

Llanbedr Bypass Stalemate: Residents Demand Action as Daily Life Deteriorates

The quiet village of Llanbedr in Gwynedd, North Wales, is once again at the centre of a growing political and infrastructural controversy, as frustration mounts over continued delays to the long-promised relief road project. Residents and local officials are warning that the lack of progress on the bypass is not only hampering economic development but actively damaging the wellbeing and safety of the local community.

Originally approved in March 2020, the £14 million Llanbedr bypass was intended to address severe traffic congestion through the village, particularly during the busy summer months. However, the Welsh Government cancelled the scheme in November 2021 following a review of road projects based on climate change considerations.

Despite the cancellation, the underlying traffic issues have only intensified. The Welsh Government has since allocated £400,000 for the development of a potential “low-speed” road alternative, and a working group comprising Transport Wales, Cyngor Gwynedd, and engineering consultants WSP and YGC is refining revised proposals. Among the options is a new road to the west of the village. A “material start” had already been made on parts of the original scheme, which could ease future planning permissions should the project be revived.

The matter has now become further complicated by a shift in the funding process. Rather than receiving direct government support, any future request for investment must be made through the newly established North Wales Corporate Joint Committee (CJC), which manages a £100 million regional transport infrastructure fund. Gwynedd Council must now compete for a share of this budget, potentially requiring up to £32 million to proceed with the bypass.

Plaid Cymru Senedd Member Mabon ap Gwynfor has called on the Welsh Government to take direct responsibility. Speaking in the Senedd, he argued that the government’s withdrawal of funding for a “shovel-ready” project has directly impeded progress. “If the scheme were funded, it could be operational by 2027,” he stated. “The responsibility lies with the government to rectify its own decision.”

First Minister Eluned Morgan responded by emphasising the government’s commitment to empowering local authorities through the CJC model. “We believe it is appropriate that local leaders have a stronger voice in infrastructure priorities,” she said. “That is why future allocations will be determined through the Corporate Joint Committee.”

However, local leaders remain unconvinced. Councillor Nia Jeffreys, Leader of Cyngor Gwynedd, described the situation as untenable. “This ongoing saga is having a serious impact on residents’ quality of life, public safety, and the local economy,” she said. “This road is simply not fit for purpose in the 21st century.”

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Councillor Gwynfor Owen echoed those concerns, urging immediate action. “The Welsh Government must demonstrate that it represents all of Wales. Guaranteeing funding for this vital project would be a crucial first step.”

With the summer season already bringing increased traffic through Llanbedr’s narrow roads, residents are once again facing delays, disruption, and a sense of abandonment. Whether political consensus can be reached in time remains uncertain.