An Economy that Works for All
GWYNEDD 2035

An innovative, productive and low-carbon economy which strengthens the Welsh language, creates new opportunities and contributes towards everyone's well-being.

Adopted by Cyngor Gwynedd on 14 May 2026

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Gwynedd is a unique county. In its close communities, its natural beauty and in the vibrancy of the Welsh language in the county, it has a unique identity and appeal which makes it one of the best locations to live and work in Wales and beyond.

We also have a modern and innovative economy with substantial potential in our existing enterprises and opportunities in new industries and activities for a prosperous future for the people of Gwynedd.

But a lot of this potential is yet to be realised. According to many indicators, there is a substantial gap between the economy of Gwynedd and the rest of Wales and the United Kingdom (UK). In part, this can be attributed to the sense that the area lacks the opportunities, suitable employment or salaries required to live full lives.

This Strategy responds to this gap, and it will shape our work until 2035. It is an honest assessment of today's economy; however, it is ambitious for the future. By identifying our strengths and weaknesses, the opportunities here in the county, and those areas in need of improvement, the Strategy's purpose is to realise the potential of our people and our enterprises and create new benefits and opportunities. Our vision is to create:

"An innovative, productive and low-carbon economy which strengthens the Welsh language, creates new opportunities and contributes towards everyone's well-being."

Creating growth for growth's sake is not the intention. The purpose of the Strategy is to ensure inclusive and sustainable growth, so that individuals, businesses and community enterprises in Gwynedd genuinely benefit from the economy. Essentially, it is a strategy that focuses on the values that mean the most to the people of Gwynedd:

- **Living with dignity**: Everyone should receive enough to sustain themselves and their families, to have full and happy lives without wanting for anything.
- **Opportunities:** Every individual should be able to access the opportunities they need to realise their full potential, regardless of their socio-economic background.
- **Fairness:** No area, person or community should be left behind.
- **Local roots:** Gwynedd enterprises are the essence of Gwynedd's economy, and through them, we are able to retain the wealth that we create locally.
- **Sustainability:** The Welsh language and environment must be nurtured and protected which, together, make Gwynedd such a unique place to live, work and enterprise.

As the funding landscape changes, there will be a need to decide where and how to target resources to secure the greatest economic and social benefit. This may include targeting resources geographically or to specific groups or sectors. This Strategy gives us the structure to assess and prioritise interventions, in order to strike a balance between growth and quality of life.

This is not solely a Council Strategy. We will need to collaborate with partners on a local, county, regional and national level, to make the biggest possible difference. We will build on positive experiences of collaboration by establishing the **Gwynedd Economy Forum**. The Forum will bring organisations and partners together to draw up and coordinate an annual delivery plan which will include current activity and upcoming projects. This will assist to identify geographical and thematic gaps in terms of implementing the Strategy.

In order to review progress against the Strategy's priorities, a monitoring and evaluation framework has been developed. The indicators within the framework reflect the Strategy's priorities and the change required. This will assist the Forum when evaluating and reviewing progress.

This is a vision that puts the people, communities and enterprises of Gwynedd at the centre. To implement this, we have three themes: *Enterprise, People and Place*.

Local **enterprises** of all shapes and sizes - commercial, community and voluntary - are essential to create opportunities for local **people** to sustain themselves and realise their potential.

Skilled **people** are essential to **enterprises** if they are to succeed.

People and **enterprises** need each other if they are to thrive and make a positive contribution to their communities.

An effective and attractive **place**, which helps them succeed, is critical to **enterprises** and **people**.

For each of the three themes, we have identified two strategic priorities.

OUR VISION:

An innovative, productive and low-carbon economy which strengthens the Welsh language, creates new opportunities and contributes towards everyone's well-being.

ENTERPRISE - prosperous local enterprises that excel

PRIORITY ONE - Maximise the value of our current economy

1. More productive and competitive enterprises
2. More efficient enterprises to reduce costs and waste
3. Enterprises equipped with new technologies
4. Innovative enterprises
5. Enterprises accessing new markets
6. Local ownership of enterprises
7. Retain public sector spending local
8. Engage with enterprises to share information
9. Support the transition to a net zero economy
10. Encourage enterprises to collaborate
11. Local ownership of economic assets

PRIORITY TWO - Make the most of new opportunities

1. Attract investment and high-quality jobs.
2. Capitalise on significant regional investments
3. Support local enterprises in new industries
4. Support local enterprises to access private investment.
5. Making the most of our strategic assets
6. New developments to benefit local communities
7. Capitalise on opportunities arising from global changes.
8. Collaboration between enterprises and education in research and development.

PEOPLE - a skilled and inclusive workforce

PRIORITY THREE - Securing a skilled workforce

1. Overcome recruitment skills challenges
2. Collaborate on long-term skills needs
3. Showcase local employment opportunities to young people
4. Promote schemes to attract and develop talent
5. Support young people who are NEET to realise their potential
6. Support volunteering opportunities
7. Encourage flexible working arrangements

PRIORITY FOUR - Supporting our people

1. Support people who are out of work to gain employment
2. Help people in work to access better jobs
3. Promote the Real Living Wage
4. Promote inclusive employment
5. Increase in the number of secure jobs
6. Support older people to work or volunteer
7. Reduce inequality between men and women in the labour market
8. Ensure fair opportunities for disabled people by removing barriers

PLACE - the best conditions to thrive

PRIORITY FIVE - The best possible connectivity and infrastructure

1. Improve digital connectivity in areas where it is weak
2. Press for improved local transport
3. Improve the Gwynedd roads network to support businesses
4. Press for improvements to the grid and utility infrastructure
5. Support town centre regeneration.
6. Develop the stock of business and works units

PRIORITY SIX - A great place to live, work and enterprise

1. Build confidence to succeed locally
2. Support Gwynedd's unique cultural.
3. Strengthen the use and visibility of the Welsh language
4. Attract the Gwynedd diaspora back to the area
5. Encourage buying locally

THE CHANGE REQUIRED

- Higher wages and incomes
- More secure jobs
- Less poverty and disadvantage
- More local employment opportunities
- More people living and working locally
- Job satisfaction and realising potential
- A green economy that protects the environment
- Increased use and visibility of the language

OUR STRATEGY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GWYNEDD ECONOMY UP TO 2035

CYNNWYS

1. FOREWORD
2. THE PROFILE OF GWYNEDD'S ECONOMY
3. THE CASE FOR ACTION
4. THE CHANGE REQUIRED
5. DEVELOPING THE STRATEGY FOR GWYNEDD'S ECONOMY
6. THE STRATEGY'S PRIORITIES
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I. FOREWORD

Here in Gwynedd, we have a strong economic history that we can be proud of. From our world-famous quarrying communities to our university and power stations - all parts of Gwynedd have witnessed substantial innovation and progressiveness.

But we are not going to rely on the past. Today, we have huge potential in Gwynedd - in our residents, our communities and our entrepreneurs; but this potential is not always realised. There remains a substantial gap between the performance of the economy in Gwynedd and the economies of Wales and the United Kingdom on average.

Therefore, it is a privilege to introduce this Economic Strategy which clearly sets out our vision and long-term priorities for Gwynedd's economy:

"An innovative, productive and low-carbon economy which strengthens the Welsh language, creates new opportunities and contributes towards everyone's well-being."

Growth for growth's sake is not our intention. We must create an economy which brings benefits to all by creating new employment, reducing poverty and improving quality of life across the county. This is the economy that will give our people the opportunities they need to remain in or return to their communities and thrive. And this will be an economy that will strengthen and protect the Welsh language and environment. At the heart of this, Gwynedd enterprises will realise their full potential, they will be resilient and they will grow, and the wealth we create will stay local.

It is a vision which responds to the call for prosperity expressed by Gwynedd residents during the Ardal Ni consultation. We heard calls for full-time higher-salary jobs, for a more stable and diverse economy, for lively town centres, and for opportunities for our young people to thrive in Gwynedd.

We want an economy that gives everyone an opportunity to live full lives and realise their full potential, and for an economy that strengthens the natural and cultural wealth which makes our county so unique.

Prosperity that is not only sustainable but is also **inclusive** and **fair** and **restores** the community, natural and cultural wealth of our county.

With substantial economic changes afoot, there is an exciting opportunity ahead of us to make Gwynedd a destination of excellence in new industries - in the creative and digital industries, professional services, clean energy and low-carbon activity, life sciences, advanced manufacturing and aerospace. Similarly, we must support those industries that already exist in Gwynedd which are essential to our communities, enterprises and residents. For example, with the second largest agricultural land area in Wales, we must continue to nurture and add value to our traditional sectors, such as agriculture and tourism, as a firm foundation and integral part of a modern and innovative economy.

Consequently, there is a need for a clearer and stronger voice to steer development which affects us and keeps the benefits local. This Economic Strategy was formulated for this purpose. It acknowledges that we will need to collaborate with partners on all levels and influence them if we are to take advantage of opportunities and overcome challenges, and as the funding landscape and economic policy changes, the value and importance of collaboration increases.

We look forward to seeing this Economic Strategy deliver its vision.

Cllr R. Medwyn Hughes
Cabinet Member for Economy and Community
Cyngor Gwynedd

II. THE PROFILE OF GWYNEDD'S ECONOMY

Geographically, Gwynedd is the second largest county in Wales. Located in north-west Wales, Gwynedd extends from Cardigan Bay in the west to the banks of the Menai Straits in the north, and a substantial part of the county is located within Eryri National Park. This geography shapes the spatial distribution of the population, with most living along the coastline and low-lying areas, particularly in the north of the county, and the rest live in villages, smaller towns or in the countryside.

Gwynedd is a unique county with outstanding cultural and environmental wealth. Gwynedd is the county with the highest percentage of Welsh speakers in Wales and 92% of the county's local areas * are above the threshold of the Welsh Communities Commission's high-density Welsh threshold. The county is also environmentally rich and includes the mountains of Eryri, the Llŷn Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and the Bro Dyfi Biosphere Zone. There is also world-famous and unique heritage, which is reflected in the two UNESCO World Heritage Sites, Castles of Edward I and Gwynedd Slate Landscape.

Gwynedd Population
117,000

Gwynedd Area
2,535km^2

Gwynedd Population density
46 persons per km^2

** The areas have been defined by the Office for National Statistics as a Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOA) - standard statistical areas used to collect and publish data on a small local level, which usually include around 1,500 people.*

THE LABOUR MARKET

- 73% of Gwynedd's working-age population are employed, which is lower than Wales and the UK.[i]
- The proportion of the workforce that is self-employed is over 50% higher in Gwynedd than in Wales.[ii]
- Average weekly earnings for workers in Gwynedd are over £50 lower than the Wales average and £100 lower than the UK average.[iii]

PRODUCTIVITY

- Gross Value Added (GVA) per head in Gwynedd is around £3,500 per year lower than the North Wales average, and almost £12,000 lower than the UK average.[iv]
- GVA per job in Gwynedd is £10,000 lower than the North Wales average, and over £23,000 lower than the UK average.[v]
- GVA per hour worked in Gwynedd is the second lowest in North Wales and recorded the lowest growth between 2004 and 2023.[vi]

SKILLS

- Only 4% of the working-age population in Gwynedd has no qualifications, lower than North Wales and Wales overall.[vii]
- 70.6% of the working-age population in Gwynedd holds qualifications above A-Level, higher than North Wales and Wales.[viii]
- Almost 1/3 of the economically inactive working-age population in Gwynedd wants a job, a higher proportion than in Wales and the UK.[ix]

COUNTY ENTERPRISES

- Over half of enterprises established in Gwynedd in 2019 were still trading in 2024 – the highest five-year survival rate in Wales. [x]
- 94.6% of Gwynedd's native businesses employ fewer than 10 people.[xi]
- There are 230 enterprises employing more than 250 people in Gwynedd (1.4%).[xii]
- Almost 14% of Gwynedd's enterprises are in the hospitality sector – a higher proportion than in other North Wales counties.[xiii]
- Across the western counties of North Wales, agriculture represents the strongest sector (23% of enterprises), while manufacturing is the weakest, accounting for just 5% of enterprises.[xiv]
- There are almost 13,000 native enterprises in Gwynedd[xv]

III. THE CASE FOR ACTION

Here in Gwynedd, we have a strong economic history of which we can be proud. We are also home to a modern and innovative economy, with significant potential within existing enterprises and opportunities in new and emerging industries and activities.

The economy has a number of positive strengths: unemployment is low, workforce qualification levels are high, the economy is resilient, and business survival rates are among the highest in Wales.

Despite this, a range of indicators show that a gap remains between the performance of Gwynedd's economy and that of other areas in Wales and the United Kingdom. This reflects deep-rooted structural inequalities that place people in Gwynedd at a relative disadvantage, limiting their ability to access suitable, secure employment with fair pay, and constraining the potential of the local economy to improve living standards and life opportunities.

According to the Competitiveness Index (2025), Gwynedd is amongst the lowest performing 10% of counties economically across England and Wales. While Gwynedd's performance is among the strongest of rural and western counties in Wales, this remains a central challenge with a direct impact on the well-being of Gwynedd's residents.

The Strategy focuses on the issues requiring attention, with the most significant gaps indicating that Gwynedd underperforms against more than one National Well-being Indicator:

GAPS IN GWYNEDD'S ECONOMY

WORKFORCE GAP

Low unemployment rate, but the county's inactivity rate (i.e. the proportion of the 16- to 64-year-old population not in employment) is higher than the averages for north Wales and the UK.
(Well-being Indicator 21: Proportion of the population in employment)

POPULATION GAP
The population is ageing quicker than in Wales and the UK, with a higher proportion of older people of retirement age and high levels of outward migration amongst young people.

PAY GAP
The average weekly salary of a full-time worker and household gross disposable income has been consistently lower in Gwynedd since 2010 than the Welsh and UK averages.
(Well-being Indicator 10: Household Gross Disposable Income per Head)

WORK CONDITIONS GAP
Substantially higher rates of workers in Gwynedd are part-time and seasonal employees, compared with Wales and the UK.
(Well-being Indicator 16: Percentage of the population in employment, on permanent contracts and earning the Real Living Wage).

WELL-BEING GAP

Low salaries and part-time jobs cause high levels of poverty in rural and urban areas, with in-work poverty particularly high in Gwynedd compared with Wales and the UK.
(Well-being Indicator 18: Percentage of households in poverty compared with the UK)
(Well-being Indicator 19: Percentage of households in material deprivation)

PRODUCTIVITY GAP

The value of what is produced in Gwynedd (per hour worked; per job filled), is substantially lower than the averages of Wales and the UK in 2023, and the productivity growth rate in Gwynedd is substantially lower than the averages of Wales and the UK since 2004.

(Well-being Indicator 09: GVA per hour worked compared with the UK average)

INDUSTRIAL GAP

A relatively narrow range of industries with employees and enterprises more numerous in a smaller range of industries.

NEW ENTERPRISE GAP

The business start-up rate in Gwynedd is amongst the lowest across the counties of Wales in 2023, below the Wales national average and significantly below the UK average.

HIGH PERFORMANCE GAP

Percentage of enterprises that saw an increase of 20% in the number of employees over a three-year period was consistently lower in Gwynedd than in Wales and the UK between 2018 and 2023.

DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY GAP

Percentage of property with access to gigabyte connectivity (>1,000 Mbps) is lower than the averages for Wales and the UK, with a higher proportion of properties also with the weakest connectivity (<15 Mbps). 4G and 5G coverage is also lower in Gwynedd.

(Well-being Indicator 50: Digital inclusion)

IV. THE CHANGE REQUIRED

The gaps facing Gwynedd shows a clear need for a fundamental change in the economy: change which, on one hand, addresses the comparative under-performance of the economy, and creates the best possible conditions for our enterprises, and on the other hand, change which has a direct positive impact on the well-being of our people and life opportunities in Gwynedd. The Strategy has been developed in order to start-up and support these types of change.

On the whole economy level, it includes:

- **Raising the productivity levels of our enterprises and our workers** to stimulate higher salaries and better working conditions.
- **Increasing the competitiveness of our native enterprises** so that they are more effective and efficient, realising their long-term business objectives and creating quality jobs.
- **Strengthening digital connectivity and the county's business infrastructure** to create the best possible conditions for enterprise.
- **Creating a more diverse industrial foundation** with local enterprises in a range of industries, creating new opportunities and a more resilient economy.
- **Supporting our people to gain the skills they need** so that they, as well as the enterprises employing them, can take full advantage of opportunities.
- **Retaining more of the wealth that we have created locally in Gwynedd** to maximise benefits for the people, enterprises and communities of Gwynedd.
- **Building an economy that is** environmentally, linguistically and culturally sustainable**.**

We are going to implement this mainly to make a positive difference to the lives of the people of Gwynedd. The most important outcomes affecting the people of Gwynedd are:

- Higher salaries and gross household income
- More people employed in stable jobs
- Lower levels of poverty and socio-economic disadvantage
- Broader variety of work opportunities locally
- More people able to stay, live and work in their local communities
- More people enjoying their work and realising their full potential
- A green economy which protects the county's outstanding natural environment
- A Welsh economy which increases the use and visibility of the language with customers and in the workplace across Gwynedd.

At the heart of all efforts to deliver the Strategy, we will focus on the values that matter most to the people of Gwynedd:

- **Living with dignity**: Everyone should receive enough to sustain themselves and their families, to have full and happy lives without wanting for anything.
- **Opportunities:** Every individual should be able to access the opportunities they need to realise their full potential, regardless of their socio-economic background.
- **Fairness:** No area, person or community should be left behind.
- **Local roots:** Gwynedd enterprises are the essence of Gwynedd's economy, and through them, we are able to retain the wealth that we create locally.
- **Sustainability:** The Welsh language and environment must be nurtured and protected which, together, make Gwynedd such a unique place to live, work and enterprise.

We will need to be brave when implementing this Strategy, encouraging others to do the same. We will need to be prepared to experiment with new and different methods, accepting that not all efforts will bear fruit.

V. DEVELOPING THE STRATEGY FOR GWYNEDD'S ECONOMY

The Strategy was developed through desk-based research and extensive stakeholder engagement between 2024 and 2025. It provides an honest yet ambitious assessment of the economy and has been designed in light of Gwynedd's opportunities, challenges and needs, alongside a clear understanding of what can realistically be delivered by Cyngor Gwynedd and its partners.

Research and Engagement

The economic profile of Gwynedd was considered first, including its characteristics and performance, how it compares with other areas, and the wider influences affecting the county now or likely to do so in the future. Alongside this research, the strategic and policy context was mapped at county, regional and national levels (Wales and the UK), in order to secure the greatest possible benefit for Gwynedd from a broad range of economic development activities.

Extensive engagement was undertaken with strategic partners, businesses and residents, including meetings with key Council stakeholders involved in economic development. Feedback from Gwynedd businesses was gathered through the Council's Business Surveys in 2024 and 2025, providing a clear picture of the opportunities and challenges they face, the types of support required, and their future intentions.

Responses to the Council's public consultations were also used, including the Ardal Ni Consultation, which focused on Gwynedd's economy and communities. Views were gathered from residents on the strengths of their local areas, aspects requiring improvement, and the changes they would like to see. This provides a valuable measure of what matters to the people of Gwynedd and their vision for the county's economy.

Influence and collaboration

Employers across the public, private and third sectors have a key role to play in delivering this Strategy. Much of the change will be realised through their actions, and this requires appropriate support—whether through the Council's direct influence or through working in partnership with others.

Areas within local influence are wide-ranging and include business development grants, place-shaping and regeneration schemes, planning and building control, business licensing and trading standards. They also encompass careers advice and support, as well as health interventions and social services to help sustain a healthy, safe and work-ready workforce.

One area of particular importance when developing the economy is to ensure that public contracts support local suppliers. Whether individually, or when forming cooperative enterprises, local suppliers have the capacity to deliver substantial contracts. Keeping the pound local is more important than ever. There is a duty - not only on the Council but also on all our partners - to make a concerted effort to support the local supply chain, through procurement practices and by encouraging individual businesses to use them.

Many of these areas are strongly influenced by national policies of the UK Government and the Welsh Government, where the main decision-making powers reside. As a result, collaboration and influence are essential to ensure the greatest possible benefit for Gwynedd. We will continue to make the strongest possible case to secure a fair share of economic investment from all future sources.

Public, private and joint enterprises will be critical to delivering this Strategy. We are already working on projects through partnership and will continue to maintain and expand our network of funding partners. We will explore traditional and innovative approaches to bringing organisations together to fund appropriate projects for the county.

The strategic and policy context

This Strategy responds to the relevant strategic context and economic development policies, building on what is already in place in order to add value and ensure the greatest possible benefit for Gwynedd. This context will be monitored throughout the lifetime of the Strategy to ensure it remains relevant and responsive to wider policy changes.

It also acknowledges that Gwynedd forms part of a wider region, with people and businesses working and operating across county boundaries. Gwynedd's economy cannot thrive without both drawing on and contributing ideas, approaches and talent from within the region and beyond

Local Areas

- Ardal Ni: Local Regeneration Plans: In 2022, Cyngor Gwynedd consulted with communities across the county which led to the development of 13 local regeneration plans. Collectively, these form a regeneration framework for the county with economic issues identified as a common theme.
- Town Regeneration Plans: Cyngor Gwynedd has eight plans to improve its main commercial centre, which will be a guide for future investment.
- Local and community connection**:** A range of networks operate across Gwynedd, including town and community councils and wider local forums, many of which have set out local priorities and needs within strategic documents.

Gwynedd

- Cyngor Gwynedd Plan 2023-28: The Council's corporate plan identifies A Prosperous Gwynedd amongst its strategic priorities, with the aim of "*strengthening the economy and support the people of Gwynedd to earn a worthy wage*".
- Gwynedd and Eryri Sustainable Visitor Economy Strategic Plan 2035**:** The Strategic Plan has been adopted by Cyngor Gwynedd and Eryri National Park Authority to deliver their principles for a sustainable visitor economy.

- Cyngor Gwynedd Language Strategy 2023 - 2033: The Language Strategy sets out Cyngor Gwynedd's priorities for promoting the Welsh language and facilitating its use across the county.

- Cynllun Eryri**:** Cynllun Eryri is Eryri National Park Authority's Statutory Management Plan to protect the unique features of Eryri.
- Planning Policy**:** Town and country planning responsibilities within Gwynedd are divided between Cyngor Gwynedd and Eryri National Park Authority.

Regional

- North Wales Growth Deal: Led by the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee, the programme invests £120 million from the Welsh Government and £120 million from the UK Government into a range of projects across five programmes, with the aim of creating 4,000 jobs by 2036.
- North Wales Skills and Employment Plan 2023-2025: The North Wales Skills Partnership provides guidance on the needs of employers and employees within the regional economy.
- North Wales Regional Economic Framework: This framework outlines how the region works collectively towards shared priorities.
- ARFOR programme: ARFOR is a partnership between the councils of Anglesey, Gwynedd, Ceredigion, and Carmarthenshire, which seeks to support the viability of the Welsh language by addressing socio-economic challenges within Welsh-speaking communities.

Wales

- Regional investment in Wales: A Welsh Government Framework which outlines its approach to regional investment.
- Economic Mission: priorities for a stronger economy: Welsh Government Priorities for building a more prosperous, equal, and greener economy based on four priority areas, with a strong emphasis on inclusive growth.
- Foundational Economy: mission statement: A statement of Welsh Government priorities for the sectors it considers fundamental to the economy.
- Innovation strategy for Wales**:** The Welsh Government's strategy for using innovation to improve people's lives and stimulate the economy.
- The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**: The Act places a duty** on public bodies in Wales to consider the well-being of the population and future generations. The Strategy has been developed in accordance with the principles and purpose of this Act.

The United Kingdom

- Economic Mission**:** Economic growth is the main priority of the current government in London. The aim is to increase productivity and create a competitive, varied, and innovative economy.
- Industrial strategy, 2035**:** The UK Government Industrial Strategy, *Invest 2035*, is central to its Economic Mission. It identifies eight strategic growth sectors and a range of interventions to support them. The Artificial Intelligence Action Plan also promotes growth by increasing the use of technology across enterprises and the wider economy.

VI. THE STRATEGY'S PRIORITIES

OUR VISION:

An innovative, productive and low-carbon economy which strengthens the Welsh language, creates new opportunities and contributes towards everyone's well-being.

Enterprise

Prosperous local enterprises that excel

PRIORITY ONE: Maximise the value of our current economy

Aim (what?):

Realising the potential of our existing enterprises and sectors by increasing their value, strengthening their resilience and supporting them to reduce emissions.

Activity areas (how?):

1.1. Supporting enterprises to become more productive and competitive and create more value.

1.2. Supporting enterprises to become more efficient and reduce costs and waste.

1.3. Supporting enterprises to adopt and/or respond to new technologies.

1.4. Supporting enterprises to innovate by using the resources available to create and develop new products and services.

1.5. Supporting local enterprises to reach new markets.

1.6. Supporting succession plans that keep ownership local.

1.7. Retaining more public spending in the local area.

1.8. Regular engagement with Gwynedd enterprises to highlight business opportunities and information.

1.9. Supporting the transition to a net zero economy and take advantage of the opportunities that come from that.

1.10. Encouraging micro and small enterprises to collaborate in order to build on each other's strengths.

1.11. Encouraging and supporting local ownership of economic assets.

PRIORITY TWO: Make the most of new opportunities

Aim (what?):

Supporting and making the most of new industries and activity with substantial potential, ensuring that the benefit stays local

Activity areas (how?):

2.1 Attracting investment to create quality employment for the county.

2.2 Capitalise on significant investments in the north Wales region to ensure the greatest possible benefits for Gwynedd from the North Wales Growth Deal, Wrexham and Flintshire Investment Zone and Anglesey Freeport.

2.3 Supporting local enterprises with potential in new industries and activity, to keep the benefit local.

2.4. Supporting local enterprises to take advantage of alternative and private investment opportunities.

2.5. Making the most of our strategic assets with potential to attract substantial developments.

2.6. Ensuring that new developments in Gwynedd benefit the communities in which they are located.

2.7 Ensuring that Gwynedd enterprises take advantage of opportunities arising from major changes in the global economy.

2.8 Encouraging and enabling enterprises and education organisations to collaborate on research and development opportunities.

People
A skilled and inclusive workforce

PRIORITY THREE: Securing a skilled workforce

Aim (what?):

Nurturing, attracting and retaining talent, responding to the county's long-term skills requirements

Activity areas (how?):

3.1. Supporting Gwynedd enterprises to overcome recruitment challenges and skills needs.

3.2 Working with education sector partners in order to plan for long-term skills needs.

3.3 Keeping in contact with young people who leave the county, or who consider doing so, and showing the work opportunities here in Gwynedd.

3.4 Promoting schemes to attract and develop talent.

3.5 Supporting young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) to take advantage of opportunities and achieve their full potential.

3.6 Supporting volunteering opportunities.

3.7 Encouraging use of alternative work arrangements and patterns to enable more convenient working in terms of location and time, particularly within our rural areas.

PRIORITY FOUR: Supporting our people

Aim (what?):

Supporting the people of Gwynedd to realise their full potential, to obtain quality employment, fair salaries and opportunities locally

Activity areas (how?):

4.1. Supporting people who are unemployed, inactive or facing additional challenges into employment.

4.2 Supporting people in employment to progress to a better post with higher salaries or more certain work conditions.

4.3 Promoting the Real Living Wage amongst the county's employers.

4.4 Promoting inclusive types of employment to make it easier for people to be able to work.

4.5 Promoting work opportunities that give people security.

4.6 Supporting people of retirement age to continue working and volunteering if they wish to do so.

4.7 Reducing inequality between men and women to ensure that everyone is treated the same and are able to participate fully in the labour market.

4.8 Ensuring that disabled people have fair opportunities, by removing barriers and ensuring equal access to services and to opportunities.

Place
The best conditions to thrive

PRIORITY FIVE: The best possible connectivity and infrastructure

Aim (what?):

Acting for better connectivity and business infrastructure to boost the economy

Activity areas (how?):

5.1. Expanding access to the best possible digital connectivity in areas where it is weak.

5.2 Pressing for improvements in transportation in order to facilitate the movement of people locally.

5.3 Pressing for improvements in the Gwynedd roads network in order to facilitate business development.

5.4 Pressing for improvements in local grid capacity and utility infrastructure.

5.5 Supporting town centre regeneration plans.

5.6 Creating and improving work unit stock in order to ensure suitable provision.

PRIORITY SIX: A great place to live, work and enterprise

Aim (what?):

Promoting Gwynedd as a great place to live, work and enterprise, celebrating the Welsh language and our unique identity

Activity areas (how?):

6.1. Building self-confidence and the belief that success can be achieved locally in Gwynedd.

6.2 Energising and support the unique cultural and social scene of Gwynedd.

6.3 Strengthening the use and visibility of the Welsh language as a unique aspect of Gwynedd's economy.

6.4 Engaging with the Gwynedd diaspora to attract different experience, expertise and investment back to the area.

6.5 Encouraging more people and enterprises to buy locally.

VII. THE STRATEGY IN PRACTICE

Working in Partnership

The Strategy is not a document for a single organisation alone. Its success will require effort across organisations and sectors.

We will build on the positive experience of implementing the UK's Shared Prosperity Fund and the appreciation that organisations have expressed for the opportunity to come together to collaborate, coordinate their efforts, and express the needs of their stakeholders. Therefore, we will establish the '**Gwynedd Economy Forum'** in order to implement the Strategy.

The Forum membership includes the key organisations that contribute to local prosperity, and the bodies working to develop an economy that benefits our communities. The Forum will bring together local partners from the public, private sector and third sectors. Relevant regional and national organisations will also be part of the Forum.

We will ensure that different parts of Gwynedd have a voice in order to maintain awareness of the diversity that exists across the county.

The Forum will formally meet three times a year, to:

1. Formulate and coordinate an annual Delivery Plan for the Strategy.
2. Monitor activities and their individual and composite indicators.
3. Maintain oversight of the progress towards delivering the Strategy.
4. Review and update the Strategy as needed.
5. Maintain oversight of the wider landscape and developments relevant to Gwynedd's economy and lobby on behalf of our needs.
6. Promote and facilitate collaboration between organisations with a role in developing the county's economy and other partnerships / forums.

Strategy Delivery Plan

The Strategy sets out the aim and identifies a method of addressing the long-term economic challenges that have been identified for Gwynedd.

An annual Delivery Plan will be prepared under the leadership of the Gwynedd Economy Forum to implement the Strategy. The Plan will include activity already underway, as well as projects in development, identifying their alignment with the Strategy and the areas that will benefit.

The plan will also be a way for the Forum to identify gaps in provision and of influencing regional and national plans.

Monitoring, evaluating and reviewing

It is crucial that we can measure what the plans and activities deliver individually, and their composite impact.

To this end, we have developed a monitoring and evaluation Framework which includes a series of indicators to measure:

- OUTPUTS
  Direct products of a project or activity
  - OUTCOMES
    Medium-term indicators arising from plans and activities, reflecting changes in behaviour
    - EFFECTS
      Indicators of a long-term, strategic change over a period of years

By having a consistent selection of indicators, it will be possible to evaluate the impact of activities and review our progress against the Strategy's priorities.

The indicators identified reflect the change needed and the priorities within the Strategy

MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

THE STRATEGY IN PRACTICE

Outputs - Short Term

1. Enterprises supported to adopt technology
2. Enterprises receiving succession support
3. Enterprises supported to transfer to employee ownership
4. Enterprises adopting green technology
5. Local enterprises engaging with business support
6. Enterprises that have received procurement support
7. Enterprises supported to expand into a new market
8. Enterprises supported to win public sector contracts
9. Enterprises supported to become more productive and competitive
10. Manufacturing enterprises supported to start up or grow
11. Enterprises in high value sectors supported to start up or grow
12. Major developments engaged
13. Major developments consented
14. Inward investment into capital projects
15. Public sector investment into capital projects
16. Public sector investment to support the growth of existing businesses
17. Inward investment to support the growth of existing businesses
18. Enterprises receiving recruitment support
19. People enrolled in a qualification
20. Young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) receiving support
21. People supported through schemes to attract and develop talent
22. People supported to volunteer
23. Unemployed, economically inactive or people facing additional challenges supported into employment
24. People in work who have received training or support
25. People of retirement age supported to continue working or volunteering
26. Disabled people supported into training, work or volunteering
27. Women supported into training or to return to work
28. Digital infrastructure improvements supported
29. Number of jobs created
30. Towns that have received investment
31. Empty buildings returned to use
32. Public spaces improved
33. Improvements to transport connectivity
34. Improvements to grid capacity and other utility infrastructure
35. Work units built
36. Commercial floor spaces permitted
37. Commercial floor spaces built
38. Welsh speakers supported to secure a job and return to the area
39. Enterprises committing to using more Welsh
40. Young people engaged before they graduate from education
41. Enterprises supported to increase spending in the local supply chain
42. Cultural or social activities supported
43. Number of activities to promote positive perceptions of Gwynedd

Outcomes - Medium Term

1. Enterprises remaining locally owned following founder's retirement
2. Enterprises more productive as a result of support
3. Enterprises that have reduced their carbon footprint as a result of support
4. Increase in business start-up rate
5. Increase in business survival rate
6. Public sector spending with local enterprises
7. Increase in spending in the supply chain in North Wales
8. Enterprises being established or growing as a result of inward investment
9. Enterprises being established or growing as a result of public sector investment
10. Major developments spending with local enterprises
11. Enterprises reporting a reduction in recruitment challenges
12. People gaining a qualification as a result of support
13. NEET young people in education, training or work as a result of support
14. People volunteering as a result of support
15. People who were unemployed, economically inactive or facing additional challenges in employment
16. People increasing their earnings (increased hours/wages) as a result of support
17. Enterprises paying the Real Living Wage as a result of support
18. People in employment as a result of support
19. People of retirement age in employment or volunteering as a result of support
20. Disabled people who have received training, are in employment or volunteering following support
21. Individuals/businesses with access to improved digital infrastructure
22. Residents living / visiting towns that have received investment
23. People benefitting from improved transport connectivity
24. Increase in the number of visitors to town centres
25. Enterprises located within new work units or new commercial floor spaces
26. Enterprises using more Welsh as a result of support
27. People who have participated in a cultural or social activity
28. People engaged in activities to promote positive perceptions of Gwynedd
29. Enterprises creating an action plan to use the Welsh language

Effects - Long Term

1. Gwynedd economy's productivity gap narrowing compared to Wales, UK and similar areas
2. Proportion of businesses hiring closer to the Welsh and UK average
3. Increase in the proportion of medium-sized enterprises
4. Growth in employment across the economy, particularly in the high value/high productivity sectors
5. A more diversified economy by sector
6. Growth in employment across the economy, particularly in the high value/high productivity sectors
7. An economy that will be better able to seize global opportunities
8. Business growth increases as talent supply strengthens
9. The skills level in the county maintained and improved
10. Reduction in young people not in education, employment or training (NEET)
11. Increased sense of community pride and community engagement
12. Economic inactivity rate closer to the average in Wales and UK
13. Narrowing in the average pay gap with Wales and the UK
14. Household income closer to the average in Wales and the UK
15. Part-time working rate closer to the average in Wales and UK
16. Reduction in the rate of children in workless households
17. Increase in the rate of people over the age of 50 continuing to work
18. Digital infrastructure availability rate closer to the average in Wales and UK and better than similar areas
19. Town centres that are more resilient and sustainable, with fewer dilapidated or vacant buildings
20. Reduction in the risk that grid capacity or other infrastructure will restrict or delay development
21. Reduction in the barrier that transport connectivity creates for jobseekers
22. Reduction in the rate of young people emigrating from the county
23. Increase in the perception that Gwynedd is a good place to live or venture among young people
24. Reduction in the rate of people commuting from the county
25. Increase in the use of Welsh across the county
26. Communities where the percentage of speakers has been maintained or improve

[i] 73% of Gwynedd's working-age population is in employment, which is lower than Wales (73.7%) and the United Kingdom (UK) (76.6%) Annual Population Survey: summary of economic activity | StatsWales

[ii] Nomis employment and unemployment data for the period October 2024 – September 2025 for the working-age population (18–64) shows that 11.9% of the workforce in Gwynedd is self-employed, compared with 7.9% in Wales and 9.5% in the UK
Labour Market Profile - Nomis - Official Census and Labour Market Statistics

[iii] Workers in Gwynedd earn some of the lowest weekly wages in the UK, averaging £669.20 per week, compared with £719.30 in Wales and £766.60 in the UK. Nomis data on weekly and hourly pay by workplace shows that Gwynedd is below the Wales and UK averages Labour Market Profile - Nomis - Official Census and Labour Market Statistics

[iv] Welsh Government data on GVA for 2023 shows £23,848 per head for Gwynedd, £27,395 per head for north Wales, £25,742 for Wales and £35,661 for the UK
Gross value added by Welsh local authority and year | StatsWales

[v] Office for National Statistics productivity data for the period 2002–2023 shows GVA per filled job of £43,076 in Gwynedd, compared with £53,042 on average in North Wales and £66,402 in the UK
GVA per filled job by Local Authority - Office for National Statistics
(Table B3 / line 347, line 6 and average of line 346-351)

[vi] Office for National Statistics data measuring productivity for the period 2004 to 2023, showing GVA of £29.30 per hour worked in Gwynedd in 2023, a growth of 43% since 2004
GVA per hour worked by Local Authority - Office for National Statistics (Table A3 / line 347)

[vii] Welsh Government data on qualifications for working-age adults (18–64) in 2024 shows that 4% of adults in Gwynedd have no qualifications, compared with 8.5% in North Wales and 7.9% in Wales.
Working-age adults with no qualifications by region and local authority | StatsWales

[viii] Welsh Government data for 2024 also shows that 70.6% of working-age adults in Gwynedd hold qualifications at Level 3 (A-Level) or above, compared with 69.1% in North Wales and 68.6% in Wales.
Working-age adults qualified to Level 3 or above by region and local authority | StatsWales

[ix] Nomis economic inactivity data for the period October 2024–2025 shows that 32.7% of economically inactive working-age people in Gwynedd want a job, around 60% higher than Wales (19.3%) and the UK (20.5%).
Labour Market Profile - Nomis

[x] Office for National Statistics business demography data shows that 55.2% of businesses established in Gwynedd survive for five years, the highest five-year survival rate in Wales, compared with 38.1% across Wales and 38.4% in the UK. Business survival rates by area and birth year | StatsWales

[xi] Welsh Government enterprise size analysis for 2025 shows that 94.6% of businesses in Gwynedd are micro-enterprises (0–9 employees), similar to 94.3% in North Wales, 94.6% in Wales, and 95.8% in the UK.
Welsh Government data – number of micro-enterprises

[xii] Welsh Government data on enterprise size and industry in 2025 shows that 230 enterprises in Gwynedd (1.4%) employ 250 or more people, compared with 1.0% in North Wales and 0.7% in Wales.
Welsh Government data – number of large enterprises

[xiii] Office for National Statistics data on the number of businesses by sector in each county (2025)
UK business: activity, size and location - Office for National Statistics (Table 1, Gwynedd row 345)

[xiv] Office for National Statistics data on the number of businesses by sector in each county (2025)

UK business: activity, size and location - Office for National Statistics (Table 1, Gwynedd row 345)

[xv] Size analysis of businesses by industry (SIC2007), size band, area and year | StatsWales

xvi **Economic Contribution by Sector**

The sectors have been grouped in a way that enables data to be compared and the information to be presented in a manner that is relevant and meaningful to the people of Gwynedd.

GVA:
Office for National Statistics (ONS) data on Gross Value Added (GVA) for Gwynedd shows the GVA contribution of each sector against the defined sector groups. Imputed rental of owner-occupied properties, valued at £308 million (almost 11% of the total), has been excluded as it does not represent genuine productive activity within the economy.
Regional gross value added (balanced) by industry (Table 3c)

Number of jobs:
ONS data on employment by sector is sourced from the Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES). The data includes working business owners, as this captures self-employed individuals—a group that is particularly well represented in Gwynedd.

Number of enterprises:
ONS data on the number of enterprises is sourced from the *Inter Departmental Business Register (IDBR)*.This includes the number of enterprises only, rather than the number of local units.