



# Corporate Support Department



The department reinforces the Council's ability to provide the best services to Gwynedd's residents through a combination of support, specialist and front-line services. This provides an opportunity for the remainder of the Council to focus on the other services that are provided directly to the public.

## Customer Contact



Galw Gwynedd, from its centre in Penrhyndeudraeth, responds to telephone calls, e-mail messages and online service requests on behalf of Council services. Siop Gwynedd in Dolgellau, Pwllheli and Caernarfon operate as a combined one-stop-shop and reception for the same purpose, as well as operating as a first point of contact for the Tax and Benefits Services.

Answer phone calls, on average within 40 seconds



Galw Gwynedd receives approximately 200,000 telephone calls annually, and the Gwynedd Shops receive at least 20,000 visitors each year.

In future, we will:

- review and introduce new arrangements for the switchboard service to improve customer services
- review our ability to provide a service from our Customer Contact Centres in order to ensure consistency across our sites.

## Registration

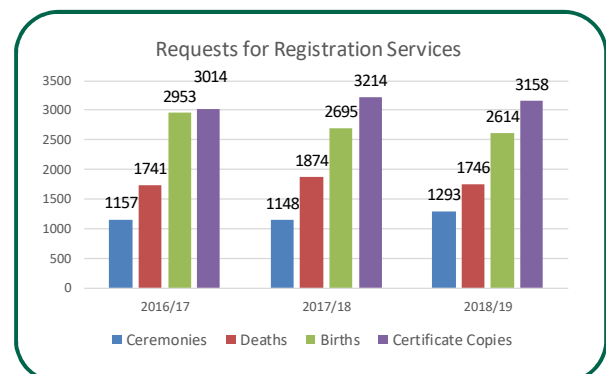


The Council provides a registration service from four locations across the county, including Ysbyty Gwynedd.

During the past year, 5,000 marriages, civic partnerships, births and deaths were registered and more than 3,000 requests for certificates were received.

In future, we will:

- review working arrangements across the service,
- develop self-service for births, deaths and request for certificates appointments
- review our arrangements for keeping our Registrars safe.



## Communication and Engagement



The Communication and Engagement Service facilitates a two-way dialogue with the residents of Gwynedd, staff and councillors.

This communication includes maintaining a proactive relationship with the media, maintaining the Council's website and social media accounts, publishing *Newyddion Gwynedd* and coordinating opportunities for Gwynedd's residents to give their views on the Council's work and maintain the Council's internal communication arrangements.

In future, we will:

- improve the procedure for identifying and prioritising the main messages and the main issues in order to ensure that Gwynedd's residents receive the information they require.
- undertake development and engagement work to establish whether the Council's website continues to meet the needs and identify any steps that will need to be taken in future.
- implement internal communication schemes in response to messages stemming from the Staff Survey.



## Council Business Support



This service coordinates arrangements for publishing the Council Plan, equality plan and performance reports in addition to providing executive support to the Corporate Management Team, advising on project arrangements and managing projects, service reviews and scrutiny investigations. We will assist the Council's services to give fair consideration to the equality and rights of each individual, consider the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act and assist officers and councillors to challenge plans and working practices.

Another part of the service's work is supporting the work of the *Public Services Board* where Gwynedd and Anglesey Councils, with the Health Board, Natural Resources Wales and the Fire and Rescue Service, collaborate closely in order to improve the well-being of residents in several fields.

In future, we will:

- implement the work programme within the Equality Plan 2020-24 in order to ensure that equality is embedded in all the Council's work
- start the work of reviewing and updating the well-being assessments published for the 14 well-being areas in Gwynedd and Anglesey.

## Ensuring Fairness for Everyone

## Improvement Priority 3



In order to put the people of Gwynedd at the centre of everything we do, we must first identify any barriers that face some people when looking for, or receiving services from the Council. Although we have collected a lot of information over the years, we do not feel that we have heard from a wide enough range of people.

Therefore, our intention is to undertake a thorough investigation of the opinion of Gwynedd residents who have protected characteristics (as noted in the Equality Act 2010) about the services offered by the Council. We will do this not only by means of a paper and online questionnaire but also by meeting with a wide range of people and being creative in order to reach everyone.

This engagement will happen in 2020/21 as part of the Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24. We will create a further Action Plan based on the evidence we receive.

## Research and Information



In order for all Council services to work successfully in accordance with the Ffordd Gwynedd principles, they need to understand the needs of their customers, to be able to measure whether or not they are delivering what's important to their customers, and to make decisions based on the evidence of the impact on the people of Gwynedd. To achieve this, gathering, recording and analysing information is vital. We are here to support the Council's services to do this.

As so much information is kept to provide Council services, including information about people, we need to ensure that the arrangements for creating, retaining, sharing and using this information are working correctly and that they comply with legislation.

In future, we will:

- collaborate with the Council Business Support Service to improve the evidence that is available for Council services regarding the nature and needs of local areas in Gwynedd
- develop the information and analyses that Council managers receive regarding their workforce and make this information more accessible
- make the most of the potential of the Council's new document and records management system (iGwynedd) and help services to develop things that facilitate ways of working and reduce unnecessary steps
- ensure that information retention and sharing arrangements and practices mean that the use of data is safe and complies with legislation at all times.



**iGwynedd**

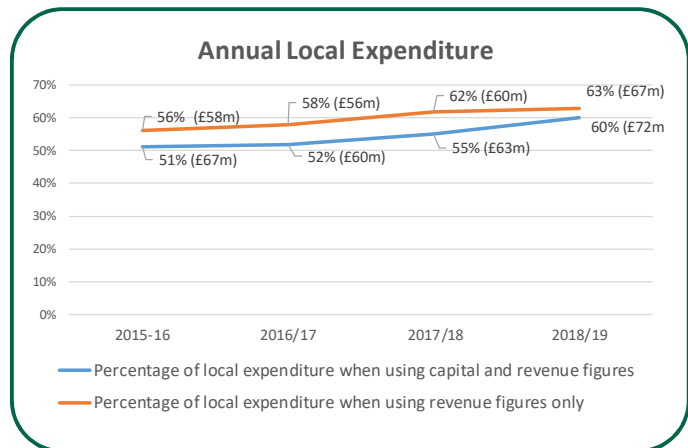
## Procurement



The Council spends over £97m annually on procuring, or purchasing, various goods and services from revenue budgets. In 2018/19, the locally purchased goods and services was equivalent to £60m to the local economy.

In future, we will:

- strengthen and develop the procurement expertise within the Council and review what we are currently purchasing.
- adopt best practice in the field and introduce further schemes to support the market.
- develop our electronic purchasing systems in order to respond to new requirements.



## Keeping the Benefit Local

## Improvement Priority 1



The Council is responsible for buying a number of goods and services and is eager to try to ensure that local businesses can compete and win these contracts in order to ensure that as much of the Council's expenditure as possible remains local. In 2018/2019, we succeeded to increase the percentage of local expenditure to 63% compared with 62% the previous year. New arrangements were introduced to seek to purchase goods and services in more innovative and efficient ways and steps have been taken in order to facilitate the businesses' ability to compete for contracts.

In 2020/21, we will engage with local businesses in order to assess what would make procurement opportunities more attractive to them and what further support they need. We will also review our procurement arrangements in order to ensure that the balance between keeping the benefit local and getting value for money is appropriate.

## Democracy and Language



The Democracy and Language Service is responsible for three specific fields, namely democracy, translation and language. We are responsible for undertaking the committees process and offer various support to the 75 councillors.



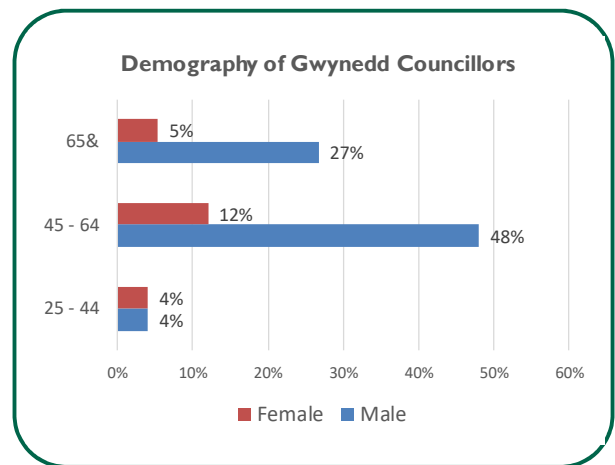
The Council's administrative language is Welsh; however, all the Council's services are available to the public in Welsh and English. Therefore, we promote and enable the use of the Welsh language in all our services. This is supported by the provision of written and oral translation services for staff, councillors and the county's residents.



The Council wishes to see a situation where Gwynedd continues to be a stronghold for the Welsh language, and that it is an everyday language that is heard and spoken naturally by children, young people and adults across the county.

In future, we will:

- develop regional scrutiny arrangements jointly with other authorities where relevant
- build on the existing remote attendance and committee web-casting arrangements in order to reduce carbon footprint and facilitate the work of councillors
- review how we promote the Welsh language in the community
- promote the use of the Welsh language in technology



## The Welsh Language in Public Services

## Improvement Priority 5



At present there is inconsistency in the provision of bilingual services by public bodies in Gwynedd which means that it is not always possible for residents to use the Welsh language naturally when communicating with public bodies.

Now that a work programme has been signed off, and as part of the Public Services Board's Welsh Language Sub-group, we will continue to work with the Adults, Health and Well-being Department, the Health Board and Anglesey Council in order to establish working arrangements in a bilingual setting for the Community Resource Teams by:

- establishing a workforce language skills baseline in each area
- create a developmental work programme to address the matters highlighted when identifying the baseline.

## Gwynedd Businesses using the Welsh Language

## Improvement Priority 5



The Council has direct contact with Gwynedd businesses in order to promote the use of the Welsh language within the private sector. Hunaniaith officers, as well as officers within the Economy and Community Department, encourage businesses to increase the use of the language through their work in the communities.

We will work with external partners such as Welsh in Business and the Welsh Language Commissioner in order to promote the use of the Welsh language among Gwynedd businesses. To do so, we will:

- develop robust arrangements to refer businesses to Welsh in Business if they require additional support to increase their use of the Welsh language
- hold campaigns to promote the Welsh language and Welsh events with businesses
- trial new ways of promoting the Welsh language among businesses via the ARFOR cross-county project

## Emergency Plans

The Council has a role in preparing plans for dealing with emergencies and to collaborate with the emergency services, agencies and volunteers when caring for the welfare of the public.

The provision of food and rest facilities, temporary accommodation and road safety are prominent examples of the specific responsibilities that the Council has in responding to emergencies.

The Emergency Planning Operation Group, which has representatives from all departments, co-ordinates the arrangements to prepare for emergencies while a Strategic Group, under the guidance of the Corporate Director, keeps an overview and challenges those arrangements as and when necessary.

This is all supported by the Regional Emergency Planning Service which is contracted to provide specialist guidance in this field.

In future, we will:

- review and strengthen our service continuation arrangements and hold local exercises to ensure that we are able to respond effectively

## Human Resources Advisory Service



The team of human resources advisers and officers are responsible for advising managers and school heads on a wide range of staff employment matters. This includes interpreting the employment conditions, equal opportunities issues, restructuring or service cuts, dealing with disciplinary matters and complaints, managing absences and workforce planning. The service also leads on a programme which focuses on reviewing and developing the Council's employment conditions and has a central role in maintaining a constructive working relationship with the trade unions.

In future, we will:

- develop and implement the service's business model, so that there is an increasing emphasis on giving advice and supporting managers to take ownership of day-to-day employment matters.
- implement a programme of reviewing and developing local employment conditions to reflect and support the way in which the Council wants its staff to work.
- advise departments as they plan the workforce and assist and support them to address future service continuation requirements.

### Women in Leadership

### Improvement Priority 3



The Council is firm that it adheres to equal pay, however the Council acknowledges that the number of women who have a managerial role within the Council is disproportionate with the split within the entire workforce i.e. 70% women 30% men.

The main purpose of this project, therefore, is to boost the number of women who apply for and attain senior positions within the Council by reviewing the employment conditions and environment to attract more women to undertake the work in future. We will implement the work programme which has been established by the Project Group following a consultation held within the Council during 2019/20. That programme includes introducing a programme to develop potential for women, carrying out an audit of our recruitment and appointment methods for managerial posts and creating a forum for female leaders and prospective leaders within the Council.

## Support Service



The Support Service provides administrative support such as arranging appointments, ordering goods, printing, paying bills and distributing post for Council staff.

In 2018/19, the service has focused on rationalising the administrative arrangements, reducing unnecessary paperwork, and enabling staff and managers to access service and information directly and promptly.

In future, we will:

- input recruitment and appointment arrangements, in an effort to reduce internal bureaucracy and to facilitate the task for individuals when applying for a post in the Council
- change the procedure of communication and administration from paper to electronic means.

## Health, Safety and Well-being Advisory Service



The service fulfils a statutory role of providing competent advice to the employer on health, safety and well-being matters. This includes advising on legal standards in safety, investigating accidents and other incidents, monitoring, examining and providing training programmes.

In addition to this, we support staff through periods of absences, provide advice to managers on the health of their staff and assess suitability to return to work following an injury or illness, screen the health of workers and carry out staff medical checks as well as plan and implement a programme to promote health and well-being.

In future, we will:

- mainstream mental health and well-being within the workforce, while raising awareness and empowering staff across the Council and promote a culture of sharing experiences and supporting individuals
- develop and implement a new business model for the service in order to encourage ownership within the services of day-to-day health and safety matters within the Council and prioritise resources for the biggest risks.





## Learning and Organisational Development



The service provides relevant learning and development support, consults and responds to the needs of individuals and teams, helps to develop a beneficial working environment so that everyone gives their best, helps services to identify opportunities to improve and develops talent to fill gaps in the future.

Learning and Development programmes are provided for staff (on all levels) and Elected Members, which includes developing leadership. We are working with teams and officers to ensure that the service is relevant, to 'fill gaps' in the provision and tailor titles to meet their needs.

We promote and support individuals to take ownership of their own learning, and offer a range of learning methods that include the 'traditional' as well as innovative methods such as *coaching and mentoring*, learning through experience and using technology.

The objective of the organisational development work is to nurture behaviours and culture which create and maintain a working environment where staff are at their best to serve the people of Gwynedd. Giving staff a voice, and an opportunity to contribute their views and ideas is a crucial part of this while there is also focus on developing the future workforce through schemes such as *Identifying and Developing Talent*. An increasing range of benefits is offered which contributes to staff satisfaction and well-being.

Another important element is *Service Improvement* by responding positively to *Complaints*, and facilitating arrangements for services to take ownership of, and learn from them.

In future, we will:

- contribute to a scheme to ensure that all Council staff have appropriate information technology skills in order to use self-service systems and take advantage of the e-learning provision.
- develop and extend the use of the Staff Development Module and encourage individuals to take ownership of their own learning.
- extend the Continuous Appraisal culture across the Council

### Promote the use of the Welsh language within the Council's services

### Improvement Priority 5



Gwynedd Council has been prominent in terms of ensuring that services are available through the medium of Welsh and ensuring that the Council's internal work happens through the medium of Welsh. Nevertheless, we acknowledge that we are in challenging times and that we need to work continually to push the boundaries to make sure that the services utilise every opportunity to promote the use of the Welsh language and to enable the public to use it in all contexts. To date, we have been successful in reviewing the language requirements of all posts and assess the linguistic ability of 40% of our officers against those requirements. This has all been supported by a language improvement and learning programme.

In 2020/21, we will focus on working with other Council services - especially front-line services - to complete the assessment and develop the skills of new and existing staff and to take up new opportunities to ensure that we offer a fully bilingual provision for all aspects of our services.

## **Empowering Units to Implement Ffordd Gwynedd**

### **Improvement Priority 7**



Establishing a consistent culture will not happen in isolation, and the purpose of this project is to lead service teams to reflect on their current working arrangements, to challenge whether they are putting the people of Gwynedd at the centre and whether there is room for improvement.

In doing so, we will ensure that every service unit within the Council places the people of Gwynedd at the centre of everything they do. This will also ensure that we consider alternative methods of implementation (including collaboration with others) and measure those ideas against a single yardstick – namely to what extent does it increase the benefit for the people of Gwynedd.

We have already created a development programme based on learning in the workplace and have held training on the Ffordd Gwynedd principles for Heads of Department, Senior Managers and the majority of Managers. Additionally, a number of service reviews have been undertaken, or are underway within the Council.

The original Ffordd Gwynedd Strategy published in October 2015 has now ended. The Ffordd Gwynedd Plan in its new form was approved during 2019/20. The plan details the next steps to be taken in order to embed the culture and the way of working within the Council. The main focus of this work in the coming year will be to implement the objectives in the work programme, which includes workforce planning, customer contract, employment conditions and performance challenging as some of its main priorities.

## **Apprenticeships Scheme**

### **Improvement Priority 1**



Welsh Government has outlined its national vision to address the need to develop vital skills in Wales and the broader economy to identify the priority fields and how apprenticeships will be an integral part of fulfilling this.

The Council has already identified appropriate fields for establishing apprenticeships and has allocated funding to realise these schemes for the next two years.

We will be moving ahead to appoint more apprentices in priority fields during 2020/21 and will consider the practicality of continuing with the scheme beyond the current commitment.

The department's day to day work contributes towards the following Gwynedd Well-being Objectives by ensuring that residents can:

Enjoy happy, healthy and safe lives

Earn a sufficient salary to be able to support themselves and their families

Live in a natural Welsh society