

Complete Agenda

CABINET

CYNGOR GWYNEDD

DATE	Tuesday, 12th March, 2024
TIME	1.00 pm
LOCATION	Hybrid - Siambr Dafydd Orwig, Swyddfeydd y Cyngor, Caernarfon LL55 1SH and Zoom
CONTACT POINT	Annes Sion 01286 679490 / 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 20/02/24

Present-

Councillors: Dyfrig Siencyn, Nia Jeffreys, Beca Brown, Menna Trenholme, Berwyn Parry Jones, Craig ab Iago, Dilwyn Morgan, 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 Annes Sion (Democracy Team Leader).

- Item 7: Gareth Jones (Assistant Head of Environment Department) and Heledd Fflur Jones (Planning Policy Team Leader)
- Item 8: Carys Fôn Williams (Head of Housing and Property Department)
- Item 9: Steffan Jones (Head of Highways, Engineering and Gwynedd Consultancy Department) and Rob Williams (Water and Environment Service Manager)
- Item 11: Dewi Wyn Jones (The Council's Business Support Service Manager)
- Item 13: Ffion Madog Evans (Assistant Head - Finance Department)
- Item 14: Sioned Williams (Head of Economy and Community Department)
- Item 15: Catrin Love (Assistant Head of Corporate Support Department)

1. APOLOGIES

The Cabinet Members and Officers were welcomed to the meeting.

An apology was received from Cllr Dafydd Meurig.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

There were no declarations of personal interest.

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 23 JANUARY 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2024 were accepted as a true record.

6. SAFEGUARDING POLICY REVIEW

The report was submitted by Cllr. Menna Trenholme.

DECISION

To adopt the amended 'Policy and Guidelines for Safeguarding Children and Adults who are at risk of abuse and neglect' together with the Terms of Reference for the Safeguarding Strategic Panel.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted asking the Cabinet to adopt a revised Policy and guidance for safeguarding children and adults who are at risk of abuse and neglect along with the terms of reference for the Safeguarding Strategic Panel. It was noted that the policy sets out how the Council intends to fulfil its statutory responsibilities for safeguarding children and adults who are at risk in accordance with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. It was explained that as the current version was an adaptation of a policy created in 2013, it was timely to prepare a new policy rather than update the document in accordance with the usual procedure.

It was highlighted that a workshop had been held in October, attended by representation of officers across the Council to discuss the new Policy and strengthen reporting and monitoring arrangements. The next steps were set out, namely that a copy would be submitted before the Full Council followed by further work to promote the revised Policy amongst all Council staff.

The Corporate Director added that the policy needed to be amended and now highlighted the difference between safeguarding and protection, and the definitions had been set out in the policy. It was noted that changes had been made to the Panel's Terms of Reference highlighting the role and membership.

Observations arising from the discussion

- The new policy was welcomed and it was stressed that it was vital that people were aware that everyone within the Council had a role to ensure the safety of children and adults who were at risk.
- The importance of the policy being submitted before the Full Council was noted, in order to highlight the importance of the role that Councillors had.

7. DELIVERY AGREEMENT, LOCAL DEVELOPMENT - RESPONSE TO THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION PERIOD

The report was submitted by Cllr. Dyfrig Siencyn

DECISION

The Cabinet agreed to:

- i. Present the amended Draft Delivery Agreement to the Full Council for approval.
- ii. Delegate the right to the Head of Department to make editorial changes for accuracy as required.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted stating that preparing and receiving approval of the Delivery Agreement was the statutory first step associated with the process of preparing a new Local Development Plan. It was noted that the Cabinet had decided to go to public consultation in October and it was noted that the report set out the results of this consultation period. It was noted that 14 individuals / organisations had responded to the consultation with a total of 37 comments.

It was made clear that there were no substantive issues arising from the comments received, and that some of the comments and suggestions had been in relation to how to amend the document and it was noted that the amendments added value and clarity to the Delivery Agreement.

It was stated that the Delivery Agreement had been submitted to the Planning Policy Working Group meeting in January. It was highlighted that the working group had enquired whether the soundness tests could be amended to consider the language. It was noted that there was no need as the requirement was addressed in the tests in their present form and by statutory requirements placed on the Council. It was explained that the Delivery Agreement would now go to the Full Council in March and it would then be possible to begin the process of formally preparing a Local Development Plan.

Observations arising from the discussion

- It was noted that response numbers appeared low but the number of respondents highlighted this step – which was to set up the process rather than develop the policy itself.

8. WELSH GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION: 'WHITE PAPER ON ENDING HOMELESSNESS IN WALES'

The report was submitted by Cllr. Craig ab Iago

DECISION

The content of the draft response to the Government's consultation on ending homelessness in Wales was approved.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted stating that everyone wanted to end homelessness. But it was highlighted that, to put an end to it, it would need to be split into two parts, namely, how to deal with homelessness and what caused homelessness.

So, while this document was ambitious it was noted that the Westminster Government had increased homelessness through Brexit, a period of austerity and consequently increased poverty and homelessness. There was agreement on how to deal with the problem but it was highlighted that the root of the problem needed to be dealt with.

The Head of Housing and Property Department added that the Welsh Government had launched this consultation back in October, with a view to passing the act before the end of this Parliamentary term in 2026. It was noted that, generally, the department was happy with the recommendations but that implementation was going to be difficult as a result of the need for additional resources. The need to get the approval of the Cabinet as a result of the potential impact this white paper could have on the Council's resources and budgets was highlighted.

Observations arising from the discussion

- Thanks were given for Council's responses indicating concern about the removal of the local connection element.
- It was expressed that more work needed to be done to look at the reasons for homelessness, and that taking action was concerning particularly as a result of the current financial situation and what the Council would be facing over the next few years.

9. COLLABORATION PLAN APPROVAL (WALES COASTAL MONITORING CENTRE)

The report was submitted by Cllr. Berwyn Parry Jones

DECISION

The Cabinet agreed to:

- i. Give Gwynedd approval to continue to work with and devote resources to the Wales Coastal Monitoring Centre.
- ii. Delegate the authority to the Head of the Highways, Engineering and YGC Department in consultation with the Head of the Legal Department to approve the Collaboration Agreement.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted stating that the report asked to formalise the system that was already in place currently. It was noted that the collaboration plan would be an opportunity to attract income to Gwynedd Consultancy (YGC) into the future as there would be no need to compete for work.

The Head of Highways, Engineering and Gwynedd Consultancy Department added that the go-ahead had been received by the Welsh Government to re-establish the Wales Coastal Monitoring Centre back in 2018. It was noted that the Council had been part of the Centre since 2018, and it was noted that if YGC

did not need to compete for the work it would draw on expertise within the Council. It was explained that the data being collected is part of a long-term plan that had been feeding into national strategies. It was reiterated that the centre had a vital role in climate change plans.

10. REFORMING THE COUNCIL TAX REGIME - WELSH GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION: FAIRER COUNCIL TAX: STAGE 2

The report was submitted by Cllr. Ioan Thomas.

DECISION

The content of the draft response to the Government's consultation on reforming Council Tax in Wales was approved.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted noting that the Welsh Government had submitted the paper to a consultation setting out options for how far and how quickly there would be change in terms of Council tax reform. It was noted in terms of the pace of change that it ranged from completion by April 2025 to April 2028, and that how far the reform would go varied from very small scale to a wider reform.

It was highlighted on average that the price of properties in Wales had increased by around 150% between 2003 and 2022, however the increase across Wales had not been consistent. It was explained that Gwynedd had seen the 7th highest increase throughout Wales during the period, and as a result that an above average number could move up at least one band in Gwynedd.

It was explained that it appeared that more Gwynedd taxpayers would lose than would gain under any of the reforms proposed, it was noted in general that there was a strong possibility that around 40% of the people of Gwynedd would pay a few hundred pounds more in taxes as a result of the reforms. It was expressed that, in terms of reform, it could be argued that house prices had increased in some areas but individuals' salaries had not, which could lead to many people being unable to afford to pay their Council Tax bill.

Observations arising from the discussion

- It was noted that option 3 which was a wider reform led to the creation of a fairer system, with more bands available.
- It was highlighted that any overall increase in the Council's taxation base would mean a reduction in the grant received from the Government. However, it was stressed that the reforms were not intended to raise more tax as the national total would remain the same, but would be fairer.

11. CYNGOR GWYNEDD PLAN 2023 - 2028 - 2024/25 REVIEW

The report was submitted by Cllr. Dyfrig Siencyn

DECISION

The Cabinet approved the Cyngor Gwynedd Plan 2023-2028 – 2024/25 Review (the Plan) to be submitted to Council on 7 March 2024.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted stating that there was a requirement to undertake a review of the Cyngor Gwynedd Plan even though it had only been a year since it had been passed. It was noted that the report highlighted the amendments that can be seen.

The Council's Business Support Service Manager highlighted that a light review had been carried out to ensure the plan remained up to date. It was emphasised that the priority areas, which aligned with the well-being objectives as a result of the act and the Council's list of ambitions remained as they were.

It was highlighted that adaptations had been made to projects such as Free School Meals in the Education Department section as this scheme was now part of the day-to-day work of the department. Another scheme taken out was reviewing the Language Policy as it had been accepted by Full Council at its meeting before Christmas. It was noted that work had been undertaken to repackage the Adults Care project to simplify the description and to combine projects.

Observations arising from the discussion

- It was noted that modifying and reviewing the document highlighted that this was a live document and had been a very good exercise in seeing what had been achieved.
- It was emphasised that no change had been made to the objectives of the repackaged schemes in the Adults department, but rather made it easier to be able to create milestones and as a result it would be possible to report on those.

12. 2024/25 SAVINGS PLAN

The report was presented by Dafydd Gibbard.

DECISION

The Cabinet agreed to:

- a) Approve the savings and cuts listed in Appendix A (£4.4M) to be used as a contribution towards our 2024/25 financial deficit, and commission the Departments to move forward to implement the plans taking note of the issues highlighted in the report.

- b) Set a balanced budget in 2024/25, to approve the value of the cuts and savings listed in Appendix B (£0.8M) and note that further steps will be required before a final decision can be reached to implement them, as outlined in 2.13, and use reserves to bridge the savings that could not be realised in 24/25.
- c) Make provision of £0.52M to meet the risk level involved in realising this cuts plan.
- d) Delegate the right to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Finance, to make adjustments to this Savings Plan as the maturity of the schemes listed in Appendix A and B develops, within the financial totals.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted with sadness that it was now normal to have to discuss an item about savings before it was possible to set the budget. It was stressed that as a result of the financial crisis facing local authorities, it was an essential item. It explained that the Council would receive an increase of 2.3% from the Local Government Grant, but that it was significantly below the level of inflation and below what would be needed to maintain the existing level of services. It was explained as a result the Council would need to cope with a funding deficit of almost £15m.

It was expressed that in order to do this the budget would need to include a combination of having to increase Council tax and delivering budget cuts across the Council. It was explained that, in October, workshops had been held for all elected members to prioritise savings plans for 2024/25. It was noted that the bids had a total value of approximately £8m. An impact assessment had been carried out on each proposal together with a legal and financial assessment to ensure they were schemes that were deliverable.

The conclusions of the workshops had been that around £5m of schemes could be implemented, and the list of cuts and savings had been presented in two parts. It was explained that list A contained plans that could be moved forward to be implemented by the Department. The schemes were highlighted under the headings such as efficiencies, increasing income and using other sources for funding.

It was noted that list B reflected schemes that were subject to statutory action or further decisions before they could be confirmed. It was highlighted that the Governance and Audit Committee had scrutinised the process, but raised concern about the level of reserve for savings schemes as it had been reduced from 20% to 10%. Despite this, it was noted that they were satisfied and that the process had been comprehensive and thorough.

It was explained that the Government grant would be reducing over the coming years, and a new round of savings would need to be initiated immediately, looking at how to cope and possibly re-defining what the Council would be able to offer.

Observations arising from the discussion

- Attention was drawn to the equality impact assessment and noted that it looked at the savings as a whole. It was suggested that a further report may be needed to make sure the schemes created them as vulnerable groups would be hit.

13. BUDGET 2024/25

The report was submitted by Cllr. Ioan Thomas

DECISION

- 1) To set a budget of £330,590,040 and any additional funding received in the final settlement for 2024/25, to be funded by £232,092,110, of government grant and any increase in the grant received in the final settlement, and £98,497,930 of Council Tax income (which is an increase of 9.54%).
- 2) To establish a capital programme of £85,224,800 in 2024/25 to be funded from the sources set out in Appendix 4 of the report.
- 3) That the final additional Government Grant received above £232,092,110 - estimated to be approximately £969,000 - be used to reduce the use of £2m shortfall that has not been met in our financial schemes in 2024/25 and must be bridged from funds for this year as referred to in paragraph 5.4.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted stating that the Minister for Finance and Local Government had pledged additional funding to Welsh authorities as a result of additional funding recently allocated to English councils. It was estimated that the Council would receive an additional figure in the region of £969,000. In addition, it was noted that the department had informed them at the end of the previous week of certain grants that would be transferred to the settlement, and which would also have an impact on the final figures. It explained that the figures would be finalized by the Full Council meeting on March 7.

It was noted that the resolution sought was to recommend to the Council at its meeting on 7 March 2024 that a budget of £331 million should be established together with any additional money received in the final settlement for 2024/25 to be funded through a Government Grant of £232 million adding any increase in grant received in the final settlement and £98 million of income from Council Tax (representing a 9.54% increase on individual dwelling tax). Also, establish an £85 million capital programme in 2024/25 to be funded from the sources set out in Appendix 4 to the report.

It was added that the estimated final additional Government Grant would be around £969k higher than what was in the draft settlement and additional funding (in the final grant above the draft settlement) would be used to reduce the use of £2m of the Council's reserves. It was emphasised that the budget was being

recommended at a time when Welsh local authorities were facing significant financial challenges. It was highlighted that the Council had received a grant increase for 2024/25 which was among the lowest in Wales. It was explained that this amount was not sufficient to meet inflation, let alone additional pressure on services.

A salary inflation provision of £15.1m was highlighted. It was expressed that this figure was in line with most other local authorities. It was noted that the Council had planned prudently in 2023/24 for a 6% increase, but the final agreement was higher, and therefore as a result salary inflation in the 2024/25 budget would include an element to correct this gap as well as taking into account notional inflation of 5% for the whole workforce. It was highlighted that the budget provided for other inflation of £6.8m, and it was explained that this was a net amount which included provision for a wide range of changes depending on the scale of inflation of particular areas, such as £4m in care.

It was noted that there was a requirement to recommend approval of £5.1m of bids for additional permanent resources brought in by the departments to meet inevitable pressures on their services. It was explained that the items had been thoroughly challenged before being recommended for Cabinet approval.

In summary, it was expressed that the Council's spending needs before taking out savings for 2024/25 were £340m, and that a grant from the Welsh Government was to be around £232m. This highlighted that a residual gap needed to be filled and the previous item highlighted the savings that would need to be made. It was noted that it would be necessary to recommend meeting the remaining gap through Council Tax, and to increase it by 9.54%.

The Head of Finance added that appendix 10 highlighted that risk assessments had been undertaken and that hard work had been done by the department to ensure that the estimates were robust. It was stressed that the year was going to be extremely challenging, and the biggest challenge would be to ensure that savings would be realised.

Observations arising from the discussion

- It was stressed that no Councillor wanted to raise Council tax but there was no other option available. It was noted that a number of individuals were willing to judge but without understanding how much of the Council worked, and that the money received was not sufficient.
- It was expressed that there were only two options for having a balanced budget namely to raise council tax or cut more services, it was reiterated that trying to get the balance here was very difficult.

14. PERFORMANCE REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR THE ECONOMY

The report was submitted by Cllr. Nia Jeffreys

DECISION

To accept and note the information in the report.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted, expressing pride in seeing progress with projects across the department, and the wide range of services the department offered. It was added that these services were vital to the people of Gwynedd and the staff were thanked for their work.

The Head of Department highlighted the department's main issues which included grants the Council offered to businesses across Gwynedd as part of the Council's priority - A Prosperous Gwynedd. It was explained that, through the ARFOR programme, the Welsh Government's Transforming Town Centres Fund and the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund that a package of different funds had been put in place. It was expressed that there had been a significant response to the funds with applications valued at £13.26m and the budget was only worth £3.46m. The department continued to work with the businesses that had been unsuccessful to offer further feedback and advice.

It was expressed that recovery continued for Byw'n Iach with the number of visits in December 2023 exceeding the December 2019 figure. It was explained that work continued to encourage the use of the centres and that they hoped to fully restore the situation. At the Maritime Service it was noted that upgrades to the Dinas Dinlle car park were ongoing and that they hoped it would be completed by March 2024. It was expressed that there had been a 4% increase in customer numbers and mooring agreements in the county's harbours and that the outlook for 2024 was very encouraging. However, it was highlighted that there had been a decrease in Pwllheli Marina figures as a result of an increase in the cost of living. Despite this, it was noted that the waiting list remained strong at present.

It was expressed that upgrades to the Lloyd George Museum were ongoing and would report further on the project in the future.

Observations arising from the discussion

- Attention was drawn to the Boardmaker Picture Communication Symbols scheme, a resource for families of children who were unable to communicate verbally, which was now available in three libraries in Gwynedd.

15. PERFORMANCE REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CORPORATE SUPPORT AND LEGAL SERVICES

The report was submitted by Cllr. Menna Trenholme

DECISION

To accept and note the information in the report.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted stating that she would start with the Corporate Support Department's performance report. It was noted that the report outlined what had happened so far against the promises of the Cyngor Gwynedd Plan. Attention was drawn to some schemes in particular, such as Women in Leadership. It was noted that over 40 women had now been following the developmental programme with 33% of attendees having accepted a senior position since completing the Programme. It was added that a pilot scheme was underway to avoid unconscious bias and ensure equality by submitting anonymous application forms for Team Leader level posts and above.

As part of the Council's Language programme it was highlighted that the Language Strategy had been adopted in December. It was noted that as a result of the further research on changing street names in two pilot areas, a number of complexities had been highlighted and therefore it had not been feasible to proceed with this aspect at present. As a result, it was explained that the service was focusing on the sign installation scheme on settlements, bridges and district boundaries and increase the visibility of the project.

It was highlighted that the department anticipated that it would be overspending by the end of the financial year. It was explained that there was a combination of reasons for the likely overspending, such as increased pressure on a particular budget, e.g. increased demand on counselling and not meeting the income target for a range of services.

In terms of the Legal Service it was noted that the Cabinet Member was pleased with the day-to-day performance of the department. It was emphasised that the recruitment position was now in a healthy place with staff appointed. It was explained in terms of Propriety that a programme of seminars would be held with bodies explaining the basics of decisions in public bodies together with the constitutional and regulatory framework.

It was noted that the department had been working to support the Returning Officer and the Election Registration Officer in order to respond to new constituency boundaries of UK elections, the Elections Act 2022 and prepare for the Welsh Parliament Electoral changes. It was explained that arrangements for elections were now in place with Conwy Council and Denbighshire Council where constituency boundaries crossed county boundaries.

Observations arising from the discussion

- It was noted that work had begun to resume seeking level 2 certification of the Disability Confident scheme, and that it was hoped that it would be completed by the end of March 2024. It was explained that the department was ambitious and keen to reach level 3.
- It was highlighted with Prosiect 15, which was part of the Promoting Use of the Welsh language scheme, that extremely good work had been done, and thanks were conveyed to the young person who had been developing and creating original Welsh language content for social media.
- It was noted that the Women in Leadership work was innovative and

mentioned often externally as well.

The meeting commenced at 1.00 pm and concluded at 3.05 pm

CHAIRMAN

CYNGOR GWYNEDD - Report to Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet

Title of Item:	Strategic Equality Plan 2024-28
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Menna Trenholme, Cabinet Member for Corporate Support
Relevant Officer:	Delyth G Williams, Equality Adviser
Date of meeting:	12 March 2023

1. Decision Sought:

To accept and adopt the Strategic Equality Plan so it can be implemented over the next four years (2024-28).

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

According to the specific duty placed on Welsh public organisations as part of the Equality Act 2010 in Wales, a Statutory Equality Plan must be created every four years. As part of this it is necessary to amend our Equality Objectives.

3. Introduction and Rationale

3.1 Background/Introduction

The Cabinet has already identified Ensuring Fairness for All, namely the Strategic Equality Plan, as one of the Council's priorities through the Council's Plan. As the Act requires action on a 4-year cycle, the current Plan period is coming to an end, and a new one is required.

3.2 Rationale and justification for recommending the decision

We have undertaken an extended period of opinion gathering on the objectives with a variety of people. You have already heard about the engagement period between April and August 2023, which gave us a range of information for adapting our equality objectives in order to create an Equality Objectives Consultation Document. After the Cabinet agreed for the document to be released, a period of consultation on the draft objectives was held. This included a questionnaire in various formats, with the equality officers meeting again with groups of people with protected characteristics. A report on the consultation can be found as an appendix.

As a result of the consultation, we have adapted the objectives. This includes simplifying the wording and making the action points more specific. We have also added some action points and have divided one of the Objectives into two.

As expected of such a document, the Impact Assessment, which has been amended following the consultation, shows that the Objectives have a positive impact on people with equality characteristics and the three aims of the equality duty.

It also has a positive impact on socio-economic disadvantage, something we are required to look at under the Socio-economic Duty 2021. Data shows that people with some protected characteristics are more likely to live in financial poverty or be affected more frequently or harshly by factors such as digital poverty or to live far away from services. The fact that the Objectives have a positive effect on people with those characteristics therefore means that we are reducing the socio-economic gap.

It can also be seen that the Objectives generally have a positive impact on the Welsh language, and that specific steps are proposed for removing any potentially negative impact.

The Impact Assessment also looks at the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. It shows that the Objectives, and the way we have acted, comply with the Sustainable Development Duty under the Act, by addressing the five ways of working.

3.3 Next steps

Should the Cabinet accept the Strategic Equality Plan for 2024-28, we will create a comprehensive Action Plan for each action point within the objectives to commence the work as soon as possible.

We will report upon this work as one of the Council's projects and prepare Annual Reports that will be presented to the Cabinet.

The impact assessment is a live document, and we will amend it as required, with individual ones being prepared for every Objective.

4. Views of the Statutory Officers

4.1 Chief Finance Officer

I support the decision sought to adopt the Strategic Equality Plan for 2024-2028. I am comfortable that the cost of the implementation plan will be comparatively low. I expect that it will be possible to meet these costs within existing revenue budgets but if not, additional funding will need to be sought through the usual arrangements

4.2 Monitoring Officer

In accordance with the Council's statutory duties under equality legislation the Council needs to create a Strategic Equality Plan and thereby review its Equality Objectives. Carrying out an engagement process meets statutory requirements and principles regarding carrying out a review. It is important that the Cabinet is satisfied that what is recommended

represents an appropriate response to the consultation. There is nothing further to add in terms of propriety.

List of Appendices

Strategic Equality Plan 2024-28

Impact Assessment on the Equality Characteristics, Welsh Language and Socio-economic Impact

A report on the Consultation

List of Background Documents

[Microsoft Word - 2023 Equality in North Wales Data and evidence report.docx \(llyw.cymru\)](#)

[Microsoft Word - Analysis of the Engagement.docx \(llyw.cymru\)](#)

Strategic Equality Plan

2024-28

Foreword

I am pleased to introduce Cyngor Gwynedd's Strategic Equality Plan for 2024-28.

This Plan includes five Equality Objectives, namely the specific work Cyngor Gwynedd will do to improve fairness within our organisation. These objectives touch on all fields within the Council as we include matters such as staff training on how to ensure fairness for the people who use our services. We will also be looking at how easy it is for people to utilise our services and work to reduce any problems. Indeed, the main aim of this Plan is to improve our services, to ensure that they are suitable for everyone using them.

We also aim to work to become an employer that leads in the equal opportunity field, to ensure that we recruit and retain the best staff for their jobs.

To create the Objectives that are in this Equality Plan, thorough work has been done to ensure that we heard, and listened to, the public's opinions. This particularly included groups who have life experience of living with equality characteristics and are aware of obstacles that arise. It was possible for us to improve our objectives as a result of the information we have received, and I would like to thank everyone who gave their time to share their opinions with us.

M M Trenholme

Menna Trenholme
Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Equality



Introduction

What is the Strategic Equality Plan?

Cyngor Gwynedd is very keen to ensure that equality is deeply rooted within the Council's work so as to improve our services for all the people of Gwynedd. The purpose of the Strategic Equality Plan (the Plan) is to give us a framework to improve fairness within the Council and ensure that we treat people according to their needs. Equality is the term used in the act (see below), but it would also be possible to use the word equity too. This definition of equality means acknowledging that every individual has different needs and that we should share the exact resources and opportunities that they need to reach an equal outcome.

An important part of this Equality Plan are the Equality Objectives. We have been asking for the public's views over the course of a few months, including diverse groups and individuals, to see what are the best objectives we can fulfil for the people of Gwynedd. These Objectives are based on what we have been told, but also on several other factors. These include data from various sources, Welsh Government's action plans and what is possible within the Council.

Is there another reason to provide the Strategic Equality Plan?

The Plan ensures that we fulfil our duty under the Equality Act 2010 (the Act). The aim of the Act is to reduce inequalities by asking public bodies to give due attention to the three aims of the public sector equality duty, namely:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act.
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The act protects people who have one or more of these characteristics (protected characteristics):

- Age
- Gender reassignment
- Sex
- Race – including ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality
- Disability
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Sexual Orientation
- Religion or belief – including a lack of belief
- Marriage and civil partnership

The Plan is one of the expectations under the specific duty of the Act as it is implemented in Wales. We are also expected to report on our progress annually.

The Equality Act 2010 has also included the Socio-economic Duty since 2021. The expectation is for public bodies to take socio-economic disadvantage into account when making strategic decisions. There is more about this in this document, and also in the Equality Impact Assessment accompanying it.

Who is the Strategic Equality Plan aimed at?

The Plan, and the Act, are important to everyone. From talking to people over the past few months we have seen that some people have not understood that the Act protects everyone. They think that it is something for other people. But the act protects everyone because everyone has protected characteristics.

Of course, people with certain characteristics experience more barriers than others and therefore require greater consideration when developing the Plan and in the Council's work in general. Also, people with more than one of these characteristics are affected even more(intersectionality) e.g. a disabled young person.

What sort of county is Gwynedd?

Gwynedd is a county in North Wales. Gwynedd is the second largest county in Wales after Powys but it is in the lower half in terms of population. The three largest population centres in Gwynedd (Bangor, Caernarfon and Bethesda) are in the north-west of the county, therefore the rest of the area is rural. This is a factor that must be considered when providing services.

Recently, our Data and Information Service has produced a data document titled "Equality in North Wales: A Data and Evidence Document" on the six counties in North Wales (Gwynedd, Anglesey, Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham) and it notes many interesting factors about the Gwynedd population.

Over 51% of the people of Gwynedd are women.

There are more individuals under 25 in Gwynedd than any other county in the north (28.7%). The number of people over 65 is slightly lower than the North Wales average, but the percentage of people in this age group is increasing, with an 8.6% increase between the 2011 and 2021 censuses, whilst the population in general has fallen (in contrast with most of Wales).

Fewer people in Gwynedd identify as White (96.2%) than the rest of the counties in the north, except for Wrexham (96%). 66.6% noted that they were born in Wales (this is higher than the other counties except for Wrexham, and similar to Anglesey). 59% note that they identify as a Welsh person, which is several percentage points higher than the rest of the counties.

46.2% of the people of Gwynedd identify themselves as Christian, which is the lowest percentage in North Wales. 44.2% noted that they did not have a religion, the highest percentage in the north. The percentage that did not reply was also the highest in the region, at 7.5%. 1% of the population are Muslims.

Fewer people in Gwynedd identify as heterosexual or straight than any other county in the North (87.3% - the average for the north was 89.4%). There were more people identifying as Bisexual (1.6% – the percentage for the north was 1%) or who chose not to answer the question (9.4%) than in any other county in the region. The number who identified themselves as Gay or Lesbian was similar to the percentage for the north (1.3%).

Almost 1 person in every 5 (19%) identify as a disabled person and there is almost 10% more disabled women than men. 74% of Gwynedd people who

are not disabled are in employment compared with 43% of disabled people, comparable to the rest of Wales.

91.7% of the people of Gwynedd say that their gender identity is the same as the gender they were assigned at birth. This is less than any other county in North Wales (the average for the north is 92.8%). A higher proportion chose not to answer the question (8% - the north Wales percentage was 6.9%), and the proportion who identify as a trans man, trans woman and every other gender is the same as for the north (0.1% each).

There is a higher percentage of people in Gwynedd who have never married or been in a civil partnership (40%) than the rest of the counties in the north. Therefore, there are fewer people who are married (41.5%), separated (1.7%) or divorced or have dissolved a civil partnership (9.2%).

There were 977 live births in Gwynedd in 2022, down from 1039 in 2021.

64.5% of the people of Gwynedd (three-year-old or above) say that they speak Welsh, which is 73,600. This is the highest in Wales in terms of number and percentage.

13% of people were living in a household in material deprivation in 2021/22, while the figure in Wales was also 13%.

Our Equality Objectives

As a Council we are required to revise our objectives every four years. We recognise that equality work is a long-term undertaking, therefore we are building on the work of the 2020-24 Plan. Our task was to consider our objectives for 2020-24 and the progress we have made on them in order to create objectives for 2024-28, which will be another step on the journey.

We have also conducted an exercise to gather people's opinions over a number of months to ensure that we capture the views of the people of Gwynedd. There is more on this in the Analysis of the Engagement¹ and Analysis of the Consultation documents.

Furthermore, we have used data to determine what needs to be done. The data has come mainly from the "Equality in North Wales: Data and Evidence Document"² by our Data and Information Service. This document gathers data from various sources. Further information came for Welsh Government Action Plans. We have also used the Council's internal information to identify what needs to be done and what is possible.

More information on why we have decided on the objectives can be seen on page 21.

We have five objectives for 2024-28. One of these objectives, namely Objective 1, relates to employment and includes actions on the pay gap, as the specific duty requires us to do.

The specific duty also requires us to have objectives on each protected characteristic. Our decision has been to produce thematic objectives, and every objective works towards equality for each of the protected characteristics. This reduces duplication and makes it easier to identify factors that come from intersectionality (these are the additional barriers faced by people with more than one characteristic).

¹ [Microsoft Word - Analysis of the Engagement.docx \(llyw.cymru\)](#)

² [Microsoft Word - 2023 Equality in North Wales Data and evidence report.docx \(llyw.cymru\)](#)

Objective 1 – Employment: Acting to improve equality in the workplace

	Actions	Outcome	Timetable
1.1	Establish a staff forum / forums to discuss equality issues, so that our employees can contribute to the subject within the Council.	Staff will have begun to contribute to developments Staff to continue contributing	March 2025 Continuous
1.2	Review how we communicate with staff so that information is accessible and understandable to everyone; we received feedback from an external body that our documents were too clumsy and official.	Information, including employment policies, which is easy for everyone to understand and reach	2024/26
1.3	Set the goal of working towards being a leading employer in this area, including paying attention to the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not to put requirements that are not necessary in our job descriptions when advertising jobs in order to give as many people as possible the opportunity to apply. • How and where we advertise jobs. • Our image as an employer in our communities - being proactive in trying to attract people from all parts of society to work for Gwynedd Council. 	Continue to be a member of the Disability Confident scheme, working to reach the highest level (Level 3) in the framework. Working to be recognised as a leading employer in this broad area, for all equality features.	March 2026 Continuous – over the duration of the plan

	There is a strong link between our plans at this stage and another of the Council's corporate priorities, namely our project on Workforce Planning.		
1.4	Continue to take steps to fully develop management and staff awareness of this area, including equality, inclusion, neurodiversity, sexual harassment, respect and dignity in the workplace.	Managers and staff to be aware of equality and inclusion issues, know where to access advice on different aspects and use that information in their teams as needed.	Continual – over the duration of the plan
1.5	Look at the way we explain and communicate the linguistic needs when advertising jobs. This is in order to improve the understanding of potential candidates and the public about the need for the Welsh Language skills and about the Council's statutory responsibilities to provide bilingual services.	Fewer complaints about the recruitment policy and discrimination and a better understanding among the public of the linguistic needs for jobs.	2024/27
1.6	Carry out a pay gap audit annually, considering what steps to take to try to close the gap. Getting to a position where we are able to carry out a pay gap audit based on disability and race as well.	Audit completed and informing discussions on action points	Annually

1.7	Conduct an equal pay audit every three years	Audit completed	2025/26
1.8	Continue to try to improve the data about protected characteristics that is shared with us by our staff, as a basis for taking decisions in this important area.	The number of staff sharing information with us has increased, which will strengthen the information we have about our workforce.	Annual improvement

What difference do we expect to make by the end of the period?

We will have established steps where staff can take part and offer ideas on how Cyngor Gwynedd as an employer can improve things for people with equality characteristics. We will also take proactive steps to develop our image as an employer for people with equality characteristics, aiming to be progressive in the field. We will also ensure that our managers and staff have access to information to support them when dealing with employment matters that are associated with this area.

Objective 2 – Information: Improving our data about people with equality characteristics

	Actions	Outcome	Timetable
2.1	Update our engagement procedure to avoid duplication, by creating a better way of working and sharing results. Also strengthen diversity within the Citizens Panel.	Cyngor Gwynedd Engagement Group to look at the procedure. Act as required. Improve the diversity of our Citizens Panel.	2024-25 Continuous 2024-25
2.2	Create an easier and more accessible system of storing our equality data. The aim is to make it easier to use when amending policies and creating plans.	Have an electronic system in place. Keep the information up-to-date	2024-26 Continuous
2.3	Improve and update the data we have on Gwynedd in the Equality in North Wales document, filling in any gaps if possible.	Update the data as necessary	Continuous
2.4	Identify any gaps in the information we collect about the users of care services and then work to fill them. This will ensure that we collect data that is as complete as possible	A suitable recording system put in place to make it easier to fill in equality data when the individual is happy to share it. Gather and fill in the equality data of those cases that are already on our recording system, where possible and with the user's consent.	September 2024 Continuous

What difference do we intend to make by the end of the period?

We intend to improve the data we have in order to use it when creating or amending a policy or way of working, and provide a better service to the

people of Gwynedd. We will also ensure that we obtain suitable input from people with protected characteristics without overwhelming them by continual questioning. It is important to have a clear overview and understanding of the main problems facing the people with a different protected characteristic.

Objective 3: Systems: Ensuring that the Council is an anti-discriminatory organisation, by improving our internal arrangements

	Actions	Outcome	Timetable
3.1	Continue with the training framework to provide our staff at all levels within the Council with the resources and confidence to respect diversity and deal with a range of needs appropriately. Ensure that the training framework is extended to include a variety of equality characteristics / broad topics.	Training on Disability, Respect and Dignity, and Anti-racism. Move to examine other equality characteristics subjects and decide upon and arrange the necessary topics.	2024-2025 Continuous
3.2	Raise awareness of staff at all levels in the Council of the new Equality Impact Assessment procedure (see page 27) and provide support, information and training to ensure the standard of the work.	Training in place Raise awareness and provide assistance	2024-2025 Continuous
3.3	Make our website more accessible by producing and implementing an action plan. This will include working towards eliminating the use of PDF documents.	An action plan in place Implementing	2024-25 Continuous
3.4	Continue to work to reduce Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence	Continue to act in accordance with our action plan for the White Ribbon scheme	Continuous

What difference are we making?

Our aim is to ensure that the Council's arrangements give consideration to all equality characteristics and that our staff understand and accept their responsibilities in the field. We will ensure better understanding of the rights and needs of people with various characteristics by creating a variety of training titles. In addition, that consideration of equality characteristics is given the place it deserves when producing and amending policies and ways of working through our Equality Impact Assessment procedure. We will ensure that people receive the information they need by making our website more user-friendly. Promoting the White Ribbon scheme will also help staff understand their responsibility in the field.

Objective 4: Services: Ensure equality within our day-to-day work

	Actions	Outcome	Timetable
4.1	Inspect how accessible the Council's services are, then produce and implement an action plan	Inspection and action plan Implement	2024-26 The period of the Plan
4.2	<p>The Museums and Arts Service will support the communities of Gwynedd by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing inclusive programmes for our diverse communities, whether they are an exhibition, an activity, events, promotion opportunities, projects and grants • Ensure that the narrative in our museums is suitable (anti-racist etc.), and that the stories of people with particular characteristics are heard 	<p>Plan work programmes with objectives being a part of them.</p> <p>Report on the number of opportunities and on the feedback from them</p> <p>Create a system to record the improvements</p> <p>Ensure that the designing of new exhibitions and updating others is done inclusively; receive training and mentoring; consultation work and research. (Some elements have a specified target date such as the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) scheme for story reinterpretation. A grant is needed to realise others).</p>	<p>Continuous</p> <p>Continuous</p> <p>March 2024</p> <p>Continuous and integrated into the work programme. Lloyd George Museum - December 2024 Storiell - 2028.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with communities of people with equality characteristics to remove barriers to using our museums and galleries 	<p>Feedback through engagement, customer satisfaction, responding to complaints, staff training. Recording, identifying and reducing barriers. A system to collect the feedback is needed.</p> <p>Specific engagement with the scheme for reinterpretation of the Lloyd George Museum.</p> <p>Action steps to arise from the feedback, and set a timetable. Further engagement will be required on the reinterpretation of Storiell history galleries .</p> <p>Further assessments to be arranged</p>	<p>Arrangements to gather feedback by March 2024</p> <p>Continuous and integrated into the work programme</p> <p>By December 2024</p> <p>Between 2024 and 2028</p>
4.3	Continue to work to ensure that public transport is more accessible	<p>Gather information about the needs of different groups</p> <p>Collaborate with other stakeholders such as operators, Transport for Wales and the Welsh Government.</p>	<p>Continuous</p> <p>Continuous</p>
4.4	<p>Services of the Housing and Property Department.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out the activities of the Gwynedd Council Housing Action Plan which aims to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the opportunities for all residents of the county to have access to suitable accommodation. Better understanding of 	Between 2024 – 2028

	<p>"Ensure that the people of Gwynedd have access to a suitable, quality home, which is affordable and which improves their quality of life".</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a One Stop Shop which will be a new system that can respond to the needs of residents when submitting applications relating to housing in one central place. 	<p>the obstacles that prevent the people of Gwynedd from finding and living in accommodation that meets their needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult with communities in order to establish the true demand for different types of homes and facilitate the process of commissioning new plans. • Better results for those who face socio-economic disadvantage by increasing the number of affordable houses available in Gwynedd through construction plans, house repairs and access to rented houses. • Ensure that Gwynedd houses are beneficial to the environment and offer energy efficiency benefits to residents. • Council officers will be able to assess the customer's needs, directing one inquiry to a number of different units depending on what support the Council can offer. • Facilitate the process of submitting applications for Social Housing and improve access to the service. 	<p>2024 and onward</p>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a SPOA (single point of contact) to simplify the Housing Assistance Grant process, directing individuals to the services and providers that meet their needs. 	
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What difference are we making?

We will look at how accessible our services are to everyone and work to reduce any barriers. Our Museums and Arts Service will also build on what is already in place to provide for communities to get to contribute their voices to the narrative in our museums, to have more opportunities, fewer barriers and enable them to participate more in their culture and experience enjoyment, learning and health and well-being improvements. People have told us how important housing and transport are for people with certain equality characteristics and for those who live with socio-economic disadvantage, and we also have action points in these areas in order to improve people's living standards.

Objective 5: Schools: Improve equality within education

	Actions	Outcome	Timetable
5.1	<p>Collect, analyse and act on data relating to cases of bullying and hate crime:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify training needs for school staff by analysing data/trends of bullying that are reported by schools. Collaborate with welfare officers, the youth service, the police and other agencies to respond to findings/trends of bullying by providing training and prevention work to staff in the schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gwynedd schools reporting electronically every term (three times a year) on cases related to bullying. The Education Department analysing the data on a termly basis, using findings to draw up a training plan/provision. 	<p>Establish in January 2024, to be operational every term</p>
5.2	<p>Identify the true financial and emotional cost of attending school for the children of Gwynedd and reduce costs and barriers to education, and implement a range of Mental Health and Well-being interventions to support learners, whatever their background and protected characteristics.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce and distribute questionnaires with Headteachers, Governors, Staff and pupils at schools to identify the true cost of attending school. Schools receiving a report on the findings of their school so they can revise policies and procedures for supporting families. The Education Department supporting schools to adapt school arrangements and procedures by creating a resource to support families in the community. 	<p>November 2023</p> <p>January 2024</p> <p>2024 onwards</p>

5.3	Identify, monitor and act to improve the attendance, punctuality and attainment of groups of pupils such as: children who are eligible for free school meals, looked after children, continual absences, additional learning needs and other various groups as highlighted by the data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance being promoted and monitored across Gwynedd schools on a weekly basis. • A target of 95% being implemented across Gwynedd schools. • Attendance data (including various groups) being analysed to identify and act on aspects to be developed. 	November 2023 and continuous Continuous Continuous
5.4	Establish effective arrangements to obtain children and young people's input through school councils and forums, ensuring that the pupil's voice is acted upon, irrespective of their protected characteristics and needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Gwynedd Youth Service established to obtain children and young people's input across Gwynedd schools, irrespective of their protected characteristics or their needs, to be considered at the authority's political and corporate level 	2024 onwards

What difference are we making?

Our aim is to ensure equality of education and opportunity for all pupils, staff, parents and carers who receive services from our schools, irrespective of their protected characteristics and their needs. By improving equality within education, we will develop a culture of inclusion and diversity where every child who is linked with Gwynedd schools feels proud of their identity and are able to participate fully in school life. Pupils' attainment will be monitored, and we will use the data to support the pupils, raise standards and ensure inclusive education. We will tackle discrimination by facilitating and supporting schools to positively promote equality, challenging bullying and stereotypes and create an environment that fosters respect towards all. In Gwynedd we believe that diversity is a strength that should be respected and celebrated by everyone within and outside the schools.

Why did we choose these Objectives?

In the following information we talk about two periods of finding opinions. The engagement³ took place between April and July, before we made any decision. The consultation (end of October to February) focused on finding the public's views on the draft objectives that were drawn up after the engagement. Our data has come from the "Equality in North Wales: Data and Evidence"⁴ document which has gathered information from several sources. A further analysis of the effect on people with equality characteristics can be seen in the Impact Assessment.

Objective 1: Employment

There will be two objectives in the 2020-24 Plan regarding employment, which are improving our workforce's diversity and reducing pay gaps. This time we have decided to combine these because work has already been carried out on them.

In the engagement we didn't ask people to express their views on the need to include the objective on the pay gap because it is a topic that we have to include. But from talking to people in the meetings it was evident that there was support for the objective. That was also the case with the objective on our workforce's diversity, with 62.1% in favour of including it in 2024-28.

In the consultation there was good support for this objective with 85% of respondents agreeing or partially agreeing with the objective. Some were concerned with the points related to improving the diversity of our workforce thinking that it will be an exercise in ticking boxes and that we will not choose the best person for the job. The opposite is true. Our intention is to attract more people to apply for any job, in order to get the best choice of candidates. There is no intention to set targets or appoint people based on their equality characteristics.

Our internal data is insufficient at present to highlight pay gaps, with the exception of the gender pay gap, and improving this data is part of the actions.

³ [Microsoft Word - Analysis of the Engagement.docx \(llyw.cymru\)](#)

⁴ [Microsoft Word - 2023 Equality in North Wales Data and evidence report.docx \(llyw.cymru\)](#)

Talking about Wales as a whole, we have not found data on every characteristic, but it shows that pay gaps do exist based on gender and disability. Data also shows that some cohorts of young people are less likely to be in employment e.g. disabled people and people from some ethnic minority groups, and this objective works towards removing barriers.

The Welsh Government's Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan and LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales identify the need to act on employment, but our decision was to act on every characteristic.

This Objective takes positive action on Socio-economic disadvantage by ensuring that lower paid groups, or groups who find it difficult to secure work, are encouraged to apply for and retain jobs.

This local objective feeds in to North Wales Public Sector Equality Network (NWPSSEN) equality objectives' "Objective 2: We will take steps to ensure that we are an equal opportunity employer and reduce pay gaps".

Objective 2: Information

61.3% of people felt that engagement was an important field after the engagement.

In the consultation there was support for this Objective, with 76% agreeing or partially agreeing. Some had concerns about privacy and confidentiality. Most of the data we collect comes from other sources and is therefore statistical in nature and most of our consultations are anonymous. We do not require anyone to disclose details of their protected characteristics and when we receive that information it is kept confidential with appropriate security measures and access is strictly limited.

When gathering data, it was clear that there was a lack of local information about many protected characteristics. It is likely that this is partly due to the low numbers. It is also clear that many consultations are happening and that we need to improve our ways of operating. We are keen to make sure that we share any message we receive about equality matters so that we act on barriers and reduce duplication.

The Welsh Government's Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan and LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales also identify the need to act in this field, and the government

has established arrangements to do so. The plans require us as public organisations to ensure that we gather data, particularly in the areas of Education, Social Care and Employment. Our other objectives also contain matters pertaining to these action plans.

This Objective also corresponds with NWPSSEN's Objective 6, which is to increase access to consultation and improve diversity within decisions.

Objective 3

67.3% of people felt there was a need to keep training in the plan after the consultation. 57.6% of people felt that assessing impact was important after the consultation.

This objective and objective 4 were one objective in the consultation. There was strong support for them with 84% agreeing or partially agreeing. Some were concerned that providing training would be too costly financially and in staff time. We feel that training is essential so that members of staff have a full understanding of the needs of different groups.

We agree that they are matters that require attention, but because they were considered during the time of the current Plan, we have decided to include them as action points within this objective this time.

Improving the website's accessibility stems partly from the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan but we have decided to expand this to include other characteristics as well, as this will also be important to other cohorts, and will provide better access to information.

In improving our internal arrangements, we are improving things for people with equality characteristics, therefore this corresponds with NWPSSEN's Objective 3. – We will act to improve the Living Standards of people who are disadvantaged because of their protected characteristics.

Objective 4

There were strong calls for us to look at accessibility issues, particularly for disabled people, in the responses to the engagement, further supported in the consultation. Objective 3 and this objective were one objective in the consultation - we have now decided to split them. As stated in Objective 3

there was strong support for this objective with 84% agreeing or partially agreeing.

These actions look at accessibility in the broadest sense possible, including matters such as transport and access to information, which are matters that were raised in the exercises for gathering opinions. It will also cover other services that were mentioned, such as refuse collection and toilets.

The action point on museums comes from information in the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan but we have decided to expand it to include other characteristics as well. Some people were concerned about this action point, in case we wanted to try to change history and erase what had happened. But our intention here is to give a fuller picture of history, including stories of people who have not already been heard.

As a result of the consultation we have also added two action points for Transport and for Housing. The first is important because it is at the core of people's living standards, especially those living with socio-economic disadvantage, and for many other groups who do not have access to a car. The second is also intended to act on socio-economic disadvantage, which statistics show that people with certain protected characteristics experience.

This Objective responds to action points in a number of NWPSSEN objectives, namely Objective 3 - We will act to improve the Living Standards of people who are disadvantaged because of their protected characteristics, Objective 3 - We will act to improve the Living Standards of people who are disadvantaged because of their protected characteristics and Objective 4 - We will improve Health, Wellbeing and Social Care outcomes

Objective 5: Schools

This objective is a new one this time. There is a duty on every school to update their Strategic Equality Plan every 4 years, in the same way as the Council. We believe that it would be beneficial to have a correlation between the Council's Equality Plan and those of the individual schools. The Authority has therefore proposed 4 Objectives for the schools, which appear here as action points. Each school will then decide whether the objectives are suitable for them and will explore what they will need to do to respond to the need locally. They are welcome to add other local Objectives too.

The available data, although slightly dated by now, shows that problems of bullying remain, and also that some cohorts are under-achieving within the education system. The more recent data shows that children and young people are experiencing problems with well-being and mental health conditions in light of Covid-19.

Some of these action points also come from information in the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan. However, we have decided to look at the field in its entirety rather than on one particular characteristic.

There was a strong response to this Objective in the consultation, with 86% agreeing or partially agreeing. Many comments had been made in the questionnaire and at the meeting, especially regarding bullying. Changes have been made as a result of those comments and others will be passed on to the schools in order to act locally. This Objective corresponds with NWPSSEN's Objective 1, which is to Improve Outcomes in Educational Attainment and Well-being in Schools.

Do the Objectives satisfy the general duty?

We believe that the objectives give due attention to the three aims of the general duty.

Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited under the Act.

Objective 1 ensures that we ask staff members regarding discrimination, harassment and victimisation and operate in accordance with any problems that will be highlighted. Objective 2 gathers information that will help us to remove the cause of any discrimination. Objectives 3 and 4 ensure that we are fair to people who use our services and 5 does that specifically within schools.

Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

Advancing equal opportunities involves:

- Removing or reducing the disadvantage that people with protected characteristics face.
- Taking steps to meet the specific needs of people with protected characteristics.

- Encouraging people with protected characteristics to participate fully in every activity, especially where they are not adequately represented.

The purpose of Objective 1 is to remove disadvantage and to attract applicants with protected characteristics for them to have an equal opportunity to apply for jobs, and then to thrive within our workforce. The forums will also encourage people to participate in the development of the organisation. Only by gathering sufficient information will we know what we need to work on first, and of course. It will place a focus on the key matters that affect the different characteristics and allow us to identify further steps that could most effectively address any disadvantage. Objectives 3, 4 and 5 ensure that we treat service users in accordance with their needs to give everyone the opportunity to experience the same results and encourage them to participate.

- **Foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.**

Fostering good relations involves taking steps to reduce prejudice and to increase the understanding between different groups of people.

All our objectives should do this, by ensuring fairness. In particular, ensuring better representation of the community within our workforce would make it easier for people to relate with the Council (Objective 1). Objectives 3, 4 and 5 will ensure that people get a service that suits them, and is suitable for them to use.

See also the Impact Assessment on Equality, the Welsh Language and the Socio-economic Duty.

How will we monitor the progress of the objectives?

Our intention following publishing the Plan is to create a comprehensive Action Plan to identify the exact work we need to do to achieve the Objectives. This Action Plan will be flexible, and we will adapt it when moving forward in order to respond to any matters arising. So will the individual impact assessments for each of the Objectives.

The internal monitoring procedure will be to report as one of the Council Plan's projects to the Member responsible for equality as part of the Performance Reporting procedure. We will also create an Annual Report that will be referred to the attention of the Council Cabinet and will be published publicly. We will also amend the Impact Assessment as required. As we have already mentioned, these objectives are a step along that road and it is very likely that the themes here will continue to the next period, as it is long-term work.

Additional matters

The specific duty's guidelines require us to specifically mention other matters within the Equality Plan. There are also further considerations under other legislation.

Do we have procedures to record and collect information regarding equality?

Although collecting information, especially from engagement, has been a part of the 2020-24 Plan, we have decided to include it as an objective in the current one also, as there is further work to be done. We want to ensure that enough information is easily available to officers when undertaking impact assessments, to ensure that due attention is given to the three aims of the general duty (see above). We also want to ensure that good use is made of the information collected.

We already gather information on pay differences regarding protected characteristics and publish it annually. We also undertake an audit on gender-based pay gaps every three years.

As part of the North Wales Public Sector Equality Network we have commissioned the document "Equality in North Wales: Data and Evidence Document" Link from our Data and Information Service, which brings together a wide range of information.

How do we assess impact and monitor the real and continuous impact of our policies and ways of working?

There was a specific Objective on assessing impact in the 2020-24 Plan. During this period, NWPSSEN, namely North Wales equality officers' group, have created a comprehensive form which contains the impact on equality matters (protected characteristics and aims of the general duty), the Welsh Language and the Socio-economic Duty. We have adopted that form, with local changes, as our impact assessment template. Considerable work was done to put it in an electronic format and at the end of the period the new form was being piloted. We will roll it out across the Council at the beginning of this Plan period by promoting it in various ways, including training.

An important part of this form is the action plan for monitoring which is at the end of the form. It is possible to assume an impact and by asking people with life experience, we can do that quite accurately at times, but only when the policy or the way of working is in place can we see every impact. It is therefore fundamental to check that the impact was as we had assumed.

How will we promote knowledge and understanding of the general and specific duties among the workforce?

Training is an action point within two of the objectives, namely Objective 1 and Objective 3. This will of course include an understanding of the duties.

What is the impact on the Welsh language?

We are required, under Part 4 of The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, to consider the impact of the Objectives on people's opportunities to use the Welsh language, and to ensure that Welsh is not treated less favourably than English. The work noted in Objective 1 to look at the requirements within posts and to create a staff forum include language elements, which means better understanding within the Council and the wider community on language requirements when recruiting and the Council's statutory responsibilities under the Standards. Also, the work to improve our website in Objective 3. For more information see the Impact Assessment.

Do these Objectives comply with the duties of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015?

The well-being aim in question here is "A More Equal Wales" as this is the purpose of the work. It will also contribute towards a prosperous Wales, as it will improve the situation of people with equality characteristics; and Wales of cohesive communities, where people with different protected characteristics receive better fairness. The five ways of working are also met here. For more information see the Impact Assessment.

Assessing the Impact on Protected Characteristics, the Welsh Language and Socio-Economic Disadvantage

Gwynedd Council's Strategic Equality Plan 2024-28

The Council is required (under the Equality Act 2010) to consider the impact that any changes in any policy or procedures (or the creation of a new policy or procedure) will have on people with protected equality characteristics. The Council also has additional general duties to ensure fairness and to foster good relationships. Therefore, a timely assessment should be made before any decision is taken on any relevant change (i.e., that affects people with protected equality characteristics).

The Council is also required, under the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (Section 44 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011), to consider the impact that any change in policy or procedure (or the creation of a new policy or procedure), will have on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and to ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than English. This document therefore ensures that these decisions safeguard and promote the use made of the Welsh language. This document therefore ensures that these decisions safeguard and promote the use made of the Welsh language.

From 1 April 2021, the Council has a duty to give due attention to addressing socio-economic disadvantages in strategic decisions.

Author: Delyth Williams. Equality Advisor

Version: 2

STEP 1

1. What is being assessed?

- Setting objectives.
- New project proposals affecting staff, communities or accessibility to the built environment, e.g. new construction work or adaptations to existing buildings, moving to on-line services, self-service, changing location, etc.

2. What are the overall aims, objectives and intended outcomes of the policy or practice?

The aim of the Strategic Equality Plan is to act as a framework for the main work we will be undertaking in the equality field during the period in question (2024-28) to ensure fairness for everyone. The Council should pay attention to equality matters in everything they do, but the objectives in the Plan will be our strategic priorities for the period. They should improve our services for people with the nine protected characteristics.

3. Who are the main consultative groups (stakeholders)?

The people of Gwynedd - every person has at least 5 protected (equality) characteristics and therefore it's important that everyone is able to participate.

However, we have targeted groups and representatives of people with the different characteristics to make sure that we get a broad range of replies. We have engaged with Cyngor Gwynedd's Equality Core Group, which is a group of organisation representatives that represent people with protected characteristics.

In addition, there are some groups that don't always get the chance to engage, because organisations do not prepare for them properly and they are therefore seldom heard. We have therefore ensured that we have a range of ways to engage and have discussed with various groups and individuals as part of the work (see question 4).

STEP 2

4. Have you complied with the duty to engage as described above and are you sufficiently informed to proceed?

Yes

Note any consultation or engagement you have done:

Consultation / Engagement	Date	Responsibility	Method
Engagement April to August			
The Centre for Sign Sight Sound (CoS) were asked their opinion regarding the best way to engage, and they said they would help people as part of their usual work for the Council	May 2023	Equality Advisor	The organisation to act
Ask the self-advocacy group to give their opinion on the easyread document	May June 2023	Equality Advisor	Receive opinions
Ask the refugee officers about the best way to engage	March 2023	Equality Advisor	Receive opinions
Te am Tri meeting (Advocacy group)	12/05/23	Equality Advisor	Used slides and a chat
Visit to the Galwch Acw shop	18/05/23	Equality officers	Give support to the service recipient to fill out the easy read questionnaire
Visit the LGBTQ+ GISDA group, Caernarfon	03/07/23	Equality officers	Use visual resources and a discussion

Arfon Young Carer group	11/07/23	Equality officers	Use visual resources, stickers and a chat
Arfon Access Group	12/07/23	Equality Advisor	Discussion on the questionnaire
Arfon Young Carers Group (11-18 years old)	18/07/23	Equality officers	Use visual resources, stickers and a chat
Visit the Unique Transgender Network	03/08/23	Equality officers	Discussion to engage
Attend Pride North Wales, Caernarfon	24/06/23	Equality officers	Distribute QR codes, ask people to fill out a short form of the questionnaire
Visit to the Boccia event in Porthmadog	04/09/23	Equality officers	Give attendees with various impairments, and their carers, an opportunity to fill out a short questionnaire and discuss the objectives
Gwynedd Council Core Equality Group	18/04/23 & 05/07/23	Equality officers	Two meeting to discuss the present objectives and what else should be included
Questionnaire in electronic and paper form	Ebrill - Awst 2023	Equality officers, Engagement Officer	Available in easy read versions, in Ukrainian and Dari. Promoted on social media platforms, papers, Newyddion Gwynedd, cards with QR

			codes, on the website and through various organisations including the Equality Core Group
Consultation, October to February			
Contacted a number of organizations before and during this period but failed to make arrangements to go to many		Equality Officers	
Questionnaire in electronic and paper form (including easy to read)	End of February to end of January	Equality officers and Engagement Officer	Promoted through social media sites, "pop-up" on the Council's website, emails to organisations, on the radio
. Paper copies of the questionnaire are sent to the mosque, including easy-to-read ones for people whose first language is neither Welsh nor English. Also to Siop Galwch Acw.	December	Equality Trainee	
Equality Core Group	14 December	Equality Officers	Discuss the draft objectives in a hybrid meeting
Age Cymru Gwynedd and Anglesey, Centre in Bontnewydd	9 January	Equality Adviser	Discussion using a simplified questionnaire
Meeting with Te am 3 (self-advocacy)	12 January	Equality Trainee	Zoom Meeting discussing the draft objectives using easy to read objectives.

Post easy-to-read questionnaires to members of Team 3 on their request	Week 15 January	Equality Trainee	
Visit to Bryn Rhodyn Care Home	17 January	Equality officers	Chat with some of the residents and ask for the draft objectives
Arfon Access Group	17 January	Equality officers	Discussion about the draft objectives
Scrutiny Committee	25 January	The Elected Member, Human Resources Advisory Services Managers and the Equality Adviser	Discussion about the draft objectives
Unique Transgender Network	2 February	Equality officers	Discussion about the draft objectives using the simple questionnaire
Apprentices of Gwynedd Council	Week 5 February	Equality Trainee	Chat with the apprentices and fill in the simple questionnaire

5. Data, Engagement and Assessing the Impact - What information do you have regarding the impact on all of the characteristics, the Welsh language, socio-economic disadvantage and other matters

Equality characteristic	Evidence	Impact
General	ENGAGEMENT:	As we have thematic objectives some people were keen to get more information about the impact on specific characteristics. Our intention

	<p>You can find more information on the engagement in the Analysis of the Engagement. Although we wanted people to give us all kinds of information, we are also aware of how difficult it is to keep to fact a blank sheet. So we started by asking people about our objectives for 2020-24. There were more people in favour than against each of the objectives and a number were not sure. There was some variation by characteristic, which is noted below.</p> <p>We then asked about what objectives they wanted us to consider. A variety of ideas for additional matters were put forward.</p> <p>Every one of the organisations that represent people with equality characteristics on our data base were e-mailed to advertise and promote the questionnaire and to offer a visit.</p> <p>DATA:</p> <p>The North Wales Public Sector Service Boards have funded the data document, commissioned by North Wales Public Sector Equality Network. Equality in North Wales 2023: Data and Evidence Report follows a document commissioned in 2020 that was based on <i>Is Wales Fairer? 2018</i> by the Equality and Human Rights Commission. The 2023 document came out too late for us to use. This north Wales document collects the latest information from various sources and is therefore very useful for creating the Amended objectives.</p> <p>CONSULTATION:</p>	<p>is to continuously adapt this assessment over the coming months while developing a comprehensive action plan and making specific assessments on the individual objectives as well. This will allow us to identify a specific effect on the different features.</p> <p>See the analysis on the consultation for more information on comments. The issues raised in response to the questionnaire and at the meetings are:</p> <p>Objective 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening to staff when they complain about discrimination • Do not put unnecessary points in job details • It is necessary to be careful that training does not have a strong agenda • Need to protect minority groups • People were for and against having forums • Improve policies • Equality messages should come down from senior managers • Waste of time and resources <p>Objective 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns about data collection due to confidentiality and misuse
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	<p>A consultation was held on the draft objectives between the end of October 2023 and February 2024. Full details can be found in the Analysis of the Consultation document. There was strong support for the draft objectives. Ideas were given about issues that needed to be considered for inclusion as well.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not everyone wants to share their data• Data can be misleading• Data at the core of creating better services and policies• Need to use alternative methods to share data with the public• Need to improve the diversity of the Citizen’s Panel• Waste of time and resources <p>Objective 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feel that the Council discriminates on the basis of political views• The need for senior officers to undertake training.• The importance of training• No need for training because employees should already know everything.• Waste of money and resources• Need to make strong and consistent impact assessments to a good standard <p>Objective 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some people support the work in the museums and want it to go further• Some people are concerned that changing the narrative is trying to change history.• Waste of money and resources
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		<p>Objective 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to include all forms of bullying, not just bullying because of equality characteristics • Want to include hate crime as well as bullying <p>General</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern that the Council will not carry out the work • A number of ideas about other subjects - transport, housing, toilets, bins • Need to number action points • Need to look at the wording of the objectives • The need to keep the objectives realistic to be able to act • Need to remember the effect of intersectionality
<p>Race</p>	<p>ENGAGEMENT:</p> <p>Method:</p> <p>Some ethnic minority groups are represented on the Equality Core Group: Indians and Friends Organisation, Africa North Wales Organisation. Refugee groups. Others had been invited but hadn't accepted.</p>	<p>The data clearly shows that there are obstacles facing people from ethnic minority groups, and that varies according to the group in question.</p> <p>Some people noted the need to consider language for people who do not speak Welsh or English as a first language.</p> <p>A number of people have mentioned discrimination against English speaking people.</p>

	<p>An easy read questionnaire was created (useful for people that don't speak Welsh or English as a first language), as well as Dari and Ukrainian copies for the refugee groups. A message on providing for a different language or different format as needed was placed on the questionnaires and the advertisement messages.</p> <p>The representative from Africa North Wales Organisation promised to put information on their Facebook page.</p> <p>Outcome: 43.2% of the responders noted they were Welsh, 23.5% were British and 15.6% were English. 82.6% of those that completed the questionnaire were White, a little below the county percentage (see below). Fewer people from an Asian Ethnicity completed it also, with more people from Black backgrounds and any other ethnicities than the percentages in Gwynedd. Caution had to be taken of course as the numbers were quite low.</p> <p>There are no statistical differences identified in terms of race when filling out the questionnaire, but some observations have been made regarding race. Some of those were regarding the need to consider the Anti-Racist Wales Equality Scheme. But a number of them were regarding the feeling that the Council discriminates against non-Welsh speaking people, regardless of their ethnic origin.</p> <p>DATA:</p> <p>Equality in North Wales 2023: Data and Evidence Document The 2021 Census shows that fewer people in Gwynedd identify as</p>	<p>Objective 1</p> <p>It will have a positive effect on people from different ethnic backgrounds as it will include ways of improving the diversity of our workplace and attract more people from ethnic minorities to apply for posts. It is also proposed to look at, and explain, the expected skills when applying for posts, including the language expectations.</p> <p>Some people had concerns about the action point for improving the diversity of our workforce, saying that people should not be selected because of their ethnicity etc. As we have indicated, there is no intention to do that, but rather to attract a variety of candidates in order to get the best person for the job.</p> <p>Two comments were received claiming that the expectation for people to speak Welsh is preventing people from ethnic minorities from getting a job. Speaking Welsh is a skill, like any other. We believe that any person can learn the skill.</p> <p>Objective 2</p>
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	<p>White (96.2%) than the rest of the counties in the north, except for Wrexham (96%). 66.6% noted that they were born in Wales, fewer than Wrexham and similar to Anglesey. 59% noted that they were Welsh, higher than the rest of the counties.</p> <p>The data shows that ethnic background has an impact on people's lives statistically from the beginning - e.g. children from Chinese backgrounds are more likely to meet the expected outcome in the foundation phase than their peers, whilst children from "any other ethnic background" (i.e. not identified as from a White, Black, Chinese, Asian or Mixed background) were less likely to do so (statistics on Wales). In Gwynedd the employment rate of White people was 74% (an average statistic for North Wales) whilst the employment of people from an ethnic minority was 53% (which is the lowest county but one). However, the number of White people who have a degree or higher qualification was lower.</p> <p>The cohort of Black people in Gwynedd from a home without a car or van was much higher than any other ethnic group, and much higher than any other county in North Wales. The White ethnic group is the least likely to be living in this sort of household. Not having a car or van can be a sign of a socio-economic disadvantage.</p> <p>In Gwynedd the people from a Black background are least likely to live in over-crowded houses (1%) whilst people from other minority groups (i.e. that don't identify as Black, White, Asian or Mixed) are most likely to live in over-crowded houses (12%).</p> <p>Well over half the hate crimes recorded by North Wales Police are related to Race (including nationality) - which was 58% in 2021/22.</p>	<p>It is clear there is a lack of data on race, especially locally. Engaging with race groups is important.</p> <p>Objective 3</p> <p>It is expected it will be positive as it would ensure anti-racism training, which would ensure that the needs of people from different ethnic backgrounds are considered. Assessment will also consider race.</p> <p>Improving the accessibility of our website will improve accessibility for people who do not speak Welsh or English as a first language.</p> <p>Objective 4</p> <p>Looking at the accessibility of services will include access to information, including for people who do not speak Welsh or English as their first language.</p> <p>We will look at the narrative of our museums in terms of race.</p> <p>Objective 5</p> <p>We believe it will be positive as some groups, especially Black male learners and children from</p>
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	<p>The number of Gypsies and Irish Travellers was a little higher in Gwynedd (0.095% of the population) than North Wales (0.083%). The number of Roma people was a little lower (0.038% compared to 0.039%). 14 caravans were on an official site and 8 on an unofficial site on 21 July 2022 (out of 271 in the whole of North Wales)</p> <p>The Equality and Human Rights Commission has said that it is probable that Covid-19 has had an impact on children who weren't performing as well before the pandemic e.g. Black learners, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners. This also had a greater impact in terms of illness and death amongst people from ethnic minorities.</p> <p>Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan: This plan provides guidance on the matters that need addressing in this field. When considering local factors, we identify these specific fields: education, work, data collection, and ensuring that we act in an anti-racist way.</p> <p>CONSULTATION:</p> <p>Just over 75% of respondents to the questionnaire said they were white, 3.4% of mixed origin, 1.3% Asian and less than 1% each Gypsy/Irish travellers and black/African/Caribbean. 2% had indicated other but a fairly high percentage did not, or chose not to, respond, almost 17%. Paper questionnaires, including easy-to-read ones, were sent to the Mosque in order to reach the people from different racial backgrounds who go there.</p>	<p>traveller and gypsy backgrounds, have a lower attainment level in the classroom compared to other groups. It will also get to grips with matters such as bullying and improve child welfare.</p>
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	<p>14 people (out of the 39 who said that more attention needs to be paid to one or more characteristics) felt that race did not get enough attention within the objectives, which was 36%.</p>	
<p>Disability</p>	<p>ENGAGEMENT:</p> <p>Method: Disability groups are represented on the Equality Core Group: Self-advocacy Group NWAAA (people with learning disabilities), Access Groups (people with a physical impairment), CoS Group (Deaf people). Others have been invited but did not join.</p> <p>CoS promised to help by offering support to the members they meet as part of their everyday work to understand and fill out the questionnaire. The equality officers visited: Arfon Access Group (on-line) to discuss the questionnaire and encourage members to fill it out; Te am Tri Group (on-line) which is a self-advocacy group for people with learning disabilities, by using slides to explain the situation and gather opinions; a Boccia event where different groups with different impairments were meeting by using a short version of the questionnaire; two Young Carers Groups (7-11 years old and 11-18 years old) where slides and a chat were used.</p> <p>Outcome: The percentage of people who identify as a disabled person and have answered the questionnaire (19.6%) was very similar to the percentage in Gwynedd (19.2%). We also engaged with specific groups, see above.</p>	<p>The data clearly shows that there are barriers that a disabled person faces in several fields, including access to services, buildings, jobs and information.</p> <p>Some said they doubted there was a full understanding of the needs of disabled people, pointing to the range of types of disability. It will be necessary to ensure that all types of disability receive appropriate attention when proceeding to make a comprehensive action plan and impact assessments for the individual Objectives. Others drew attention to neurodiversity, which is something we talk about in the Objectives. The importance of mental health was noted.</p> <p>Objective 1</p> <p>It is expected it will be positive for disabled people as it aims to work towards level 3 in 'Disability Confident'. It is anticipated that the other work to promote the diversity of our workforce will also be positive for disabled people. The need to ensure disability training was note.</p>

	<p>There was a higher percentage of disabled people, compared to people who had noted that they were not disabled, who felt that engagement (Objective 2) was important to be included this time. The percentage of disabled people who had said that they supported diversity in the workforce (Objective 5) was also higher.</p> <p>When responding to the questionnaire, and when engaging with groups, a number of people said that training is particularly important in the field of disability. A number of topics were identified e.g. awareness of autism, Braille, BSL and mental health (talk about collaborating with ICAN). Adjustments within employment were also a priority with some mentioning Stage 3 Disability Confident, support around interviews and mentoring. There was also special mention of understanding, access needs (to services, information, buildings and public spaces including suitable parking), terminology, transport and suitable toilets. See also the comments in Age.</p> <p>DATA:</p> <p>Equality in North Wales 2023: Data and Evidence Document Data shows that fewer people in Gwynedd noted that they were disabled in the 2021 Census than any other county in North Wales expect for one. Having said that, the percentage was 19%, nearly 1 in every 5 people. Nearly 10% more women were disabled than men. The highest percentage of disabled people were aged 45-69 in Gwynedd, with a slightly fewer in the 70+ age group.</p>	<p>Objective 2</p> <p>It will also be positive as we will be collecting more data on every field and cross-sectioning will be important. It will also address the need to engage with disabled people and groups in suitable ways.</p> <p>Objective 3</p> <p>As it considers the needs and rights of disabled people when changing policies and ways of working, it will be positive. We have started the work and a range of training on disability matters will be offered during the 4 years.</p> <p>Objective 4</p> <p>It is expected to be positive as there will be consideration of the provision of museums and the accessibility of the website.</p> <p>A number of people have mentioned physical accessibility, others have mentioned more general accessibility including BSL. One person has mentioned a conflict of interest between disabled people and historic buildings.</p> <p>Objective 5</p>
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	<p>The data shows that this characteristic affects many parts of life. In 2021-22, 74% of people who weren't disabled in Gwynedd were employed (which is exactly the same as the average in North Wales) but that only 43% of disabled people were working (5% less than the cohort in North Wales). In Wales, the pay gap difference between disabled people and people that aren't disabled is 11.6% (more local data is not available). 3% of apprentices note a disability that affects their learning.</p> <p>In Gwynedd, according to the census, over 23% of households with a head of the family with a disability do not have access to a car or van. This compares to 10% of families with a head of the family that wasn't disabled. The percentage living in homes without a car or van in North Wales according to health status was at its highest for those in bad health or in very bad health (29.8%), and lowest amongst those in very good or in good health (9.5%). This is consistent with the pattern in Gwynedd also. Although this compares favourably to the gap in North Wales, it is concerning in such a rural county.</p> <p>During 2021/22 100% of the DFG approved in Gwynedd were completed, but the numbers were very low here.</p> <p>The number of people that identify themselves as carers was lower in Gwynedd than other counties in the north. It is likely that the numbers are lower in general as every person that could identify as a carer does not do so. People between 50 and 64 years of age are more likely to be carers than any other age group and women more typically than men (13.1% compared with 10%). People who are carers are more likely to report that their health is fair or poor than they are to report it as being</p>	<p>It will deal with bullying and achievement which will have a positive effect. The intention of the action point on well-being is to improve the mental health of the learners.</p> <p>The Objectives are also expected to be positive for carers for similar reasons.</p>
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good. This is very different to most of the population, where most say that they're in very good or in good health.

Disabled people are one of the groups that are most likely to experience digital exclusion.

248 cases of hate crime based on disability were recorded in 2021/22, an increase of 359% since 2016/17.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission notes that disabled people are more likely to die from Covid-19, and to experience financial difficulties. Also, the risk that remote learning has increased the inequality for pupils that didn't perform as well at school before Covid, including pupils who needed educational support.

Locked Out: liberating disabled people's lives and rights in Wales beyond COVID-19:

This report notes the data and life experiences of disabled people during the Covid-19 crisis. Most of what's included is aimed at Welsh Government, but the data is also useful for local authorities. The report notes that disabled people said that the social model of disability had lost ground and the medical model was being used more and more. More than half the people who died of Covid-19 during the period in question were disabled and it is said that social factors were a major reason for this, e.g. substandard health care for disabled people (especially people with learning disabilities), lack of PPE and unsuitable housing. It also notes that disabled people had found it difficult to get suitable services during the crisis and transport was also problematic.

	<p>CONSULTATION:</p> <p>Around 18% of respondents defined themselves as disabled, 66.4% define themselves as not disabled with over 15% not answering or choosing not to answer.</p> <p>16 people (out of the 39 who said that more attention needs to be paid to one or more characteristics) felt that disability did not receive enough attention within the objectives, which was 41%.</p>	
<p>Sex</p>	<p>ENGAGEMENT:</p> <p>Method: Although we have invited groups, and some have attended in the past, no organisations currently represent men or women on the Equality Core Group. No specific contact had been made with organisations representing this characteristic during the consultation.</p> <p>Outcome: The number of males and females that completed the questionnaire was fairly equal. A high percentage of women, more than any other gender category (men, prefer not to say and no answer), had said that Engagement (Objective 2), Impact assessment (Objective 3), and Workforce Diversity (Objective 5) was important to be included this time.</p> <p>DATA:</p>	<p>The data clearly shows that barriers exist relating to gender.</p> <p>Objective 1</p> <p>A positive effect is expected, especially for women because of the action points on the pay gap, but other action points also.</p> <p>Some people had concerns about the point of action to improve the diversity of our workforce, saying that people should not be selected because of their gender etc. As we have indicated, there is no intention to do that, but rather to attract a variety of candidates in order to get the best person for the job.</p>

	<p>Equality in North Wales 2023: Data and Evidence Document 51.09% of Gwynedd's population are female.</p> <p>In Wales, the percentage of girls that reach the expected outcome in the foundation phase was higher than boys in every year between 2017 and 2019. The number that reached Level 2 in Year 11 in 2018/19 in Gwynedd was higher amongst girls than boys, although the difference was low compared to North Wales on a whole. More girls report being bullied (37% to 33%).</p> <p>More people in Gwynedd aged 25-65 have a degree compared to other counties in the North, which is 45.8% of women and 36.2% of men. More women received job-related training in Gwynedd in 2021-22 (23.1% to 15.4% - the county's figures not the Local Authority's figures). 72% of the male population (aged 16-64) in Gwynedd are employed, and 75% of females (smaller difference than the north as a whole). More females than males work as apprentices also. The gender pay gap in 2022, namely 8.6%, was lower than any other county in the north except for Anglesey (figures for the county not for the Local Authority workforce, and based on home location, not work location). A higher percentage of women (28.2% to 25.9% of men) in Gwynedd are in high paying jobs. But on the other hand, 44.8% of women are in low paying jobs compared to 21.9% of men.</p> <p>In Gwynedd, nearly 70% of families at threat of becoming homeless were being led by a woman - much higher than any other county in the north. Having said this, 70% of families that were homeless and needed support were being led by males (including single males) - again the biggest gap in the north.</p>	<p>It will also be helpful to carers, who are statistically more likely to be female.</p> <p>Objective 2</p> <p>It should also be positive for men and women as it is always good to have full data. It will also be positive for those who identify themselves differently as data is very difficult to obtain currently.</p> <p>Objective 3</p> <p>The last point of action is clearly about making a difference for women because of the work on the white ribbon. Equality assessments and training will be important to all, especially when considering intersectionality.</p> <p>Objective 4</p> <p>Improving services will be positive for everyone. The individual assessments will provide more information on how the different action points will have an impact.</p> <p>It is also positive that Objective 3 on anti-discrimination considers everyone.</p>
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	<p>Statistics show that women are more likely to be carers than men. Also more women than men note that they are disabled. (See Disability above). Women on average live for about 3 years more years than men in Gwynedd.</p> <p>In the year that ended in March 2020, crime data recorded by the Police showed that 84.5% of sexual offence victims were females, with 90% of sexual violence victims recorded as females and 81.2% of other sexual violence victims also females. There was no analysis of domestic abuse offences based on characteristics on a local level, but in Wales and England, 74.1% of victims recorded were females and 25.9% of victims recorded were males in the year up to March 2022. Women were one of the groups that felt less safe in their community (especially after dark).</p> <p>The Equality and Human Rights Commission notes that there is more pressure and reliance on unpaid carers, during the Covid-19 crisis, with women more likely to be unpaid carers, due to social care pressures. Also that the crisis has caused more domestic violence (which affected women more). In addition, the risk that remote learning can increase inequality for pupils that didn't perform well at school before Covid, including boys.</p> <p>CONSULTATION</p> <p>Slightly more women than men answered the questionnaire.</p> <p>6 people (out of the 39 who said that more attention needs to be paid to one or more characteristics) felt that gender did not get enough attention within the objectives, which is around 15%.</p>	<p>A couple of people said it was necessary to consider single-sex changing areas and toilets.</p> <p>Objective 5</p> <p>It is expected that it will be especially positive for cohorts of boys, who have a lower attainment level than girls generally, and the cohorts that are affected by intersectionality (e.g. young black men).</p>
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<p>Age</p>	<p>ENGAGEMENT:</p> <p>Method: Some age groups are represented on the Equality Core Group: Older People's Council, Age Cymru Gwynedd and Anglesey, LGBTQ+ GISDA Group, Yr Urdd.</p> <p>The equality officers visited two groups of young carers, 1 group were aged 7-11 and the others were 7-18 years old. Slides and alternative methods were used to promote a discussion. There was also a meeting with GISDA's LGBTQ+ Group where alternative methods were used to engage. They also visited a Boccia event where groups with different impairments, including Dementia, met. A short version of the questionnaire was used.</p> <p>Outcome: A small number of young children under 25 completed the questionnaire but as we had visited the organisations above, an opportunity was provided for more young people to share their opinion.</p> <p>A higher percentage of respondents aged between 25 - 34 have noted 'unsure' and a smaller percentage of them have noted 'yes' compared to other age groups regarding continuing with the objectives on training (Objective 1).</p> <p>A higher percentage of the respondents in the 25-34 and 35-44 age groups noted that we need to continue to include impact assessments (Objective 3).</p>	<p>The data clearly shows that age-related barriers exist.</p> <p>Objective 1</p> <p>It is expected to be positive for different age groups. It is obviously going to help working age people, especially those with other specific characteristics (intersectionality). It will also be helpful for older people and younger people seeking work.</p> <p>Objective 2</p> <p>It is anticipated that Objective 2 will be positive for every age. It is always useful to have full data and (and the work regarding Adults is going to help things for Older people especially. to have anti-discriminative methods.</p> <p>Objective 3</p> <p>This work will be particularly useful in cases of intersectionality. The work on the website should be particularly useful to ensure accessibility for older people, but bearing in mind that not all of them can use the web.</p> <p>Objective 4</p>
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	<p>A higher percentage of respondents in the 35-44 and 55-64 age groups notes 'yes', while a higher percentage of respondents in the 25-34 age group notes 'no'.</p> <p>Some of the issues raised regarding children and young people were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need to keep local young people in their area, by offering support and securing jobs • Learners need more one to one support and early intervention • The mental health of LGBTQ+ young people • More attention to the needs of young carers at school, especially being able to keep in touch with school. • Better accessibility for learners with physical impairments in school • Safe places for children with learning difficulties and neurodiversity outside the school <p>Some of the issues raised regarding children and young people were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The needs of older LGBTQ+ people who are likely to have historically hidden their identity • The need to hear the voice of older people • The need to support older people by supporting carers in the workplace <p>DATA:</p> <p>Equality in North Wales 2023: Data and Evidence Document</p>	<p>It is necessary to remember that older people do not always use the web. Improving services will help people of different ages.</p> <p>Objective 5</p> <p>It will obviously be positive for children and young people, once again especially because of intersectionality. It deals with well-being which will include young carers, learners with neurodiversity etc</p> <p>More feedback was received about this objective than any other. Some of them were used to adjust the action points and all the feedback will be shared with the schools for local implementation.</p> <p>There was particular interest in the objective about bullying, with most of the comments being supportive. We have tightened the wording as a result of the comments. Some comments said that bullying did not exist, but we reject that stance. One group felt that it was necessary to include hate crimes as well as bullying and we have done so. Others think that all forms of bullying need to be included. Although the objectives relate to characteristics under the act, the reports will deal with bullying as a whole. The need for specific training for teachers was noted.</p>
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There are more individuals under 25 in Gwynedd than any other county in the north (28.7%). The number of people over 65 was a little lower than the average for North Wales.

The attainment level of year 11 children in Gwynedd in 2018/19 was at its highest in north Wales. During the 2019-20 period, 19% of boys and 12% of girls said they had bullied someone at school (north Wales). 35% of secondary age children (years 7 to 11) in North Wales said that they had been bullied, which was less than the average in 2017/18 but higher than Wales as a whole. The number of young children not in education, work or training in north Wales reduced significantly for the 2020-22 period to 12.8% which was very similar to the numbers for Wales on a whole. This compares to 14% in 2018-20 (when the average for Wales was around 13.1%).

During April 21 - March 22, 51% of people aged 16-24 were employed, a little less than the average for the north. 89% of people aged 25-49 were employed (higher than the average regionally) and 66% of people aged 50-64 (lower than the average).

In Gwynedd, the highest proportion of people who provide un-paid care were those between 50 and 64 years old (15.4%) and the lowest was 15 years of age and under age group (1.1%). This was similar to the rest of the counties in the north. In Gwynedd, as in every other county, those in poor or very poor health increases with age, with 11.5% of people over 65 in those categories.

The highest percentage of people living in a home without a car or van in north Wales based on age were in the 65 and over age group (17.8%), and the lowest was the 50 to 64 age group (9.1%). This pattern is very

It was said that disabled children and those with health problems needed more attention. Also that early intervention is important

	<p>similar to the rest of the north. But in Gwynedd, the number of people aged 15-24 were in the same situation (15.9%) which is significantly higher than the other counties.</p> <p>Welsh Government noted that older people were amongst the groups that were likely to experience digital exclusion (although older people's use of the internet is increasing). They are also one of the groups that feel unsafe in their communities. The number of people that attend heritage and artistic events in Gwynedd falls with age - with just over half of the people ages 75+ not attending three events a year.</p> <p>The Equality and Human Rights Commission notes that older people are more likely to die from Covid-19, and that, and the isolation experienced during the crisis, was likely to have a long-term effect on mental and physical health. Also that education, achievement levels and future jobs for young people had been affected. In addition, there's the risk that remote learning had increased inequality for children and young people that weren't performing as well in school before Covid-19.</p> <p>5 people (out of the 39 who said that more attention needs to be paid to one or more characteristics) felt that age was not given enough attention within the objectives, which is around 13%.</p>	
<p>Religion and Belief</p>	<p>ENGAGEMENT:</p> <p>Method: Some religious groups are represented on the Equality Core Group: Bangor Islamic Centre, Cytûn (Christianity). We have asked other belief groups to join but haven't succeeded yet.</p>	<p>The data clearly shows that there are issues to be addressed regarding religion and belief.</p> <p>Objective 1</p> <p>It is anticipated that it will be positive as it will consider the needs of different beliefs.</p>

	<p>Outcome: The percentages in terms of completing the questionnaire were comparative with the percentages in Gwynedd. Having said this, fewer people identified as Christians, without a religion or from another religion, and the number noting Other was higher.</p> <p>Observations have been made regarding religion in the questionnaire, namely that the Council was anti-Christian and that reasonable adjustments needed to be made regarding religious observance.</p> <p>During the engagement the main theme mentioned about this characteristic was mental health especially among young LGBTQ+ people. The importance of training was also emphasized. Other issues raised were respect, support within the Council, data and terminology. One group said that engagement work is highly valued by LGBTQ+ communities as it shows that the Council is ready to learn and improve. It is also necessary to remember the needs of older LGBTQ+ people, many of whom are used to hiding their identity.</p> <p>DATA:</p> <p>Equality in North Wales 2023: Data and Evidence Document</p> <p>46.2% of the people of Gwynedd identify as Christians, and this is the lowest percentage in North Wales. 44.2% noted that they did not have a religion, which is the highest percentage in the north. The percentage that didn't answer was also the highest in the region, at 7.5%. 1% of the population are Muslim.</p>	<p>Objective 2</p> <p>Data collection will be beneficial because of a lack of local data.</p> <p>Objective 3</p> <p>It will be positive as we will consider beliefs as part of the impact assessments, and it will be a part of the re-consideration on the narrative of our museums.</p> <p>Objective 4</p> <p>It will be part of the reconsideration of the narrative of our museums, and transport and housing issues are sure to be relevant (the individual assessments will show this better).</p> <p>Objective 5</p> <p>Children from some religious groups perform less well than others in terms of attainment so it will be positive. The action point on bullying is also positive.</p>
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The people that didn't answer the question on religion are the ones least likely to have a degree (38%), and then the ones without a religion (39%) and Christians (42%). The other religions were quite equal between 55-60%. This pattern was similar to the one in North Wales except that the religions in the middle were equal at about 45-48%.

Jewish people in Gwynedd were much more likely to identify themselves as carers (around 17%), people from "other" religions were second (16%). People who didn't answer the religion and belief question (just under 5%) was the lowest, and Muslims (just over 5%). It is obvious from looking at the results of the different counties that there is no obvious pattern here, this is likely due to the low numbers in some religions. Figures show that people of the Muslim religion were less likely to report that they had bad or very bad health in Gwynedd (1%), followed by Hindu people (2%). People from other religions were most likely (11%). Again, caution is needed as the figures are low.

There were 40 incidents of hate crime based on religion noted in North Wales during 2021/22, an increase of 150% since 2016/17.

CONSULTATION:

The largest group of people who filled in the questionnaire were people with no religion, with a slightly smaller number saying they were Christian.

10 people (out of the 39 who said that more attention needs to be given to one or more characteristics) felt that religion and belief did not get enough attention within the objectives, which is around 25%.

<p>Sexual Orientation</p>	<p>ENGAGEMENT</p> <p>Method: LGBTQ+ groups are represented on the Equality Core Group: GISDA’s LGBTQ+ Group, Unique Transgender Network and an individual member.</p> <p>The equality officers visited North Wales Pride in Caernarfon, distributing cards with QR codes on them to those who were participating and to the public in general. Some individuals were also asked to complete a short version of the questionnaire. In addition, they visited the LGBTQ+ GISDA Group where alternative methods were used to engage and the Unique Transgender Network where there was a general discussion to promote the questionnaire.</p> <p>Outcome: A lower percentage of heterosexual or straight people had filled out the questionnaire (76.5%), compared with the population of Gwynedd (87.3%) and the number of gay males, gay or lesbian females, bisexual people and people of another sexuality had completed it is higher.</p> <p>A higher percentage of respondents who note that they are a gay man / gay woman / lesbian supported continuing with engagement (Objective 2). Regarding Objective 3 (Impact assessment) a higher percentage of the bisexual, gay or lesbian respondents noted 'yes', with a higher percentage of the heterosexual / straight respondents noting 'unsure'. A higher percentage of respondents who note that they are bisexual, gay or lesbian noted that diversity in the workforce is important.</p>	<p>The data clearly shows that there are issues to be addressed in this field.</p> <p>Objective 1</p> <p>It is anticipated that will be positive as it is regarding diversity in the workforce. Young LGBTQ+ people especially have told us about the challenges they face due to mental health conditions and making the workplace a welcoming place as possible would be a step forward.</p> <p>Some people had concerns about the action point to improve the diversity of our workforce, saying that people should not be selected because of their ethnicity etc. As we have indicated, there is no intention to do that, but rather to attract a variety of candidates in order to get the best person for the job.</p> <p>Objective 2</p> <p>Data is in short supply, especially locally, regarding LGBTQ+ people so it will be beneficial.</p> <p>Objective 3</p>
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	<p>During the engagement the main themes that arose about this characteristic was mental health especially among young LGBTQ+ people. The importance of training was also emphasised. Other issues raised were respect, support within the Council, data and terminology. One group said that engagement work is highly valued by LGBTQ+ communities as it shows that the Council is ready to learn and improve.</p> <p>DATA:</p> <p>Equality in North Wales: Data and Evidence Document Fewer people in Gwynedd identify as heterosexual or straight than any other counties in the North (87.3% - the average for the north was 89.4%). There are more people with a Bisexual identity (1.6% - the percentage for the north was 1%) and more who chose not to answer the question (9.4%) than any other county in the region. The number identifying as Gay or Lesbian was equal with the percentage of the north (1.3%).</p> <p>There were over 334 incidents of hate crime recorded in North Wales based on sexual orientation in 2021/22, an increase of 430% since 2016/17. People who do not identify as heterosexual felt less safe in their communities.</p> <p>LGBTQ+ Action Plan, Welsh Government: Not much work had been noted for Local Authorities in the first place in this Plan. The Housing field was the only one where a specific reference was made but that was long-term work. It is, therefore, necessary to wait for further guidance from Welsh Government following the work they need to do, in order to identify our duties properly. In the meantime, of course, it is necessary to respond to local factors.</p>	<p>The work of assessing impact and training will be positive steps. We will ensure that the start we have already made in training will be built upon.</p> <p>Objective 4</p> <p>The re-interpretation work will be very positive for this characteristic.</p> <p>Data shows that homelessness is high amongst LGBTQ+ young people.</p> <p>Objective 5</p> <p>As young LGBTQ+ people had told us about the mental health challenges they face, as we have mentioned previously, the action points on bullying and well-being will be especially important.</p> <p>A couple of people mentioned their reservations regarding the Religion, Values and Ethics curriculum.</p>
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	<p>CONSULTATION:</p> <p>73% of respondents were heterosexual, 4.7% were bisexual, 2.7% were gay men, 1.3% were gay / lesbian women, and 1.3% identified themselves in another way. The rest (27.1%) chose not to, or did not, respond.</p> <p>9 people (out of the 39 who said that more attention needs to be paid to one or more characteristics) felt that sexual orientation did not get enough attention within the objectives, which is around 23%.</p>	
<p>Gender reassignment</p>	<p>ENGAGEMENT:</p> <p>Method: Some organisations are represented on the Equality Core Group, namely LHDTTC+ GISDA Group, Unique Transgender Network.</p> <p>The equality officers visited North Wales Pride in Caernarfon, distributing cards with QR codes on them to those who were participating and to the public in general. Some individuals were also asked to complete a short version of the questionnaire. They also visited the LGBTQ+ GISDA Group where alternative methods were used to engage, and the Unique Transgender Network where a general discussion was had to promote the questionnaire.</p> <p>Outcome: The percentage of people who had answered yes to the question "Has your sexual identity changed from when you were born? (for example you are transsexual or trans etc)" was 1.3%, which is higher than the</p>	<p>The data clearly shows that there are issues to be addressed regarding gender reassignment.</p> <p>Objective 1</p> <p>It is anticipated that it will be positive as relates to diversity in the workforce. Young LGBTQ+ people especially have told us about the challenges they face due to mental health conditions and making the workplace a welcoming place as possible would be a step forward.</p> <p>Objective 2</p> <p>Data is in short supply, especially locally, regarding LGBTQ+ people so it will be beneficial.</p>

	<p>number of people who said they were a trans man, trans woman or any other gender 0.3% in all, see below) in the census.</p> <p>During the engagement the main theme that arose about the feature was mental health especially among young LGBTQ+ people. The importance of training was also emphasised. Other issues raised were respect, support within the Council, public toilets, data and terminology. One group said that engagement work is highly valued by LGBTQ+ communities as it shows that the Council is ready to learn and improve. It is also necessary to remember the needs of LGBTQ+ people, many are used to hiding their identity and are nervous about letting people know.</p> <p>DATA:</p> <p>Equality in North Wales 2023: Data and Evidence Document</p> <p>Fewer people in Gwynedd (91.7%) note that their sexual identity was the same gender as registered at birth than any other county in North Wales (92.8% was the percentage for the North) but there were more who hadn't answered the question (8% - the percentage for the North was 6.9%). The percentage that identifies as a trans male, trans female and every other gender was the same as the North (0.1% each).</p> <p>There were 50 incidents of transgender hate crime recorded in north Wales in 2021/22. This is an increase of 525% since 2016/17. Stonewall undertook research in 2017 and noted in their report "LGBT in Britain: Trans Report", that most trans people don't report incidents to the police, and therefore it is under-reported. Therefore, the hate crime figures above are unlikely to show the full extent of the hate crime incidents in North Wales.</p>	<p>Objective 3</p> <p>The work of assessing impact and training will be positive steps. We will ensure that the start we have already made in training will be built upon.</p> <p>Objective 4</p> <p>The re-interpretation work will be positive.</p> <p>Data shows that homelessness is high amongst LGBTQ+ young people.</p> <p>Objective 5</p> <p>As young LGBTQ+ people had told us about the mental health challenges they face, as we have mentioned previously, the action points on bullying and well-being will be especially important.</p> <p>A couple of people mentioned their reservations regarding the Religion, Values and Ethics curriculum. The need for single sex toilets and changing rooms was also mentioned.</p>
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	<p>LGBTQ+ Action Plan: Not much work had been noted for Local Authorities in the first place in this Plan. The Housing field was the only one where there a specific reference was made but that was long-term work. Therefore there was a need to wait for further guidance from Welsh Government following the work they need to do, in order to identify our duties properly. In the meantime of course it is necessary to respond to local factors.</p> <p>CONSULTATION:</p> <p>Almost 82% of the respondents said that their gender identity had not changed from that assigned to them at the time of their birth, and 1.3 said that it had. Almost 17% of people had not, or chosen not to, answer.</p> <p>5 people (out of the 39 who said that more attention needed to be paid to one or more characteristics) felt that gender reassignment was not getting enough attention, which is around 13%.</p>	
<p>Marriage and Civil Partnership</p>	<p>ENGAGEMENT:</p> <p>No additional work was undertaken to approach this group as nothing had been identified that would prevent them from participating.</p> <p>A higher percentage of people in Gwynedd have never married or been in a civil partnership (40%) than in the rest of the counties in the north. Therefore, there was fewer married people (41.5%), separated (1.7%) or divorced or in a civil partnership that had broken down (9.2%). The</p>	<p>We have not recognised that the work we are doing will have a negative impact on any cohort but we will monitor this moving forward.</p>

	<p>number of widowed people or a partner who had survived a civil partnership was fairly average in the region (7.5%).</p> <p>CONSULTATION:</p> <p>In the consultation, 3 people (out of the 39 who said that more attention needs to be paid to one or more characteristics) felt that this characteristic did not get enough attention within the objectives, which is around 8%. There were no comments about this characteristic.</p>	
Pregnancy and Maternity	<p>No needs had been identified regarding engagement, as there were no barriers to prevent people with this characteristic from taking part. We haven't identified that the work we do has a negative impact on any cohort but we will monitor this when moving forward.</p> <p>There were 977 births in Gwynedd in 2022, down from 1039 in 2021.</p> <p>Yn yr ymgynghoriad oedd 5 person (allan o'r 39 wnaeth ddweud fod angen rhoi mwy o sylw i un neu fwy o nodweddion) yn teimlo fod y nodwedd yma heb gael digon o sylw o fewn yr amcanion, sef tua 13%. Nid oedd unrhyw sylwadau am y nodwedd yma.</p>	Objective 1 will be particularly positive because it looks to give a voice to different characteristics within the workplace. One person mentioned policies and flexible working around maternity.
The Welsh Language	<p>ENGAGEMENT:</p> <p>Every resource was bilingual. The officers spoke in the language choice of those taking part, holding some discussions bilingually. More specifically, there was a standard question regarding the Welsh Language in the questionnaire.</p>	<p>We welcome the commitment to the Welsh Language in the first observations and believe that the Council acts on the positive factors that have been named already.</p> <p>We do not accept a number of the statements made in the negative factors in the engagement, and were upheld in the consultation. The Welsh</p>

	<p>33.8% of those that responded noted they were fluent in Welsh, 11.6% had the ability but weren't confident and 13.9% were learners. 25% noted that they speak the language only, with 15.2% noting that they couldn't speak or understand the language. Nearly 10% did not wish to answer the question.</p> <p>A specific question on the Welsh Language was asked in the questionnaire, namely:</p> <p>Are there any matters we should consider in terms of the Welsh Language?</p> <p>The main observations in response to the question were:</p> <p>Positive factors regarding the language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need to protect the Welsh Language was emphasised • That support for the language within the economy keeps young people in the area • The importance of Welsh education • The need to protect Welsh signs and names • The need to use the language first • The need for a Welsh workforce and the rights of people to receive services in the Welsh language <p>Negative factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allegations that requiring Welsh language skills within employment was racist, and that it causes a disadvantage for non-Welsh speaking people and ethnic minorities. One person said that nobody from an ethnic minority can speak Welsh. 	<p>Language is a skill, like any other skill within a job description, and it is a skill that nearly every person can learn. It is entirely wrong, for example, to say that people from an ethnic minority background cannot speak the language. Having said this, we do acknowledge that we have further work to do to ensure that people are aware of the fact that different posts ask for different levels of ability in Welsh. The work noted to look at the job requirements in Objective 1 will address this.</p> <p>We do not accept that our use of the Welsh language affects the effectiveness of our work. To the contrary, it ensures that the people of Gwynedd receive services in the language they need.</p> <p>Regarding the recommendations, we already provide a range of Welsh lessons for staff. We also work with organisations such as Menter Iaith Gwynedd to ensure that lessons are available in the communities.</p> <p>Explaining the importance of the language and culture is part of the work in Objective 1 which has already been addressed.</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need to appoint the best person to the post, regardless of their linguistic ability • Claims that the use of the Welsh language also discriminates and alienates more generally, within the community and tourism. • Some disabled people, especially those with learning disabilities, find it harder to learn the language • That the Welsh language is bad for the economy as professional people who might come to the area to work aren't keen for their children to receive a Welsh education • The use of the Welsh language shouldn't be at the expense of services and efficiency, due to the cost of using two languages. <p>Suggestions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide learning opportunities and the support for non-Welsh people to learn the language, with a request for free lessons within the Council and the community • Explain the importance of the language and culture to those who are unaware. • Use easy to understand language, when communicating and within lessons, and use methods such as a video for those who can't read the language easily. • Respect other languages and cultures. <p>DATA:</p> <p>64.5% of the people of Gwynedd (three years of age or older) noted that they spoke Welsh, which was 73,600. This was the highest in Wales in terms of numbers and percentage.</p>	<p>Simplifying the language is something that has been mentioned previously and is part of the work on our website in Objective 3</p> <p>The Council respects other languages and cultures and we hope that more ideas on this will come from the work on workforce diversity, especially the staff forum.</p> <p>Therefore, the largest effect we foresee the objectives having on the Welsh Language will be in the fields above. The work of spreading the message about the reason for employing people with Welsh language skills will be positive, within the Council and in the community in Gwynedd, by ensuring a better understanding of what is happening. Using language that is easy to understand will promote the use of the Welsh language.</p> <p>We will consider all the comments when preparing a detailed action plan and individual impact assessments for every Objective.</p>
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The Council has a statutory responsibility, under the Welsh Language Standards, to set linguistic requirements for every job advertised. This means that language skills are identified as an essential skill for each job, and the exact level of skills required is determined by the nature of the job. It seems that a misunderstanding about these requirements, and a tendency to think that essential means a need to be able to speak fluently, leads to the opinion that the Council discriminates.

CONSULTATION:

57.7% of the respondents said that they spoke Welsh to some level.

The question was asked "In your opinion, is the introduction of these objectives likely to have an impact on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and the status of the Welsh language in the community?"

22 respondents thought it would have an impact, some said it would have a positive impact and a couple said it would have a negative impact. 40 thought it would not have an effect, most without elaborating, but some noted that it was a separate issue and others said that Welsh lessons were needed.

In addition, 24 felt that the Welsh language received too much attention, with comments about being obsessed with the language and that it was an obstacle to development and equality. On the other floor, 10 felt that the language was not getting enough attention, that Welsh-speaking people needed to be protected from racism and Welsh should have its own objective and that Welsh lessons were needed.

	<p>In addition, 6 talked about not employing non-Welsh speakers and 5 felt that there was too much expenditure on the Welsh language. 17 did not fit these categories, e.g. a couple thought it would possibly have an effect on the language, others talked about the importance of community, people's rights to speak the language they want, and issues outside the scope of the objectives.</p> <p>A number of the above issues were also mentioned in the responses to other questions in the consultation as well</p>	
<p>Socio-Economic Considerations</p>	<p>CONSULTATION:</p> <p>We believe that people living in a situation of socio-economic disadvantage are addressed in the equality characteristics. This is because the statistics show that people with specific characteristics are more likely to experience such disadvantage (see above). As we are trying to meet a range of people in meetings they would normally attend, we hoped to reach the ones who wouldn't normally fill out questionnaires. This will help us to reach people who don't use computers or have transport problems.</p> <p>DATA:</p> <p>Equality in North Wales 2023: Data and Evidence Document</p> <p>Much of the data is shown under the specific characteristics. Some examples are that disabled people have less access to a car or van, the gender pay gap, the fact that some cohorts were more likely to be afraid in their community etc.</p>	<p>It is anticipated that the impact of the objectives will be positive because their intention is to ensure equality, and data shows that people with different protected characteristics experience a socio-economic disadvantage.</p> <p>Objective 1 relates to improving pay inequalities. It also relates to encouraging people from various backgrounds to apply for work within the Council. This should contribute to removing socio-economic disadvantage.</p> <p>Collecting data is always beneficial in order to identify where action is needed. This is particularly the case when asking for the opinions of various groups.</p> <p>Objective 3 will contribute to reducing socio-economic disadvantage by removing barriers</p>

	<p>54% of learners in Gwynedd who weren't eligible for free school meals did not reach Level 2 in Year 11 (2018/19 data), and 30% of learners that were eligible for free school meals. 1.9% of households in North Wales are over-crowded (not enough bedrooms), nearly the same percentage as North Wales (2%).</p> <p>The number of households which receive Universal Credit had increased from 8.4% in November 2021 to 9% in November 2022, but Gwynedd had the lowest number in north Wales. The number of people in Gwynedd living in a home that experience material deprivation was 13%, more than any other county except for Wrexham which was equal. The number of women in this situation was 14%, once again the highest of every county and equal to Wrexham. In 2018, 23% of Gwynedd homes were experiencing fuel poverty, much higher than other counties (closest was Anglesey at 17% and the lowest was Flint with only 9%). This was the most recent local data and of course does not consider the inflation seen over the past few years.</p> <p>People in Gwynedd are more likely to say that their health is very good than other counties in the north and are less likely to say that they are in poor health.</p> <p>The Wales National Survey asked for a sample of people in every county and found that the people of Gwynedd were very satisfied or quite satisfied with their ability to reach local services. Most were also very satisfied or quite satisfied with the availability of services at hand.</p> <p>The number of people living in a household without access to a car or van was 12.4%, which is 0.1% less than the average for North Wales.</p>	<p>that people face when trying to find information on the Council's website and when trying to access the arts. It will also be helpful for people who experience this type of disadvantage due to a protected characteristic, as the training will improve staff understanding. Additionally, every impact assessment includes questions on socio-economic matters. Working against violence against women is sure to be of help.</p> <p>By improving our services, Objective 4, we will look to reduce socio-economic disadvantage. Following comments, we have added an action point on housing and transport.</p> <p>Objective 5 helps to rectify any differences within Education and is therefore important in this area as well.</p> <p>We will consider socio-economic disadvantage when proceeding to make a detailed action plan and individual impact assessments.</p>
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The percentage of households with access to the internet has increased slowly from 85% in 2018/19 to 87% in 2021/22, and Gwynedd had the lowest number in the North. The number of people that use the internet has also increased from 87% to 91%, which is joint lowest with Anglesey. Welsh Government note that the people at the highest risk of being digitally excluded in Wales are: older adults (although older adults' use of the internet is increasing), disabled people or people with long-term health conditions, people with a lower educational attainment, people or families on lower income, rural population, Welsh speakers, people who do not speak English as a first language, people who are isolated socially or lonely and homeless people.

The number of people attending art, culture or heritage activities in Gwynedd has increased from 2017/18 to 2019/20, while every other county saw a reduction. This meant that all the counties were quite similar. The number of people that take part in sports or physical activity also increased from 53% in 2016/17 to 59% in 2021/22.

The number of people over 16 years old that were satisfied with their local area as a place to live had increased in Gwynedd from 89% in 2018/19 to 92% in 2021/11. In the same period the people who felt that they belonged to the area, that people from different backgrounds got along well, and that people treated each other with respect had increased from 53% to 73%. In 2021/22, 11% of the people of Gwynedd said that they felt lonely.

CONSULTATION:

In answers to the question "In your opinion, is the introduction of these objectives likely to have an impact on people who face socio-economic

	<p>disadvantage?" 42 people thought it would be, or likely to be, positive and helpful to the community. Many said it would depend on how well it was implemented.</p> <p>On the other hand, 37 believed that it would not have a positive effect, most did not give a reason but others said that they did not believe it would be implemented, the need to improve the economy, that work on this work is being done already and the payments that people have to make to the Council.</p> <p>9 people noted the importance of transport. 8 said that they thought doing this was too costly, 5 raised issues about language, and 3 mentioned the importance of employment.</p> <p>In some of the meetings, the need for suitable housing was discussed.</p>	
Human Rights	<p>Article 14 Protection from discrimination was especially relevant but other articles were also relevant:</p> <p>Article 5 The right to freedom and safety</p> <p>Article 8 The right to respect towards life, home and private communication</p> <p>Article 9 The right to freedom of choice, belief and religion</p> <p>Article 12 The right to marry and establish a family</p>	<p>The engagement had a positive effect as people gave their opinion in order to influence our objectives. It is anticipated that the objectives will also be positive because they are in line with the articles.</p>
Other	<p>Two groups of young carers were questioned. Adult carers were questioned as part of the Boccia event</p> <p>We didn't targeted other people but the questionnaire was open to everyone</p>	<p>The engagement was positive for the carers and had no effect on the other groups.</p> <p>The objectives will be positive on groups such as carers (see Disability above).</p>

		<p>It is required, under the Armed Forces Act 2022, that we pay due attention to the impact on members and ex-members of the armed forces and their families, so that they are not treated less favorably than others. The plan should have a positive impact on some sections of this community because it takes into account the needs of children in schools and disabled people.</p>
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6. Are there any data or information gaps and if so, what are they and how do you intend to address them?

It is clear that there is a lack of data regarding some equality characteristics and one of our action points will work on this.

Our intention is to collect as much information as possible over the next few years.

7. What is the cumulative impact of this proposal on different protected groups when considering other key decisions?

The work we do on objectives should interlock with the rest of Gwynedd Council’s work in order to improve fairness. We are aware that this work may be affected by the funding available over the next 4 years and we will keep an eye on that. There is a great deal of engagement and consultation going on at the moment. It is important that we ensure that the information that has been collected here is available for other officers to avoid duplication.

8. What does your proposal include to demonstrate you have given due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty (to advance equality of opportunity; help to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, or victimisation and foster good relations and wider community cohesion as covered by the 3 aims of the General Duty in the Equality Act 2010)?

The purpose of the plan is to ensure fairness therefore it operates on these three aims. We are helping to remove discrimination, harassment or victimisation by asking for the opinions of people, improving diversity in our workforce etc. One Objective promises to get to grips with anti-discrimination and is therefore integral to the first aim. We have promoted equal opportunities by encouraging people to take part in the consultation in the best way for them. This means that we receive a range of opinions to form these objectives. Ensuring fairness through the

objectives also promotes equal opportunities and ensures that we provide for people depending on their needs. The above means a better relationship between people with various characteristics and as we will treat them as needed, ensuring that their voices are heard.

9. How does the proposal show that you have given due regard to the need to address inequality due to socio-economic disadvantage? (Please note that this relates to closing the inequality gap, rather than just improving outcomes for everyone)

The section on Socio-Economic Disadvantage in question 5 shows that we have taken into account socio-economic disadvantage and all 5 objectives improve things in this area. We have added action points on housing and transport as a result of the consultation.

10. How does your proposal ensure that you are working in line with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011), to ensure the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than the English language, and to ensure opportunities for people to use the Welsh language? Also, how does the proposal operate in accordance with the requirements of the Council's Welsh Language Strategy to take advantage of every opportunity to promote the Welsh language (beyond providing bilingual services) and increase opportunities to use and learn the language in the community?

Every resource was bilingual and discussions took place in the language choice of those taking part. This sometimes meant having bilingual discussions.

As shown above in question 5, we have acted on suggestions that have been received to create action points that are beneficial to the language. We are looking at the ways we operate within employment, and this will include explaining why we need a workforce that can speak the language, but also showing that you don't have to be completely fluent to get a job within the Council. It is hoped that this will cause less ill-feeling in the future. Using language suitable for the audience on our website will also promote the language, ensuring that more people will be able to use it.

11. How does this proposal meet the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act by implementing the five ways of working, and responding to the 7 national well-being goals including creating a More Equal Wales?

The well-being aim in question here is "A More Equal Wales" as this was the purpose of this work. It will also contribute towards A Prosperous Wales, as it will improve people's situations and equality characteristics. Also, a Wales of Cohesive Communities, where people with different equality characteristics receive better fairness. The 5 ways of working are met like this: Long-term - the objectives that will be created are 4-year ones, but their impact should be greater than this; Prevent – our aim is to work to remove barriers; Integrating - this plan will be a project with the Council's Plan and will affect the Council's work as a whole; Collaboration - we collaborate with the public by including them in the

engagement and also with other public organisations in the region through the North Wales Public Sector Equality Network and this will feed in to meeting the objectives for North Wales; Inclusion - the purpose of the consultation is to allow people to give their opinion and influence on these objectives before we make any decision.

STAGE 3

12. Is this policy or practice to be carried out wholly or partly by contractors or in partnership with another organisation(s)?

No, although we will be working in collaboration as mentioned above.

STAGE 4

13. When considering proportionality, does the policy or practice have a significantly positive or negative impact or create inequalities of outcome resulting from socio-economic disadvantage? (please give brief details)

Significantly Positive Impact:

The purpose of the new Equality Objectives is to have a significantly positive impact on people with protected characteristics. We have ensured that there is strong reasoning for our choice, including a wide-ranging engagement.

Significantly negative impact:

No

14. What measures or changes you will introduce to the policy or practice in the final draft which could reduce or remove any unlawful or negative impact or disadvantage and/or improve equality of opportunity/introduce positive change; or reduce inequalities of outcome resulting from socio-economic disadvantage?

The Objectives are intended to improve equal opportunities and reduce or eliminate unequal outcomes. The data set out in question 5 clearly shows that having certain specific protected characteristics, such as being a disabled person, a female head of a family, or a member of a specific ethnic group means that there is a greater chance for you to experience socio-economic inequality. The objectives therefore essentially address this.

We have also ensured that we engage widely, before making any decisions, in order to obtain the opinion of people with life experience of these characteristics, and therefore of socio-economic inequality. The methods we have used have been varied, to ensure that as many people as possible have been able to participate.

We have made considerable changes to the objectives as a result of consultation, e.g. changed the wording and added action points on housing and transport. This is to improve equal opportunities and introduce positive change. In the same way the changes address socio-economic disadvantage.

15. Explain any intentional negative impact you have identified and explain why you believe you have justification for acting in this way (for example, on grounds of improving equal opportunities or developing good relationships with those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not due to objective justification or positive action

None has been identified

16. Will any of the negative impacts identified count as unlawful discrimination albeit they are unavoidable (e.g. budget cuts)?

Not applicable

Note your reason for stating this and the justification for proceeding

Not applicable

17. What other measures or changes could you include to strengthen or change the policy/practice to demonstrate you have given due regard to equal opportunities; help to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, or victimisation; and foster good relations and wider community cohesion; as covered by the improvement aim of the General Duty in the Equality Act 2010?

Our first step was to ensure we engaged with as much diversity as possible. We have used this information, and other data, in order to form draft objectives. There was a period of consultation on those objectives to obtain further opinions. That has led to making changes as we have mentioned above. Moving forward we will make a comprehensive action plan and impact assessments on each objective individually to ensure we comply.

18. What measures or other changes can you include to strengthen or change the policy / practice to demonstrate that you have given due regard to the need to reduce inequalities of outcome as a result of socio-economic disadvantage?

As 17

19. What other measures or changes could you include to strengthen or change the policy/practice to demonstrate you have given due regard to the need to increase opportunities to use the Welsh language and in treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language as set out in the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and to reduce or prevent any adverse effects that the policy/practice may have on the Welsh language?

We will make a comprehensive action plan and impact assessments on each objective which will look at the impact on the Welsh language.**20.**

20. Do you have enough information to make a balanced judgement and to proceed?

Yes

If you answered Yes, please justify:

We believe that we have formed the best possible objectives by considering the opinions and the data we have collected. We therefore recommend action on the objectives.

STAGE 5

21. Using the information you have gathered in Steps 1 – 4 above, please state below whether you are able to proceed with the policy or practice and if so, on what basis?

Yes – the policy or plan is suitable.

STAGE 6

22. Outline below any actions identified in Steps 1-5 or any additional data collection that will help you monitor your policy/practice when it is implemented:

Action	Timetable and Frequency	Lead Responsibility
Create a comprehensive action plan on every objective	April-May 2024	Project Leader
Undertake a individual equality assessment on every objective	April-May 2024	Project Leader

23. Outline below what arrangements you will make to monitor and review the ongoing impact of this policy or exercise including timetables for when it should be formally reviewed:

Monitoring and Reviewing Arrangements	Timetable and Frequency	Lead Responsibility
Report on the Plan	Annually	Equality Advisor

Adapt the Impact Assessment	As necessary	Equality Advisor
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Analysis of the responses to the questionnaire

Introduction

The questionnaire was available online, and paper copies were also available in Siopau Gwynedd and Libraries across the county. Easy-to-read copies were also distributed. The questionnaire was promoted through Gwynedd Council's social media, Gwynedd Council's website as a 'pop-up' when visiting the website and through Gwynedd Council's Citizens Panel. Emails were sent out to local and national organisations that support people with equality characteristics in the area.

The consultation was live between the end of October and February. There were 149 responses to the questionnaire.

Results

Who answered the questionnaire ?

There were 149 responses to the questionnaire. Most of the respondents responded as individuals (95.3%, N=142).

	Number	Percentage
Individual	142	95.3%
Organisation	3	2.0%
Other	2	1.3%
No answer	2	1.3%
Total	149	100.0%

Report on the Consultation

As can be seen from the table below there is a representation of each area.

	Number	Percentage
Pwllheli catchment area	15	10.1
Dolgellau catchment area	12	8.1
Bangor catchment area	12	8.1
Bro Ogwen	10	6.7
Bro Ardudwy	8	5.4
Bro Peris	8	5.4
Bro Llew / Nantlle	7	4.7
Bro Dysynni	7	4.7
Pen Llŷn catchment area	5	3.4
Bro Ffestiniog	5	3.4
Porthmadog / Penrynudraeth catchment area	4	2.7
Bala / Penllyn catchment area	3	2.0
Caernarfon catchment area	2	1.3
Outside of Gwynedd	1	0.7
No answer	31	20.8
Postcode not complete	19	12.8
Total	149	100.0

Sex

	Number	Percentage
Female	61	40.9
Male	56	37.6
Prefer not to say	17	11.4
No answer	12	8.1
I identify in a different way	3	2.0
Total	149	100.0

Age Group

	Number	Percentage
15 years old or younger	0	0.0
16 – 24 years old	2	1.3
25 – 34 years old	2	1.3
35 – 44 years old	19	12.8
45 – 54 years old	19	12.8
55 – 64 years old	29	19.5
65 – 74 years old	32	21.5
75 – 84 years old	20	13.4
85+ years old	1	0.7
I prefer not to say	14	9.4
No answer	11	7.4
Total	149	100.0

Report on the Consultation

How would you describe your skills in Welsh?

	Number	Percentage
Speaking, reading and writing fluently	34	22.8
Speaking, reading and writing, but not very confident	24	16.1
Speaking, reading and writing – currently learning	20	13.4
Speaking, but unable to read or write	8	5.4
Unable to speak or understand Welsh	27	18.1
I prefer not to say	16	10.7
Other	10	6.7
Total	149	100.0

Nationality or national identity?

	Number	Percentage
British	53	35.6
Welsh	44	29.5
English	23	15.4
I prefer not to say	10	6.7
Other	7	4.7
Scottish	2	1.3
No answer	10	6.7
Northern Irish	0	0.0
Total	149	100.0

What is your race?

	Number	Percentage
White	112	75.2
I prefer not to say	15	10.1
No answer	10	6.7
Mixed / several ethnic groups	5	3.4
Other	3	2.0
Asian	2	1.3
Gypsy / Irish Traveller	1	0.7
Black / African / Caribbean	1	0.7
Total	149	100.0

Report on the Consultation

What is your religion?

	Number	Percentage
No religion	54	36.2
Christian	51	34.2
I prefer not to say	21	14.1
No answer	11	7.4
Other	7	4.7
Buddhist	4	2.7
Muslim	1	0.7
Hindu	0	0.0
Jewish	0	0.0
Sikh	0	0.0
Total	149	100.0

Which of these best describes you?

	Number	Percentage
Heterosexual/straight	100	73.5
I prefer not to say	21	15.4
No answer	13	8.7
Bisexual	7	4.7
Gay man	4	2.7
Gay woman/ Lesbian	2	1.3
Other	2	1.3
Total	149	100.0

Has your gender identity changed from that assigned to you at birth? (for example are you trans or transgender etc)

	Number	Percentage
No	122	81.9
No answer	13	8.7
I prefer not to say	12	8.1
Yes	2	1.3
Total	149	100.0

Report on the Consultation

Section 6 (1) of the Equality Act 2010 states that a person is disabled if:

- a. That individual has a physical or mental impairment, and
- b. That the said impairment has a substantial and long-term detrimental effect on the ability of the individual to carry out normal day to day activities

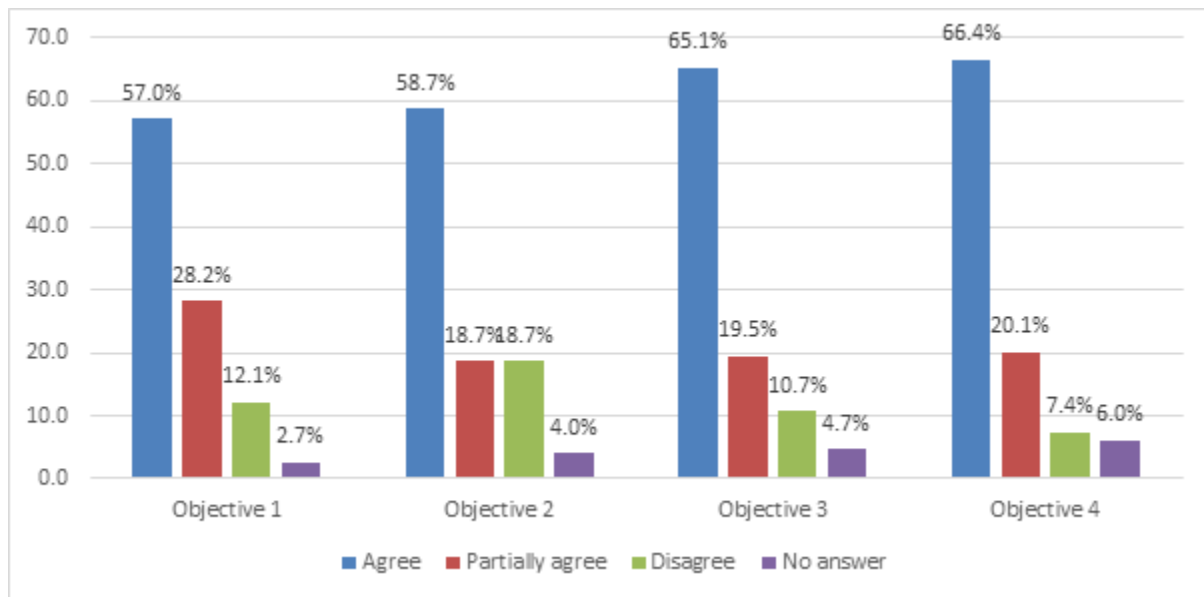
Protected Characteristic: Disability (Using this definition, do you consider yourself a disabled person?)

	Number	Percentage
No	99	66.4
Yes	27	18.1
I prefer not to say	12	8.1
No answer	11	7.4
Total	149	100.0

Report on the Consultation

Summary of the responses to the Draft Equality Objectives

The graph below shows a summary of the responses to the Draft Equality Objectives and their action points. It can be seen that most of the respondents agree with the objectives. A more detailed analysis will follow the summary.



Report on the Consultation

Objective 1 – Improve the diversity of our workforce and reduce pay gaps

Most of the respondents agreed or partially agreed with Objective 1 and its action points (85.2%, N=127).

	Number	Percentage
Agree	85	57.0
Partially agree	42	28.2
Disagree	18	12.1
No answer	4	2.7
Total	149	100.0

Explain your answer for Objective 1

The free text responses here were analysed into themes by the equality team.

Of those who stated 'disagree', the themes raised were:

Theme	Number	Percentage
Hire the best candidate	8	44.4
The objective is too costly	3	16.7
Disagree with diversity targets	2	11.1
Difficult to balance diversity with the Welsh language	2	11.1
Other	2	11.1
Agree with equal pay	1	5.6
Total	18	100.0

Of those who stated, 'partly agree', the themes raised were:

Theme	Number	Percentage
Hire the best candidate	10	23.8
Difficult to balance diversity with the Welsh language	9	21.4
The objective is too costly	6	14.3
The aim is good for the workforce	6	14.3
Agree with equal pay	5	11.9
Disagree with diversity targets	5	11.9
Agree that having a diverse workplace is positive and provides people with an opportunity	3	7.1
Other	2	4.8
Total	42	100.0

Report on the Consultation

Of those who stated 'agree', the themes raised were:

Theme	Number	Percentage
Agree that having a diverse workplace is positive and gives people a chance	19	39.6
Agree with equal pay	17	35.4
Benefits Staff	16	33.3
Difficult to balance diversity with the Welsh language	5	10.4
Hire the best candidate	4	8.3
Disagree with diversity targets	2	4.2
Other	1	2.1
Total	48	100.0

Report on the Consultation

Objective 2 – To improve our data about people with equality characteristics

Most of the respondents agreed or partially agreed with Objective 2 and their action points (77.2%, N=115)

	Number	Percentage
Agree	88	59.1
Disagree	28	18.8
Partially agree	27	18.1
No answer	6	4.0
Total	149	100.0

Explain your answer for objective 2

The free text responses here were analysed into themes by the equality team.

Of those who stated 'disagree', the themes raised were:

Theme	Number	Percentage
Data is misused or misinterpreted	10	35.7
Other	9	32.1
The objective is too costly	8	28.6
Data quality is important	2	7.1
Language	1	3.6
Total	28	100.0

Of those who stated 'partly agree', the themes raised were:

Theme	Number	Percentage
Data quality is important	7	25.9
Language	4	14.8
Other	4	14.8
Data is misused or misinterpreted	3	11.1
Staff Matters	2	7.4
The objective is too costly	1	3.7
Total	27	Percentage

Report on the Consultation

Of those who stated 'agree', the themes raised were:

Theme	Number	Percentage
Data quality is important	29	33.0
Staff Matters	2	2.3
Other	2	2.3
Data is misused or misinterpreted	1	1.1
Language	1	1.1
Total	88	100.0

Report on the Consultation

Objective 3 – Ensure that the Council is an anti-discriminatory organisation

Most of the respondents agreed or partially agreed with Objective 3 and their action points (84.6%, N=126).

	Number	Percentage
Agree	97	65.1
Partially agree	29	19.5
Disagree	16	10.7
No answer	7	4.7
Total	149	100.0

Explain your answer for objective 3

The free text responses here were analysed into themes by the equality team.

Of those who stated 'disagree', the themes raised were:

Themes	Number	Percentage
Concern about cost and efficiency	3	18.8
Concern about language issues	2	12.5
Concern about the museums action point	2	12.5
Other	2	12.5
Feeling that the Council / work processes discriminate	1	6.3
Disability / accessibility issues	1	6.3
Staff matters	1	6.3
Need to focus on providing services	1	6.3
Agree that the objective is necessary / important	1	6.3
Total	16	100.0

Report on the Consultation

Of those who stated 'partly agree', the themes raised were:

Themes	Number	Percentage
Concern about the museums action point	6	20.7
Concern about the training action point	5	17.2
Concern about cost and efficiency	5	17.2
Disability / accessibility issues	4	13.8
Other	3	10.3
Concern about language issues	2	6.9
Need to focus on providing services	2	6.9
Agree that the objective is necessary / important	2	6.9
Feeling that the Council / work processes discriminate	1	3.4
Staff Matter	1	3.4
Total	29	100.0

Of those who stated 'agree', the themes raised were:

Themes	Number	Percentage
Agree that the objective is necessary / important	14	14.4
Need to focus on providing services	12	12.4
Other	6	6.2
Concern about language issues	4	4.1
Disability / accessibility issues	4	4.1
Feeling that the Council / work processes discriminate	2	2.1
Concern about the training action point	2	2.1
Staff matters	2	2.1
Concern about the museums action points	1	1.0
Concern about cost and efficiency	1	1.0
Total	97	100.0

Report on the Consultation

Objective 4 –Improve equality within the field of education

Most of the respondents agreed or partially agreed with Objective 4 and their action points (86.6%, N=129)

	Number	Percentage
Agree	99	66.4
Partially Agree	30	20.1
Disagree	11	7.4
No Answer	9	6.0
Total	149	100.0

Explain your answer for objective 4

The free text responses here were analysed into themes by the equality team.

Of those who stated 'disagree', the themes raised were:

Themes	Number	Percentage
The importance of dealing with bullying	3	27.3
Agree in general	3	27.3
Other	3	27.3
Identify other priorities or say that the objective is too costly	1	9.1
Total	11	100.0

Of those who stated 'partly agree', the themes raised were:

Themes	Number	Percentage
Agree in general	11	36.7
Other	8	26.7
The importance of dealing with bullying	5	16.7
Language issues regarding education	3	10.0
Identified other priorities or say that the objective is too costly	1	3.3
Total	30	100.0

Of those who stated 'agree', the themes raised were:

Themes	Number	Percentage
Agree in general	35	35.4
The importance of dealing with bullying	12	12.1
Identify other priorities or say that the objective is too costly	2	2.0
Language issues regarding education	1	1.0
Other	1	1.0
Total	99	100.0

Report on the Consultation

3. Is there any equality protected characteristic that has not received sufficient attention in the above objectives?

There are 9 protected characteristics that are relevant here, namely – age, gender, race, sexual orientation (or sexuality), religion or belief, disability, gender reassignment (being trans etc.), marriage or civil partnership and pregnancy or maternity.

Just over a quarter of the respondents (26.2%, N=39) noted that there are protected equality characteristics that have not received sufficient attention in the above objectives.

	Number	Percentage
No	97	65.1
Yes	39	26.2
No answer	16	8.7
Total	149	100.0

3.1 Identify those who have not received sufficient attention

Of those who indicated 'yes', these are the characteristics recognised as not receiving sufficient attention:

	Number	Percentage
Disability	16	41.0
Race (including nationality)	14	35.9
Religion and belief	10	25.6
Sexual orientation	9	23.1
Sex	6	15.4
Age	5	12.8
Gender reassignment	5	12.8
Pregnancy and Maternity	5	12.8
Marriage and Civil Partnership	3	7.7
Total	39	

Report on the Consultation

Explain your answer

26 comments were received here. They included:

- Access to buildings
- The range of different impairments covered within the disability characteristic
- Language matters
- Should not just be lip-service
- Welsh Government action plans need to be included
- Too vague
- Feels focus is on race, sex and disability
- More needs to be done for disability and older people
- Single sex toilets

Report on the Consultation

4. In your opinion, is the introduction of these objectives likely to have an impact on people facing socio-economic disadvantage?

Socio-economic disadvantage means poverty of all kinds – financial poverty, digital poverty, living far from services etc

There were 121 responses to this question. The free text responses here were analysed into themes by the equality team. The themes raised were:

Theme	Number	Percentage
It will help the community	42	34.7
It will have no effect	37	30.6
Other	16	13.2
The importance of transport	9	7.4
Cost or prioritisation issues	8	6.6
Language matter	5	4.1
The importance of employment	3	2.5
Total	121	100.0

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5. In your opinion, is the introduction of these objectives likely to have an impact on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on the status of the Welsh language in the community?

There were 119 responses to this question. The free text responses here were analysed into themes by the equality team. The themes raised were:

Theme	Number	Percentage
No effect	40	33.6
The language gets too much attention	24	20.2
Yes – having an effect	22	18.5
Other	17	14.3
The language not getting enough attention	10	8.4
Employment matters	6	5.0
Too costly	5	4.2
Total	119	100.0

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6. In your opinion, is there any other issue that has not received enough attention?

The majority of respondents (33.6%, N=50) noted that there is another issue that has not received sufficient attention.

	Number	Percentage
No	86	57.7
Yes	50	33.6
No Answer	13	8.7
Total	149	100.0

Of those who stated 'yes' this is what was stated as requiring more attention: Of those who stated 'yes' this is what was stated as requiring more attention:

Theme	Number	Percentage
Other	12	24.0
Equality issues in general	11	22.0
Language mater	10	20.0
The economy and society	6	12.0
Training	3	6.0
Transport	3	6.0
Cost	3	6.0
Total	50	100.0

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Impact Assessment

7. If you wish, you can give your comments on the equality impact assessment (draft) for the objectives here

30 of the respondents commented. Their comments included:

- The cost of the Plan
- A fear of tokenism and lack of commitment from the top
- Needs to be more than a box-ticking exercise
- Waste of time
- No comment to make
- A worthy aim, it deserves to be successful
- Needs to be implemented as quickly as possible
- Outside organisations should challenge
- Unhappy with language and terminology used
- Language matters
- A minor issue affecting a small minority
- A need for youth clubs
- Does not agree with equality
- Comments regarding specific characteristics
- Local issues, not government setting intentions

Analysis of the comments from the meetings

In addition to the questionnaire, a number of meetings were held with people with various equality characteristics. People were allowed more time to fill in the easy-to-read questionnaires than the original, with the understanding that it would be too late to analyse them with the rest, but that they would be included here. Comments from 3 forms have therefore been included. This report also includes comments received from members of the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee of Gwynedd Council.

These are the comments received from the equality officers, who have provided this part of the report.

Objective 1: Improve the diversity of its workforce and reduce pay gaps

Most of the groups agreed that this objective was important and related to looking after staff and supporting them. Gender was raised as an example of being fair in the workplace regarding pay gaps and everyone agreed with this point. One group also raised the issue of race as something to be aware of and

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something we need to keep in mind in a place like Gwynedd, where there is not so much obvious diversity.

A group felt that more needed to be done regarding the Welsh language, to raise the confidence of people who speak Welsh as a first language or have been through education in Gwynedd. The Council needs to use clearer Welsh to be able to expand diversity within recruitment.

One group stated that this objective highlights the importance of equity in the workplace in order to provide greater protection for minority groups. Better policies are needed to protect staff, and this should be mentioned in the objectives. Another group said that having a staff forum is important for groups with different characteristics using the example of the LGBTQ+ group. But some concerns were raised about the safety of staff taking part and that keeping staff safe is something we need to think more about.

Concerns were raised around the objective turning into a tick box exercise and that the behaviour of staff towards the community and other staff members must be monitored. The group said that it is necessary to make sure that the messages regarding equality come down from a senior management and that senior officers must take responsibility for equality together with central and front line staff. The group said that staff training is essential for the success of this objective.

One group suggested that consideration needs to be given to recruiting from outside to attract more diversity amongst new staff.

Some other issues raised were the importance of disability issues within training. Also consider changing the title of the objective as there are two objectives in one here - something like "equity in the workplace"/ "justice in the workplace".

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Objective 2: Improve our data about people with equality protected characteristics.

Many of the groups agreed with this objective to improve our knowledge and understanding more widely. One group commented that this meshes well with the council's duty to carry out equality impact assessments, as the information helps and supports the quality of the assessments. A group noted that we also need to find out where the gaps are in our data.

It was suggested that we record the data that is available and what people are saying in ways that are more accessible to those who are not online. A film could help people understand and participate.

Another group suggested that the council should be careful when using external data such as the census as some people do not feel safe or comfortable sharing information about their characteristics and the data may not always be correct.

They also noted the need to have diversity within the Residents Panel, and the need to ask more to join through a pop up or on the front page.

Objective 3: Ensure that the Council is an anti-discriminatory organization (does not discriminate against anyone)

The groups agreed that this was an important objective. It was noted that there is a need to be anti-discriminatory and promote equal opportunities within the workplace with an example of promoting more flexible working when it comes to maternity issues. One group said that there was a need to ensure that older people who are not familiar with technology are treated fairly and that things need to be accessible for them to be able to access services. The group suggested that we make sure that we advertise information through different sources that do not all depend on being online.

It was suggested that there should be a pamphlet in the library to indicate the transport timetable. Transport was something that groups thought was

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important, saying that there was not enough transportation available to them. The group also supported the need to simplify some services for some people as processes can be too complicated.

Another group added the importance of making strong and consistent impact assessments to a good standard to be able to succeed with this objective. This group said that looking again at diversity within museums is also a step in the right direction.

Concern was expressed as a group regarding negative comments in the previous engagement, such as concern about money and other priorities. It was noted that the council should respond with an explanation to combat negative views such as studies that prove that diversity in the workplace can be cost effective in the long term.

Concern was raised that some of the language used may be confusing. A better explanation is needed together with an explanation of the differences and treating people equally and in accordance with their needs. Another member of the group agrees with the point made, emphasising that the word needed is Equity and that the word equity needs a better explanation.

It was asked to include issues such as the sunflower lanyard in the training.

When discussing access to services one group noted the importance of transport, public toilets and bins. Also the importance of being able to contact care and support workers easily.

Objective 4: Improve equality within the field of education.

Various points were raised regarding bullying specifically, with most agreeing that it was something important for us to consider. One individual shared personal experience of bullying regarding a linguistic issue, with them only speaking English and not Welsh.

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One group indicated that they strongly agree with improvements within education because early intervention is the best way to solve many of the problems that young people and adults face today. One group thought that more emphasis needed to be placed on additional needs education but to be careful not to label children too young. Some others from the group thought that school children needed to be taught more respect to enable teachers to do their job more effectively. It was noted that schools need to take more responsibility for incidents of bullying on the school buses, and when they are outside school grounds.

It was raised that there is a need to collect data more widely than just on bullying and to include hate crimes also. This should be considered annual reports for schools. The Council should consider all the annual reports to focus on the trends. A change the wording was needed to include this, as it was felt that bullying does not convey it well enough. The police do not collect the data on schools specifically. A point from another member that school statistics can reflect the thinking of the wider community. One member noted that an officer is needed in schools to be able to deal with specialist needs like this. The group noted that work is already being done on this objective with the police and education welfare officers but that individual schools need more data to be able to better target where more support is needed. Another group said how important it was to keep children safe.

One group said they felt specific training was needed for teachers on general bullying and hate crimes so they could recognise them.

One group felt that it was also necessary to tackle the stereotyping of teachers, giving an example of the stereotype of more women being language teachers.

Another group felt that there was a need for better policies on LGBTQ+ issues within schools to protect children and young people from being bullied.

One group emphasized that the action points for this Objective were unclear in terms of meaning and wording.

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Further matters to consider

The groups were given a chance to note additional issues that should be considered for inclusion. One group raised the issue of parking in Gwynedd, especially when it comes to age issues. A suggestion to be able to park for free before 11 o'clock (instead of 10:00) so that older people can go to small local shops (which open later) and support local businesses more. The group was keen to see parking spaces continue accept payment in cash, with no need to use a card and definitely not app/technology.

One group raised the use of council services, specifically Siopau Gwynedd one stop shops. They felt that there is potential to go against confidentiality if there is someone with a hearing impairment and officers have to speak louder than usual. Another group raised concerns about physical access to services, asking for the plan to take accessibility into account.

One group said that more attention is needed on impact assessment training, to get them to a good standard, as this is a duty for the Council.

Financing for disability adjustments was raised, saying that there is a need for more consideration and budgeting for access issues and issues more widely.

One group said that there must be a safe system for staff to be able to raise any issue of discrimination or unfairness in the workplace and that a senior manager must take responsibility for the culture of the workplace and promote fairness. It was suggested to have a senior manager or senior officers as equality and diversity champions. It was emphasised that the workplace needs to take responsibility for hate crimes and bullying in the workplace.

Housing issues were also discussed. It was noted that problems had arisen because the housing association did not provide enough support for tenants with learning disabilities who can face obstacles in the community. Emphasis that there is a need to have contact with housing communities in order to work together. Housing problems can lead to more community problems and a member of the group suggests contacting community officers Housing and neighbourhood services. One group raised the need for more consideration

Report on the Consultation

towards homes for life that can be adapted as people get older so that people do not have to move from their community to have a suitable and accessible house. It was also noted that there are not enough suitable places available at an affordable price.

A group emphasized the need to keep the objectives realistic to be able to act.

General matters

During the consultation several general points were received about the objectives. These included numbering the action points and using language that is more accessible and understandable. The importance of the objectives should also be better explained. There was concern that some statements could be misleading without further explanation in the whole document, for example saying that everyone has five equality characteristics.

One group raised the importance of considering intersectionality and how the government's plans are intertwined.

Input of Elected Members

We also sought the opinion of the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee on the Draft Objectives.

- The importance of removing barriers and tackling inequalities in employment (Objective 1)
- The importance of collecting data to ensure we are working towards a diverse workforce (Objective 1)
- Make sure we include the views of different groups to ensure we encourage people with different characteristics e.g. women to apply for senior positions within the Council. It was also noted that women are over-represented in lower paid jobs e.g. care (Objective 1)

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- The need to ensure that questionnaires are representative of the community e.g. a representative number of Welsh speakers or young people had not completed it. Also more had answered from some areas than others.
- The community works better when people have equality
- The fact that an objective on education was included was welcomed but it was felt that the wording was more about the world of education than about equality and further explanation was needed (Objective 4)

CYNGOR GWYNEDD CABINET



Meeting date: March 12th 2024
Cabinet Member: Cllr. Dyfrig Siencyn
Contact Officer: Dafydd Gibbard, Chief Executive
Subject: Funding for Climate and Nature Emergency Plan projects

A report to the Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet

1. The decision sought.

1.1 Cabinet approval to prioritise £1,640,495 from the climate fund for the following projects:

- a) Green Fleet Plan – £1,048,400
- b) Lighting Upgrade Pilot Scheme – £416,617
- c) Heating Pumps Plan - £175,478

1.2 To delegate the right to prioritise the expenditure of the rest of the climate plan fund to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader and Members of the Climate and Nature Board.

2 The reason why a decision is needed.

2.1 To prioritise the climate funding in order to enable the Council to deliver projects that would reduce carbon emissions and contribute to our goal of being zero carbon by 20230.

3. Background

3.1 At its meeting on March 8, 2022, the Cabinet adopted the Climate and Emergency Nature Plan (CAHN) available at <https://www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/en/Residents/Documents-Residents/Climate-Change/Climate-and-Nature-Emergency-Plan.pdf>. Its vision is for “Cyngor Gwynedd to be zero net and ecologically positive by 2030.”

3.2 The report attached to this Plan stated in paragraph 5.2:

‘Further works needs to be undertaken to measure the financial costs of some projects, and to confirm the financial funds available to support this plan. This work will be done in the near future and a further financial report will be brought to Cabinet in order to prioritise the projects to be implemented.’

3.3 We have been continuously working to establish the cost of some individual projects. Given the evolving nature of the field, especially in terms of technology, attempting or plan and

price each project before implementation risks impeding progress and falling short of our desired outcomes.

- 3.4 We have therefore identified those projects which are most developed and practical to implement, while continuing to develop others plans.
- 3.5 At the Full Council meeting on 3 March, 2022, it was agreed that a “climate plan” fund worth £3 million should be created through the bidding process of one-off revenue, for the purpose of implementing the CAHN.
- 3.6 In addition, the Cabinet agreed at its meeting on 22 November, 2022, to use £2.8 million from its general funds to finance an investment plan in solar PV panels on 54 of our buildings, with the revenue savings contribution to our savings plan.
- 3.7 As of March 2024, £214,928 has already been committed from our Climate Fund, and if the Cabinet chooses to allocate funding for the projects outlines section 1.1., the remaining balance in the fund would be £1,144,577 and earmarked for future projects.
- 3.8 Funding the three projects in section 1.1 would contribute to achieving the following projects in the Climate and Nature Emergency Plan (CAHN):
 - 7.8 Improving the fabric of council-owned buildings to maximise energy efficiency as far as possible.
 - 7.9 Electrifying building heating systems to minimise carbon emissions.
 - 7.12 Enhancing lighting systems in leisure centres to decrease energy consumption.
 - 8.1 Transition from fossil fuel vehicles to an ultra-low emission vehicle (ULEV) fleet (cars and vans).

4. Projects

Green Fleet Plan

- 4.1 At its meeting on January 24, 2023, the Cabinet adopted the Green Fleet Plan, 2023-29, aimed at providing the Council’s services with a fleet of safe, effective and emission-free vehicles in order to deliver for the people of Gwynedd.
- 4.2 The Council’s Fleet Service has participated in a national purchasing arrangement, where several local authorities across Wales have committed to combining their orders for cars and small electric vans by placing one order together. Placing one large order will reduce the purchase cost compared to the Council placing an order on its own.
- 4.3 We have 44 diesel and petrol vehicles that reach the end of their life in 2023/24, and 23 vehicles in 24/45. In line with our Green Fleet Plan, we will replace them with electric vehicles instead. This purchase will result in emissions savings of 64 tonnes of CO₂.
- 4.4 Money has already accrued in the flee fund, sources from depreciation and other sources, to contribute toward the purchase of new vehicles; but as the cost of buying an electric vehicle is higher than the price of a diesel/petrol vehicle, there exists a funding gap between the accrued funds and the actual purchase cost.
- 4.5 The revenue-saving objectives outlines in table 4.6 below are predicated on a vehicle lifespan of 5 years, the utilisation of electricity instead of diesel, and maintenance cost differentials. As

it is unclear what the savings will be in full until 5 years from now, we cannot put the savings against the purchase cost at the moment.

Year	Money accrued through a depreciation/fleet fund	Price of a new vehicle	Financial gap	Revenue-saving objectives (5 years)	tCO2e goal
2023/24	£486,660	£1,176,594	£689,934	£396,000	64
2024/25	£300,813	£659,280	£358,466	£207,000	34

- 4.6 An application is made for £1,048,400 from the climate plan fund to bridge the financial gap for the purchase of 67 vehicles for 2023/34 and 2024/25.

Lighting Upgrade Pilot Scheme

- 4.7 Following the adoption of the CAHN by the Council, the Welsh Government Energy Service (WGES) was tasked with commissioned with evaluating additional opportunities to reduce the carbon emissions of the Council's buildings. A desktop review of current energy management practices was carried out, together with a quantitative analysis of the efficiency of the buildings.
- 4.8 One project that has been identified is to upgrade lighting by transitioning from fluorescent tubes to LED lighting.
- 4.9 Changing the lighting in most of our buildings would require a significant investment and would take a few years to complete, so the intention is to first carry out a pilot of 6 buildings of different nature and usage; thereafter reviewing the results before deciding to move on to replicate this across our estate. The pilot will include a residential home, a primary school, two secondary schools, and two leisure centres.
- 4.10 At present, we estimate that a further investment of £3.3 million would be required to carry out this second phase (full project outlines in table 4.13). This figure will be reviewed after running the pilot scheme.
- 4.11 The costs and financial and carbon savings for the pilot scheme are set out below. The full project costs are currently estimated to be:

	Projected cost	Projected financial savings	Projected Carbon tCO2 reduction
Pilot	£416,617	£53,880	56t
Full project	£3,300,000	£444,335	468t
Total	£3,716,617	£498,215	524t

- 4.12 Given the instability of the energy market, it is possible that the unit price of electricity may increase over the coming years, and in this respect, the table below outlines how a change to the unit price could impact the business case. A year ago, our electricity costs were 16.5p, but have now increased to 25p.

Pilot investment cost	£416,617			
Electricity cost per unit	25c	34c	54c	60c
Annual savings	£ 53,880	£ 73,277	£ 116,380	£129,312
Repayment period (years)	7.7	5.7	3.6	3.2

4.13 A request will be made for £416,617 from the climate plan fund to finance the Lighting Upgrade Pilot Scheme.

Heating Pumps Scheme

4.14 Following the same principle of running a pilot scheme, we have applied for a grant from the Welsh Government’s Energy Service to install heating pumps at three sites – two primary schools and a leisure centre. We have since received confirmation of a grant amounting to £1,754,776.

4.15 To claim this grant, we are required to contribute 10% in matching funds.

4.16 This presents a prime opportunity for us to trial this low-carbon heating method and gather insights before considering the wider implementation across our estate.

4.17 A funding request of £175,478 is made from the climate fund to secure the £1,754,776 grant and finance the heating decarbonisation projects at the three sites.

Other projects

4.18 Various other opportunities have emerged for experimentation and to trial in the field, for example, in encouraging low carbon journeys with more staff commuting to the workplace, aligning with the Hybrid Working Policy. These initiatives include:

- Buying electric bikes for staff to borrow for commuting to work.
- Hiring electric cars to be trialled by staff on lease for commuting to work.
- Encouraging staff to use public transport by offering a cheaper season ticket.
- Encourage staff to care share.

4.20 The Climate and Nature Board has declared its support for experimentation and innovation in the field to work towards the goal of reaching net zero, with an intention to invest reasonably in these plans.

5 Climate Plan Fund

5.1 Since the establishment of the Climate Fund in 2022, £214,928 has been earmarked for issues such as funding the position of Programme Manager, carbon literacy training, matching funds for a grant to upgrade lighting at the Tennis Centre, and feasibility studies for heat acquisition and decarbonisation.

5.2 A balance of £2,785,072 out of the initial £3 million remains in the fund.

5.3 Should the Cabinet approve the funding for the project outlined in this report, the remaining balance would decrease to £1,144,577.

- 5.4 Given the lead role of the Climate and Nature Board within the Council, it is sensible for the Board to influence the prioritisation of fund expenditure moving forward.
- 5.5 To this end, and in order to enable action on the priorities of the Climate and Nature Board as opportunities arise, it is requested that control over decisions about the allocation of the remaining part of the Climate Fund be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader and the Members of the Climate and Nature Board.

6 Next steps and timetable

- 6.1 Subject to the decision of the Cabinet, we will proceed to:
- Order the fleet of electric cars.
 - Commission the work to upgrade lighting at 6 sites.
 - Commission the heat decarbonisation work at 3 sites in order to claim the relevant grant money.

Opinion of the statutory officers

The Monitoring Officer:

The Cabinet was assured on the adoption of the Climate Emergency and Nature Plan that a further report on utilisation of the fund would be presented to them. This report achieves this and provides an opportunity to apportion resources to specific projects. The decision and delegation is appropriate.

Head of Finance:

I can confirm the accuracy of the figures in the report. I have no objection to the decision sought.

REPORT TO CYNGOR GWYNEDD CABINET

12 MARCH 2024

Cabinet Member: Councillor Dyfrig Siencyn, Leader of the Council

Title of Item: One-off Bids/Transformation Fund 2024/25

Contact officer: Dafydd Gibbard, Chief Executive

1. The decision sought

The Cabinet is asked to approve the one-off bids of £6,508,260 for 2024/25 which are to be funded from the Transformation fund and the Financial Strategy fund.

2. Reason for the need of a decision

The bids for a one-off resource are presented in a separate report to the Budget report as the allocation of a one-off resource does not have an impact on setting our annual revenue budget or a consideration when having to determine the rate of Council Tax. This report will be submitted before the start of the 2024/25 financial year so that action can be taken from 1st April 2024.

3. Introduction and rationale

- 3.1 Annually the Council's departments are invited to submit bids for a one-off resource for issues such as coping with temporary pressures, carrying out Council Plan projects, transforming services or trialling before concluding if it is sensible to provide a permanent budget.
- 3.2 Although a number of bids were submitted by the departments, it was necessary to prioritise and limit the bids that were to receive approval to ensure that no excessive use of the funds is made.
- 3.3 Normally the Council's Transformation Fund / Scheme is used to finance the one-off bids. There is a balance of £3.53 million in the fund which isn't committed, therefore available to partially fund the bids of £6.51 million. It is intended to use the remaining £2.97 million to finance it from the Financial Strategy Fund.
- 3.4 Following the allocation of the one-off bids above, there are no funds left in the Council's Transformation Fund / Scheme. If temporary bids are to be funded in the future, it will be necessary to consider how to re-supply this fund when opportunities arise.
- 3.5 It is recommended that a higher than usual amount be approved for the 2024/25 one-off bids as we are not in a position to provide permanent revenue for them. As a result, it is recommended to fund them for a period rather than permanently. Some of these bids go to

areas that are overspending e.g. homelessness, in the hope that we will be able to bring those overspenders under control.

	Balance 31.3.23 £000	Funding for One-off bids £000	Amended Balance £000
Balances	7,912		7,912
Financial Strategy Fund	9,024	(2,974)	6,050
Transformation Fund (uncommitted)	3,534	(3,534)	-
	<u>20,470</u>	<u>(6,508)</u>	<u>13,962</u>

** Financial Strategy Fund - following the August and November revenue budget review additional money will be put into the Financial Strategy Fund, which results from corporate underspend, the exact figure will be dependent on the amount of departmental overspend that needs to be funded at the end of 2023 /24.*

4. One-off Bids 2024/25

- 4.1 The bids received have been assessed by me, the two directors and the Head of Finance and are presented in **Appendix 1** details of the one-off bids recommended to receive financial support for 2024/25.
- 4.2 It is recommended to approve 22 bids worth £6,508,260 as listed in **Table 1** below, with more detailed information about the individual bids included in **Appendix 2**. The transform fund available to fund the Council's priorities, together with the financial strategy fund, to be used as a source to finance these bids.

Table 1 One-off Revenue Bids 2024/25

	Bid Title	Recommended amount (£)
Economy and Community Department		
One-off 1	Town Centre Regeneration	145,000
One-off 2	Sustainable Tourism Assistant position	46,040
Corporate Support Department		
One-off 3	Random alcohol and drug testing	15,380
One-off 4	Fund to pay for Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) security checks	50,000
One-off 5	Accessibility of the corporate website	41,960
One-off 6	Meeting statutory language matters	79,920
One-off 7	Language Strategy – action on delivery	85,080

One-off 8	Continue with the Apprenticeship Scheme and the Graduate Scheme. Establishment of a new Work Experience Scheme and Care Academy - Children and Adults	2,383,500
Highways, Engineering and YGC Department		
One-off 9	Commercial, Projects and Contracts Manager position	198,150
One-off 10	Continue to employ a Single Point of Contact	48,300
One-off 11	Contactless payment technology for public toilets	80,000
One-off 12	Modernise and improve the Street Cleaning service	88,610
One-off 13	Pilot Scheme - Town Centre Rubbish Collection	181,000
Environment Department		
One-off 14	Public transport	400,000
One-off 15	Waste and recycling structure	45,100
One-off 16	CCTV cameras on vehicles	196,970
Housing and Property Department		
One-off 17	Homelessness emergency accommodation costs	1,200,000
Education Department		
One-off 18	Re-tendering of school buses	486,000
One-off 19	Taxi transport and school trains	409,610
Children and Supporting Families Department		
One-off 20	Additional workers as a result of accepting Asylum Seekers without parents as part of the National Transfer Plan	115,000
Adults and Children Together		
One-off 21	Salaries of Social Workers and Occupational Therapists	212,640
TOTAL		6,508,260

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 Following approval of the bids set out in Part 1 of the report, the money will be allocated to the relevant Departments so that they can act to spend on the services during the 2024/25 financial year.

View of the local member

Not relevant

View of the Statutory Officers

Monitoring Officer:

No observations to add in relation to propriety

Head of Finance:

Officers from the Finance Department have collaborated closely with the author of the report, and I can confirm the accuracy of the figures contained therein. I am satisfied that adequate resources have been identified, as shown in part 3.5, to finance the one-off bids shown in Table 1.

Appendices list

Appendix 1 – One-off Bids Summary

Appendix 2 – One-off Revenue Bids

APPENDIX 1 - SUMMARY OF ONE-OFF BIDS

	Bid Title	One-off (£)
Economy and Community Department		
One-off 1	Town Centre Regeneration	145,000
One-off 2	Sustainable Tourism Assistant Post	46,040
Corporate Support Department		
One-off 3	Alcohol and drugs random testing	15,380
One-off 4	Fund to pay for Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) security checks	50,000
One-off 5	Accessibility of the corporate website	41,960
One-off 6	Addressing statutory Language matters	79,920
One-off 7	Language Strategy – implementing delivery	85,080
One-off 8	Continue with the Apprenticeship Scheme and the Graduate Scheme. Setting up a new Work Experience Scheme and Care Academy - Children and Adults	2,383,500
Highways, Engineering and YGC Department		
One-off 9	Commercial, Projects and Contracts Manager Post	198,150
One-off 10	Continue to employ a Single Point of Contact	48,300
One-off 11	Invest in technology to charge a fee for using public toilets	80,000
One-off 12	Modernising and improving the Street Cleaning service	88,610
One-off 13	Pilot Scheme - Town Centre Litter Collection	181,000
Environment Department		
One-off 14	Public Transport	400,000
One-off 15	Waste and Recycling Structure	45,100
One-off 16	CCTV Camera on the Vehicles	196,970
Housing and Property Department		
One-off 17	Homelessness emergency accommodation costs	1,200,000
Education Department		
One-off 18	Re-tendering School Buses	486,000
One-off 19	School Taxis and Trains Transport	409,610

Children and Supporting Families Department

One-off 20	Additional workers as a result of receiving Asylum Seekers Without Parents as part of the National Transfer Scheme	115,000
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Joint Adults and Children's Department

One-off 21	Salaries of Social Workers and Occupational Therapists	212,640
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6,508,260

APPENDIX 2 - ONE-OFF REVENUE BIDS 2024/25 RECOMMEND APPROVAL

	Bid Title	Details of the Bid	Amount recommended (£)
ECONOMY AND COMMUNITY			
One-off 1	Town Centre Regeneration	<p>The threat to and decline of town centres has been afoot for years, with online shopping and out-of-town supermarkets being factors contributing to the decline. The Covid period has accelerated the decline leaving many towns suffering from shop closures, properties empty for long-term periods and a lack of atmosphere.</p> <p>This bid is for the costs of Bangor Regeneration Programme Manager, Regeneration Programmes Manager and Town Centre Regeneration Projects Manager for the period 2025/26.</p>	145,000
One-off 2	Sustainable Tourism Assistant Post	Secure two year funding for a post that is key to our efforts to realise a new sustainable tourism strategy in collaboration with Eryri National Park Authority. The additional resource will ensure that key support is available to support the priorities and outputs of the Gwynedd and Eryri Sustainable Tourism Strategic Plan, a priority project in the Council Plan.	46,040
CORPORATE SUPPORT			
One-off 3	Alcohol and drugs random testing	<p>Since the Alcohol and Drugs policy was established some years ago, which allows the testing of staff members when they are suspected of being under the influence, there have been a number of staff who have tested positive to a high level of alcohol and/or illegal drugs in their system. This is a concern for service managers who are involved in high risk work e.g. working on highways, driving heavy machinery etc.</p> <p>The bid is intended to fund a one-year pilot working specifically with employees who have been identified as doing work that has 'very high risk' elements to it.</p>	15,380
One-off 4	Fund to pay for Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) security checks	A bid for one-off funding to replenish a fund for the expenditure of security checks for Council staff which are above the budget.	50,000
One-off 5	Accessibility of the corporate website	<p>In August 2021, the Cabinet Office carried out an assessment of the website revealing 10 accessibility issues affecting a large number of the information on the website. One particular issue was the significant number of PDF documents – 2,500 – on the website that are not accessible. Added to this are thousands of PDF documents in third-party systems.</p> <p>A bid for funding a Website Accessibility Officer to</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dispose of / correct 2,500 documents on the website; 2. Establish guidance/training for staff on how to create accessible PDF documents before sending them to be posted on the website in accordance with the commitment; 3. Set up a series of BSL (British Sign Language) videos for main services, e.g. blue badge application, contacting the Council in an emergency/out of hours and registration information. 	41,960
One-off 6	Addressing statutory Language matters	<p>A bid to fund an Assistant Language Officer for two years.</p> <p>Demand for the unit's language planning service and expertise has increased steadily over the past few years. Funding the above post would ensure sufficient capacity to cope with the work and free up the Senior Language and Scrutiny Advisor and the Language Advisor to focus on other issues in the field.</p> <p>The officer is specifically responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • collecting data and monitoring the progress of the Language Strategy in accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards • dealing with the impact assessments submitted with planning applications, and submitting comments in line with a challenging timeframe 	79,920
One-off 7	Language Strategy – implementing delivery	In December 2023, the Full Council approved the Council's new Language Strategy for the period 2023 – 2033. There are high expectations from the public and politicians of Gwynedd for the Strategy to tackle specific projects to boost and promote the Welsh Language in Gwynedd. In the past, no investment has been made to realise the Language Strategy, which is contrary to the expectations of the Language Commissioner. Fund one post for two years.	85,080

One-off 8	Continue with the Apprenticeship Scheme and the Graduate Scheme. Setting up a new Work Experience Scheme and Care Academy - Children and Adults	<p><u>Apprenticeship Scheme, Graduate Scheme and Establish a Work Experience Scheme</u> Continue to fund the apprenticeship and graduate schemes for 3 years. The main purpose of the expenditure will be to encourage departments to establish new posts by contributing towards the salary and development costs of the individuals on the various schemes.</p> <p>The money will also pay for the salaries of the Talent and Apprenticeship Team who work with the departments to identify and establish suitable positions, promote and engage with various stakeholders, put suitable recruitment and appointment arrangements in place, support the individuals on a day-to-day basis and ensure the quality of the experiences and providers.</p> <p><u>Establish a Care Academy (Joint Children and Adults)</u> Recruitment and retention of social care staff has been a challenge for some years and the pandemic has exacerbated the situation. A number of job gaps leading to increased pressure on the staff that are working and many are leaving their jobs. Therefore, a scheme needs to be established for employees to follow a social care career path to jobs such as organisation managers / social workers and occupational therapists and working in organisations / community as part of the development process.</p>	2,383,500
HIGHWAYS, ENGINEERING AND YGC			
One-off 9	Commercial, Projects and Contracts Manager Post	After a period of review of Gwynedd Consultancy Service, this role is vital to ensure the growth of the Service while protecting jobs and maintaining employment in the area. The role will lead on commercial elements as well as the re-introduction of an external work pricing service within the following services (highway maintenance, grounds maintenance, public toilets and street cleaning areas). These services already undertake work that attracts income but also face overspending issues at present. This post will provide opportunities to be able to price new work competitively, taking advantage of the services' expertise when it comes to competing for work. The post will be self-funded at the end of year 4.	198,150
One-off 10	Continue to employ a Single Point of Contact	<p>Continue to employ a Single Point of Contact to act as the primary point of contact for surveillance systems (CCTV), to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordinate information about all systems in use across all departments • Ensure that the Council's workforce implementing surveillance technology are properly trained and follow corporate policies • Update and introduce corporate surveillance equipment policies • Introduce surveillance camera procedures and provide updates on any changes to legislation • Compile a full and detailed asset register of all cameras and associated equipment within the authority • Conduct an annual review • Ensure cyber threats are considered to determine and record what checks are in place to protect data 	48,300
One-off 11	Invest in technology to charge a fee for using public toilets	A scheme to introduce contact-less payment technology in 5 public toilets which charge a fee for access - Caernarfon x2, Dolgellau, Porthmadog and Pwllheli.	80,000
One-off 12	Modernising and improving the Street Cleaning service	<p>Costs of software, hardware (for vehicles) and licenses.</p> <p>The bid's intention is to use new technology to modernise work management systems to improve efficiency and quality of service. This system would also be a resource to meet savings targets. The recent review of the Street Cleaning Service has identified that existing work management systems that include circuits and collections programmes, are far behind the times and are a barrier to achieving improvements.</p>	88,610
One-off 13	Pilot Scheme - Town Centre Litter Collection	<p>2 additional Street Cleaning posts.</p> <p>A recent review of the Street Cleaning Service highlighted the need to raise the profile of the teams in the eyes of our residents as well as modernise their approach.</p> <p>The intention of the pilot scheme would be to locate one street cleaner with a new electric litter cart / cleaner in a prominent urban area in each of the 3 operational areas and change their working hours from between 05:00 and 13:00 currently to 08:00 - 16:00 so that they are visible to the public.</p> <p>Alongside the scheme, there would be a branding exercise to reinforce the message that keeping our communities clean and tidy is a priority for the Council. The cost contributes to 3 electric litter carts / cleaners and 2 additional street cleaning posts for 2 years.</p>	181,000

ENVIRONMENT			
One-off 14	Public Transport	<p>Estimated overspend of around £400,000 in 2023/24.</p> <p>Bid for additional resources to be able to maintain services, and continue with projects to make innovative improvements to the public transport network in Gwynedd.</p> <p>The additional resources would bring spending under control for 2024/25 and give the Department and Council the opportunity to reach a more stable arrangement with Welsh Government, to ensure public transport services are sustainable, reliable and cost effective.</p>	400,000
One-off 15	Waste and Recycling Structure	Fund the job changes when the service was part of the Highways and Municipal Department, as well as the changes that have been made since the service was transferred.	45,100
One-off 16	CCTV Camera on the Vehicles	Install cameras on work vehicles, to promote good health and safety behaviours among workers, reduce the risk to workers working alone, improve safety around machinery and gather evidence for investigations e.g. bins being missed, property damage or accidents.	196,970
HOUSING AND PROPERTY			
One-off 17	Homelessness emergency accommodation costs	Rising costs over the past four years because of increased demand for accommodation for homeless individuals and families in Gwynedd. The cost of a night in emergency accommodation has also risen from around £50 in September 2022 to £85 now. This pressure is above the £3m earmarked from the Council Tax Premium for the field.	1,200,000
EDUCATION			
One-off 18	Re-tendering School Buses	<p>The Transport Unit undertook a re-tendering process of Dwyfor Buses in March 2023. The result of the process was that the costs of the new contracts were significantly higher. Furthermore, some Meirionydd contracts are subject to re-tendering in February / March 2024.</p> <p>A Transport Review Panel has been set up to identify potential efficiency opportunities in the field to try to manage the increase in spending. However, implementing a modification in the bus contracts is a difficult one, especially in the short term.</p>	486,000
One-off 19	School Taxis and Trains Transport	<p>Overspending based on the September 2023 contracts. Related to -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deficit in bid submitted for the 2023/24 financial year. • Actual increase in the last 12 months mainly on Special Schools transport contracts and Further Education transport contracts. 	409,610
CHILDREN AND SUPPORTING FAMILIES			
One-off 20	Additional workers as a result of receiving Asylum Seekers Without Parents as part of the National Transfer Scheme	<p>Supporting Asylum Seekers Without Parents places pressure on the team in terms of capacity and additional work. The statutory work that needs to be carried out with these young people is more complex because of the nature of their personal situation. They are looked-after children until the age of 18, and therefore need to carry out visits at least every 6 weeks, carry out statutory reviews, put education arrangements in place and monitor the progress of the young people in general. The team has faced an increase in demand at a general level as well as this cohort of young people.</p> <p>Bid for funds to create capacity to meet the additional need.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Practice Leader – to carry a workload and to assist the Team Manager by developing contacts / expertise / giving advice / attending regional and national meetings as needed. 2. One Social Worker post. 	115,000
JOINT ADULTS AND CHILDREN			
One-off 21	Salaries of Social Workers and Occupational Therapists	A one-off bid to protect the salary rights of social workers and occupational therapists as we switch to the new staffing structure.	212,640
TOTAL ONE-OFF REVENUE BIDS			6,508,260

TRANSFORMATION / FFORDD GWYNEDD TOTAL 3,712,290

INCREASE IN DEMAND TOTAL 2,795,970



CYNGOR GWYNEDD – Report to Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet

Title of Item:	PURCHASE OF CROWN OFFICES, PENRALLT, CAERNARFON
Cabinet Member:	CIlr Craig ab Iago, Cabinet Member for Housing and Property
Relevant Officer:	Carys Fôn Williams, Head of Housing and Property Department
Date of meeting:	12 March 2024

1. The Decision Sought:

The Cabinet is asked to authorise the purchase of the Crown Offices in Penrallt, Caernarfon, in accordance with terms and conditions to be determined by the Head of Housing and Property Department.

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

The Council adopted a Housing Action Plan in February 2021. The Housing Action Plan incorporates 33 schemes, with the aim of ensuring that the people of Gwynedd have access to a suitable home of a high standard, that is affordable and improves their quality of life.

Authorising the purchase of the Crown Offices site would enable the Council to develop one of the Housing Action Plan schemes.

3. Introduction and Rationale

Background/Introduction

The Crown Offices is a substantial property located in the centre of Caernarfon.

The purchase and re-purposing of the property would enable the Council to provide up to 46 homes, and provide support to equip residents to live independently. The size of the site's current layout also offers an opportunity to incorporate a Housing Hub to provide more extensive housing support services for the county's residents.

The rationale and justification for recommending the decision

The Crown Offices have been empty for some years now, with their condition deteriorating, and the site is a cause for concern in terms of anti-social behaviour.

At present, there are 2300 applications, which equates to almost 5000 people, on a waiting list for Social Housing in Gwynedd. Since April 2023, 885 people have presented as homeless

in the county and almost 250 households are currently living in unsuitable emergency accommodation, with options to move on to permanent accommodation very limited due to a lack of suitable housing stock.

Opportunities

Converting the Crown buildings would offer the potential to provide 46 homes, reducing the reliance on unsuitable emergency accommodation, and enabling the Council to house residents in quality homes while awaiting permanent accommodation.

The ambition is that the development would also incorporate a Housing Hub for the provision of multi-agency housing services and support to the residents of the county more widely, and the layout of the property allows for the incorporation of a provision of this nature.

The work of developing the site will provide employment opportunities within construction in the area, and the new-look development will give a new lease of life to a disused building, encouraging community growth in Caernarfon town centre.

A feasibility study has already been prepared for the proposed conversion work, and initial inspections of the buildings suggest that there will be no practical obstacles or unexpected costs associated with the work of converting the buildings to provide homes.

Risks and mitigation measures

The proposed development is not without its risks, and it should be recognised that the Council's ability to realise its ambition of converting the site will be dependent on securing sufficient funding sources to meet the development costs, and on securing planning permission to realise the development.

To mitigate the above risks, funding from the Transitional Accommodation Capital Programme fund has been secured to meet the costs of purchasing the site, conditional upon completion of the purchase by the end of this financial year.

An initial feasibility study estimates that the development costs for the site as a whole will be between £12 million and £14 million.

It is anticipated that grant funding of £50k will be available from the Town Transformation developing fund for developing the project, and a sum of £6 million has been designated from the second homes premium as a contribution towards the development.

Welsh Government have stated in initial discussions that they would be willing to support the Council in the residential element through either the Capital Program for Temporary Accommodation fund or the Social Housing Grant and it is anticipated that the amount available as a contribution towards the residential element would be approximately £6 million.

Positive discussions have also taken place with the Government in relation to the availability of funding sources from the Town Transformation Fund to cover the costs of developing the proposed Housing Hub, and it is anticipated that this fund will contribute an amount of approximately £1 million towards the development.

Although not all funding sources have been secured, positive discussions are ongoing with the Welsh Government in order to address the financial gap in order to realise the development, and pre-planning enquiries suggest that the proposed development would meet Planning policy requirements.

Should the decision to purchase the site be authorised, it is inevitable that the property would stand empty for a period while the work of developing the scheme and securing planning permission takes place. The costs of safeguarding and maintaining the property during this period would be met from the second homes premium.

As there is no intention to pay in excess of market value for the site, the above risks can be mitigated further, as it would be possible for the Council to sell the site on if there was no budget to realise the development, or if planning permission was not approved.

If the Council did not proceed to purchase the property, the likelihood is that the site would be sold to a private developer and developed as open market housing.

Equality Act 2010

The whole purpose of the Housing Action Plan is to establish specific projects to give Gwynedd residents a fair opportunity to secure suitable homes. It therefore follows that equality issues are at the core of the entire plan. In accordance with the Council's statutory duties through the Equality Act 2010, an equality impact assessment of the Housing Action Plan as a whole was completed, and that assessment informed and reinforced the schemes within the Plan.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The principles of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 were also a central consideration when preparing for the Housing Action Plan. The principles and the 'Five ways of working' are an integral part of the Housing Action Plan schemes, responding and meeting the housing needs of the people of Gwynedd in a sustainable way and without undermining people's future well-being.

The proposed development for converting the offices into supported accommodation, and providing associated support in relation to housing issues, offers an opportunity to work in an innovative and preventative way in an attempt to reduce and avoid problems from evolving in the future. Approving the decision would also mean preventing the problem of having an empty property in the town for an extended period, and the associated challenges.

Conclusions

In implementing the decision sought, the Council will facilitate:

- a. The development of up to 46 quality homes, addressing the needs of the people of Gwynedd for suitable homes, and reducing the dependence on unsuitable emergency accommodation.
- b. The provision of support services for residents of the development to live independently.
- c. The provision of housing support services for the county's residents more widely.
- d. Associated economic and social benefits.

Securing planning permission and sufficient funding to realise the development provides an element of risk, but as highlighted above, steps have been taken to ensure that these risks can be mitigated.

The Cabinet is therefore asked to weigh up the above opportunities against the risks before reaching a conclusion.

4. Next steps

If the Decision sought is approved, we will proceed to complete the purchase and undertake preparatory work to develop the site.

5. Local Member's Views

Councillor Olaf Cai Larsen

As a member in an area like Caernarfon where there are a significant number of people on waiting lists, and where it is common for people to find themselves homeless, I welcome any measure to prepare provision and support for those who are in need of housing and welcome any steps to mitigate costs on the Council's budgets. I have also been worried about the site - it is becoming unsightly, deteriorating and it causes problems for people who live in the area due to anti-social behavior and problems with the alarm system.

I therefore welcome the development, and trust that thorough consideration will be given to the needs of residents who already live in the area when upgrading the building and once the development becomes operational. Access to the area is limited, there are significant parking problems in the area, as in the rest of the town center, and some of the nearby houses accommodate people with profound learning difficulties.

6. Views of the Statutory Officers

Chief Finance Officer

"As the report notes, there are significant risks involved with this scheme but I am of the opinion that these risks can be mitigated to acceptable levels. I am satisfied that

arrangements are in place in the Housing and Property Department to claim funding from the Transitional Accommodation Capital Programme (TACP) – which is a Welsh Government grant scheme – to fund the purchase of the building. The purchase price will be set by an independent body. I can also confirm that there are resources in the Council Tax Premium Fund to commence the work of developing the building and I understand that other sources of funding are also being pursued. However, in line with the Council’s usual arrangements, the Department may need to underwrite any remaining funding gaps until there is any formal decision to the contrary.

As with any scheme of this nature, the risks (including, but not exclusively, financial risks) will need to be kept under continuous review so that the mitigation arrangements remain suitable. The success of this project will bring obvious benefits to the Council and the people of Gwynedd.”

Monitoring Officer

“The decision sought is based on an assessment of the risks involved in the development of a project of this nature. There is clearly an opportunity to develop a substantial building in Caernarfon to meet the objectives of the Housing Strategy. The risks involved are explained in the report. Measures are already being put in place to address them and manage potential impacts. These are appropriately set out for the Cabinet.”