		(411)	(340)
Learning Disabilities Services	26,638	28,985	2,347		2,347	2,761
Mental Health Services	4,442	4,734	292		292	336
Other Services (Adults)	3,700	3,884	184		184	80
<u>Adults Services Total</u>	68,947	72,328	3,381	0	3,381	4,285
<u>Provider Services (shows net budget)</u>						
Residential Care	353	489	136		136	285
Day Care	4	(116)	(120)		(120)	(113)
Domiciliary Care	408	2,143	1,735		1,735	1,679
Others	9	19	10		10	24
<u>Provider Services Total</u>	774	2,535	1,761	0	1,761	1,875

REVENUE BUDGET 2023/24 - END OF NOVEMBER REVIEW						
Adults, Health and Well-being Department	2023/24 Proposed Budget	2023/24 Estimated Position	Gross Under / (Over) Spend 2023/24	Use of Other Sources or Other Adjustments Recommended	Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2023/24	Estimated August Review Over / (Under) Spend 2023/24
Field:-	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<u>Other Services</u>						
Departmental Central Services (<i>including Department savings</i>)	3,815	4,054	239		239	418
<u>Other Services Total</u>	3,815	4,054	239	0	239	418
<u>Adults, Health and Well-being Total</u>	73,536	78,917	5,381	0	5,381	6,578

Adults, Health and Well-being

Older People's Services - in residential and nursing higher fee costs from private providers continue but the implementation of legal arrangements relating to deferred payments due from residents, including historical debts, reduces the reported overspend. Furthermore, an increase in the use of internal home beds has a favorable effect on contributions from clients. Increased pressure on the home care budget when moving to the new delivery model. In 'Other' an overspend of £532k on direct payments.

Physical Disability Services - reduced demand for home care which is offset by pressure on direct payments

Learning Disability Services - increasing pressure and a number of new cases and the cost of supportive accommodation responsible for £2m of the overspend, pressure also seen on residential and nursing, direct payments and taxi costs for day services. The overspending is reduced by underspending on supportive schemes.

Mental Health Services - increased pressure on residential and nursing with a number of intensive new cases together with increased demand for supportive accommodation.

Provider Services - a reduction in the overspend reported on residential care as a result of a reduction in the use of agency staff, following a recent successful recruitment campaign. In domiciliary care, higher staffing costs, with sickness levels and non-contact hours rates high. The Day Care provision has been affected and reduced over the past few years, therefore is underspending.

Departmental Central Services - receipt of grants and income to finance core expenditure reducing the impact of jobs above the structure and failure to realise savings.

Savings - following the department's inability to realise savings plans, £1,488k worth of savings have already been written off this year. The predicted departmental overspend of £5.4m follows the elimination of the savings.

In view of the exceptional overspend forecasts by the Department of Adults, Health and Well-being, it is noted that the Chief Executive has already commissioned work to clarify the complex details of the picture in the care of Adults, in order to obtain a better understanding of the issues and a clear program to respond. The work is currently receiving attention and is being led by the Statutory Director of Social Services with the intention of reporting on the findings soon

REVENUE BUDGET 2023/24 - END OF NOVEMBER REVIEW						
Children and Families Department	2023/24 Proposed Budget	2023/24 Estimated Position	Gross Under / (Over) Spend 2023/24	Use of Other Sources or Other Adjustments Recommended	Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2023/24	Estimated August Review Over / (Under) Spend 2023/24
Field:-	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Service Management	593	581	(12)		(12)	(27)
Operational	2,566	2,979	413		413	412
Placements						
Out-of-County Placements	5,536	6,042	506		506	(755)
Agency Fostering	1,791	1,478	(313)		(313)	(331)
Fostering – Internal	2,856	2,652	(204)		(204)	(282)
Support Services and Others	1,969	2,082	113		113	147
	12,152	12,254	102	0	102	(1,221)
Post-16	1,477	1,376	(101)		(101)	(100)
Specialist/Derwen	2,393	3,167	774		774	707
Youth Justice	275	244	(31)		(31)	(30)
Early Years	153	141	(12)		(12)	6
Workforce Development Unit	117	117	0		0	0
Others	2,107	2,236	129		129	142
Contribution to the Department's Overspend Fund			0		0	76
Children and Families Total	21,833	23,095	1,262	0	1,262	(35)

Children and Families

Operational - an increase in the pressure on the supporting schemes together with staffing above the field workers budget.

Placements - a movement of £1.3m in the forecast on Out-of-county Placements since the August Review with a forecasted overspend of £506k, increased cost due to the complexity of packages and increase in the the average number to 28.5 (compared to 25.7 for 2022/23), with the cost approximately £226k per case.

The average numbers of Fostering through Agent and Internal Fostering are consistent with 2022/23 numbers but as there are several asylum seekers without parents or guardians receiving a service, the income receipt from the Home Office for them has resulted in an underspend. Pressure on the support worker budget and the Placements Team.

Post-16 - reduced pressure on the provision after intensive packages recently came to an end.

Specialist/Derwen - the increasing overspend trend continues, an overspend of £470k is projected on staff costs for support plans and specialist support. There is a change in the emphasis in terms of how the service is provided, with increased pressure on direct payments which is responsible for £76k of the overspend. An overspend of £96k is anticipated on the Short Respite Unit due to staff costs and reduced income after Anglesey Council established their own provision instead of coming to Gwynedd for the service.

Others - combination of overspending on staffing, specialist service fees and on the contributions of joint services.

REVENUE BUDGET 2023/24 - END OF NOVEMBER REVIEW						
Education Department	2023/24 Proposed Budget	2023/24 Estimated Position	Gross Under / (Over) Spend 2023/24	Use of Other Sources or Other Adjustments Recommended	Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2023/24	Estimated August Review Over / (Under) Spend 2023/24
Field:-	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Devolved Schools	91,408	91,408	0		0	0
Schools Quality Services	(1,558)	(1,751)	(193)		(193)	(201)
Infrastructure and Support Services						
Transportation	6,286	7,817	1,531		1,531	1,460
Ancillary Services	1,531	1,481	(50)		(50)	(3)
Others	3,574	3,543	(31)		(31)	(27)
	11,391	12,841	1,450	0	1,450	1,430
Leadership and Management	2,549	2,362	(187)		(187)	(222)
Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion service	5,255	5,228	(27)		(27)	24
Youth Service	980	955	(25)		(25)	(33)
Use of the Department's Underspend Fund	241		(241)		(241)	(241)
Use of Other Departmental Funds			(700)		(700)	0
Education Total	110,266	111,043	77	0	77	757

Education

Schools Quality Service - a combination of receiving income and reducing expenditure.

Transport - following the recent re-tendering of bus contracts an overspend of £833k is predicted by the end of the year, together with an increase in the forecast overspend on school taxis to £697k.

The Transport area has been the subject of a strategic review to try to control the increase in expenditure, it is suggested that the work by the Education Department and the Environment Department continues, so that it is possible to try to reduce the overspend and take advantage of efficiency opportunities.

Infrastructure and Support Services - Supplementary Service - increase in income and grant receipt in Catering together with staff turnover reducing the impact of higher staff costs and lack of income on the care element of the breakfast clubs which is overspending £122k.

Infrastructure and Support Services - Other - underspending on a number of different budgets.

Leadership and Management - staff turnover and underspending on a number of budget headings.

Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion - a mixed picture which is a combination of an increase in staff turnover and underspend on a number of different headings, while circumstances relating to one particular center continue and are responsible for an overspend of £138k.

In order to reduce the reported overspend the department's intention is to use their underspend fund of £241k in its entirety this year. In addition to this, the department's other funds worth £700k will be used to reduce the reported overspend.

REVENUE BUDGET 2023/24 - END OF NOVEMBER REVIEW						
Economy and Community Department	2023/24 Proposed Budget	2023/24 Estimated Position	Gross Under / (Over) Spend 2023/24	Use of Other Sources or Other Adjustments Recommended	Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2023/24	Estimated August Review Over / (Under) Spend 2023/24
Field:-	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Management	517	527	10		10	5
Community Regeneration and Support Programmes	479	479	0		0	(39)
Maritime and Country Parks	(147)	(80)	67		67	(27)
Byw'n lach and Other Leisure Contracts	2,222	2,322	100		100	70
Economic Development Programmes	(35)	(110)	(75)		(75)	0
Marketing and Events	296	296	0		0	0
Gwynedd Libraries	1,787	1,752	(35)		(35)	(43)
Museums, Arts and Gwynedd Archives	965	1,097	132		132	112
Use of the Department's Underspend Fund	140		(140)		(140)	0
<u>Economy and Community Total</u>	6,224	6,283	59	0	59	78

Economy and Community

Maritime and Country Parks - a clearer picture now on the impact of the bad weather over the summer on the income levels, which has meant a lack of income in Hafan, Pwllheli, Victoria Dock, beaches and the harbours.

Byw'n Iach and Other Leisure Contracts - the leisure provision was transferred to the Byw'n Iach Company in April 2019, but responsibility for the running costs of properties remained with the Council. In recent years, the impact of Covid affected the company's income. The Welsh Government compensated them for the loss in 2020/21 and 2021/22 from its hardship fund. In 2022/23, the Council provided £550k financial support above the contractual payment of the contract to Byw'n Iach to enable it to maintain its services. The financial support continues this year and the required amount has reduced to £350k.

Furthermore, there is an overspend of £100k on the running costs of Byw'n Iach properties.

Economic Development Programmes - success in attracting grants which free up the Council's core budget.

Gwynedd Libraries - vacant post and less expenditure on several budget headings but a reduction in room rental income received.

Museums, Arts and Gwynedd Archives - overspend mainly as lack of income are issues at Neuadd Dwyfor £88k and Storiel £44k.

In order to reduce the reported overspend the department's intention is to use their underspend fund of £140k in its entirety this year.

REVENUE BUDGET 2023/24 - END OF NOVEMBER REVIEW						
Highways, Engineering and YGC Department (including Trunk roads)	2023/24 Proposed Budget	2023/24 Estimated Position	Gross Under / (Over) Spend 2023/24	Use of Other Sources or Other Adjustments Recommended	Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2023/24	Estimated August Review Over / (Under) Spend 2023/24
Field:-	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Services:						
Highways (including Trunk roads)	11,812	12,079	267		267	507
Engineering	415	392	(23)		(23)	(5)
Municipal	5,528	6,073	545		545	480
Gwynedd Consultancy	12	3	(9)		(9)	16
Highways, Engineering and YGC Total	17,767	18,547	780	0	780	998

Highways, Engineering and YGC Department (including Trunk roads)

Highways Services - less work being commissioned by external agencies and, therefore, having a negative impact on income.

Engineering Services - receipt of income and underspend on various headings.

Municipal Services - a mixed picture which is a combination of factors, additional pressure on the street cleaning and cleaning public toilets budgets. Income losses in ground maintenance and public toilets, but higher income by the bereavement services which reduces the overspend reported.

Gwynedd Consultancy - underspend on staff and improved income projections by the building service and road and engineering services.

REVENUE BUDGET 2023/24 - END OF NOVEMBER REVIEW						
Environment Department	2023/24 Proposed Budget	2023/24 Estimated Position	Gross Under / (Over) Spend 2023/24	Use of Other Sources or Other Adjustments Recommended	Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2023/24	Estimated August Review Over / (Under) Spend 2023/24
Field:-	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Department Management	814	815	1		1	(17)
Planning and Building Control Service	600	788	188		188	65
Street Care and Transport Services						
Network Management (Transportation)	135	5	(130)		(130)	(260)
Parking and Parking Enforcement	(2,015)	(2,058)	(43)		(43)	142
Integrated Transport	2,059	2,072	13		13	379
	179	19	(160)	0	(160)	261
Countryside and Access	697	698	1		1	1
Public Protection	1,917	1,713	(204)		(204)	(196)
Waste	14,407	14,994	587		587	452
Use of the Department's Underspend Fund	75		(75)		(75)	(55)
Environment Total	18,689	19,027	338	0	338	511

Environment

Planning and Building Control Service - increasing lack of income are issues in Building Control and Land Charges, but are reduced with underspend on staff costs.

Street Care Services and Transport

Network Control (Transportation) - exceeding the streetworks fees income, as well as vacant posts and underspend on many of the budget's headings.

Parking and Parking Enforcement - parking income deficit has reduced to £23k by now together with underspend on other budgets.

Integrated Transport - the recent re-tendering of public bus contracts has further increased the overspend but the receipt of a significant grant from Transport for Wales has helped to alleviate the situation. It is suggested that the review to the Transport provision should continue.

Public Protection - vacant posts and less expenditure on a number of the budget headings.

Waste - a number of matters are responsible for the overspend, but mainly on waste and recycling collection. Additional circuits have led to overspending on employment costs and fleet costs. Sickness and overtime levels are also problematic, while there are additional costs in terms of vehicle hire. Overspend on the running costs of the recycling centers and on the handling of recycling materials. Although there is a reduction in residual waste, essential one-off costs in the field increase the reported overspend.

Following the increased overspend trend in the waste field in recent years, an external review was commissioned by WRAP Cymru. The report and recommendations on ways to improve the service are being considered by the department with steps to respond to the situation being implemented.

In order to reduce the overspend reported, the department intends to use its £75k underspend fund this year.

REVENUE BUDGET 2023/24 - END OF NOVEMBER REVIEW						
Housing and Property Department	2023/24 Proposed Budget	2023/24 Estimated Position	Gross Under / (Over) Spend 2023/24	Use of Other Sources or Other Adjustments Recommended	Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2023/24	Estimated August Review Over / (Under) Spend 2023/24
Field:-	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Management	362	315	(47)		(47)	(30)
Housing Services						
Homelessness	4,993	6,406	1,413		1,413	1,555
Private Sector Housing	442	429	(13)		(13)	42
Others	248	198	(50)		(50)	(83)
	5,683	7,033	1,350	0	1,350	1,514
Property Services						
Property	4,261	4,229	(32)		(32)	(21)
Caretaking, Catering and Cleaning	12	8	(4)		(4)	(2)
	4,273	4,237	(36)	0	(36)	(23)
One-off Corporate Covid Provision	1,200		(1,200)		(1,200)	(1,400)
Housing and Property Total	11,518	11,585	67	0	67	61

Housing and Property

Management - underspend on staff costs and on supplies and services.

Homelessness - the trend of significant pressure on the Temporary Accommodation service continues to be very intense with higher average costs as the availability of temporary accommodation in the county has reached its capacity. The reported overspend of £1.4m follows consideration of the additional budget of £3m which has been allocated from council tax premium and also the receipt of a grant of £597k from the Government to assist with the additional pressure.

Private Sector Housing - staff turnover and underspend on supplies and services but an income deficit in the disabled facilities grant income.

Housing Services, Others - the effect of grant acceptance and underspending on staff costs is reduced by additional costs in the Gypsy and Traveler field.

Property Services - vacancies in Property which alleviate the overspend on services and supplies and on vehicle costs in Pest Control.

Corporate One-off Covid Provision - it was possible to reduce the one-off allocation to meet the additional costs relating to Homelessness from £1.4 million to £1.2 million.

REVENUE BUDGET 2023/24 - END OF NOVEMBER REVIEW						
Central Departments	2023/24 Proposed Budget	2023/24 Estimated Position	Gross Under / (Over) Spend 2023/24	Use of Other Sources or Other Adjustments Recommended	Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2023/24	Estimated August Review Over / (Under) Spend 2023/24
Field:-	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Corporate Management Team and Legal	2,608	2,649	41		41	37
Finance (and Information Technology)	7,874	7,944	70		70	102
Corporate Support	7,715	7,737	22		22	62
Central Departments Total	18,197	18,330	133	0	133	201

Central Departments

Corporate Management Team and Legal - additional pressure of £47k on the Gwynedd element of the Coroner's budget, recent appointments in Legal have led to reduced use of agency solicitors and therefore, an underspend of (£6k) is anticipated.

Finance (and Information Technology) - banking costs are overspending £115k as more payments by customers are made by card and therefore the associated banking fees are payable by the Council. Further one-off costs of £25k to buy equipment to comply with data security standard requirements of the payment card industry for Council services. The overspend is reduced by staff turnover and higher income.

Corporate Support – a combination of reasons are responsible for the position, including increasing pressure on the counselling budget with an overspend of £37k being anticipated. Income deficit are issues in some areas including £33k Customer Care and £20k in the Printroom. Underspend on staff costs and on various budgets reduces the overspend reported.

REVENUE BUDGET 2023/24 - END OF NOVEMBER REVIEW						
Corporate (Reflects variances only)	2023/24 Proposed Budget	2023/24 Estimated Position	Gross Under / (Over) Spend 2023/24	Use of Other Sources or Other Adjustments Recommended	Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2023/24	Estimated August Review Over / (Under) Spend 2023/24
Field:-	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Council Tax	*	*	(36)	36	0	0
Council Tax Reductions	*	*	(574)	574	0	0
Capital Costs	*	*	(700)	700	0	0
Interest Received	*	*	0	0	0	0
Pay Inflation Pressure Above Budget	*	*	1,600	(1,600)	0	0
Returned Budgets / Bids	*	*	(2,476)	2,476	0	0
Others	*	*	(2,055)	2,055	0	0
Corporate Total	*	*	(4,241)	4,241	0	0

Corporate

Council Tax - a reduction in the projections following a number of second homes subject to the premium falling, with 181 lower by November compared to the end of March 2023. In addition to this, although there was a reduction compared to previous years, the Valuer's Office allowed 115 properties to transfer from council tax to non-domestic taxes (452 in 2022/23, 469 in 2021/22, 506 in 2020/21). In 2023/24 £6m of council tax premium has been set aside for the Housing Strategy and a further £3m for the Homelessness.

Council Tax Reductions - prudent projections set and a further reduction in the numbers claiming a reduction in Gwynedd compared to previous years.

Capital Costs - a combination of factors creating the underspend including the receipt of a one-off grant income to support maintaining the funding of a major capital scheme. Also, impact of the current treasury management policy which has meant that it was possible to avoid external borrowing, thus avoiding the associated costs.

Pay Inflation Pressure Above Budget - following the confirmation of the national increase to the salaries of Local Government employees in November, the cost to the Council was £1.6 million above the budget which was considered to be prudent at the time.

Returned Budgets / Bids - the pressure on some budgets including the covid provision and electricity was not as much as what was provided.

Others - the demand on the provision has not been as high as what was predicted when the budget was set.

It is recommended that the net underspend on corporate budgets of (£4,241k) is transferred to the Council's Financial Strategy Reserve to assist in funding the financial gap facing the Council.

Although it is premature to transfer money from funds until the financial situation is finalised at the end of the year, **it is recommended** that the procedure in terms of using funds to fund the financial deficit at the time will be:

- firstly, use £3,800k of the post-Covid recovery fund established to fund the associated financial challenges.
- with the rest funded from the Council's Financial Strategy Reserve.

CYNGOR GWYNEDD – Report to Cyngor Gwynedd’s Cabinet

Subject:	Savings Overview: Progress Report on Realising Savings Schemes
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Ioan Thomas, Cabinet Member for Finance
Contact officer:	Ffion Madog Evans, Assistant Head of Finance - Accounting and Pensions
Date:	23 January 2024

1. The decision sought

- 1.1 To accept the information in the report and to note the progress towards realising the savings schemes for 2023/24 and previous years.

2. The reason why it is necessary that the Cabinet makes the decision

- 2.1 Realising the individual schemes is the responsibility of relevant Cabinet members, who challenge the performance of the departments including the progress of the savings schemes. It is the responsibility of the Cabinet Member for Finance to have an overview of the whole picture.

3. Introduction and Rationale

Background / Introduction

- 3.1 This report provides an overview of the Council's savings' situation for 2023/24 and previous years following a review of the situation at the end of November 2023.
- 3.2 In the '2023/24 Budget' report to the Full Council on 2 March 2023, it was reported that savings worth £5,194,220 were required for the 2023/24 financial year to close the 2023/24 fiscal gap. The savings were a combination of £950,250 that had been approved in previous years, together with new savings of £1,146,600 for Schools and £3,097,370 for the rest of the Council.
- 3.3 In addition, by reviewing the Council's policy on debt repayment that finances capital expenditure (Minimum Revenue Provision), as set out in the report to the Full Council on 2 March 2023, a further £2,400,000 was added to the 2023/24 savings schemes.
- 3.4 Therefore the total of all savings for 2023/24 was £7.6m.

4. Rationale and justification for recommending the decision

Reassessing savings

- 4.1 The Council has financial planning arrangements that have already identified significant efficiency savings in order to minimise service cuts for Gwynedd residents. Despite this, in recent years there have been difficulties in realising savings in some areas. £2,056,430 worth of schemes with significant risks to achieve were deleted as part of the End of August 2023 Review. Worth £1,488,430 of them were in the Adults, Health and Wellbeing Department and the rest in the Environment Department, Highways and Engineering Department and the Housing and Property Department.

5. Historical Departmental Savings Schemes 2015/16 – 2023/24

- 5.1 **Appendix 1** summarises the achievement of each department based on the November 2023 review, against the revised savings target that has been set for them, **totalling over £34m. It can be reported that £33.7m, or 98% of these schemes have been realised**, but the risk of realising the savings on some of the schemes remains.
- 5.2 There are 7 schemes worth £391k that have risks of delivering; 3 schemes from the Adults, Health and Wellbeing Department (total of £222k), 2 schemes from the Economy and Community Department (total of £130k), 1 scheme from the Finance Department (£25k), and 1 scheme from the Legal Service (£14k).
- 5.3 There are 4 schemes totalling £164k that have slipped but the departments do not foresee a problem in realising them.

6. New Departmental Savings Schemes 2023/24

- 6.1 The Full Council report of 2 March 2023 identifies the new efficiency savings schemes worth £6.7m which have funded the fiscal gap in 2023/24.
- 6.2 **Appendix 2** summarises the achievement of each department based on the November 2023 review. **It can be reported that £5.4m or 81% of these schemes have already been realised, with a further £428k or 6% on track to deliver fully and in a timely manner.**
- 6.3 It is currently predicted that there are some risks of realising schemes worth almost £134k, 1 scheme from the Environment Department worth £70k and 1 scheme from the Finance Department worth £64k.
- 6.4 There is a slight delay in realising £694k worth of 2023/24 savings schemes but the departments do not foresee a problem in realising them. Most of this amount includes

savings of £539k by schools, which is slipping as schools work within an academic year and therefore the realisation will slip into the next financial year.

7. Departmental Savings Schemes 2024/25 onwards

7.1 Due to the poor financial settlement and the current economic climate and high levels of inflation, it is inevitable that Local Authorities must look at savings and cuts to help the financial situation. Savings schemes and additional cuts for 2024/25 are already under consideration by Cyngor Gwynedd and will be the subject of a report soon.

7.2 The current savings for 2024/25 onwards, worth £4.3m are listed by department in **Appendix 3**, the historical savings worth £215k in Table 1 and the new savings worth £4.1m in Table 2, but it is currently premature to report on the status of these schemes.

8. Conclusion

8.1 It can be reported that a total of £39.1 million of savings have been realised since 2015/16, which is 96% of the required £41m over the period. It is inevitable that realising the savings has been challenging and I am grateful to all the departments and Cabinet Members for ensuring this success.

8.2 The table below summarises the latest position of the savings schemes since April 2015 with 96% of all schemes realised.

Table 1: Summary of the status of all savings schemes since April 2015

Status of Savings	Portal	£m	%
Have realised	1	39.13	95.6
On track to achieve savings in full and on time	2	0.43	1.0
Delay, but moving forward	3	0.86	2.1
Some risks to achieve - slip or fail	4	0.49	1.2
Significant risks to realise in full or partially	5	0.04	0.1
Total savings		40.95	100

8.3 Therefore, I ask the Cabinet to note the achievement outlined in this report towards realising the savings schemes.

9. Next steps and timetable

9.1 Act on the recommendations stated in this report and submit a follow-up report to Cabinet following the final position of the end of the financial year 2023/24.

10. View of the Statutory Officers

10.1 Head of Finance

I have collaborated with the Cabinet Member in the preparation of this report and I confirm the content.

10.2 Monitoring Officer

No observations to add in relation to propriety.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Overview of Historical Savings Schemes 2015/16 - 2023/24 per Department

Appendix 2 - Overview of New Savings Schemes 2023/24 per Department

Appendix 3 - Table 1 - Overview of Historical Savings Schemes 2024/25 onwards per Department

- Table 2 - Overview of New Savings Schemes 2024/25 onwards per Department

OVERVIEW OF HISTORICAL SAVINGS SCHEMES FOR 2015/16 TO 2023/24 PER DEPARTMENT

Department	Total Savings 2015/16 to 2023/24	Schemes that have realised	Schemes that have slipped but in the process of implementation.	Schemes with some risks in achieving the savings	Head of Finance's comments	
	£ - number	£ - number	£ - number	£ - number		
Education	1,659,740	1,659,740	-	-	All schemes of the period have been achieved.	
Schools	4,331,620	4,331,620	-	-	All schemes of the period have been achieved.	
Environment	2,972,463	2,922,463	50,000	1	There has been a slippage on one scheme which is <i>To provide electric car charging points in car parks</i> (£50k).	
Corporate Support	2,569,218	2,569,218	-	-	All schemes of the period have been achieved.	
Finance	1,881,636	1,856,636	-	25,000	1	There are risks in realising the savings of the <i>Attracting additional income through an Internal Collection Agency</i> scheme (£25k)
Economy and Community	2,981,422	2,851,422	-	130,000	2	There are some risks in achieving the savings of 2 schemes; <i>Establish parking fees on Dinas Dinlle beach and increase launching fees across Gwynedd beaches from £10 to £15</i> (£45k) and a scheme relating to <i>Neuadd Dwyfor</i> (£85k).
Adults, Health and Well-being	6,594,981	6,293,051	79,360	222,570	3	There are some risks in achieving savings of 3 schemes namely <i>Improving work processes by undertaking the Ffordd Gwynedd review and using the finance modules of the new IT system within the Adult Department</i> (£40k), <i>Review of Continuing Healthcare packages</i> £47.57k) and <i>Review the operating arrangements within the Adult Department</i> (£135k). A further 2 schemes worth a total of over £79k have slipped but the Department anticipates realising these during 2023/24; <i>Increase income and reduce other costs</i> with a balance of £30k which is yet to be realised and <i>Restructure the Business Service reducing support for teams within the Department and the Children's Department</i> (£49k).
Children and Supporting Families	2,318,908	2,318,908	-	-	All schemes of the period have been achieved.	
Highways and Engineering	5,928,910	5,893,910	35,000	1	<i>The Barmouth Bridge scheme - not paying Network Rail for the right of way over the bridge</i> (£35k) has slipped but the Department is still in discussions with Network Rail.	

OVERVIEW OF HISTORICAL SAVINGS SCHEMES FOR 2015/16 TO 2023/24 PER DEPARTMENT

Department	Total Savings 2015/16 to 2023/24 £ - number	Schemes that have realised £ - number	Schemes that have slipped but in the process of implementation. £ - number	Schemes with some risks in achieving the savings £ - number	Head of Finance's comments
Consultancy	602,670	602,670	-	-	All schemes of the period have been achieved.
Corporate Management Team and Legal	403,240	389,440	-	13,800 1	There is a slippage on <i>Savings in the Coroner's budget</i> scheme, worth £13.8k, as it is based on a projection that was made a few years ago about the North Wales Coroner's areas review. This is not going to happen anymore.
Housing and Property	843,230	843,230	-	-	All schemes of the period have been achieved.
Sub-total	33,088,038	32,532,308	164,360 4	391,370 7	
Managerial Savings	1,200,360	1,200,360	-	-	All schemes of the period have been achieved.
TOTAL	34,288,398	33,732,668	164,360 4	391,370 7	In financial terms (£), 98% of 2015/16 – 2023/24 historical savings schemes have been realised.

OVERVIEW OF NEW SAVINGS SCHEMES FOR 2023/24 PER DEPARTMENT

Department	Total 2023/24 Savings		Realised Schemes		Schemes on track to be completed on time		Schemes slipping and schemes with some risks of achieving the savings		Head of Finance's comments
	£ - number		£ - number		£ - number		£ - number		
Education	852,990	18	852,990	18	-	-	-	-	All schemes of the period have been achieved.
Schools	1,146,600	1 *	607,700	1	-	-	538,900	*	There has been a delay on part of the <i>school efficiency savings</i> scheme mainly because schools work within an academic year and therefore the remaining amount will materialise in the next financial year.
Environment	319,190	12	230,690	10	-	-	88,500	2	There is one scheme which is <i>To improve the efficiency of the use of waste treatment/transfer sites</i> worth £70k with some risks of delivering. There has been a delay on another scheme namely <i>More efficient arrangements for road safety</i> worth £18.5k but moving forward.
Corporate Support	275,250	12	267,690	11	7,560	1	-	-	No problem in realising the one scheme which is on track to deliver in a timely manner.
Finance	294,060	7	19,820	2	138,670	3	135,570	2	There are risks of achieving the savings of one scheme <i>Increase income targets to be proportionate to the work</i> , worth £64k. There has been a slippage on the scheme <i>To restructure the Information Technology Service</i> worth £71.5k but it is moving forward.
Economy and Community	310,770	21	237,250	15	63,520	5	10,000	1	There has been a delay on one scheme to do with Byw'n lach namely <i>Internalise building inspection arrangements</i> , but is moving forward.
Adults, Health and Well-being	172,810	10	82,150	5	70,540	3	20,120	2	There has been a delay on two schemes relating to <i>Achieving efficiency savings by making better use of equipment/technology</i> , in the field of <i>physical disabilities</i> (£10k) and <i>Mental Health, Protection and Quality Assurance</i> (£10k), but they are moving forward.
Children and Supporting Families	44,010	4	44,010	4	-	-	-	-	All schemes of the period have been achieved.
Highways, Engineering and Consultancy	215,940	6	175,940	3	35,000	2	5,000	1	There has been a delay on one scheme <i>Raise the contributions of the Closed Circuit Television service to reflect the true cost</i> , but is moving forward.
Corporate Management Team and Legal	131,190	7	131,190	7	-	-	-	-	All schemes of the period have been achieved.
Housing and Property	499,120	9	356,820	3	112,800	5	29,500	1	There has been a delay on one scheme <i>Let additional office space in the Council buildings to bring us rental income</i> , but is moving forward.
Managerial Savings	2,400,000	1	2,400,000	1	-	-	-	-	The one scheme of the period has been achieved.
TOTAL	6,661,930	108	5,406,250	80	428,090	19	827,590	9	In financial terms (£), 81% of the new 2023/24 savings schemes have already been realised and a further 6% are on track to be delivered on time by the end of the financial year.

* scheme partially realised in one financial year but yet to be realised in full.

TABLE 1

OVERVIEW OF HISTORICAL SAVINGS SCHEMES 2024/25 ONWARDS PER DEPARTMENT

Department	2024/25	2025/26	Total 2024/25 and 2025/26 Savings	
	£	£	£ - number	
Economy and Communities	15,000	-	15,000	1
Adults, Health and Well-being	-	200,000	200,000	1
HISTORICAL SCHEMES TOTAL	15,000	200,000	215,000	2

TABLE 2

OVERVIEW OF NEW SAVINGS SCHEMES 2024/25 ONWARDS PER DEPARTMENT

Department	2024/25	2025/26	Total 2024/25 and 2025/26 Savings	
	£	£	£ - number	
Education	931,380	-	931,380	6
Environment	562,870	450,000	1,012,870	14
Corporate Support	45,660	-	45,660	3
Finance	207,720	-	207,720	6
Economy and Community	50,660	-	50,660	6
Adults, Health and Well-being	1,193,040	-	1,193,040	5
Children and Supporting Families	157,960	-	157,960	2
Highways, Engineering and Consultancy	390,000	-	390,000	5
Housing and Property	128,840	-	128,840	3
NEW SCHEMES TOTAL	3,668,130	450,000	4,118,130	50
TOTAL	3,683,130	650,000	4,333,130	52

CYNGOR GWYNEDD – Report to Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet

Item Title:	Capital Programme 2023/24 – End of November Review (30 November 2023 position)
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Ioan Thomas, Finance Cabinet Member
Relevant Officer:	Ffion Madog Evans, Assistant Head of Finance
Meeting Date:	23 January 2024

1. Decision Sought:

- To accept the report on the end of November review (30 November 2023 position) of the capital programme.
- Approve the revised financing as shown in part 3.2.3 of the report, that is:
 - an increase of £3,576,000 in the use of borrowing
 - an increase of £2,373,000 in the use of grants and contributions
 - an increase of £317,000 in the use of revenue contributions
 - an increase of £1,038,000 in the use of renewal and other reserves.

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

It is the Cabinet's responsibility to act, as necessary, to secure appropriate control over the Council's budgets. It is necessary to ensure appropriate financing arrangements for the Council's plans to spend on capital. The Cabinet has the authority to adapt the capital programme. Approval is sought for the proposed programme (part 3.2.2) and financing (part 3.2.3).

These are recommendations to ensure definite sources of funding for the 2023/24 – 2025/26 capital schemes.

3. Introduction and Rationale

3.1 Background/ Introduction

This technical report is presented as part of the 2023/24 budget review procedure. The main purpose of the report is to present the revised capital programme and to approve the relevant financing sources. There is a summary in parts 3.2.2 and 3.2.3 of the report, with the recommendations in part 1:

- Part 3.2.2: Analysis by Department of the £185.876m capital programme for the 3 years 2023/24 – 2025/26.
- Part 3.2.3: The sources of finance for the net increase of approximately £7.304m since the last review.

- Part 3.2.4: Detail of additional grants since the last review.
- Part 3.2.5: Analysis of the capital prudential indicators.

Incorporating funding via grant is a point of order, but it is also necessary to deal with situations where there has been a change in expenditure profiles between years and the value of capital receipts and contributions.

These are technical issues regarding the financing of schemes and relevant implications and debates have already been addressed when the individual schemes were adopted.

3.2 Rationale of, and introduction to, the recommended decision

3.2.1 Main Findings

The main findings that arise from the revised position are:

- There are firm schemes in place to invest approximately £86.8m in 2023/24 on capital projects, with £41.5m (48%) of it being financed by attracting specific grants.
- The impact of the recent financial challenges on the capital programme can still be seen in the reported figures in Appendix C, with £23.2m which is 27% of the budget having been spent by the end of November this year, compared to 40% for the same period a year ago.
- An additional £27.4m of proposed expenditure has been re-profiled from 2023/24 to 2024/25 and 2025/26, but no loss of funding was caused to the Council where schemes have slipped.

3.2.2 Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2025/26

See below the revised proposed capital programme as at the end of November 2023.

DEPARTMENT	END OF NOVEMBER REVIEW				INCREASE / (DECREASE) SINCE THE LAST REVIEW £'000
	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	TOTAL	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Education	14,480	16,095	40	30,615	(185)
Environment	7,725	3,423	775	11,923	493
Corporate Support	-	-	-	-	-
Finance	789	2,018	498	3,305	-
Economy and Community	29,502	28,670	3,239	61,411	2,421
Housing and Property	14,836	21,751	7,130	43,717	615
Adults, Health and Wellbeing	2,834	4,127	-	6,961	36
Children and Supporting Families	332	200	-	532	(22)
Highways, Engineering and Consultancy	12,741	6,466	2,011	21,218	3,961
Corporate	3,571	2,123	500	6,194	(15)
TOTAL	86,810	84,873	14,193	185,876	7,304

3.2.3 Changes to the Sources of Finance

The budget for the three year programme shows an increase of £7.304m since the last review. The proposed sources of financing for this are noted below:

SOURCE OF FINANCE	END OF NOVEMBER REVIEW				INCREASE / (DECREASE) SINCE THE LAST REVIEW £'000
	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	TOTAL	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Supported Borrowing	8,233	8,233	6,610	23,076	-
Other Borrowing	6,086	10,967	2,880	19,933	3,576
Grants and Contributions	41,485	35,376	3,239	80,100	2,373
Capital Receipts	246	-	-	246	-
Departmental & Corporate Revenue	2,673	99	-	2,772	317
Capital Fund	10,623	12,286	40	22,949	-
Renewals & Other Funds	17,464	17,912	1,424	36,800	1,038
TOTAL	86,810	84,873	14,193	185,876	7,304

3.2.4 Additional Grants

Since the previous review at the end of August, the Council succeeded in attracting the following additional grants totalling £2,418k, the largest of which are listed below. Several adjustments including a reduction on schemes lower than the original forecast brings the total movement to £2,373k (see Appendix A for more information):

- £661k Circular Economy Capital Grant from Welsh Government
- £550k Grants towards 3G Synthetic Pitch at Ysgol Syr Hugh Owen, Caernarfon from the Cymru Football Foundation and the Football Foundation
- £350k Network of Contemporary Art Galleries Grant from the Arts Council of Wales
- £329k Transforming Small Towns Grant from Welsh Government
- £140k Contributions from local Housing Associations towards an IT system for use in the Housing field
- £135k Targeted Regeneration Investment (TRI) Grant - Bangor Regeneration Scheme
- £117k Sports Wales Grant towards lighting at the Arfon Tennis Centre
- £100k Leasing Scheme Wales grant from Welsh Government

3.2.5 Capital Prudential Indicators

The CIPFA Prudential Code notes the need to report these Prudential Indicators (see Appendix Ch for more information).

3.3 Next Steps

To implement the recommendations to finance the programme.

4. Comments by Statutory Officers

4.1 Principal Finance Officer

I have collaborated with the Cabinet Member in the preparation of this report and I confirm the content.

4.2 Monitoring Officer

No observations to add in relation to propriety.

Appendices List:

Appendix A – Details on Main Changes

Appendix B – Re-profiling Details

Appendix C – First 8 months' 2023/24 expenditure

Appendix Ch – Capital Prudential Indicators

Background Documents List:

2023-2024 Budget : [Annual budgets \(llyw.cymru\)](#)

Capital Strategy 2023-24 : Full Council 02/03/23 [Item 9 - Capital Strategy 2023-24 including Investment and Borrowing Strategies.pdf \(llyw.cymru\)](#)

APPENDIX A

Details of Main Changes

See below the relevant schemes that have caused the main changes to the sources of finance since the original budget:

	2023/24	2024/25- 2025/26
	£'000	£'000
Other Borrowing		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coastal Risk Management Programme, Local Government Borrowing Initiative (LGBI) – Hiraef Scheme (Bangor) (<i>Highways, Engineering and Consultancy Department</i>). 	3,598	
Grants and Contributions		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted Regeneration Investment (TRI) Grant - Bangor Regeneration Scheme (<i>Economy and Community Department</i>). 	135	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transforming Small Towns Grant from Welsh Government (<i>Economy and Community Department</i>). 	329	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circular Economy Capital Grant from Welsh Government (<i>Economy and Community Department</i>). 	489	172
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Network of Contemporary Art Galleries Grant from the Arts Council of Wales (<i>Economy and Community Department</i>). 	139	211
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grants towards 3G Synthetic Pitch at Ysgol Syr Hugh Owen, Caernarfon from the Cymru Football Foundation and the Football Foundation (<i>Economy and Community Department</i>). 	550	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sports Wales Grant towards lighting at the Arfon Tennis Centre (<i>Economy and Community Department</i>). 	117	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Integrated Fund (RIF) – additional grant from Welsh Government towards adapting establishments as well as facilitating joint working arrangements with other agencies (<i>Adults, Health and Wellbeing Department</i>). 	36	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contributions from local Housing Associations towards an IT system for use in the Housing field (<i>Housing and Property Department</i>). 	140
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leasing Scheme Wales grant from Welsh Government in the Housing field (<i>Housing and Property Department</i>). 	100
Departmental and Corporate Revenue	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revenue contributions from numerous organisations towards a 3G Synthetic Pitch at Ysgol Syr Hugh Owen, Caernarfon (<i>Economy and Community Department</i>). 	220
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revenue Contribution towards an IT system for use in the Housing field (<i>Housing and Property Department</i>). 	75
Renewals and Other Funds	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adjustment to match funding contributions towards various schemes (<i>Economy and Community Department</i>). 	(87)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Departmental contribution towards the Coastal Risk Management Programme – Hiraal Scheme (Bangor) (<i>Highways, Engineering and Consultancy Department</i>). 	54
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vehicle and Equipment Renewals (<i>Highways, Engineering and Consultancy; Environment Departments</i>). 	745
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribution from the specific fund towards the Office Efficiency Scheme (<i>Housing and Property Department</i>). 	250
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribution from the Climate Fund towards Heating Decarbonisation (<i>Housing and Property Department</i>). 	50

Details of Budget Re-profiling

See below the main schemes that have been re-profiled since the original budget:

	2023/24	2024/25 - 2025/26
	£'000	£'000
Schools' Schemes (Sustainable Communities for Learning and Others) (<i>Education Department</i>)	(12,245)	12,245
Economic Stimulus Schemes and Industrial Units (<i>Economy and Community Department</i>)	(1,424)	1,424
Bangor Regeneration Scheme (<i>Economy and Community Department</i>)	(145)	145
Levelling Up Fund (<i>Economy and Community Department</i>)	(1,718)	1,718
Maritime, Country Parks and Leisure schemes (<i>Economy and Community Department</i>)	(63)	63
Maesgeirchen Integrated Centre scheme (<i>Children and Supporting Families Department</i>)	(200)	200
Penygroes Health and Care Hub (<i>Adults, Health and Wellbeing Department</i>)	(2,500)	2,500
Residential Establishments, Day Care and other schemes in the Adults area (<i>Adults, Health and Wellbeing Department</i>)	(1,627)	1,627
Highways Deterioration Prevention programme (<i>Highways, Engineering and Consultancy</i>)	1,000	(1,000)
Vehicle and Equipment Renewals (<i>Highways, Engineering and Consultancy; Environment Departments</i>)	81	(81)
Coastal Risks and Flood Prevention schemes (<i>Highways, Engineering and Consultancy</i>)	(3,906)	3,906
Transport schemes, Urban Improvements and Countryside schemes (<i>Environment Department</i>)	(309)	309
Car Parks – Resurfacing, Charging Points etc (<i>Environment Department</i>)	(377)	377
Specialist IT systems (<i>Environment Department</i>)	(48)	48

Housing Grants and Other Schemes (<i>Housing and Property Department</i>)	(200)	200
Housing Strategy Schemes (<i>Housing and Property Department</i>)	(11,010)	11,010
Office and Disabled Adaptation Schemes (<i>Housing and Property Department</i>)	(398)	398
Council's Carbon Management and Solar Panel Schemes (<i>Housing and Property Department</i>)	(2,855)	2,855
Asbestos Disposal schemes (<i>Housing and Property Department</i>)	(580)	580
IT Equipment Renewal (<i>Finance Department</i>)	(1,400)	1,400

Note:

The above re-profiling will not result in any loss in grant.

There are a variety of valid reasons behind the re-profiling in many cases, but the delay prior to implementing these schemes can mean that the services must cope for longer with current assets which have not been improved.

Capital Expenditure First 8 Months 2023/24

SUMMARY	CAPITAL PROGRAMME FULL YEAR (reviewed November) 2023/24 £'000	ACTUAL EXPENDITURE FOR THE 8 MONTHS TO 30/11/2023 £'000
Education	14,480	8,519
Environment	7,725	1,319
Corporate Support	-	-
Finance (and Information Technology)	789	239
Economy and Community	29,502	3,252
Housing and Property	14,836	5,439
Adults, Health and Wellbeing	2,834	146
Children and Supporting Families	332	47
Highways, Engineering and Consultancy	12,741	4,213
Corporate	3,571	-
TOTAL	86,810	23,174

Note:

The percentage spent this year (27%) is lower than the position this time last year (amount spent in 8 months in 2022/23 was 40%).

Capital Prudential Indicators 2023/24

The Council measures and manages its capital expenditure and borrowing with references to the following indicators.

It is now a requirement of the CIPFA Prudential Code that these are reported on a regular basis.

Capital Expenditure

The Council has undertaken and is planning capital expenditure as summarised below.

	2022/23 Actual £m	2023/24 Forecast £m	2024/25 Budget £m	2025/26 Budget £m
General Fund Services	38.0	87.2	85.2	14.6
Leasing General Fund *	0.0	0.0	5.0	0.0
TOTAL	38.0	87.2	90.2	14.6

** Capital Expenditure for 2024/25 includes £5m due to a change in the accounting for leases and does not represent cash expenditure.*

The main General Fund capital projects in 2023/24 include (see the review reports for reprofiling details as applicable) :

- Housing Schemes/Strategy - £21.6m
- Sustainable Communities for Learning Schemes - £16.6m
- Departmental Vehicles - £5.4m
- Property Schemes - £3.7m
- Coastal Flood Protection - £3.0m
- Industrial Units - £2.9m

Capital Financing Requirement

The Council's cumulative outstanding amount of debt finance is measured by the capital financing requirement (CFR). This increases with new debt-financed capital expenditure and reduces with Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) and capital receipts used to replace debt.

	31.3.2023	31.3.2024	31.3.2025	31.3.2026
	Actual	Forecast	Budget	Budget
	£m	£m	£m	£m
General Fund Services *	170.8	175.9	190.5	191.7

* The Capital Financing Requirement for 2024/25 and subsequent years includes a £5m increase due to a change in the accounting for leases.

Gross Debt and the Capital Financing Requirement

Statutory guidance is that debt should remain below the capital financing requirement, except in the short-term. The Council has complied and expects to continue to comply with this requirement in the medium term as is shown below.

	31.3.2023	31.3.2024	31.3.2025	31.3.2026	Debt at 30.11.2023
	Actual	Forecast	Budget	Budget	£m
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Debt (including Private Finance Initiative (PFI) and leases)	102.5	101.3	98.7	94.0	102.1
Capital Financing Requirement	170.8	175.9	190.5	191.7	

Debt and the Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary

The Council is legally obliged to set an affordable borrowing limit (also termed the authorised limit for external debt) each year. In line with statutory guidance, a lower “operational boundary” is also set as a warning level should debt approach the limit.

	Maximum Debt 2023/24 £m	Debt at 30.11.2023 £m	2023/24 Authorised Limit £m	2023/24 Operational Boundary £m	Complied ?
Borrowing	100.5	100.5			
Private Finance Initiative (PFI) and Finance Leases	1.6	1.6			
Total Debt	102.1	102.1	200	190	Yes

Since the operational boundary is a management tool for in-year monitoring it is not significant if the boundary is breached on occasions due to variations in cash flow, and this is not counted as a compliance failure.

Proportion of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream

Although capital expenditure is not charged directly to the revenue budget, interest payable on loans and Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) are charged to revenue. The net annual charge is known as financing costs; this is compared to the net revenue stream i.e. the amount funded from Council Tax, National Non-Domestic Rates and general government grants.

	2022/23 Actual	2023/24 Forecast	2024/25 Budget	2025/26 Budget
Financing Costs * (£m)	£11.5m	£7.7m	£8.0m	£9.3m
Proportion of Net Revenue Stream (%)	3.9%	2.4%	2.5%	2.8%

* Financing costs for 2024/25 and subsequent years includes a £0.7m increase due to a change in the accounting for leases.

Treasury Management Indicators

These indicators (Liability Benchmark, Maturity Structure of Borrowing, Long-Term Treasury Management Investments) are reported separately as part of the Treasury Management Report for the period under review.

CYNGOR GWYNEDD - Report to Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet

Title of item:	Performance Report of the Cabinet Member for Education
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Beca Brown, Cabinet Member for Education
Relevant Officer:	Debbie Anne Williams Jones
Date of meeting:	23 January 2024

1. Decision Sought:

To accept and note the information in the report.

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

In order to ensure effective performance management.

3. Introduction and Rationale

3.1 Background / Introduction

The purpose of this report is to update you on what has been achieved in the field for which I, as Cabinet Member for Education, have responsibility. This includes addressing the progress against the recommendations of the Estyn report on the Authority's Education services, outlining the latest with the pledges made in the Council Plan; the Department's day-to-day work; as well as the latest in terms of the savings and cuts scheme.

Firstly, however, I would like to congratulate Gwern ap Rhisiart on his recent appointment as Gwynedd's Head of Education. Gwern has already started in his post, and I'm looking forward to this new period for the Education Department and the schools under his leadership. As the Cabinet Member for Education, I have previously worked closely with Gwern, and I look forward to continuing to collaborate and plan with the aim of facing future opportunities and challenges for the benefit of the children and young people of Gwynedd.

In June, Estyn conducted an inspection of the Authority's Education services and the report was published on 20 September 2023. The report is positive, and I am very proud of that, since it is testament to the hard work and contribution of everyone within the organisation.

We are implementing the Council Plan for 2023-28, and I herein report on progress to the end of December 2023, whilst acknowledging that it is early days in the context of some of the new pledges included in the document since April last year. Nevertheless,

all matters have been the subject of discussion and have been scrutinised by myself at a performance challenge meeting, and I am satisfied with the Department's performance, and I will elaborate on the progress in the report.

3.2 The reasoning and justification for recommending the decision

The Performance on the Council Plan Pledges

Transforming education for children in their early years

An external advisor has been commissioned to develop our information platform for the early years field in response to what the children and families of Gwynedd and early years providers / services have told us about the complexity of accessing services. We have also drawn up a draft Action Plan, as well as holding specific engagement sessions with the public as well as workshops with partners on the language and oracy elements, and communication arrangements which will assist to shape the new strategy for the Early Years field in Gwynedd. I look forward to reporting further on progress in this field of key importance next time.

Free school meals

In December 2021 the Welsh Government announced its plan to provide free school meals to all primary pupils across Wales. Since the announcement, substantial work has been achieved jointly between the Education Department and the Property Development Team to ensure that every primary school in the county has purposeful equipment, and an appropriate dining area to enable every pupil to take advantage of the scheme.

Since 1 September 2023, I am very proud that every primary age learner from Reception to Year 6 in Gwynedd can receive free school meals. Securing a hot meal at school to every primary child is of great assistance to families, considering the increase in the cost of living, and I am eager for as many families as possible to take advantage of this scheme. In light of completing the installation of equipment in school kitchens, the catering and cleaning services are now concentrating on promoting the scheme amongst children and families, to understand what barriers are facing some families which stops them from benefiting from the proposal, as well as implementing pilot schemes in some schools where the percentage of children that benefit from the proposal of free school meals was lower than what we would wish. I look forward to reporting further to you on these elements in my next report, but before then, I welcome the fact that scrutineers will also give attention to this important field in a meeting of the Education and Scrutiny Committee in March 2024.

Modernising buildings and the learning environment

As a result of the poor condition of the building and existing learning environment at Ysgol Trefferthyr, we will build a new school in Cricieth to improve the learning environment and ensure the best resources for learners to thrive. The building work is proceeding well at the site, and I am looking forward for the new school to open by September 2024.

It is also proposed to build a new school for Our Lady's School on the site of Ysgol Glanadda (now closed) in Bangor. In light of confirming the final construction costs for building the new school, we have submitted the final part of the business case to the Welsh Government at the start of January this year in order to release the funding.

It is also proposed to make improvements to Ysgol Hirael, as well as substantial modifications to Ysgol Tryfan in Bangor, and I'm pleased to have the support of the Cabinet to re-direct part of the Arfon post-16 education project funding to realise these improvements due to increased costs. A Business Case for releasing the money to realise the improvements at Ysgol Hirael has been submitted to Welsh Government at the start of January, and the initial discussions have been held with the Headteacher at Ysgol Tryfan to identify the school's aspirations for the improvements in order to consider if it is possible to meet all those aspirations with the budget available as well as the restrictions of the site. Currently, we are aiming to submit the first part of the business case for Ysgol Tryfan to the Welsh Government before the end of the spring term 2024 to ensure the best possible learning environment for learners.

Ysgol y Faenol has also had a significant extension, however, legal matters regarding land transfers are ongoing, and therefore I would like to note my appreciation for the work that has been underway recently by the Educational Department and the Housing and Property Department with Pentir Community Council and Penrhosgarnedd Community Centre Committee to try and ensure a temporary answer to facilitate parking during peak hours for parents that bring and collect their children from Ysgol y Faenol daily. I am aware of the local concerns and frustration about the situation, but I am confident that the matter will be resolved soon in order to complete the project which includes a new community centre.

I am delighted to be able to declare that we have secured a further £4.9m to improve the Condition and Suitability of 11 primary and secondary schools in Gwynedd, which are included in the final phase of the project. The purpose of this project is to improve the condition of our schools' existing buildings and make alterations to the buildings to ensure that they are fit for purpose and make the best use of the space available. The work has already commenced at some of the schools, and work in the remaining schools

will be programmed over the next few months, with significant work at some schools programmed for this year's summer holidays.

During the summer term, we held two working groups with the Arfon secondary school headteachers to discuss and revisit the original case for change for the post-16 education project in Arfon. The Department reported back to the headteachers in September 2023 following the working groups held, and following this a report was submitted to the Cabinet in November 2023 on the conclusions of the discussion. I'm pleased to have the support of the Cabinet to re-direct part of the Arfon post-16 education project funding to other modernising projects due to the fact that the case for changing the post-16 education in Arfon was not as strong by today. Despite this, I'm looking forward to hearing the outcomes of the discussions with the Gwynedd and Anglesey Post-16 Education Consortium regarding opportunities to further strengthen the collaboration between all partners.

Promote the well-being of children and young people and reduce the cost of sending children to school

This project is new to the Council Plan and is one of my main priorities as the Cabinet Member for Education. Since its establishment, questionnaires have been drawn up and distributed to governors, staff, parents and the children of schools in Gwynedd. Following analysing these questionnaires, it will be possible to identify the actual cost of attending the school and the financial challenges associated with attending the school facing families. This information will be the grounds to consider in what way schools, the education department and other Council departments can collaborate to reduce costs and reduce the financial burden on families of sending their children to school. A template of an Equality Plan will be presented to schools soon, considering the findings and main messages from the consultation held on the Authority's Equality Plan. Draft objectives have been designed as a starting point for schools to adapt them for their local needs. I am looking forward to report further next time on the progress of this project of key importance.

Extend opportunities for play and socialising for the county's children and young people

A task and finish group has been established to identify measures to measure the outcomes that the Youth Service is achieving for young people, Also, more recently, work has been ongoing to collect data and information on the provisions the service provides via an opinion survey, as well as questionnaires to stakeholders. I look forward to seeing the findings of these questionnaires later this month. Following the previous performance challenge meeting held in December, we will collaborate with the Highways and Municipal Department in relation to the play equipment for children and young people.

Modernising and extending the immersion provision to teach Welsh to children

On 6 July 2021, the Cabinet approved a new vision for a modern Immersion Education System in Gwynedd. This new vision also includes a capital investment of £1.1 million from the Welsh Government, and improvements have already been made at the Eifionydd site, as well as establishing a new immersion education sites in Bangor. A planning application has also been accepted for establishing a new immersion education site in Tywyn, and I look forward to seeing this site welcoming newcomers for the first time by September 2024. I am also very pleased that the Welsh Government has approved our business case for a further £1.1m in order to invest and improve the learning environment in the three primary immersion education sites located in Caernarfon, Pwllheli and Dolgellau.

The Welsh Government's Late Immersion revenue grant also enables us to modernise the immersion provision in our centres. By now, the Aberwla immersion scheme has been developed, which is a differential scheme that bridges the primary and secondary sectors. To accompany the scheme, we have the innovative digital project which places the Aberwla scheme and its characters on the VR stage. During the autumn term 2023, the Animated Technologies company completed the Museum setting, and they are currently working on developing the Puw Paned Cafe, The Woodland, and the Building Site by the end of the Summer 2024 Term.

I am also very pleased that the Immersion System staff have held several training sessions for Foundation Phase teachers and assistants in September 2023, and also responded to requests from individual schools for training or support in terms of immersion principles. In addition, the headteacher is in the process of establishing a Users Group for the Immersion System to share experiences, information and gain a shared understanding between the Immersion System and schools, and I look forward to receiving feedback from this very important Users Group.

A recent exciting development in Gwynedd is that we have several schools now part of the *Say Something in Welsh* pilot scheme and the Welsh Government. In the secondary sector in particular, we consider this scheme as a pilot to address the gap in terms of support for learners in Year 10 and 11 of the schools who need support to learn Welsh, as the normal provision of the Immersion System does not extend to learners of those years, although the immersion staff are always ready to support and offer guidance to schools in order to support learners to acquire the Welsh language. I look forward to reporting further to you on the development of this scheme and its result in a future report.

The Department's day-to-day work

I am very proud of the recognition that Estyn have given in their report to the commitment of the Education Department and this Council to the Welsh Language. I am also very grateful to the members of the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee for their work in conducting the Gwynedd Category 3 Secondary Schools Scrutiny Investigation, and myself and the department have started implementing some of the recommendations, and one of those was to update the Education Language Policy, and I look forward to reporting further to you on the fruits of this labour before the end of the academic year.

Work is ongoing to develop a Community Campus and environmentally friendly Campus in Bontnewydd, worth £12m from the Welsh Government. Jointly with the learners of Ysgol Bontnewydd, who were part of the interview panel, we have appointed an architect company, TACP Architects from Wrexham, to design the new building, and the work is ongoing to try and get a suitable design for the school and the community space on the site. I am looking forward to reporting further on the progress of this very exciting project next time.

One of the fields that have received considerable attention during performance challenging this year, and is one of the Estyn recommendations from Cyngor Gwynedd's education services is the attendance of learners at our schools. We are aware that since the pandemic, the attendance levels of learners have not returned to what it was in pre-pandemic times, and the situation in Gwynedd reflects the national pattern. However, through the efforts of the Department and schools, the authority's attendance percentage has increased to 90.51%, with the primary sector making good progress to reach 92.74%, whilst the attendance in the secondary sector is 87.91%.

I am delighted to be able to declare that we have been able to add capacity to the Welfare Team to be able to respond and support learners and their families where consistent absence levels are relatively high. In addition, it is pleasing to report that the levels of permanent exclusions have generally reduced during the second half of the autumn term 2023. A continuous work programme is already in place, which reviews the service and provision with the aim of increasing attendance and reducing the number of exclusions in the county, and this work programme seems currently to be coming to fruition.

With sadness, the Cabinet approved the proposal to close Ysgol Felinwnda on 31 December 2023, and for the existing pupils to transfer to a nearby alternative school, namely Ysgol Llandwrog or Ysgol Bontnewydd, in accordance with parents' choice. I wish every single one of the learners well as they settle in their new school, and over the next few months, the Department will prepare to hold a consultation on the Felinwnda

catchment area, and I look forward to considering the observations received following this consultation.

To conclude, the Department has been working on designing a 10-year Education Strategy for Gwynedd. An initial draft was submitted to the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee on 14 September 2023, and following this there was engagement with the Headteachers of our schools through strategic groups, as well as engaging with young people in a Youth Forum in Botwnnog. Arrangements are underway to engage further with learners via the medium of 6 School Councils across the county, and I look forward to receiving and considering their feedback. Further attention will be given to the Education Strategy during this term, before submitting this before the Cabinet to seek permission for us to carry out a public consultation. I am looking forward to report further on the progress of this Education Strategy next time.

3.3 The Savings Situation

The total of Savings Schemes 2023-24 for the department is £835,030, all of which has been realised. The Department's current savings target for 2024/25 is £111,880, all of which is on track to deliver on time.

The Department's financial performance is reported upon in a separate item to this meeting of the Cabinet, with forecasts that the Department would overspend by the end of 2023/24 financial year. This overspend was mostly on transport for pupils, with forecasts of a £1.5m overspend in this field, with school transport subject to a strategic review to try and manage the increase in expenditure as well as identify opportunities to realise savings where possible. The combination of underspend on other headings as well as use of funds in reserve reduces the overspend reported to £77k.

4. Views of the Statutory Officers

4.1 Chief Finance Officer

"I am satisfied that the report is a fair reflection of the financial situation of the Education Department."

4.2 Monitoring Officer

"No observations to add in relation to propriety."

CYNGOR GWYNEDD CABINET



Report to Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet meeting

Title of Item:	FINANCE CABINET MEMBER'S PERFORMANCE CHALLENGE AND SUPPORT REPORT
Cabinet Member:	COUNCILLOR IOAN THOMAS
Contact Officer:	DEWI MORGAN, HEAD OF FINANCE
Meeting date:	23 JANUARY 2024

1. The Decision Sought

To receive and note the information in the report.

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

To ensure effective performance management.

3. Introduction and Rationale

3.1 The purpose of this report is to update my fellow members on what has happened in the areas for which I am responsible as the Cabinet Member for Finance. This report will outline the following: -

- What has been achieved as part of the priorities of the Cyngor Gwynedd Plan 2023-2028:
- The status of the performance measurements
- The latest in terms of savings and cuts scheme

3.2 All the matters have already been the subject of discussion and have been scrutinised by me, along with the Corporate Director, in a Performance Challenge Meeting held on 15th December, where the Department's Management Team and service managers were present.

3.3 I am very pleased to note that the performance of the Finance Department has remained generally good over the last months. The Department has also made satisfactory progress on the relevant priority projects.

4. CYNGOR GWYNEDD PLAN PROJECTS 2023-2028 (Improvement Priorities)

4.1 The Finance Department leads on two priority projects in the Council Plan 2023-28:

- **Achieving Savings**
- **Digital Plan 2023-28**

4.2 I am very satisfied with the progress made to date by the Department's against both these priority projects, and further on progress against specific milestones are found in the Appendix.

5. PERFORMANCE

5.1 Below, I outline the main issues arising from the department's performance in the period since the last progress report in October. The information does not refer to all services in the department, only those I feel the need to draw your attention to.

5.2 IT Service – Support. I have previously reported that I am very pleased with the performance of this service and that we have evidence that it responds promptly to user queries and difficulties.

Furthermore, I am pleased to report that the service has been successful in filling key vacancies recently. Recruitment difficulties have been a concern in this area for some time, but the IT Service - Support has managed to appoint three new members of staff during the period. This is key to being able to maintain the expected service.

In terms of the amount of support, 3,453 requests for IT support were recorded during October and November 2023, with 3,221 (93%) opened and closed during the period.

The volume of external email correspondence being received and sent, in a period of just two months (October and November 2023), is surprising. 458,061 external email messages were sent by the Council, and 872,112 emails messages were received. In addition, 190,739 external email messages were filtered or suspended by our defences which means council systems received a total of 1,062,851 emails from outside the organisation in a period of just 2 months.

5.3 IT Service – Infrastructure. I am very pleased to be able to report that the availability of the Core Network and our Critical Systems has been 100% during October and November 2023. There was also no cyber incident or serious service breach.

Setting this into context, 194,099 attacks were blocked by the firewall in October, and 13 viruses were blocked. In November, 109,597 attacks were blocked by the firewall and 17 viruses were blocked.

The continuity of the performance level of the Infrastructure Team is absolutely key to the Council's ability to continue to maintain its services.

5.4 IT Service – Programme Management / External Systems. I noted in the last performance report that I thought the purpose of this service needed to be re-visited. Work has started, and the service has identified areas where new delivery measures should be introduced, and the service will move forward with that without delay. These measures are:

- Service Satisfaction across the team (Digital Transformation and Business Team)
- Statistics on ordering, including the collection and mailing of equipment
- Departmental mobile phone costs across the Council.

5.5 IT Service – Digital Learning Service. I noted in the last performance report that the capacity of the service to support the schools had been lower than expected before the summer holidays but expected the situation to improve during the autumn term. I am satisfied that the service has been able to close a high percentage of the calls it receives, coping with an increase in calls handled during November compared to October:

Calls	Recorded	Closed	Ongoing
October	531	422	275
November	544	512	305

However, I've asked the service to keep an eye on the "Ongoing" column lest a backlog develops whilst recognising that schools' historic equipment pose far more problems than the equipment that has been introduced since the service was established.

During the period, the service has run a campaign to receive satisfaction feedback. A questionnaire was sent to all headteachers of Primary, Special, Secondary and All-through Schools; 25 responses were received, which is a little disappointing in number. 85% of respondents were pleased with the support service they receive, and many offered constructive improvement ideas. It was found that 96% are happy with the devices they have received from the service.

The service has responded to the 15% who are unhappy with the supportive service, contacting the schools and listening to the comments. The reasons for the dissatisfaction were reported to the Performance Challenge and Support meeting and I am satisfied that work is taking place to respond to the issues raised.

5.6 Investment and Treasury Management Service. I am satisfied that this service has performed consistently well, protecting Council and Pension Fund investments, and ensuring accurate and appropriate handling of cash flow etc. I have no concern whatsoever about this service.

However, I believe that the performance information being presented to the Performance Challenge and Support Meetings can be expanded so that they align better with the comprehensive information that is now being presented to the Governance and Audit Committee and the Pensions Committee. The Investments Manager and the Head of Department have agreed to discuss to see what additional information can be presented to the next Performance Challenge and Support meeting, in February.

5.7 Insurance and Risk Management Service. I noted in my last performance report that one barrier preventing the Insurance and Risk Management Service from being able to operate effectively is having to wait too long for a relatively high number of reports from other parts of the Council. I reported that this created something of a concern and the Department would act to try to improve the situation.

I am pleased to report that the situation is improving, and that the service confirms that the reports the service has received from other departments have been acceptable in the latest period.

5.8 Income Service. I indicated in my last performance report that I am very keen to continue to pay attention to the progress of the cases we refer to the Legal Service, to ensure that there is effective collaboration between the two units.

A meeting was held between the two units during November to discuss steps to address the old debts. I attended the meeting, and I can report that it went well and that it was a very positive meeting. Following the meeting I concluded that a Ffordd Gwynedd review of the Income Service would be timely, and the Corporate Director and Head of Department were supportive of this. This review started immediately, and constructive conclusions have already emerged. I will continue to report progress on the work in subsequent performance reports.

5.9 Benefits Service. I would like to note that this service is performing consistently well, and I want to thank the Manager and all service staff for ensuring that Gwynedd's most vulnerable people receive the financial support they qualify for. The information available shows that there is improvement every time this service addresses its systems and processes. Staffing stability has been a great help to the service as it demonstrates continuous improvement.

5.10 Payroll Service. It is good to be able to report that the Payroll Service has responded in a timely manner to the pay agreement for 2023/24 and has ensured that the increase and backpay was paid to staff during November. There was a slight increase in the number of errors reported this period – there were 18 cases involving the arrears. Any issues were resolved in the proper manner.

I noted in the last performance report that I had some concern at the failure of some of the Council's services to notify the Payroll Service in a timely manner of any change in individuals' situation, so that action could be taken on time. Work to improve arrangements with other departments continues.

One issue highlighted during the meeting is that the service faces severe staffing issues during January and February 2024 due to absences for a variety of different reasons, including long-term illness, maternity, vacancies and secondments. The Manager will discuss mitigations with the relevant Head of Finance and Assistant Head to produce a programme to deal with the situation.

5.11 Taxation Service. During the Performance Challenge and Support meeting a presentation was given by the Taxation Manager on the significant work that has been undertaken in carrying out the Ffordd Gwynedd review in the service. A great deal of work has been done during this review and I believe that clear improvements are now emerging due to the commitment of the Manager and the team as a whole to this work.

Council Tax collection rates have remained relatively constant with recent years (at 73.1% by the end of November), but the non-domestic rate collection rate is significantly lower than it was in the same period last year. By the end of November 2023 in-year collection stood at 62.43% compared to 68.45% by the end of November 2022.

In addition to the impact of cost of living increases and the economic climate, a severe work backlog at the Valuation Office Agency, largely due to staff shortages, is having a significant impact on the Council's ability to collect Non-Domestic Rates. This is due to the time the Agency is taking to deal with valuation list appeals.

5.12 Finance and Accounting/Payments Service. I am very pleased with the work that the Finance and Accounting Service performs in completing statutory statements, but I have asked the service to consider ways of receiving customer satisfaction information about the support provided to other Council departments.

6. DEPARTMENTALS SAVINGS

- 6.1 **Historic Departmental Saving Plans 2015/16 – 2023/24.** The department has delivered all its savings plans for the period 2015/16 to 2021/22. One saving plan remains within the 2022/23 programme, which is to *Attract additional income through an Internal Collection Agency*. I no longer anticipate that the scheme will realise the £25k savings target, and the Department continues to look for an alternative plan.
- 6.2 **New Departmental Savings Plans 2023/24.** The total 2023/24 savings for the Finance Department is **£294,060** (7 schemes). Of these, schemes worth **£19,820** (2 schemes) have already been realised and a further 3 schemes totalling **£138,670** are on track to deliver in a timely manner. However, schemes worth **£135,570** (2 schemes) are slipping, with some risks to delivering the savings. The two schemes where there is a risk of delivering savings are *Increasing Departmental income targets to be commensurate with the work*, which has a value of £64k, and there has been a delay on the £71.5k *Information Technology Service Re-structuring* scheme but this is moving forward.

VIEWS OF THE STATUTORY OFFICERS

Monitoring Officer:

No observations to add in relation to propriety.

Head of Finance:

I have collaborated with the Cabinet Member in the preparation of this report, and I confirm the content.

PROJECTS OF THE CYNGOR GWYNEDD PLAN 2023-2028 (Improvement Priorities)

The following table gives an update on the progress of the Department's two priority projects which have been identified in the Cyngor Gwynedd Plan 2023-28 under the section An Efficient Gwynedd - Putting the residents of Gwynedd first and treating them fairly and ensuring that the Council performs effectively and efficiently:

Project	Overview	What we want to achieve during the FIRST year 2023-24 (milestones):	November 2023 Update
Managing the impact of national budgetary cuts	<p>The Council has already cut its budgets to save over £34m since 2015/16, but in light of the current economic situation, the money the Council will receive from the Government is not sufficient to cope with inflation and new spending pressures. We face a funding gap of over £12 million over the next two years.</p> <p>We will endeavour to do all we can to minimise the impact on the services provided to the people of Gwynedd whilst accepting that it will not be possible</p>	<p>Monitor that the £5.2m savings for 2023/24, approved by Full Council 02/03/23, are prioritised by the Departments to be realised during the financial year: Appendix 3 - Savings (llyw.cymru)</p> <p>Monitor that Departments prioritise realising savings that have slipped from previous financial years.</p> <p>Chief Executive, Directors and Head of Finance to meet quarterly to review the implementation status of all Council savings.</p> <p>Report to Cabinet and to the Governance and Audit Committee in October 2023 and January 2024 on the implementation status of all Council savings schemes.</p> <p>At the end of the financial year, review historical plans that have slipped in order to carry out an objective assessment of</p>	<p>A formal review of the situation at the end of August 2023 has been completed and challenged by the Governance and Audit Committee on 12 October and approved by Cabinet on 7 November.</p> <p>A further review (end of November) will go before the Governance and Audit Committee on 18 January and Cabinet on 23 January.</p> <p>On 12 October, Cabinet has recognised that the situation has now changed so much that historic savings schemes worth £2,056,430 cannot be achieved. The £1,956,430 savings provision was used to fund the removal of these savings schemes, along with the use of £100,000 council tax premium for the Homelessness savings scheme.</p> <p>The following meetings have been programmed with the Chief Executive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Savings/Cuts – Phase 2 Group - 22 June 2023 • Tracking Savings Progress, 13 July 2023 • Savings/Cuts – Phase 2 Group, 13 July 2023 • Savings, 4 September 2023 • Tracking Savings & Savings Progress - Second Phase, 21 September 2023 • Savings Progress Tracking, 19 December 2023 <p>Prioritisation workshops have been held with all Council members not on Cabinet on 18 – 20 October 2023.</p>

Project	Overview	What we want to achieve during the FIRST year 2023-24 (milestones):	November 2023 Update
	to set a balanced budget without a lengthy series of savings/cuts and increase Council tax higher than we would like.	<p>how realistic the expectation is for them to be realised.</p> <p>Carrying out a phase 2 review of the implementation of savings for implementation in the 2024/25 budget onwards.</p>	<p>Accountants assessed the savings being proposed for 2024/25 to confirm if the savings were available and what impact their implementation would have on department budgets.</p> <p>As the Local Government settlement was announced so late (20 December 2023), time will not allow the further savings to be realised in 2024/25 and therefore a transition to 2025/26 will probably be necessary.</p>
Digital Scheme	People's expectations and trends have changed significantly as a result of the pandemic, and this is an opportunity to see if we can further improve Gwynedd residents' experience of frontline and back office services through the use of digital technology.	<p>The first year of the project will focus on developing a new digital strategy for the Council and the people of Gwynedd, outlining improvement plans, risks and any financial implications, either through investment or savings.</p> <p>A governance cycle is now underway and is responsible for the development and implementation of the digital strategy.</p> <p>Q1 and Q2 2023/24 - preparing a new Digital Strategy in collaboration with Audit Wales guidance</p> <p>Q3 2023/24 - presentation of the Digital Strategy for adoption by the Council</p> <p>Q3 and Q4 2023/24 and Q1 – Q4 2024/25 – implementing the projects programmed for the first two years of the strategy.</p>	<p>Whilst the Finance Department is responsible for implementing the project in the Council's Plan, the Digital Transformation Board retains oversight and provides challenge as well as support beyond the usual challenge and performance support arrangements.</p> <p>Board meetings are chaired by the Corporate Director, with the Assistant Head of Finance – Information Technology acting as Project Manager. Four sub-groups have been formed to look at specific areas, with representation from a range of Council departments and chairs joining as part of the Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical and Durability • Customer Contact • Data • Business Administration and Systems <p>Furthermore, the Head of Finance and the Monitoring Officer are members of the Board, as well as the Head of Education (whose specific function is to ensure coherence between the Digital Strategy for Schools and what is underway at corporate level), and I represent the Elected Members.</p> <p>The draft Plan was submitted to the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee on 14 September 2023; and the final Plan was adopted by Cabinet on 7 November 2023.</p> <p>The individual plans have now been submitted to the corporate bid regime and confirmation of available financial support along with findings of prioritisation</p>

Project	Overview	What we want to achieve during the FIRST year 2023-24 (milestones):	November 2023 Update
			<p>exercises by the Heads, Assistant Heads and Managers will be used to create a programme of work.</p> <p>The next step will be to publish the priorities within the programme of work and this will be the basis of a progress report for our next departmental performance challenge and support meeting, with progress against the programme of work to be reported into the future.</p>

FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

CYNGOR GWYNEDD CABINET

Date of discussion at the Cabinet	Items to be discussed	Cabinet Member
Quarter 4 2023/24 1 January – 31 March		
20 February 2024	Re-modelling Arrangements for Waste Collection	Cllr Dafydd Meurig
	Public Toilets	Cllr Berwyn Parry Jones
	Approve Collaboration Plan	Cllr Berwyn Parry Jones
	Annual Review of The Council Plan	Cllr Dyfrig Siencyn
	2024/25 Savings Plan	Cllr Ioan C Thomas
	2024/25 Budget	Cllr Ioan C Thomas
	Residential and Nursing Fees	Cllr Dilwyn Morgan
	Performance Report of the Economy and Community Department	Cllr Dyfrig Siencyn and Cllr Nia Jeffreys
	Performance Report of the Corporate Support Department	Cllr Menna Trenholme
	Performance Report of the Housing and Property Department	Cllr Craig ab Iago
12 March 2023	Flooding Strategy	Cllr Berwyn Parry Jones
	One-off Bids 2024-25	Cllr Dyfrig Siencyn
Quarter 1 2023/24 1 April – 30 June		
	No committee dates determined as yet.	