

CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held in the Committee Room and virtually on Zoom on 16 September, 2026

PRESENT: Councillor Jeff Evans (Chair)
Councillor Geraint Bebb (Vice-Chair)

Councillors Celfyn Furlong, John Ifan Jones, R. Llewelyn Jones, Keith Roberts, Sonia Williams, Arfon Wyn.

Co-opted Member: Rev. Llewelyn Moules-Jones (The Church in Wales)

Portfolio Members

Councillors Carwyn Jones (Portfolio Member for Housing and Community Safety), Alun Roberts (Portfolio Member for Leisure, Tourism, Maritime and Property), Dafydd Roberts (Portfolio Member for Education and the Welsh Language), Ieuan Williams (Portfolio Member for Highways, Waste and Climate Change).

IN ATTENDANCE: Chief Executive
Deputy Chief Executive
Director of Function (Resources)/Section 151 Officer
Director of Social Services (for item 3)
Director of Education, Skills and Young People (for item 3)
Head of Housing Services
Head of Highways, Waste and Property (for item 3)
Head of Regulation and Economic Development (for item 3)
Head of Digital, Performance and Modernisation (for item 3)
Head of HR, Communications and Customer Experience (for item 3)
Head of Democracy (DS)
Strategic Performance and Projects Manager (GP) (for item 3)
Housing Technical Services Manager (DR)
Scrutiny and Committee Services Manager (AH)
Empty Homes Assistant Officer (OJ)
Committee Officer (ATH)
Webcasting Officer (FT)

APOLOGIES: Councillors Jackie Lewis, Dafydd Rhys Thomas, Alwen Watkin, John Tierney (Co-opted Member – The Catholic Church), Kathryn Seeney (Co-opted Member – Parent Governor Primary Sector), Christina Williams (Co-opted Member – Parent Governor Secondary Sector and ALN), Councillors Gary Pritchard (Leader and Portfolio Member for Economic Development), Neville Evans (Portfolio Member for Adult Services), Robin Williams (Deputy Leader and Portfolio Member for Finance, Corporate Business and Customer Experience).

ALSO PRESENT: N/A

1. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

No declaration of interest was received.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee held on the 10 June 2026 were presented and were confirmed as correct.

3. MONITORING PERFORMANCE: CORPORATE SCORECARD Q1 2026/27

The report of the Head of Digital, Performance and Modernisation incorporating the Corporate Scorecard for the first quarter of the 2026/27 financial year was presented for the Committee's consideration and scrutiny. The scorecard report details the performance of key indicators that support the Council's day to day operations and the wider strategic objectives of the Council Plan.

The Strategic Performance and Projects Manager presented the scorecard report and noted that overall, performance was positive, with the majority of indicators (86%) with targets monitored during the quarter on, or close to target and rated Green or Yellow. The report highlights good performance in several areas, including the percentage of jobs advertised as Welsh Level 3 and above which reached 90% against a target of 82% (196 of 218 vacancies); the percentage of children re-registered on the Child Protection Register within 12 months which remained 0% against a target of 12%; responsive housing repairs completed in an average of 15.6 days against a target of 18 days; 98.5% of food establishments meeting food hygiene standards; waste recycling from Council buildings at 56.57% against a target of 47%, and all streets inspected being assessed as clean.

Seven indicators were identified as underperforming - Welsh language consultation responses, completion of adult protection enquiries within statutory timescales, housing re-let times (though significantly improved), planned inspections of high risk food businesses, domestic waste recycling rates, FOI response times and sickness absence levels. Mitigation measures are in place for each area and these will be monitored by the Leadership Team to secure future improvements.

In reviewing the corporate scorecard for Q1 2026/27, the committee discussed the following themes:

- **The Welsh Language**

Members raised several questions about Welsh language consultation responses and how these could be improved, including whether the target was sufficiently challenging given the proportion of Welsh speakers on the island and whether consultation questionnaires used language that was clear and accessible. Questions were also asked about Welsh language recruitment, specifically the proportion of posts advertised at Level 3 or above that were actually filled by applicants with that level of competence and whether lower levels were accepted in practice.

Officers advised that although the target for Welsh language consultation responses appears low, the challenge lies in changing people's practices and norms. Once individuals leave education and enter workplaces outside the public sector, Welsh is often used less and English tends to be used more. Targets are reviewed annually and set at levels that will drive improvement. Consultation responses are also influenced by the subject matter, the audience and the method of engagement. While efforts are made to keep consultations simple, language standards and professionalism must be maintained, particularly in technical areas where terminology is important. The Council ensures all consultations are bilingual, has trialled various methods of encouraging Welsh language responses, and will review recent consultations to identify any further interventions.

Regarding recruitment, Officers explained that posts advertised at Welsh language Level 3 or above reflect the service need for those skills. The challenge is balancing the requirement to serve communities through the Welsh language with the need to attract suitable applicants. The Head of HR, Communications and Customer Experience confirmed he would be willing to examine the data further, including the reasons why 22 jobs were not advertised at Welsh language Level 3 or above.

Members noted that the Council recruits non-Welsh speaking staff to professionally qualified posts and provides Welsh language training. It was suggested that the reverse could also be considered – recruiting individuals with Level 3 Welsh language skills who may not yet hold all professional qualifications and support them to gain those qualifications.

The committee was assured that the officer attendance at Welsh language courses is healthy, and that the challenge is ensuring that the right training is provided at the right level. Posts must be assessed for the level of Welsh Language competence genuinely required to perform duties effectively rather than automatically advertising at the highest level.

- **Social Care and Wellbeing**

- Members questioned the increase in adult protection enquiries which resulted in Social Care and Wellbeing PI 02 (the percentage of adult protection enquiries completed within statutory timescales) missing its target.

The Director of Social Services explained that the indicator performance had been examined in detail and that the increase could be attributed to two factors – demographic change on the island with more adults living longer and requiring support, and greater awareness of adult safeguarding responsibilities among agencies and organisations working with vulnerable adults. While the statutory timescale for responding to adult protection enquiries is seven days, discussions with third parties can extend the response time beyond the timescale, resulting in completion on the eighth or ninth day. He assured the committee that a detailed review of the data showed that there were valid reasons for responses exceeding the statutory timescale and that no individuals had come to harm as a result. The service has also reviewed its response procedures and can redeploy qualified staff to manage spikes in demand when required.

The committee also discussed the impact of empty homes on social care and was advised that any effect is marginal and indirect. Members further considered the pressures that rising homelessness is placing on services.

- **Education**

In response to questions about measures to improve pupil attendance which was below the level achieved in Quarter 1 of the previous year, the Director of Education, Skills and Young People and Portfolio Member advised that attendance remains a national challenge and is a strategic objective for the council. It was explained that the new Anglesey ALN and Inclusion Service will work in a more integrated and preventative way particularly alongside Children and Families Services. This approach aims to ensure that where attendance levels begin to slip, timely and appropriate interventions can be put in place to support affected pupils and their families. ALN and inclusion plans under the previous joint arrangements are also being reviewed to assess their effectiveness, and additional capacity has been introduced within the Education Welfare team. The Learning Service has recently issued a letter to parents highlighting the importance of regular school attendance.

Members were advised that the newly appointed Strategic Leader for ALN, Inclusion and Engagement will report on the progress and impact of the new service in November. The Director of Education, Skills and Young People also provided assurance that pupils who

are excluded from school continue to receive support and educational provision, either through a learning hub or an alternative school placement.

- **Housing**

- The committee requested clarification of PI 09 – the percentage of households successfully prevented from becoming homeless, given that performance against the indicator was reported as 100%. Members queried who the figure relates to and whether it could be broken down between individuals who had secured permanent housing and those placed in emergency or temporary accommodation.

The Head of Housing Services advised that the definition of homelessness used for this indicator is set by Welsh Government and is intended to ensure that no individual has to sleep rough. Consequently, when a person presents as homeless, the immediate priority is to ensure they have a roof over their head through emergency or temporary accommodation.

Members were advised that 46 individuals are currently in shared facility housing while a further 35 are living in self-contained temporary accommodation. The Head of Housing Services explained that for the purpose of the indicator, the prevention of homelessness means ensuring that an individual has access to accommodation and does not have to sleep on the streets, while the longer-term objective is to support individuals in securing a tenancy in suitable permanent housing.

- **Economy**

- The committee questioned when the investment made through the previous year's budget would begin to deliver improved performance against food hygiene legislation. (PI 07 – the percentage of high risk food businesses received planned inspections which was 68% against a target of 90%)

The Head of Regulation and Economic Development clarified that food hygiene inspections are undertaken by the Environmental Health team and that the additional budget allocation approved last year had been directed to the Trading Standards service rather than Environmental Health. He explained that 156 food hygiene inspections had been completed during the year, with a further 90 inspections undertaken in Quarter 1 2026/27. Priority had been given to newly established unrated food businesses to ensure that they were brought into the inspection programme at the earliest opportunity. The Officer advised that the service is confident that all outstanding Category C inspections will be completed during Quarter 2. He further confirmed that an additional resource had joined the Environmental Health team in August and is expected to contribute to improved performance against the indicator in the next reporting period.

In response to a specific request, the committee was also updated on the ongoing work to develop the local skills base and create training and employment pathways for young people on the island to enable them to benefit from the job opportunities expected to be created by the development of the new nuclear facility on the existing Wylfa site.

- **Climate Change**

In response to several questions by members regarding climate change, domestic waste recycling performance and the measurement of street cleanliness, Officers and the Portfolio Member for Highways, Waste and Property provided the following clarifications –

- Schools do participate in accredited climate change programmes; however the relevant data is collected and reported annually rather than on a quarterly basis.
- Street cleanliness inspections are undertaken using the Local, Environmental Audit and Management System (LEAMS). Audits are conducted by both Council officers and Biffa on behalf of the Council with approximately 50 audits completed each month. The results are collated and submitted to Keep Wales Tidy. A range of measures is assessed including land use and density, types of litter, and the servicing of public

bins. In addition, the Council's contract with Biffa includes street cleanliness standards, and the contractor takes a proactive approach to maintaining them.

- The proposed replacement of the current 240 litre residual waste bins with smaller 180 litre bins, while appearing counterintuitive from a sustainability perspective, is intended to support the Council in achieving the Welsh Government's target of recycling 70% of household waste. Several Welsh local authorities that have introduced smaller residual waste bins have subsequently reported increased recycling rates. To support residents in recycling more, households requiring additional capacity will be able to request an extra container for paper and cardboard or cans and plastics. Existing residual waste bins will be repurposed and made available to larger households.
- That investment in the Council's two recycling centres is intended to upgrade and modernise existing systems and equipment while also increasing recycling capacity and improving operational efficiency.

Having reviewed the Corporate Scorecard for Q1 2026/27, noted and welcomed the areas of good performance and considered the responses provided to the issues raised, the Corporate Scrutiny Committee resolved -

- **To note the areas being explored by the Leadership Team to manage performance and secure further improvements. These include - Welsh Language (consultation responses), Social Care and Wellbeing (adult protection enquiries completed within timescales); Housing (re-letting of void properties); Economy (planned inspections of high risk food businesses), Climate Change (domestic waste recycling rates) and Whole Council Health (responses to FOI requests within timescale and levels of sickness absence).**
- **To recommend the scorecard report together with the mitigation measures outlined therein, to the Executive.**

4. MEASURING PROGRESS AGAINST THE EMPTY HOMES STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2028

The report of the Head of Housing Services outlining progress against the Empty Homes Strategic Plan 2023-2028 was presented for the committee's consideration and scrutiny.

Councillor Carwyn Jones, Portfolio Member for Housing and Community Safety presented the report noting that empty homes are a wasted resource that could help reduce the pressure on Anglesey's housing stock. The plan seeks to increase housing supply through improved data collection and analysis, greater awareness of the support available, the provision of financial assistance for property owners, and use of enforcement methods where appropriate to bring empty properties back into use.

Between 2023 and 2026, 211 empty properties were returned to use, including 78 supported through grants or loans. Notable projects included the refurbishment of Plas Alltran Holyhead and the redevelopment of the former Beaumaris Social Club, both of which now provide affordable housing. Service capacity has also been strengthened through the appointment of an Assistant Empty Homes Officer. In addition, new processes for data collection and reporting have been introduced, resulting in improved monitoring.

Despite this progress, several challenges remain. These include an increase in the number of long-term empty homes, from 421 in April 2023 to 582 in April 2025, rising refurbishment costs and limited capacity to make wider use of enforcement powers. The focus for the coming year will be on developing a scoring matrix to better target and prioritise cases, improving data and CRM processes, raising awareness among property owners and continuing efforts to increase the number of empty properties brought back into use.

In reviewing progress against the Empty Homes Strategic Plan, the committee raised the following matters –

- Members enquired whether there was any geographic pattern in the distribution of empty homes and they questioned the effectiveness of the plan given the increase in the number of empty properties. Members also asked when it was anticipated that the number of empty homes would begin to decline.

Officers and the Portfolio Member advised that, while the profile and nature of empty properties vary, the majority are located in coastal areas and towns. Properties that remain empty for the longest period tend to be terrace houses. The service will continue to implement the Strategic Plan and use the measures available to encourage owners to bring empty properties back into use. These include targeted publicity and guidance, the promotion of funding opportunities and the use of the Council Tax Premium on empty properties, which from April 2027 will increase incrementally according to the length of time a property has remained empty. The committee was assured that the plan has made a positive contribution to increasing housing supply and ensuring that more properties are available for the benefit of the island's residents. However, the Portfolio Member acknowledged that forecasting housing market conditions and identifying the most effective interventions remains challenging.

Members were also informed that the Valuation Office Agency is responsible for determining whether a property is included in or excluded from the Council taxbase. This decision is based on a range of criteria including whether a property is deemed suitable for occupation.

(At this point, the Chair left the Chair for a short period, and the Vice-Chair took the chair for the interval).

- Members enquired whether there were links between efforts to bring empty properties back into use and other strategic initiatives, such as town centre regeneration and the allocation of bus franchises, to ensure a co-ordinated and joined-up approach.

The Portfolio Member acknowledged the importance of this point and highlighted the refurbishment of the former Santander bank building in Llangefni under Leasing Scheme Wales as an example. The project delivered six flats above the premises on the town's high street providing additional housing while also supporting economic activity within the town centre. He assured the committee that links already exist between the empty homes programme and wider regeneration and development initiatives and that this alignment of activities will continue.

- The committee sought assurance that sufficient funding is available to support the renewal of empty properties and that the budget is adequate to meet current demand.

The committee was advised that a wider range of financial assistance schemes is now available to help bring empty properties back into use. The approach is to initially engage with property owners to establish their intention for the property and then identify the most appropriate support or intervention depending on individual circumstances.

It was resolved to accept the contents of the progress report which provides assurance that the Empty Homes Strategic Plan remains relevant and is being delivered and monitored.

5. MEASURING PROGRESS AGAINST THE ASSET MANAGEMENT (HOUSING) STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2029

The report of the Head of Housing Services outlining progress against the Asset Management (Housing) Strategic Plan 2024-2029 was presented for the committee's consideration and scrutiny.

Councillor Carwyn Jones, Portfolio Member for Housing and Community Safety presented the report noting that delivery of the plan remains on track with overall progress currently rated Yellow. The plan supports the Council's commitment to comply with the requirements of the Welsh Housing Quality Standards 2023. It highlighted two major work programmes aimed at meeting kitchen renewal cycles and achieving ambitious energy efficiency standards set out under WHQS. During the reporting period, the Housing Service commenced two long term 5 year programmes for kitchen replacements and the installation of Solar PV systems with battery storage. Both programmes began on site in January 2025 and are progressing well.

Targeted energy pathways have been developed for all homes and 94% of the planned solar PV installations have been completed. Remeasurement of 477 of the properties completed shows that 78% now achieve an EPC C75 rating.

The report also highlights continued compliance with statutory safety requirements alongside ongoing investment in adaptations and assistive technology to support independent living. In addition, the Housing Service's most recent STAR survey indicates high levels of tenant satisfaction. While positive progress has been made, a number of risks remain. These include the long-term affordability of delivering the Plan through the HRA, tenant refusals, contractor performance and external constraints such as network capacity and SPEN approval required to deliver solar installations at scale. Actions are being taken to manage these risks.

Overall, the report demonstrates that the Strategic Plan is contributing positively towards achieving WHQS targets, strengthening asset management and maintaining statutory compliance.

In reviewing progress against the Housing Asset Management Strategic Plan, the committee raised the following matters –

- Members enquired whether sufficient engagement takes place with tenants to encourage them to accept refurbishment works, such as kitchen replacements, and whether refusals can create additional challenges when properties are re-let following the end of a tenancy.

Officers advised that while tenants' wishes must be respected, refusals can increase the time required to prepare and re-let a property for a new tenant. However, experience has shown that tenants may reconsider their decision, particularly when they see improvements carried out in neighbouring properties and the benefits of a new kitchen. Members were informed that the response to the programme this year has been encouraging with the majority of tenants indicating their willingness to take part.

- Members asked about the methods used to assess housing needs.

The committee was advised that data from the stock condition survey completed in 2022/23 forms the basis for determining investment requirements and planned programmes of work. Additional records and local knowledge may also be used where appropriate.

- Members enquired about the approach to replacing existing electric and LPG heating systems which can be expensive.

Officers advised that around 50 homes currently have electric heating boilers which achieve poor energy performance outcomes. The service has written to the tenants of these properties to assess their willingness to change systems; otherwise replacements will be undertaken when tenancies change. Officers explained that the position is more complex with LPG heating systems as these serve sheltered bungalows. While these systems are effective, they are expensive to operate. As part of the Council's net zero commitments, difficult decisions may be required with financial implications.

- Members asked about properties that may be unsuitable for modernisation.

The committee was advised that a small number of properties could prove difficult to upgrade and that options for these homes will need to be carefully considered.

- Members sought assurance that tenants of newly built Council homes maintain their properties to the standard in which they were received. It was suggested that incentives could be introduced to reward tenants who keep their homes in good condition, thereby encouraging others to do the same.

The Head of Housing Services advised that maintaining a property is an expectation of a tenancy. The service employs an Estates Management Officer and Maintenance Officers and aims to undertake annual property inspections. He added that he would be happy to explore whether any other social landlords have introduced schemes that recognise and reward tenants who take good care of their homes.

It was resolved to accept the contents of the progress report which provides assurance that the Asset Management (Housing) Strategic Plan remains relevant and is being delivered and monitored.

6. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The report of the Scrutiny Manager incorporating the Committee's Forward Work Programme for 2026/27 was presented for consideration and review.

It was resolved -

- **To agree the current version of the Forward Work Programme for 2026/27.**
- **To note progress thus far in implementing the forward work programme.**

**Councillor Jeff Evans
Chair**