

ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL Scrutiny Report Template

Committee:	Corporate Scrutiny Committee
Date:	10/04/2025
Subject:	North Wales Regional Transport Plan
Purpose of Report:	IACC Response to North Wales Regional Transport Plan
Scrutiny Chair:	Cllr. Douglas Fowlie
Portfolio Holder(s):	Cllr. Dafydd Rhys Thomas
Head of Service:	Huw Percy Head of Highways, Waste and Property Services
Report Author: Tel: Email:	Dylan Llewelyn Jones (01248 751805) DylanLlewelynJones@ynysmon.llyw.cymru
Local Members:	Applicable to all elected members

25

1 - Recommendation/s

The Committee is requested to endorse the Isle of Anglesey County Council's proposed consultation response to the North Wales Regional Transport Plan as set out in Appendix A.

2 – Link to Council Plan / Other Corporate Priorities

Council Plan 2023-2028

Climate Change

- To develop and deliver sustainable transport plans such as decarbonising transport, active travel, and cycle routes

Economy

- Collaborate with key stakeholders and partners to strengthen the role of Holyhead and the port as a key international gateway
- Increasing and encouraging the development of low carbon projects such as the Holyhead Hydrogen Hub.
- Continue to deliver a green, sustainable recovery and improve the vitality and viability of town-centres through improved connectivity between various transport modes.

Social Care

- Ensure community hubs are accessible to enable independence and improve people's health and wellbeing

Wellbeing Objectives

- The people of Anglesey are safe, healthy and as independent as possible
- The people of Anglesey and its communities enjoy, protect and enhance their built and natural environment for future generations.

3 – Guiding Principles for Scrutiny Members**To assist Members when scrutinising the topic:-**

- 3.1** Impact the matter has on individuals and communities – the RTP has an impact on all individuals and communities as everyone is dependent on the transport system for travel purposes whether undertaking local journeys within Anglesey or wider across the North Wales region (and further afield). Therefore, ensuring the RTP is fit for purpose for the Isle of Anglesey is critical and that the future interventions has the potential for positive change to reduce the inequalities that exist in rural Wales.
- 3.2** A look at the efficiency & effectiveness of any proposed change – both financially and in terms of quality – Processes are currently in place by Welsh Government to modernise the grants system within the transport sector (as there are currently seven different programmes) to provide better strategic direction across the various transport modes and to increase the quality of improvements by having an overarching understanding on the schemes rather than treating each grant separately.
- 3.3** The risks associated with the North Wales Regional Transport Plan is currently seen as very low as this is a strategic and visionary document and not focussed on the delivery of individual schemes.
- 3.4** Scrutiny taking a performance monitoring or quality assurance role
- 3.5** Looking at plans and proposals from a perspective of:
- Long term - The IACC is supportive of the principle of preparing a new RTP for North Wales which sets out vision for the next 5 years (2025-2030) in respect of how transport can contribute to the wider social, environmental, economic and cultural well-being of people in the region
 - Prevention – The RTP aligns with the transport hierarchy set out in WG's Llwybr Newydd which prioritises sustainable transport measures in order reduce the impact of transport (of people and goods) on the environment.
 - Integration – The RTP seeks to consider all the various modes of transport, however, the County Council considers that further work can be undertaken to ensure there is synergy between all modes of transport especially to connect rural areas to urban interchanges as this will provide further accessibility for all to be able to use public transport.
 - Collaboration – Public Consultation events held locally to receive feedback from all members of the community.
 - Involvement – Highways / Transport Officers at each Local Authority have input in developing the RTP by working with their portfolio Members through the Strategic Transport Sub-Committee. The challenging timescale to adopt the RTP has meant that the public consultation period provides an opportunity to reflect on the draft version and to offer refinement for the final version.
- 3.6** Please see section 6 in relation to the potential impact the decision would have on
- protected groups under the Equality Act 2010

- those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage in their lives (when making strategic decisions)
- opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language

4 - Key Scrutiny Questions

1. How will the public consultation process influence the final version of the Regional Transport Plan?
2. What are the key challenges and opportunities within the Regional Transport Plan facing rural areas such as Isle of Anglesey?

5 – Background / Context

The North Wales Regional Transport Plan (RTP) aligns with Welsh Government's Llwybr Newydd: The Wales Transport Strategy 2021 (WTS). This document provides the strategic direction, vision and priorities for transportation in Wales. The North Wales RTP is specific to North Wales and provides the direction of travel for the next five years in terms of priorities and interventions within the various parts of the transport system.

Whilst the North Wales RTP is a high-level strategic document which sets out the vision for the region, it is the Regional Transport Delivery Plan that is of critical importance in terms of actual impactful projects that will strive to deliver improved transport linkages and connectivity across the region and within the Isle of Anglesey. Ultimately, the effectiveness of the RTP hinges upon the extent that the Delivery Plan is executed over the next 5 years.

The North Wales RTP will be led and governed by the Corporate Joint Committee (CJC). Corporate Joint Committees (CJC) are regional corporate local government entities comprised of Local Authorities within their regional geographies. The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 created the framework for establishing the CJs in Wales and they were established on 1st April 2021.

The North Wales CJC has a statutory duty to produce a:

- Strategic Development Plan
- Regional Transport Plan

In addition, they have the power to do anything that will enhance or promote regional economic wellbeing. The CJC has established its Strategic Transport and Planning Subcommittees to undertake its statutory functions. The Strategic Transport Sub-Committee has met, and work has been undertaken to prepare the draft Regional Transport Plan in line with Welsh Government guidelines.

6 – Equality Impact Assessment [including impacts on the Welsh Language]
6.1 Potential impacts on protected groups under the Equality Act 2010
<p>The IACC held ‘drop-in’ sessions at both Holyhead and Llangefni Libraries on 11th and 13th February to provide opportunities for all members of the public (including those with protected characteristics) to voice their opinion and share their thoughts on the proposed RTP in order to ensure that any impacts on protected groups under the Equality Act 2010 are captured. Further considerations to protected groups under the Equality Act 2010 will be given on a scheme by scheme basis (as part of the Regional Transport Delivery Plan) to ensure that due consideration is given to their needs.</p> <p>The above consultation measure was undertaken proactively by the County Council in order to fully integrate all groups as part of the consultation process. This is an additional mode of consultation to the online methods undertaken by Ambition North Wales (on behalf of the CJC).</p>
6.2 Potential impacts on those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage in their lives (strategic decisions)
<p>The lack of public transport in rural areas are more impactful as there is a high degree of dependency on the use of the private car – currently there are no other realistic alternative. This is a critical issue for those experiencing socio-economic disadvantages.</p> <p>In rural areas the importance of interconnectivity between different transport modes cannot be underestimated. It is accepted that services are less frequent in rural areas in comparison to urban areas due to population numbers, nevertheless, it is imperative that there is an integrated investment plan in place enabling people to travel to their chosen destination by utilising various transport modes. All sustainable transport timetables must align to promote increased use especially in rural areas. This would prevent people becoming socially excluded through lack of transportation options. North Anglesey is especially peripheral, and it should be a priority to improve connections with the Island’s urban and economic hubs and the mainland, as transport infrastructure is a key enabler for economic growth.</p> <p>Whilst recognising that the RTP acknowledges rural challenges and does provide an opportunity for improvements, it currently only focusses on each of the transport modes in isolation, whereas there needs to be interconnectivity between the transport modes to enable a more effective transport system in rural areas. The needs, challenges and opportunities of an integrated transport system to enable people in rural communities to travel to urban areas in a more seamless approach and this needs further consideration going forward.</p>
6.3 Potential impacts on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language
<p>The Integrated Wellbeing Appraisal appears to address all essential components such as how the overall programme will impact and benefit the environment, communities, equalities, economy, culture and the Welsh Language to ensure that the Transport Plan aligns with broader well-being goals that contributes to sustainable development in North Wales. There will be opportunities for people to use the Welsh Language (and treated no less favourably than the English language) with bilingual services provided on any timetabling and signage.</p>
7 – Financial Implications

There are no financial implications for the County Council at this stage. Welsh Government are currently modernizing their processes for grants system in the transportation sector. Schemes that will be developed / implemented as part of the North Wales Regional Transport Plan will be externally funded through the Corporate Joint Committee and any match-funding contribution from the County Council will be determined on a scheme by scheme basis. The delivery of schemes at Local Authority level will need to be undertaken by the officers from within the Local Authority and therefore will be dependent on available capacity.

8 – Appendices:**Appendix A – IACC Response to the North Wales Regional Transport Plan****9 - Background papers (please contact the author of the Report for any further information):**

Llwybr Newydd (Wales Transport Strategy)



April 2025

Dear Sir / Madam

Response to the North Wales Regional Transport Plan

The Isle of Anglesey County Council (IACC) welcomes this opportunity to formally comment and respond to the consultation held by the Corporate Joint Committee on the draft North Wales Regional Transport Plan (RTP).

The IACC is supportive of the principle of preparing a new RTP for North Wales which sets out vision for the next 5 years (2025-2030) in respect of how transport can contribute to the wider social, environmental, economic, and cultural well-being of people in the region. The RTP aligns with Welsh Government's Llwybr Newydd (Wales Transport Strategy).

Whilst the RTP is a high-level strategic document which sets out the vision for the region, it is the Regional Transport Delivery Plan that is of critical importance in terms of actual impactful projects that will strive to deliver improved transport linkages and connectivity across the region and within the Isle of Anglesey. Ultimately, the effectiveness of the RTP hinges upon the extent that the Delivery Plan is executed over the next 5 years in respect of enabling the movement of people to access key services such as young people to education, people to employment sites, and fragile people being able to access locations for their daily needs. Recognising that every initiative outlined in the Delivery Plan is critical to its respective Local Authority (and understanding the need for a regional approach to prioritising schemes) a mechanism is still required to ensure that funding is shared equitably in order to deliver tangible benefits to all communities across North Wales.

The IACC held 'drop-in' sessions at both Holyhead and Llangefni Libraries on 11th and 13th February to provide opportunities for all members of the public (including those

with protected characteristics) to voice their opinion and share their thoughts on the proposed RTP.

Encouraging Modal Shift in Rural Areas

The IACC remain concerned that the Welsh Government's Llwybr Newydd (and the RTP by adhering to the National Strategy) does not fully take into account the challenges facing rural areas in the transport sector and how to overcome these barriers. The lack of public transport in rural areas are more impactful as there is a high degree of dependency on the use of the private car – currently there are no other realistic alternative.

In rural areas the importance of interconnectivity between different transport modes cannot be underestimated. It is accepted that services are less frequent in rural areas in comparison to urban areas due to population numbers, nevertheless, it is imperative that there is an integrated investment plan in place enabling people to travel to their chosen destination by utilising various transport modes. All sustainable transport timetables must align to promote increased use, especially in rural areas. This would prevent people becoming socially excluded through lack of transportation options. North Anglesey is especially peripheral, and it should be a priority to improve connections with the Island's urban and economic hubs and the mainland, as transport infrastructure is a key enabler for economic growth.

Whilst recognising that the RTP acknowledges rural challenges and does provide opportunity for improvements, it currently only focusses on each of the transport modes in isolation, whereas there needs to be interconnectivity between the transport modes to enable a more effective transport system in rural areas. The needs, challenges and opportunities of an integrated transport system to enable people in rural communities to travel to urban areas in a more seamless approach and this needs further consideration going forward.

Strategic Road Network (SRN) Ambitions – Menai Crossing

It is acknowledged that the SRN in North Wales includes trunk 'A' roads which are managed and maintained by the North and Mid Wales Trunk Road Agency on behalf of Welsh Government. As with rail, this means the CJC and Local Authorities in North Wales have no direct influence, however, aspirations for transformational infrastructural change at the Menai Crossing is vital to the resilience of the A55 (Euro-22 route) corridor which is the transport artery of the North Wales region for international connectivity with Ireland.

Therefore, we support the case for SRN Aspiration 4 for the case for a third Menai Crossing to progress to improve resilience, journey time reliability and enhance capacity. The IACC responded to the North Wales Transport Commission to words of such effect and provided a strong evidence base to justify the need for a 3rd crossing (Appendix 1) and emphasises the wide-ranging and significant effects that bridge closures have upon the economy, health, education, leisure and well-being of residents. This case would be further strengthened should nationally important infrastructure projects (Wylfa Newydd) be developed as well as the Anglesey Freeport project. Additionally, should the Wylfa Newydd development be confirmed, the IACC would recommend re-visiting the Regional Transport Delivery Plan as this project

would be truly impactful and would provide a once in a lifetime generational change. Hence, the priority projects would need re-visiting.

The report fails to identify the requirement for suitable, temporary, short term HGV parking facilities either side of the Menai Straits or to serve the port of Holyhead in scenarios of bridge closure. This example has occurred more frequently in recent times. The A55 and surrounding highway network grinds to a halt in Bangor, Menai Bridge and Llanfairpwll on each occasion that an incident occurs on Britannia Bridge. These incidents severely affect the region especially the Emergency Services, Ysbyty Gwynedd, Schools, Colleges, businesses, and commuters. Similar challenges are faced in Holyhead with HGVs resorting to parking in Industrial Estates and car parks, affecting the town and its residents. The IACC would welcome further consideration in the RTP or actions arising from the North Wales Transport Commission to address these issues.

In the shorter term, the IACC recognises that the studies are being undertaken by Transport for Wales following the North Wales Transport Commission to improve the resilience of the Menai Crossing. The IACC will continue to work with partner organisations to progress interventions including public transport and active travel infrastructure improvements, potential wind deflectors to reduce the risk of closure to Britannia Bridge in high-winds and any opportunities for junction improvements.

Holyhead Port & Freeport

The port of Holyhead has a crucial role in supporting the economic and social fabric in Wales. The port of Holyhead is recognised as the 2nd busiest UK port carrying short sea ferry passengers and international transportation to Ireland as well as the majority of all Roll-on Roll-off freight units in Welsh ports. The strategic importance of Holyhead port to serve Wales, the wider UK and internationally to connect Ireland with mainland Europe is paramount. The scale of the importance of Holyhead Port to the Welsh economy is significant. The severity of the closure of Holyhead Port recently after the damage caused by Storm Darragh resulting in the collapse of a fender berth highlighted the impact caused to the wider transportation sector in terms of international freight movement and the movement of people to/from Ireland to the UK. Evidence of the detrimental impact of the port closure can be found in Appendix 2.

Future improvements to support the growth of the port, railway station and nearby Freeport sites (Policy PF1-PF3) is welcomed. The Freeport status will further enhance Holyhead's role as an international gateway and will play an important role in strengthening the North Wales economy and creating employment for local people. Contrary to this, there may be further implications due to increased freight movement and it will become of even greater priority to work with partners in both the public and private sector to identify vehicle access and egress improvements (& HGV Facilities on the approach to Holyhead) as well as improving sustainable access to both the port and rail station. Therefore, the IACC believes that an all-encompassing masterplan is required for the wider port and rail station (as well as highway linkages) as this is seen as a key piece of strategic infrastructure to catalyse transport and economic development recovery in the region.

Rail Connections

It is acknowledged that the rail network infrastructure in North Wales is non-devolved and the CJC and Local Authorities in North Wales have no direct influence over rail services and that rail-related schemes are excluded from the Delivery Plan. Nevertheless, it is crucial that the RTP sets out regional aspirations for rail across the region to support wider aspirations for improved connectivity and movement of people within North Wales and beyond to the remainder of the UK.

On this basis, it is disappointing that infrastructure improvements proposals are not prioritised west of Llandudno Junction (RA4). This fails to meet the aspirations set out in the RTP and does not take into account the importance of Holyhead Rail Station which could cater for international passengers to connect onward travel from/to Ireland to the rest of the UK or even to Europe through London and to the Ynys Mon Freeport. There are two large stations on the line that cater for Anglesey residents that are beyond Llandudno Junction and, although difficulties in upgrading the line are appreciated, it feels that the benefits to be gained by such transformational improvements, which would serve the region's only major port terminal, are not being rolled out. The IACC believes that continued strong connections with London and Northwest England is a priority in the long-term to connect people onwards from Dublin and for business travel for those who choose to reside on the Island and would be very valuable for 'hybrid-working'.

In this regard, Policy PF1 would appear to be slightly at odds with this where the policy promotes prioritizing sustainable transport connections to Holyhead, but the aspiration to improve infrastructure does not appear to extend beyond Llandudno Junction. Similarly, the cost of rail travel (recently increased by TfW) and the lack of stopping services at most stations on Anglesey does not encourage regular use over private cars.

The IACC notes a lack of synergy in the RTP with Llwybr Newydd in respect of re-utilising disused railway lines. The IACC is eager to see the Lein Amlwch asset being used again. We welcomed reference in Llwybr Newydd to the possibility of former railway lines and other redundant transport infrastructure to be re-used. Re-utilising redundant rail assets for future use could create a positive visitor economy and a community asset if reopened, and we would welcome further consideration for such infrastructure in the RTP.

The mention of Anglesey Airport on page 10 and 19 is incorrect since the airport closed in 2022. This emphasises the need for alternative rapid transportation linkages for nationwide connectivity. Further investment to create a robust and fast rail network to connect North West Wales with the North of England and South Wales is imperative. This would play a significant part in the economic development of North West Wales, providing improved business connectivity, tourism opportunities and reduced journey times (as outlined above in the Rail Connectivity section).

Bus Services

There are no bus services in parts of rural Anglesey, and more recently, cuts to existing limited services (which were already lacking) have amounted to a worsening public transport offer on the Island which has alienated many residents for whom public

transport was their only available mode of transport. This has not been conducive to achieving greater rates of use and is forcing the majority to rely on private cars. Additionally, the cost of public transport can be prohibitive to many thereby acting as an obstacle. The IACC believes that greater focus is required on increasing the frequency and quality of bus services rather than improving bus infrastructure where opportunities are limited in a rural area (bus infrastructure alone will not increase patronage levels). Although we welcome the principle of bus franchising and the aspiration for improved bus services and infrastructure, without additional funding to deliver, we risk raising expectations unnecessarily and expatiating an already sensitive situation becoming worse. Certainty is also required to ensure that any changes to bus services address the needs of rural areas and takes account of the importance that public transport buses have on Home to School Education Travel.

In addition, the IACC feel that greater emphasis is required within the RTP (and subsequently in the Delivery Plan) on the vision for public transport in rural environs such as the Flexi-Service, Demand Response Services, and Community Transport Schemes. This would better serve rural residents, offering greater mobility and reducing the dependency on the private car. Such an innovative approach could bridge the gap between connecting remote areas to interchange locations that would enable onward travel.

Active Travel (Walking, wheeling and cycling)

The IACC supports the inclusion of Active Travel within the RTP. However, more needs to be done to encourage modal shift and attract people to walk, wheel or cycle, and the correct conditions must exist to make the option more attractive to more people. Despite the acknowledged decarbonisation and wellbeing benefits to be gained from these methods, a continued lack of enabling infrastructure will stifle progress especially in rural areas as distances from outer settlements to designated active travel settlements is too long and there is a lack of integration with other sustainable public transport modes. In rural areas it is considered that greater flexibility is required in terms of the Active Travel Design Guidance in rural Wales in order to ensure that rural local authorities are able to successfully develop active travel routes to benefit all potential users, including tourists and visitors and recognition that the needs and type of provision that is appropriate for rural areas differs from that in larger urban settlements. Making use of redundant transport corridors to facilitate the modal shift provides one pragmatic solution to approaching this issue. Finally, we would be eager to see if there's a possibility to expand on the definition of active travel to a wider remit to include leisure and health and well-being purposes, because those types of travel journeys are just as important.

Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Infrastructure and Alternative Ultra Low Emission Vehicles / Fuels

The inclusion for the provision of Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points is most welcomed, however, further information needs to be communicated to improve understanding on the relationship between the role of the private and public sector in the roll-out of EV Charging and a specific policy is required at the national level on the approach to EV charging.

Furthermore, greater emphasis is required on the need for improved partnership working with the District Network Operator and to positively influence further investment in the network as there is currently a risk that the electrical capacity and infrastructure (especially in more rural areas) will not be adequate to cater for the demand in increased EV ownership which is likely over the coming years. Therefore, there needs to be a focus and aspiration to increase investment in the enabling infrastructure to be able to install EV charging points. Without investment in the primary infrastructure there is a risk that rural areas will be left behind and this will result in another barrier in rural areas. This outcome could become a detrimental factor to attracting visitors as part of the visitor economy and creating further disparity (the visitor economy is integral to the economy of Isle of Anglesey).

The IACC welcomes the inclusion on the Holyhead Hydrogen Hub (PF4) but believes greater emphasis is required to ensure that all the associated developments that sits with the Holyhead Hydrogen Hub are included as part of the Delivery Plan and any linkages with the Border Control Facilities at Parc Cybi. The Hub, which is an innovative development, is seen as a key piece of infrastructure to support the Transport and Energy sector.

Monitoring and Evaluation & Integrated Wellbeing Appraisal (IWBA)

Whilst the IACC agrees the Monitoring and Evaluation Plans are required, purposeful and appropriate, further clarity is required on where this responsibility sits – whether being conducted on a scheme-by-scheme basis, or in a more holistic approach to measure performance across the region. The IWBA appears to address all essential components such as how the overall programme will impact and benefit the environment, communities, equalities, economy, culture and the Welsh Language to ensure that the Transport Plan aligns with broader well-being goals that contributes to sustainable development in North Wales.

Continued Partnership-Working

Further clarity is required on where the capacity and resources to deliver the Delivery Plan will come from. A balance needs to be struck in respect of the vision and the aspirations of the Welsh Government for transport in North Wales against the finances that will be available to deliver the aspirations – there is a risk that we raise people's expectations without certainty that the funding will be available to deliver on the key priorities. This is in addition to the fact that resources and capacity are reduced internally whilst expertise is stretched.

The IACC is committed to working collaboratively locally, across North Wales and with the CJC (as well as Welsh Government and Transport for Wales) to ensure that the RTP and Delivery Plan is fit for purpose and captures the needs of all Local Authorities, including those of rural areas whereby more investment and alternative ideas are required to ensure that the entire population has the opportunity to travel sustainably to their destinations and that the people of Isle of Anglesey and the rest of North Wales are not economically and socially excluded. There needs to be a clear alignment from the local level to the regional level that will provide the direction of travel for investment in transport-related infrastructure and development.

In this regard, the IACC would welcome further discussions to refine the RTP to ensure the above constructive comments are addressed appropriately and crucially how funding will be allocated across the region.

Yours sincerely

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Dylan J Williams
Chief Executive

DRAFT



**CYNGOR SIR
YNYS MÔN
ISLE OF ANGLESEY
COUNTY COUNCIL**

Prif Gwnstabl Cynorthwyol / Assistant Chief Constable
Chris Allsop

Cadeirydd Fforwm Gwydnwch Gogledd Cymru /
Chair of the North Wales Resilience Forum

Anfonwyd drwy ebost / Sent via email:-
Chris.allsop@northwales.police.uk

20 Rhagfyr / December, 2023

Annwyl Chris

Fe wnaethom gyfarfod yn ddiweddar gyda'r NWC-REPS er mwyn edrych ar faterion sy'n unigryw i Ynys Môn ar ôl iddynt fynychu cyfarfod o'r Pwyllgor Sgriwtini Partneriaeth ac Adfywio lle codwyd nifer o wahanol bynciau. Tra bo'r mwyafrif o'r rhain wedi eu cyfarch, mae un risg sy'n parhau heb ei liniaru sef yr ymateb i argyfwng petai'r ddwy bont ar gau.

O ystyried y penderfyniad sydd wedi'i wneud gan Lywodraeth Cymru i beidio â buddsoddi mewn trydydd pont a'r posibilrwydd o gau Pont Borth dros dro yn gynnar yn 2024, ystyrir y byddai'n amserol adolygu'r waelodlin bresennol o drefniadau ymateb yr holl asiantaethau perthnasol petai Bont Britannia hefyd yn gorfod cau yn annisgwyl h.y. petai'r ddwy bont ar gau ac argyfwng (neu argyfyngau) yn codi ar yr Ynys.

Rydwi wedi fy hysbysu bod gweithred sydd heb ei chyflawni gan Is-grŵp Logisteg yr LRF i ffurfio Grŵp Gorchwyl a Gorffen i ddadansoddi'r risg ac edrych ar fesurau lliniaru posibl.

Mae Helen Kilgannon wedi cyfarfod yn ddiweddar ag Ian Jones o NMWTRA, sy'n arwain ar y darn hwn o waith er mwyn sicrhau bod Cyngor Sir Ynys Môn, Cyngor Gwynedd a NWC-REPD yn cael eu cynrychioli ar y Grŵp Gorchwyl a Gorffen ac yn cael mewnbwn i'r broses. Mae sgysiau cychwynnol wedi awgrymu ymgysylltu â Llywodraeth Cymru er mwyn arwain ar y prosiect ond hyd yma mae hyn wedi profi'n heriol ac nid oes unrhyw gynnydd wedi'i wneud.

DYLAN J. WILLIAMS BA (Hons), MSc, MA, M.R.T.P.I.
Prif Weithredwr
Chief Executive

CYNGOR SIR YNYS MÔN
ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL
Swyddfa'r Sir
LLANGEFNI
Ynys Môn - Anglesey
LL77 7TW

Gofynnwch am - Please ask for:
☎ (01248) 752102

E-Bost-E-mail: DylanWilliams@ynysmon.llyw.cymru

Ein Cyf - Our Ref. DW / VLJ / LlythNWRFPontydd
Eich Cyf - Your Ref.

Dear Chris

We recently met with NWC-REPS to look at issues that are unique to the Isle of Anglesey following their attendance at a Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee where several subjects were raised. Whilst most of these have now been addressed there is one risk that currently remains unmitigated which is the response to an emergency/ies during the closure of both bridges.

Given the decision taken by Welsh Government to not invest in a third crossing and the potential temporary closure of the Menai Bridge in early 2024, it seems that it would be timely to review the current baseline of response arrangements of all relevant agencies if the Britannia Bridge were also to close unexpectedly, i.e. if both bridges were closed and an emergency (or emergencies) were to take place on the Island.

I have been made aware that there is an outstanding action for the Infrastructure and Logistical Sub-Group of the LRF to form a Task and Finish Group to analyse this risk and look at possible mitigation.

Helen Kilgannon has met recently with Ian Jones from NMWTRA, who is leading on this piece of work to ensure the Isle of Anglesey County Council, Gwynedd Council, and NWC-REPS are represented on the Task and Finish Group to input into the process. Early conversations have suggested engagement with WG to lead on the project but to date this has proved challenging, and no progress has been made.

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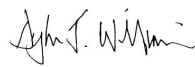
Credaf fod gwaith i edrych ar y risg hwn wedi'i ymgymryd ag ef gan bartneriaid ehangach fel rhan o'r gwaith cynllunio ar gyfer Wylfa Newydd, fodd bynnag roedd hyn beth amser yn ôl ac fe allai newidiadau staffio fod wedi arwain at fwlch o ran gwybodaeth cysylltiedig â'r risg.

Byddwn yn gwerthfawrogi eich cymorth er mwyn sicrhau bod Grŵp Gorchwyl a Gorffen yn cael ei sefydlu yn fuan yn 2024 er mwyn sicrhau bod gwaelodlin, trefniadau perthnasol ac unrhyw drefniadau wrth gefn priodol yn cael eu hadnabod cyn i waith ddechrau ar Bont Borth a hefyd er mwyn rhoi ystyriaeth i drefniadau pentyrru lorïau ar yr Ynys a'r tir mawr.

I believe that work to look at this risk was undertaken by the wider partners as part of the planning for Wylfa Newydd however this was some time ago and staff changes may well have led to gap in intelligence and information regarding the risk.

I would appreciate your support in ensuring this Task and Finish Group is established early in 2024 to ensure the baseline, necessary arrangements, and any suitable contingencies are identified prior to the Menai Bridge works commencing and also consideration for the provision for lorry stacking both on and off the Island.

Yn gywir / Yours sincerely,



DYLAN J. WILLIAMS
Prif Weithredwr / Chief Executive

Copy at / Copy to:-

Susan Jones - Rheolwr Gweithredol (Tim Arweinyddiaeth) / Executive Manager (Leadership Team)
Helen Kilgannon – Rheolwr Rhanbarthol – Regional Manager
Jon Zalot – Swyddog Cynllunio Argyfwng – Emergency Planning Officer
Anette Bailey – Uwch Swyddog Cynllunio Argyfwng – Senior Emergency Planning Officer



**CYNGOR SIR
YNYS MÔN
ISLE OF ANGLESEY
COUNTY COUNCIL**

Andrew Slade
Cyfarwyddwr Cyffredinol Yr Economi, Ynni a
Thrafnidiaeth / Director General Economy, Energy
and Transport

Anfonwyd drwy ebost / Sent via email:-
andrew.slade@gov.wales

10 Chwefror / February, 2025

Annwyl Mr Slade

Yn ystod cyfarfod o Bwyllgor Sgriwtini
Corfforaethol y Cyngor ar 15/01/25,
cyflwynwyd yr adroddiad cynnydd blynyddol ar
Wasanaeth Cynllunio at Argyfwng Rhanbarthol
Cynghorau Gogledd Cymru (NWC-REPS) i'r
Aelodau.

Nododd Aelodau'r Pwyllgor Sgriwtini'r cynnydd
da a wnaed ers cyfarfod y Pwyllgor ym mis
Rhagfyr 2023, lle codwyd pryderon ynghylch
gwydnwch y pontydd. Er iddynt nodi'r cynnydd,
mynegodd y Pwyllgor bryderon parhaus
ynghylch gwydnwch y ddwy bont, ac effaith
Cerbydau Nwyddau Trwm (HGVs) ar
gymunedau lleol. Mae Aelodau wedi gofyn i mi
ysgrifennu atoch mewn perthynas â pharatoi
cynllun stacio Cerbydau Nwyddau Trwm
cyfredol ar gyfer Ynys Môn. Cyfeiriaf at fy
llythyr dyddiedig 20 Rhagfyr 2023 at y Prif
Gwnstabl Cynorthwyol (copi wedi'i atodi).

Llwyddwyd i weithredu'r Fframwaith ar gyfer y
pontydd yn llwyddiannus ar ôl gorfod cau Pont
Britannia ar dri achlysur gwahanol:

- 07/12/24 – Gwyntoedd Cryfion Storm Darragh
- 12/12/24 – Damwain yn cynnwys Cerbyd Nwyddau Trwm ar y bont
- 24/01/25 – Gwyntoedd Cryfion Storm Eowyn.

DYLAN J. WILLIAMS BA (Hons), MSc, MA, M.R.T.P.I.
Prif Weithredwr
Chief Executive

CYNGOR SIR YNYS MÔN
ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL
Swyddfa'r Sir
LLANGEFNI
Ynys Môn - Anglesey
LL77 7TW

Gofynnwch am - Please ask for:
☎ (01248) 752102

E-Bost-E-mail: DylanWilliams@ynysmon.llyw.cymru

Ein Cyf - Our Ref. VLJ / DW/ AndrewSlade
Eich Cyf - Your Ref.

Dear Mr Slade

At the meeting of the Council's Corporate
Scrutiny Committee on 15/01/25, Members
were presented with the Annual progress
report on the North Wales Council's
Emergency Planning Service's (NWC-REPS).

Members of the Scrutiny Committee noted the
positive progress made since the meeting of
the Committee in December 2023 where
concerns were raised regarding the resilience
of the bridges. Despite noting the progress,
the Committee expressed continuing concerns
regarding the resilience of the bridges and the
effects that HGVs are having upon local
communities. Members have asked me to
write to you expedite the production of a
current up to date HGV stacking plan for
Anglesey. I refer to my letter dated 20th
December 2023 to the Assistant Chief
Constable (copy attached).

The Framework for the Bridges has been
successfully implemented following the closure
of the Britannia Bridge on three separate
occasions:

- 07/12/24 - Storm Darragh High Winds
- 12/12/24 – HGV Bridge collision
- 24/01/25 – Storm Eowyn High Winds.

Achoswyd niwed economaidd sylweddol yn sgil cau Porthladd Caergybi ar ôl i angorfa ffender ddisgyn yn ystod Storm Darragh, gyda Cherbydau Nwyddau Trwm yn parcio mewn cilfannau, ystadau diwydiannol ac ar strydoedd preswyl, oedd yn amlygu'r diffyg cyfleusterau ar gyfer cerbydau o'r fath yng Nghaergybi - yr ail gyfleuster gyrru i mewn ac allan mwyaf yn y DU. Ar hyn o bryd, mae trefniadau ar gyfer cau pont, neu borthladd, yn cynnwys cyfeirio Cerbydau Nwyddau Trwm i blot 9 ym Mharc Cybi, sy'n cynnig capasiti ar gyfer llai na 50 o gerbydau cyffelyb, ac rwyf o'r farn nad yw hynny'n ddigonol ar gyfer nifer y Cerbydau Nwyddau Trwm sy'n cyrraedd y porthladd ac/neu'r bont.

Mynegodd Aelodau bryderon hefyd yn ymwneud ag absenoldeb cynllun rheoli cyfredol er mwyn diogelu gwydnwch Pont Menai pe byddai angen cau Pont Britannia oherwydd effeithiau difrifol colli yr unig gysylltiad ffordd.

Byddwn yn gwerthfawrogi eich cefnogaeth i sicrhau bod mesurau ar gyfer stacio Cerbydau Nwyddau Trwm a gwarchod gwydnwch Pont Menai yn cael eu cwblhau, eu mabwysiadu, a bod mesurau sydd wedi'u profi yn cael ystyriaeth llawn.

Edrychaf ymlaen at eich ymateb.

The closure of Holyhead Port, due to the collapse of a fender berth during Storm Darragh, resulted in significant economic damage with HGVs parking in lay-by, industrial estates and residential streets, which highlighted the lack of HGV facilities at Holyhead – the second largest roll-on/roll-off facility in the UK. Current arrangements for a bridge or port closure involve directing HGVs to plot 9 at Parc Cybi, which offers a capacity for less than 50 HGVs which I would suggest would be inadequate for the numbers of HGV arriving at the port and/or at the bridge.

Members also expressed concerns relating to the absence of an up to date management plan to protect the resilience of the Menai Bridge during any closure of the Britannia Bridge due to the serious implications of losing the only highway link.

I would appreciate your support in ensuring that both HGV stacking and Menai Bridge resilience plans are finalised, adopted, and tested measures are given full consideration.

I look forward to your response.

Yn gywir / Yours sincerely



Dylan J. Williams
Prif Weithredwr / Chief Executive

Copi at / Copy to:-

Cadeirydd y Fforwm Gwydnwch Gogledd Cymru / Chair of the Local Resilience Forum –
Chris Allsop - Prif Gwnstabl Cynorthwyol / Assistant Chief Constable

CHRIS.ALLSOP@northwales.police.uk

Neal Cockerton, Prif Weithredwr Cyngor Sir y Fflint / Flintshire County Council -

Neal.cockerton@flintshire.gov.uk

Helen Kilgannon - helen.kilgannon@nwc-reps.org.uk Jon Zalot jon.zalot@nwc-reps.org.uk – CGC – GCAR NWC-REPS



CYNGOR SIR
YNYS MÔN
ISLE OF ANGLESEY
COUNTY COUNCIL

The Senedd's Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee

Holyhead Port Storm Damage and Closure

Isle of Anglesey County Council Written Evidence

February 2025

Status: Official

1.0 Introduction to the Evidence

- 1.1 The Isle of Anglesey County Council (the Council) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the inquiry being conducted by the Senedd's Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee on the Holyhead Port Storm Damage and Closure.
- 1.2 This written evidence should be considered in conjunction with the oral evidence that the Council's Head of Service for Regulation and Economic Development will present to the Committee on the 6th of March 2025.
- 1.3 The Council notes the inquiry's Terms of Reference. Our evidence will focus on the impact of the Port's closure, as well as the extent and effectiveness of the steps being taken to mitigate the impact.

2.0 Socio-Economic Importance of Holyhead Port

- 2.1 The importance of the Port of Holyhead to the local and Welsh economy cannot be underestimated. It is the second largest roll-on roll-off port in the UK (after Dover). It is the main port for freight and sea passenger transport to Ireland, and as part of European Route E22, it provides a key connection in the "land bridge" from Ireland to the rest of Europe. It remains the fastest route across the Irish Sea despite an increase in the number of direct ferries from Rosslare to mainland Europe. Nearly 60% of goods carried on HGVs travelling between the Republic of Ireland and Europe pass through the Port of Holyhead. The Port also accounts for three quarters of passenger traffic between Wales and the Republic of Ireland¹.
- 2.2 Annual port traffic (freight and passenger cars combined) was circa 953,000 vehicles (all types) in 2019. Traffic numbers then declined, mainly due to the impact of the UK's exit from the European Union as well as the Covid-19 pandemic. A 38% recovery, however, took place between 2021 and 2022.
- 2.3 An economic impact study of the Port was undertaken by Royal Haskoning on behalf of the Welsh Government in 2021². It noted that:
 - a. The Port supported approximately 670 jobs locally (circa 580 Full Time Equivalents (FTE)).
 - b. The jobs available at the Port were equivalent to 21% of the total jobs available in the Holyhead and surrounding areas, and 3% of the Island's labour market.
 - c. The Port of Holyhead contributed an estimated £78.5 million per year to the local economy (6.9% of the Island's GVA in 2019).
 - d. The transport and storage sector ranked fourth largest for employment in Holyhead, accounting for 11.3% of jobs. This is a significantly higher proportion than for Anglesey (4.3%) and Wales (3.3%).
 - e. The annual in-direct economic impact of the Port and its supply chain was estimated to be between £25.9 million and £28.4 million. The induced job numbers were estimated to be between 990 and 1370 (or 860 and 1190 FTEs).

¹ IACC Report 'Improving reliability and resilience across the Menai Strait. Detailed evidence base'. June 2023

² Report for Welsh Government 'Port of Holyhead Strategic Economic Impact Study' July 2021

3.0 Storm Darragh

- 3.1 Storm Darragh was an extratropical cyclone which formed on the 5th of December 2024 and dissipated on 9 December 2024. The storm brought wind speeds more than 90mph, posing a risk to life.
- 3.2 The Storm affected the Island on Saturday, 7th December 2024 and Sunday, 8th December 2024.
- 3.3 The Storm had a significant impact on Anglesey, closing roads, causing damage to structures and properties and the loss of power supply. The Storm also forced the closure of Britannia Bridge (one of only two links from Anglesey across the Menai Strait) and the closure of Holyhead Port.
- 3.4 During this period the Council collaborated with partners, responded to issues and impacts, and ensured effective communication and information sharing with local residents. The following infographic summarises the Council's information sharing activity between the 4th and 9th of December.



- 3.5 The Port experienced a total closure to ferry traffic from the 7th of December 2024 to the 15th of January 2025 (a period of 40 days).
- 3.6 Given that the closure was initially expected to be for a short period of time, HGVs and trailers were seen to be parking throughout Holyhead, However, once it became clear that the closure would be for longer than anticipated, HGVs were rerouted by their operators to other routes along the west coast of the United Kingdom.
- 3.7 The December closure period (7th to 31st), saw 22,300 fewer HGV movements on the A55 and A5 (a reduction of 12.6% in eastbound HGVs and 13.7% westbound). The January closure (1st to 15th) saw 16,100 fewer HGVs (7.6% eastbound and 9.9% westbound).
- 3.8 The Port partially reopened on the 16th of January with one operational berth.

4.0 Council Response to the Closure of Holyhead Port

4.1 The Council was part of a multi-agency emergency response, collaborating through formal Strategic and Tactical Coordination Group structures. This enabled effective and timely communication, information sharing, and decision making. The Council was not the decision-making body in relation to the Port of Holyhead, but was part of the response arrangements to manage the impacts (i.e. HGVs not being able to travel across the Irish Sea). The Council engaged and collaborated with the Port Authority, Welsh Government and other partners throughout the closure period to manage the impacts and ensure information was shared with residents

4.2 In order to understand the impacts the closure had incurred upon Anglesey and Welsh businesses, the Council launched an online survey on the 8th of January. The Survey remained open until the 31st of January.

4.3 A total of 62 responses were received from a range of sectors:

Sector	Number of responses
Hospitality	24
Retail	16
Beauty	6
Services supporting logistics	5
Other	5
Logistics	3

Two responses were received from the West Midlands and one response was received from a business that was closed for the season. These responses are excluded from the figures.

4.4 A statistical analysis of the responses illustrates that:

- 92% of respondents were from Holyhead/ Holy Island.
- 54% of respondents stated that jobs were at risk due to the closure of the Port.
- Of the jobs at risk, 74% of these included permanent roles, with only 20% being zero-hour contracts.
- 95% felt that a reduced number of sailings from the 16th of January would impact their businesses.

4.5 The qualitative responses demonstrated that:

- Businesses that support logistics providers (i.e. mechanics and hotels) were amongst the worst impacted financially, with losses in the several tens of thousands of pounds.
- Many businesses in Holyhead are reliant on the footfall ferry traffic creates (passengers and crew).
- The drop in footfall has negatively impacted a wide range of businesses.
- Various businesses reporting trade down 90%.
- Concerns remain that a reduced number of sailings would impact future revenue.
- Fears exist that there will be less confidence in the viability and resilience of the Port.

4.6 The following are direct quotes as provided by respondents:

- a. A truck service garage based on the Island estimates *“the financial impact could be between £50,000 to £100,000”*.
- b. A trucking agency staff provider stated *“December is the busiest time of year for our business transporting freight throughout the whole of the UK. As the Port is closed all the vacancies around Anglesey have been relocated to other areas of the UK, resulting in job losses. Companies will not pay the 4 hours round trip and 200 miles from Holyhead to Birkenhead so have relocated all their wagons to other ports.”*
- c. A large hotelier said *“occupancy (had) gone from usually 70/80% this time of year to 15-20% causing many hours lost for housekeepers, kitchen and front of house staff”*.
- d. Another small retailer stated *“we rely on the footfall which the port generates. Since its closure we have seen a significant fall in trade of roughly 60 to 70%. Not only from the passengers (but) the local who works at the port (too)”*
- e. A small retailer specialising in gift hampers has seen a 95% reduction in revenue.
- f. A local café said *“With lower footfall of people coming through the doors at the cafe, means we’re serving less people, we still have to staff the cafe regardless every day, and ultimately less footfall means less income generated. This poses a huge threat on job stability, given an already difficult period in hospitality anyway because of extraordinary high bills, staff wages; supplier costs etc, especially during the month of January. We rely on passing trade through the port to get us through quieter months. It has been considerably quieter during the closure. It definitely has posed risk of job losses.”*

4.7 Footfall data, provided by the SMART Cymru Programme, demonstrated a drastic decline in the number of people visiting Holyhead town centre. Footfall for December 2024 and January 2025 decreased by 36% and 33% respectively compared to the same period in 2023 and 2024.

4.8 Between the 6th of December 2024 and the 15th of January 2025, total high street footfall was 52,215 - a 37% decline from the 83,445 visitors recorded in the same period the previous year.

4.9 This decline aligns with the evidence provided in the responses to the Council’s business survey.

5.0 Summary of the Council’s Key Comments in Relation to the Inquiry

5.1 The Port of Holyhead is of significant economic and social value to Anglesey. It is intrinsically linked to local social, economic and community well-being, as well as identity and cultural heritage. Holyhead is a port town.

5.2 As the second largest roll-on roll-off port in the UK, it remains the principal port and fastest route for freight and passenger transfer to and from Ireland, handling approximately 1,500,000 passengers a year and approximately 4,000,000 tonnes of freight

5.3 The Port is a key employer on Anglesey, supporting hundreds of quality jobs. Many businesses benefit directly and in-directly from its operation.

5.4 Ensuring the prompt and safe reopening of the damaged berth must be a short-term priority - as is the need to provide support to local businesses that have been impacted by the closure of the Port.

5.5 The Council believes that the Welsh Government should provide additional financial support and practical measures to help mitigate negative impacts on local businesses (including transport, logistics, retail and hospitality).

5.6 Ensuring the long-term resilience and stability of the Port is critical to socio-economic growth and trade. The Port is critical to the vitality of the Anglesey, North Wales, Welsh, United Kingdom and Irish economies.

- 5.7 The effective operation of the Port is also directly reliant upon the resilience and reliability of the Menai Strait crossings. A symbiotic relationship exists between the infrastructure, where an issue at one location impacts the other, as well as surrounding communities and businesses. If resilience is not improved then the risk of failure will continue to increase over time.
- 5.8 Perceived and actual issues in terms of resilience and connectivity have a detrimental impact on the Island's ability to attract economic investment. This also impacts on image and profile.
- 5.9 The Port will be critical to the success of the Anglesey Freeport and the significant positive benefits which could be generated.
- 5.10 The Council welcomes the Cabinet Secretary for Transport and North Wales's announcement on the 7th of January 2025 regarding the establishment of a Task Force to deliver long-term stability for the Port. We are eager to better understand the purpose and scope of the Task Force, and how it will deliver tangible interventions to ensure the future of the Port.
- 5.11 The closure of the Port as a result of Storm Darragh has also demonstrated the lack of current and meaningful economic data. A new economic impact assessment to provide reliable and robust information to ensure informed, timely and appropriate decision making.