

DECISION NOTICE OF AN INDIVIDUAL MEMBER OF GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET

DATE OF DECISION 19/7/2024

DATE DECISION PUBLISHED 19/7/24

DATE DECISION WILL COME INTO FORCE and implemented,
unless the decision is called in, in accordance with section 7.25 of
the Gwynedd Council Constitution **29/7/24**

Cabinet Member: Councillor Dyfrig Siencyn, Council Leader

SUBJECT

North Wales Active Travel Charter

DECISION

Commit the Council to the Regional Active Travel Charter for North Wales.

REASON WHY THE DECISION IS NEEDED

Please see attached officer report

DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST AND ANY RELEVANT DISPENSATIONS APPROVED BY THE COUNCIL'S STANDARDS COMMITTEE


None

ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO MAKING THE DECISION

Consultation with
Gwynedd Council Statutory Officers

The results of the consultations are reported upon in the attached report

**DECISION NOTICE OF AN INDIVIDUAL MEMBER OF CYNGOR GWYNEDD
CABINET – OFFICER'S REPORT**

Name and title of Cabinet Member(s):	Councillor Dyfrig Siencyn
Name and title of the Report's Author:	Geraint Owen Corporate Director
Date of Decision:	19/07/2024
Signature of Cabinet Member:	

Subject: North Wales Active Travel Charter

Recommendation for the Decision: Commit the Council to the Regional Active Travel Charter for North Wales.

The reason for the need for a Decision: Public bodies across Wales have shown their commitment to sustainable travel methods by developing an Active Travel Charter. Every Charter includes a series of commitments that organisations subscribe to and make an effort to be implemented. A Charter has been drawn up for North Wales and there is an effort to ensure the partners' commitment within the three relevant Public Services Board to the objectives within that Charter.

Rationale and justification for reaching the Decision:

- 1.1. In 2021, the Welsh Government launched its new transport strategy - *Llwybr Newydd: The Wales Transport Strategy 2021*. Its aim is to develop a sustainable transport system where more people walk, cycle or use public transport, whilst also meeting the travel needs of the public, supporting the local communities and economy, and having a positive impact on health, well-being and the environment.
- 1.2. To contribute to this agenda, public bodies across Wales have shown their commitment to sustainable travel methods by developing an Active Travel Charter. Every Charter includes a series of commitments that organisations subscribe to and make an effort to be implemented, along with the intention of promoting alternative travel instead of using cars, especially amongst staff for commuting (to and from work) and business travel. These commitments are distributed amongst the following categories:

- Communication and leadership;
- Walking, cycling and public transport;
- Cycling and walking;
- Flexible working, and;
- Vehicles with very low emissions (electric or hydrogen battery).

1.3. In the North, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board's Public Health Team has led on developing an Active Travel Charter in partnership with organisations across the region, including Cyngor Gwynedd. It identifies fifteen commitments to promote alternative and sustainable travel methods. In July 2022, the Charter was presented to the North Wales Regional Leadership Board, with a request to those organisations that are members of the Board to adopt the Charter and, to this end, that the Public Services Boards lead on nurturing commitment to the Charter.

1.4. In December 2022, the Charter was presented to the Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board where it was agreed to adopt it in principle. A Task and Finish Group under the care of the Board has been established to coordinate commitment to the Charter amongst the Board's organisations, and therefore the Council is requested to consider whether they should commit to the Charter or not.

1.5. Although the Charter contributes to a wider agenda to create a sustainable transport system, the main focus is much more practical and has been centralised on alternative travel amongst staff. This means that corporate commitments are mainly in question, i.e. how walking, cycling or using public transport can be promoted and supported amongst the workforce, and reducing the use of cars to travel to work in doing so.

1.6. It can be said that several commitments are already underway or have already been implemented in the Council; therefore it is proposed that committing to the Charter would not mean any substantial new implications. If the Council adopted the Charter's objectives, the Council would measure its progress on each commitment according to the steps below:

- Early days and planning;
- Starting the journey and implementation;
- Completion, and;
- Demonstrate leadership.

The Council has already completed or are implementing on 2/3 of the commitments; and in terms of those commitments where we are in the "early days", the majority are already on the work programme or afoot, and are seen as easy wins that do not require a substantial investment. This is summarised in the table in Appendix 2. It shows the step that has already been achieved and the resource (or not) that is attached to some of the commitments.

1.7. Committing to the Charter would also be consistent with the aim of the *Climate Emergency Plan* to make "Cyngor Gwynedd net-zero carbon and

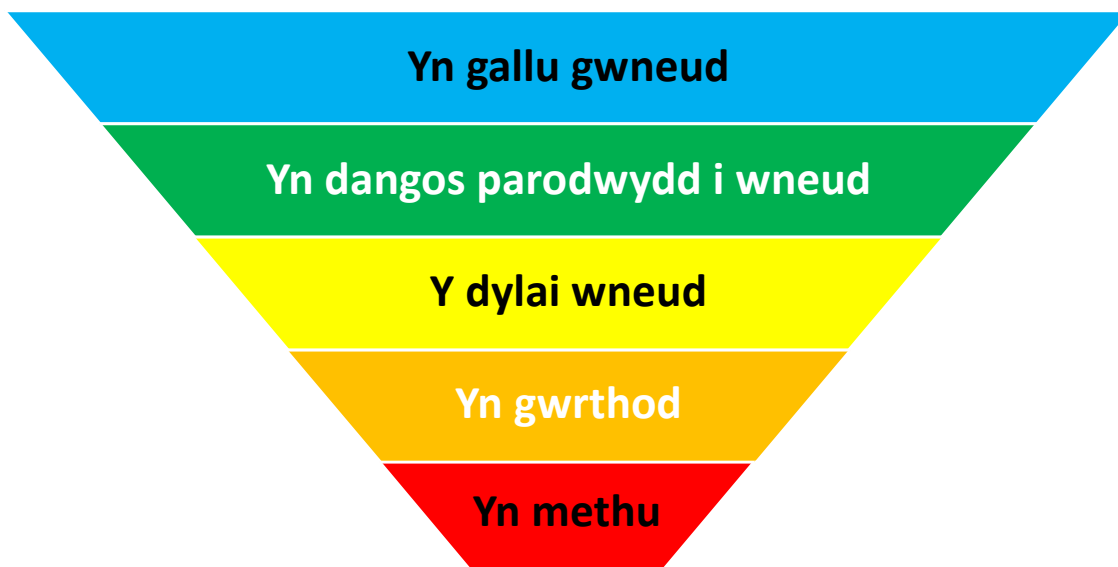
ecologically positive by 2030." To this purpose, the Plan places an emphasis on staff travelling sustainably, such as the projects below:

- Reducing carbon emissions through staff commuting practices (8.6.), and;
- Encouraging active travel amongst staff for the benefit of health and well-being and to reduce carbon emissions (8.7.).

The Council's Climate and Nature Board has already started on a work programme to change staff commuting practices, in order to reduce the Council's general emissions. The Council is required to measure carbon emissions deriving from staff commuting patterns and report on this data to the Welsh Government every year. Therefore, committing to the Charter would be compatible with the Council's intention to change staff commuting patterns and reduce corporate emissions.

1.8. Committing to the Charter would also support the Council's corporate objectives as defined in the *Council Plan*, namely A Green Gwynedd and An Efficient Gwynedd. Active travel and an increased use of public transport amongst staff would not only contribute to the Council's "green" objectives, but would also make it more efficient - because of the possible savings from encouraging alternative travel instead of cars where possible.

1.9. Because of the Charter's emphasis on staff travelling sustainably, Gwynedd's rural context does not cause the same challenges as it would if the Charter had a more general intention, looking at the whole county transport system and with the public in question. Because of this, officers do not believe that the Council's rural geography makes committing to the Charter unrealistic. The work's focus, as with changing wider commuting practices, would be based on the hierarchy below:



The aim would be to encourage staff who "can do", "show willingness to do" and "should do", to travel in alternative ways instead of cars, by raising awareness of the personal, environmental and social benefits, as well as

facilitating the experience of using alternative methods of travel. The Charter focuses on what is practically possible, i.e. it does not focus on those people who cannot turn to alternative methods. The Charter is conditional and acknowledges that the most appropriate means of travel depend on the context of the individual in question, e.g., geography, topography, public transport opportunities, travel distance etc. Therefore, instead of demanding the most profound change, the Charter encourages a more sequential and realistic change amongst staff, starting with sharing cars and moving towards more sustainable methods where possible:



Record of any personal interest by any Cabinet Member consulted and any dispensations approved by the Standards Committee:

None

Any consultations undertaken prior to making the Decision:

Chief Finance Officer – *No objections from the perspective of financial propriety. I expect any budgetary requirements to be met either through current budgets or from reserves that have already been earmarked.*

Monitoring Officer – *As noted, the Charter is the product of regional and sub-regional work to establish a range of objectives and principles which are compatible with the Council's policies and objectives to reduce carbon. I am satisfied with the propriety of the decision sought.*

Local Member/s - Not relevant



Working together across North Wales, over the next two years we commit to...

Communications and leadership
Establish a sustainable travel champion network Establish a network of proactive sustainable travel champions, including senior staff, managers and where relevant, elected members, who routinely promote and model active and sustainable travel behaviour, in line with the sustainable travel hierarchy
Use consistent communications messages Agree and use regular and consistent communications messages with the public, visitors and staff on healthy travel and reducing unnecessary travel, including targeting people of different backgrounds, gender, age, abilities and disabilities
Consider healthy travel across our wider functions Promote and consider healthy travel options and benefits across wider functions, such as: procurement, conferences, and when advertising roles in our organisations
Encourage sustainable travel through expenses policies Review our travel expense policies and journey planning processes for staff, to align with the sustainable transport hierarchy
Provide strategic leadership on healthy travel Collaborate with partners and provide strategic leadership and planning on healthy and sustainable travel, including infrastructure and services where relevant
Support staff driving fleet vehicles to be responsible road users Support staff driving fleet vehicles to be responsible and considerate road users (e.g. driving within speed limits and not parking in cycle lanes), to enable safe walking and cycling
Public transport
Promote public transport discounts for sustainable travel Explore discounts for staff on Transport for Wales rail services and with local transport providers
Walking, cycling and public transport
Provide information on how to reach our sites sustainably Make information easily available on how to get to our main site(s) by walking, cycling and public transport links, for example by contributing to an interactive map
Cycling and walking
Offer the cycle to work scheme Offer the cycle to work scheme to all staff, including e-bikes
Provide staff with facilities and accessories to encourage active travel Assess and provide secure and accessible cycle storage, showers and lockers at all suitable sites
Enable staff to access bicycles more easily at work Improve access to bicycles at work where appropriate, e.g. pool bikes, hire bikes and cargo bikes
Promote cycle training and maintenance sessions Explore and promote cycle training and maintenance sessions where appropriate
Agile working
Support flexible working Provide flexible working options for staff wherever possible, including home and/or hub working, and promote a culture of agile working across public sector sites
Ultra low emission vehicles (battery electric or hydrogen)
Review provision of electric vehicle charging facilities Review the current and future need for electric vehicle (EV) and e-bike charging infrastructure on our sites
Look at options for ultra low emission vehicles in our fleets and procurement Review our fleet and procurement arrangements (where applicable) for introduction of ultra-low emission vehicles, including e-cargo and e-bikes where appropriate



APPENDIX 2. PROGRESS THAT HAS ALREADY BEEN MADE ON THE COMMITMENTS AND EASE OF ANY FURTHER IMPLEMENTATION

	<i>Early days and planning</i>	<i>Starting the journey and implementation</i>	<i>Completed</i>	<i>Demonstrate leadership</i>
<i>Establish a sustainable travel promoter network</i>	✓			
<i>Use regular communication messages</i>	✓			
<i>Consider healthy travel across our wider duties</i>		✓		
<i>Encourage sustainable travel through expenses policies</i>		✓		
<i>Provide strategic leadership on healthy travel</i>		✓		
<i>Support staff who drive fleet vehicles to become responsible users on the roads</i>			✓	
<i>Promote information on how to reach our main sites through sustainable connections</i>	✓			
<i>Provide information on how to reach our main sites through sustainable connections</i>	✓			
<i>Offer the Cycle to Work Scheme</i>			✓	
<i>Provide facilities and accessories for staff to encourage active travel</i>		✓		
<i>Enable staff to have easier access to bikes at work</i>		✓		
<i>Promote training sessions and bike maintenance</i>		✓		
<i>Support flexible working</i>			✓	
<i>Review the provision of electric vehicles charging facilities</i>		✓		
<i>Look at options for very low emission vehicles in our fleet and in procurement arrangements</i>			✓	

Green - Easy interventions that have already been identified and do not require a budget.

Yellow - Interventions that require more coordinating but do not need any financial investment.

Amber - Requires an investment in facilities to facilitate alternative and active travel amongst staff, e.g. cycling and having lockers and showers.