



SAFLE TREFTADAETH Y BYD
Llechi Cymru
Wales Slate
WORLD HERITAGE SITE

Llewyrch o'r Llechi

Future prosperity
from our industrial past

Located in the north west corner of Wales - Gwynedd is known for its dramatic landscapes, unique culture, colourful history and rich heritage. Llechi is the Welsh word for slate and it has defined our communities for centuries. **Now recognised with the recent prestigious UNESCO designation as a World Heritage Site (WHS)**, the area is poised to take its rightful place as a world destination and achieve its potential for today's residents.



"I believe the World will want to know more about The Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales, and will appreciate and enjoy its significance"

Lord Dafydd Wigley
(WHS Partnership
Board Chair)

The Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales World Heritage Site is at the centre of this bid. Our aim is to capitalise on this distinct status, bringing it alive through our ambitious plans to create Llechi Hubs.

Led by Cyngor Gwynedd Council, the bid is designed to maximise the potential of the WHS designation and the benefits it can bring to our communities. Three complementary projects are proposed to bring new life to our post-industrial areas which have experienced economic decline since the demise of the quarrying industry.

Welsh slate is famed for roofing the Industrial Revolution - generations of families worked in the quarries of Gwynedd and their impact on our history and culture can not be underestimated. Today, through this project we aim to ensure that the area can capitalise on this rich history for the benefit of the local population and the visitor experience.

Supported by The UK Government, The Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales WHS achieved inscription in 2021. It is named as a priority in the Welsh Government programme for Government 2021-2026, and has been a strategic priority for Gwynedd Council for the past 12 years.

The area is acknowledged worldwide for its historic and cultural significance. However, economic growth and prosperity have been hindered for many reasons, including an absence of a coordinated approach to revival and renewal across communities which have faced similar challenges. This has led to social difficulties and low confidence which has, in turn lead to well-being issues. Our project aims to change this so that we can meet and exceed the expectations of those who live here as well as visitors to the area.

Our Ambition

This project aims to link communities through a shared culture, improving the well-being of the local population as well as creating a world class visitor offer at three physical Llechi Hubs. By working with partners, we will co-create experiences which focus on our cultural strengths and bring our heritage alive.

Through innovative and engaging interpretation, we will create a unified story which will help people understand and appreciate our unique heritage and contribute to the future narrative of our living landscape. An online interpretation hub has been created and we are now ready to implement the next phase of our plans.

At the heart of our ambition is the desire to share the values of the World Heritage Site as a driver to ensure that benefit, wealth and understanding is shared across the Slate Landscape and beyond. We will create a greater understanding of the designation, the landscape, its culture, its history, and its people by improving connections between the traditional sites of interest and less well-known areas. It will encourage thematic visits and encourage people - both locals and visitors alike - to discover more about our slate communities.

Our vision

To protect, conserve, enhance and transmit the Outstanding Universal Value of The Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales to reinforce cultural distinctiveness and strengthen the Welsh language, and become a significant driver for economic regeneration and social inclusion.

Our aim by achieving this vision is to:

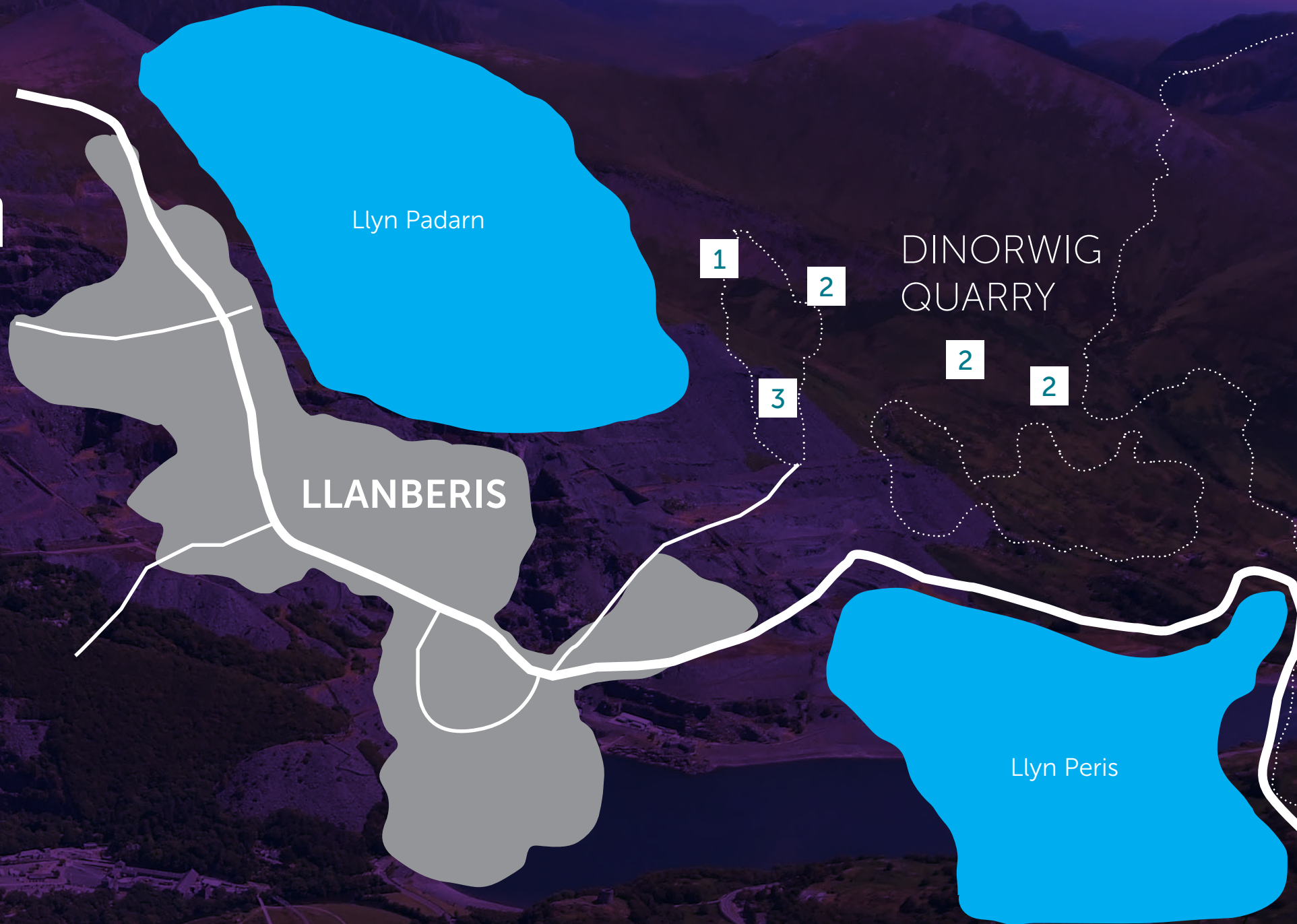
- ensure the story of the WHS is shared and appreciated
- ensure our slate communities remain innovative and thriving places for people to live, work and visit
- increase the economic value of the WHS to meet its potential benefit
- safeguard our rich and unique heritage for all
- ensure the WHS is a catalyst for safeguarding, promoting and celebrating our Welsh language and culture

The Area



An overview...

DINORWIG HUB



1. Parc Padarn historic buildings
2. Improved connectivity between Llanberis and Dinorwig Quarry
3. National Slate Museum

Key features

- Redevelopment of the National Slate Museum as a main interpretation site for The Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales World Heritage Site - including new exhibition and education spaces to bring the story of Welsh Slate alive
- Repurpose the historic buildings of Parc Padarn to improve facilities for local people and visitors - interpretation and volunteer space will be included as well as other public resources such as EV charging points/ bike wash/ accessible facilities
- Improve links between Parc Padarn and Dinorwig Quarry to facilitate access to the slate landscape and its historic features

Delivery partners

Amgueddfa Cymru (National Museum Wales)
Gwynedd Council.

Potential positive impacts

- Improved recreational and amenity facilities
- Development of educational and community resources
- Construction sector opportunities
- Increased visitor expenditure

Local significance

- ▶ **Site of the National Slate Museum and birth-place of the North Wales Quarrymen's Union**
- ▶ **Home to the Dinorwig Quarry Hospital – among first UK locations to have an x-ray machine**
- ▶ **Location of the largest man-made cavern in Europe within which now lies a Hydro-electric Power Station**



An overview...

OGWEN HUB

1. Community owned cultural
and heritage assets

2. Improved connectivity
between Bethesda and
Penrhyn Quarry

PENRHYN
QUARRY

BETHESDA



Key features

- Upgrade community owned assets in Bethesda to improve the cultural and heritage offer
- Improve connectivity between Bethesda and Penrhyn Quarry for better access to the slate landscape and its historic and modern-day features
- Repurpose a redundant high street property to create a new focal point for locals and visitors - with heritage and culture at its core

Delivery partners

Partneriaeth Ogwen
Zip World
Breedon / Welsh Slate
Cyngor Gwynedd Council
Transport for Wales

Potential positive impacts

- Creation of recreational and amenity facilities
- Development of educational resources
- Construction sector opportunities
- Improved wellbeing infrastructure
- Increased visitor expenditure

Local significance

- ▶ Site of what was once the largest slate quarry in the world
- ▶ Penrhyn is still an operational quarry exporting slate around the world
- ▶ Home to internationally renowned adventure activities including the longest and fastest zip line in the world
- ▶ An area well-known for its cultural and artistic links and home to world-renowned music acts



An overview...

FFESTINIOG HUB

LLECHWEDD
QUARRY

2

2

1

2

1

BLAENAU
FFESTINIOG

1. Community owned cultural
and heritage assets

2. Improved connectivity
between Blaenau Ffestiniog
and Llechwedd Quarry



Key features

- Upgrade community owned assets in Blaenau Ffestiniog to improve the cultural and heritage offer
- Repurpose redundant high street properties to restore historic character - creating space for economic, cultural and social activities with heritage and culture at their core
- Create a link between Blaenau Ffestiniog and Llechwedd Quarry to improve access to the slate landscape and its historic and modern-day features

Delivery partners

Antur Stiniog / Cwmni Bro Ffestiniog
Zip World
JW Greaves Ltd
Cyngor Gwynedd Council
North and Mid Wales Trunk Road Agent

Potential positive impacts

- Creation of recreational and amenity facilities
- Development of educational and community resources
- Construction sector opportunities
- Improved wellbeing infrastructure
- Enhanced opportunities for young people
- Increased visitor expenditure

Significance to the WHS

- ▶ A purpose-built Victorian City of Slates and first UK town to have hydro-powered street lighting
- ▶ Home to the Ffestiniog Railway a pre-cursor for the Darjeeling-Himalayan Railway WHS
- ▶ Llechwedd has welcomed heritage visitors for 50 years and remains an operational quarry
- ▶ Part of the quarry is now an adventure hub and is the site of the world's first underground golf course



Overall Benefits

The realisation of the Llechi project will create important community owned assets through the repurposing of redundant historic buildings. Physical links between the quarries and communities will be strengthened to deliver world class interpretation and cultural centres - and in so doing improve local skills, education and business resources and infrastructure.

"the evidence clearly identifies the WHS inscription as a major opportunity to achieve economic growth in an important sector, to further embed Gwynedd as a key international visitor destination, and to leverage benefits that can help address some of the most acute socio-economic challenges in Gwynedd"

TBR's Economic Research Team and Rebanks Consulting (An assessment of the current and potential economic impact of heritage For Gwynedd Council and Partners)

Summary of the wider benefits

- ▶ **Cultural benefits:** high quality and interactive interpretation consistent across all sites, restoring historic links between communities and quarries.
- ▶ **Educational benefits:** new formal and informal educational spaces to facilitate access and understanding
- ▶ **Community cohesion:** through better access and better connectivity, sites are more appealing and accessible
- ▶ **Improved mental health and wellbeing:** increased levels of physical activity for better health and wellbeing outcomes through green travel and safer routes
- ▶ **Increased awareness of our culture, heritage and living landscapes of the WHS:** greater sense of place and pride amongst local residents and communities
- ▶ **Vibrant communities:** improved appearance of historic centres and buildings to create thriving town and village centres
- ▶ **Economic opportunities:** A more balanced distribution of visitor spend across different communities

Realising the ambition

This project turns the old adage of 'clean slate' on its head. It's not about starting from a blank page, it aims to celebrate and bring the past alive and make it relevant to the residents and visitors of today. Slate was at the heart of these towns for centuries - shaping communities economically and culturally.

Through the WHS and additional levelling up funding we are determined to ensure they can again be proud of this heritage and their contribution to the modern world through this amazing natural material that we take for granted.

Cyngor Gwynedd Council will implement a series of slate themed town centre infrastructure interventions through the project to enhance the appeal of our communities. This work will include improving street furniture, public art installations, interpretation and navigation. This will complement the hub projects outlined in this bid and will convey the high quality and distinctiveness of the World Heritage Site through our community spaces. Conservation and interpretation work will also be carried out to historic structures along the connecting routes and within the town centre and quarry settings in order to develop a greater understanding and appreciation of the slate landscape.

To make all this happen we need additional resources - Levelling Up Funding will help us achieve our ambition and deliver a project that will have a positive impact on the lives of our residents and future generations.



For more information

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