



Economy and Community Department



The Economy and Community Department comprises a range of services that aim to improve the economic, social and cultural well-being of Gwynedd communities.

This is a brief outline of the Department's work in 2020/21:

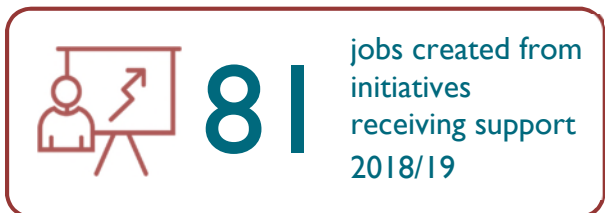
Economic Development Service

We collaborate with partners to create the conditions for businesses and enterprises to establish themselves, to be competitive and develop in Gwynedd creating high quality jobs across the county.

The economy's performance has an impact on the quality of life of Gwynedd residents influencing household living costs and income.

Gwynedd's economy is performing fairly well at a Wales level but not in comparison with other regions of Britain and Europe. Salary levels in Gwynedd are much lower than in other parts of Wales and the productivity value of Gwynedd businesses is low compared to other areas. It is therefore important that Gwynedd Council takes proactive measures to create the conditions that enable businesses to grow and stimulate economic growth at a time of economic uncertainty as Britain leaves the European Union.

There are 16,010 businesses, enterprises and community companies in Gwynedd. The department provides information, advice and practical support to assist them to establish and develop in order to support and create jobs. The service gives particular focus on supporting Gwynedd businesses to succeed when tendering for work and to keep the benefits from public and private sector contracts local by collaborating with Gwynedd Council's Procurement Team and the North Wales Economic Ambition Board.



During the next year we will seek to ascertain the impact of Brexit on Gwynedd businesses and raise awareness of business support sources to enable businesses to cope with the change.

Our improvement priorities in 2020/21 will be:

Businesses Receiving Support to Prosper

Improvement Priority I



Having prosperous businesses contribute substantially towards the creation of employment and prosperity in our communities. However, it is currently an uncertain period for businesses as a result of Brexit and a change in trade and competing arrangements. Gwynedd Council is determined to help local enterprises to adapt and respond to the challenge by:

- being alert to the opinion of businesses and listen better in order to understand their future needs;
- ensuring that every part of the Council considers how they could offer help to support businesses;
- powerfully voicing the needs of Gwynedd businesses in discussions with our partners;
- encouraging Gwynedd businesses to make the best of the support available from others.

We have already:

- undertaken a business opinion survey of all services they receive by the Council
- discussed the implications of Brexit with the business community and promoted the support available by Welsh Government and others
- played a proactive part in discussions regarding the future of business support in north Wales and the future of funding to support the economy post-Brexit.

In 2020/21, we will:

- respond to the results of our business opinion survey about Council services working specifically with the Corporate Support Department and the Environment Department.
- contribute towards the development of the business support network across north Wales ensuring that it is suitable for the needs of Gwynedd businesses;
- review our methods of continuous engagement with businesses and introduce new arrangements as a result of Brexit;
- influence the new arrangements for funding to support the economy post-Brexit.

Growth Vision for North Wales

Improvement Priority 1



A lack of growth is a weakness in the economy of the whole of north Wales, and particularly the north-west. In response, the six counties in north Wales, and other stakeholders such as education establishments in the region and the private sector came together to establish the North Wales Economic Ambition Board and to formulate a vision for economic growth.

The Board's main plan is the 'North Wales Growth Bid' and in November 2019 an initial agreement was signed between the Ambition Board, the Welsh Government and UK Government which are preparing the realisation of the Growth Bid. The bid will lead to an investment of £945m in the north Wales region over the next fifteen years and create up to 4,000 jobs across north Wales. Gwynedd Council is playing a prominent part in the Ambition Board in order to ensure that the needs of the county are addressed and that Gwynedd residents and businesses maximise the benefits.

We have already:

- ensured that several schemes in Gwynedd will be a priority for the Ambition Board which includes improving the availability of superfast broadband, developing the Trawsfynydd Nuclear Power Station site and developing the Rural Innovation Centre in Glynllifon.
- agreed to be the lead authority for the Ambition Board.

In 2020/21, we will:

- continue to influence the development of schemes that will be in Gwynedd;
- contribute towards the development of the North Wales Economic Framework which is being prepared by Welsh Government to identify future principal regional investment programmes;
- influence the British Government and the Welsh Government to ensure that Gwynedd benefits from any economic development funding that will be available post-Brexit.

Create High Value Jobs (£28,500 + salary)

Improvement Priority 1



Salaries in Gwynedd are amongst the lowest in Britain. Weekly pay in the county was the lowest in Wales in 2019 (£459 on average) and the low pay at its worst in our rural communities (£423).

Low salaries contribute towards the high rate of poverty amongst our residents who work. A lack of well-paid jobs is also the reason why young people leave or fail to return to the county which, in turn, has an impact on our communities and endangers the future of the Welsh language.

The aim of the Create High Value Jobs scheme is to:

- encourage and support businesses within well-paid sectors such as energy, digital and creative to establish and grow in Gwynedd;
- support Gwynedd residents to foster the skills to work in these sectors and in high value jobs created by Gwynedd businesses.

We have already:

- targeted funding from the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority to support the work
- secured European funding to realise a scheme to develop space for businesses to locate themselves in the Snowdonia Aerospace Centre
- secured European funding to realise a scheme to increase the number of school pupils who study the subjects desired by businesses within well-paid sectors
- established business networks in the digital and creative sectors to encourage collaboration
- supported businesses to establish in Gwynedd.

In 2020/21, we will:

- support the development of space for 165 jobs in the aerospace sector at Llanbedr airfield
- aim to ensure continuous employment at the former Nuclear Power Station site in Trawsfynydd, supporting the establishment of an appropriate entity to ensure further use of the site for a low carbon energy development in future and leading on the development of a scheme by North Wales Economic Ambition Board to prepare the site for investment.
- support the development of the creative industries and the digital sector in Gwynedd
- develop skills for high value jobs working specifically with the Regional Skills Partnership and the north Wales STEM project.

Arloesi Gwynedd Wledig / Rural Development Programme

Improvement Priority 1



Substantial challenges continue to face the economy in rural Gwynedd; salaries are particularly low and only one person works in 79% of businesses. Uncertainty continues to face the food and agriculture industry in light of Brexit and the future policy direction of British Government and Welsh Government. This threatens the sustainability of our rural communities and Welsh language strongholds.

In response, the Council intends to collaborate in order to create the conditions for businesses to adapt and compete in rural areas by improving the digital infrastructure, supporting businesses to pioneer and increase the value of their activity and attempt to retain more wealth in our rural areas by stimulating the foundational economy.

We have already:

- secured an investment of £4 million for the Arloesi Gwynedd Wledig scheme to encourage and support innovation among rural communities and businesses;
- implemented a scheme to increase the availability of public computer equipment in our rural communities
- secured funding to extend a pilot undertaken by Arloesi Gwynedd Wledig and space for public wi-fi provision in eight main towns / rural villages in Gwynedd;
- started to implement Gwynedd schemes within the ARFOR Programme to support the creation of work within Welsh language strongholds.

In 2020/21, we will:

- support further investment to improve the availability of superfast broadband in rural areas; to promote use of 'the internet of things' and mobile phone service;
- work with Grŵp Llandrillo Menai and the private sector to establish a rural innovation hub in Glynllifon, giving particular attention to the food and drink sector;
- complete projects of the ARFOR programme in Gwynedd and prepare the case for further collaboration in the West Wales region in future;
- learn more about the foundational economy in Gwynedd and how it can be supported further;
- influence nationally on behalf of the needs of rural communities as a result of Brexit.

More Gwynedd residents playing a full part in the world of work

Improvement Priority 3



A substantial number of residents are unable to fulfil their full potential as they are underemployed or excluded from employment.

Being outside the world of work leads to reducing residents' wealth and increasing the demand for public resources, and preventing this is a key part of the anti-poverty agenda. There are direct benefits from being in work in terms of increasing earnings, but there are also wider benefits in

terms of health, children's life opportunities and pride in communities. Therefore, the Council is eager to support Gwynedd residents to enter or to remain in the world of work.

We have already been:

- implementing the Communities for Work and Communities for Work and More Programme employing a team to provide support for residents who have been exempted from the world of work;
- reviewing the needs and opportunities within the labour market locally to ensure that we encourage people to develop the necessary skills;
- working with employers, especially within the tourism industry, to ensure that more Gwynedd residents benefit from the opportunities;
- achieving a programme to support Gwynedd residents to foster the necessary digital skills to gain access and to remain in employment, advising them on how to manage money in order to stabilise their circumstances.

In 2020/21, we will:

- ensure continuation of the Communities for Work and Communities for Work and More schemes;
- extend our method of working with employers to new sectors including retail and catering;
- collaborate closely with our partners across north Wales and with the UK Government's Department for Work and Pensions to improve the cohesion of our services;
- revise our provision to support residents to develop digital and financial management skills;
- extend our current provision to support residents who have returned to employment to increase their earnings.

Tourism, Marketing and Events Service

The tourism industry is a key employer in Gwynedd. With an economic value of nearly £1 billion, over 15,000 people work in this sector. We assist the industry to attract people throughout the year who are likely to spend more locally, such as visitors who enjoy the outdoors and those who take an interest in the special history and culture of Gwynedd. To deliver this more efficiently we are

57,100

followers on Snowdonia,
Mountains and Coast's social
media in 2018/19




redeveloping our Snowdonia, Mountains and Coast digital marketing and collaborating with partners to identify priorities to support the main tourism destinations of Gwynedd and the broader sector.

We also support event organisers to create vibrancy within communities across the county. Public events offer a commercial opportunity for local businesses to provide or deliver services. By staging events, it is possible to raise the profile of Gwynedd and market the area to tourists as an exciting and vibrant place to live, to visit and an ideal location for businesses to invest. We have already been successful in attracting a number of national and international high-profile events to the county which led to an economic benefit of £5.47m for Gwynedd in 2019/20.


We are eager to continue with this in 2020/21 and to ensure that local businesses benefit from the events. This will lead to opportunities to promote the county and increase the number of opportunities for local companies to work at or offer services to the events.

Our improvement priorities in 2020/21 will be:

Benefiting from Tourism	Improvement Priority I 
<p>Tourism is one of Gwynedd's main economic sectors and it is an important employer. However, the increase in the tourist numbers makes a significant contribution to the pressure on the infrastructure of the county's destinations; a cost that is mainly shouldered by the residents of Gwynedd.</p>	
<p>We have already:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• established a steering group with representatives from the tourism sector across Gwynedd to review our arrangements to manage tourism in Gwynedd;• commissioned a study to examine the options to attract new income to Gwynedd in order to respond to increasing visitor numbers.• held two workshops with Members of Gwynedd Council and the Snowdonia National Park Authority in order to agree on a series of tourism principles and priorities for the future.	
<p>In 2020/21, we will look to continue to collaborate with the tourism industry and our partners to create a new Tourism Management Plan for Gwynedd that will consider the best way of getting the greatest benefit to the industry and for the residents of Gwynedd. In doing so, we will seek to improve the sector's contribution to the communities and economy of Gwynedd, improve the provision of the county's destinations and increase the industry's provision for tourists and for the people of Gwynedd.</p>	

Maritime Services

As the Gwynedd landscape and natural environment is so important for the county's prosperity, the department tries to ensure **quality and safe resources in our harbours, marinas** and on the beaches of Gwynedd in order to create recreational attractions for local people and visitors. The department manages 301km of the Gwynedd coastline, concentrating on eight Blue Flag beaches, four harbours and two marinas, including Hafan Pwllheli that accommodates 400 boats.

	<p>1,777 boats and 923 personal watercraft were registered during 2018/19</p>
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In 2020/21, we will:

- update the Gwynedd Beach Management Scheme
- implement strategies to Dredge Pwllheli Harbour and Victoria Dock
- develop future management options for Hafan and Pwllheli Harbour

Regeneration Programmes Service

A number of economic, social, cultural and environmental factors combine to make Gwynedd a special place to live, work and venture. However, market forces are not strong in some communities and they need a boost at times in order to reverse decline, and in order to respond to the challenges they face before achieving future potential. This is a process of regeneration and it **is an intentional effort to collaborate with Gwynedd residents and partners to improve areas** in order to create healthy, prosperous, dynamic and sustainable communities with a prominent and central place for the Welsh language.

It is not possible for one department to achieve the aims of the Gwynedd Regeneration agenda alone. In order to make a long-term difference and make the best use of resources, there must be collaboration across Council departments and with a variety of national, regional and local partners. A cross-departmental Regeneration Board has been established and during 2020/21 it will collaborate with partners in order to identify priorities for the future.

Our improvement priorities in 2020/21 will be:

Implementing the Gwynedd Slate Heritage

Improvement Priority 1



A number of Gwynedd's most needy communities are rich in heritage and are home to existing or proposed World Heritage Sites, such as the former traditional slate areas.

There is an opportunity for us here to use the World Heritage Site nomination as a tool to regenerate our slate communities - to promote pride in our heritage, promote ambition for the future and increase the value of the tourism industry.

During 2019-20, a full nomination from Gwynedd was presented to the UK Government and to UNESCO for a World Heritage Site designation. Schemes were also implemented which have attracted £1m of additional resources to the county through the Heritage Fund, Welsh Government, the European Union and Snowdonia National Park through the LleCHI project.

During 2020-21, we will continue to collaborate with landowners and stakeholders on world heritage site management plans and collaborate with UNESCO to secure the status for the slate industry by July 2021.

Via the LleCHI project, we will collaborate with the slate communities to create a programme of regeneration activities in these areas that will improve the appearance and look of communities, improve the quality of the visitor's experience, and will lead to an increase in residents' ownership of their heritage, language and culture.

Promoting Town Centres

Improvement Priority 1



Lively town centres are able to make substantial contributions to the economic and social success of local areas.

The "high street" of a number of Gwynedd towns need support to ensure that they thrive by maintaining and creating work and providing a range of goods and services that residents and visitors need.

We have already:

- developed a regeneration framework for Bangor city centre as a basis to target the resources of the Welsh Government's Regional Regeneration Programme;
- collaborated with businesses in the Caernarfon and Bangor areas to promote the Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) which have created a levy for business to improve the experience for the visitor;
- been successful in targeting Welsh Government resources to establish a loans programme for the upgrading of redundant buildings in the areas of Caernarfon, Bangor, Bethesda and Penygroes;
- been collaborating with partners in Harlech to establish a town centre regeneration framework;
- promoted the Gwynedd Council free parking programme over the Christmas period to encourage more shopping in our local towns.

We will continue to work as a Council to look at how we could support and facilitate town centre regeneration to maintain a range of services for local residents and visitors within a lively environment with a Welsh atmosphere. Plans will be prepared for 13 catchment areas in Gwynedd, based on what matters to the residents within these communities.

Community Support Service

The department provides services in order for Gwynedd residents to make our communities a better place to live. **It is important that voluntary groups and local enterprises are supported to respond to local opportunities and needs.** The Council has a network of area regeneration officers and 'CIST' grants to support community projects.



65

projects that are developing a new service/safeguarding access to a service during 2018/9

We will target some communities more than others giving specific attention to planning support for areas with the most needs.

In 2020/21, we will:

- relaunch our Community Support service across Gwynedd
- measure the size and nature of the demand for support from communities and consider options to provide the service in future
- contribute to the work of the Council's Regeneration Board by leading on the work of engaging with communities to try to identify local priorities.

Libraries Service

The Council provides a service in nine main libraries, four community libraries and three library click and collect links across the county. It is important for Gwynedd residents to be able to borrow books and audio books, and to download e-books, audio e-books and e-magazines of their choice. 491,745 resources were borrowed by Gwynedd residents in 2018-19. However, not all

Gwynedd residents can reach their local library and therefore the Council also provides a mobile library that visits 115 stops in towns and villages every month, as well as the homes of 317 individuals who receive a Library Service at Home. Gwynedd Libraries are also commissioned by the Education Department to provide the Lori Ni service, which visits every Primary School, Special School and Language Centre twice a year to lend reading books for 3-11 year olds.

37,060
of Gwynedd residents
are Library members



Gwynedd residents use the library for so much more than just to borrow books. They are welcoming places for people to use for various activities - to attend activities such as digital sessions, creative writing sessions, craft or Welsh learner group sessions, sessions for babies or story time for children, to receive support and access to information about matters such as health and well-being, job seeking or local services, as well as photocopying and scanning. Gwynedd residents can also use one of the 96 computers or Wi-Fi, in the libraries for free.

The Gwynedd Libraries service received an excellent report for its performance in 2018-19, which shows that the service is performing well within the Welsh Public Libraries Standards Assessment Framework.

In 2020/21, we will:

- prepare a business case for resources to upgrade the facilities at Pwllheli Library
- develop and extend our Health, Well-being and Learning offer for adults in our libraries
- embed new self-service arrangements in every library across the county
- continue to collaborate with communities and promote access to the new service
- consider the role of libraries within communities in future

Archives Service

The Council has a statutory responsibility to **protect our public records and to ensure that people have access to them.** We will do this through the two record offices we have in Gwynedd - Caernarfon Record Office and the Meirionnydd Record Office in Dolgellau.



28,478

used the Archives Service in
2018/19

Gwynedd Record Offices have a wide range of documents, photographs, maps and newspapers with the oldest document dating back to 1176. There is a range of public, official and private collections that reflect the culture and heritage of Gwynedd communities. The Record Offices provide taster sessions and family history courses and work with Gwynedd Primary Schools.

In 2020/21, we will:

- promote access to the service
- collaborate with the Welsh Government and other records offices across north Wales to identify opportunities to make the best use of Record Office resources in the region
- work with the Education Department to discuss the maintenance of the Education Archives and Museums Service for the future.
- identify the cost of digitising the collections.

Museums and Arts Service

The service runs two museums in Gwynedd and is responsible for looking after collections and creating exhibitions in both, namely Storiell and the Lloyd George Museum.

Much of our work in the field of community arts targets **health, well-being, education and tackling loneliness projects**. The service is also responsible for allocating arts grants in order to support arts standards and opportunities for all.

The service supports various arts programmes to ensure that arts are alive in our communities and that the arts can be accessed in our rural areas.

Our aim will be to continue enriching the lives of Gwynedd residents by promoting an understanding of our unique heritage and culture.

In 2020/21, we will:

- work with the Friends of the Lloyd George Museum to create a new way to manage the museum
- ensure the success of the Storiell scheme and establish a Development Trust for it so that it may work with the arts and heritage sector in Gwynedd in future
- work with the arts sector to realise the aims of our new strategy for the arts
- support Ysgol Godre'r Berwyn to establish new community arts facilities
- develop plans to upgrade facilities at Neuadd Dwyfor and identify future sustainable provision models.

Leisure and Country Parks Service

We collaborate with partners locally, regionally and nationally in order to inspire, support and enable Gwynedd residents to be active and live healthy lives.

The health trends of Gwynedd residents are slightly lower than the national average. However, with the levels of obesity amongst four-year-olds in Gwynedd among the highest in Wales, it is crucial that Gwynedd Council and partners respond and create the conditions to promote healthy living.





82% of children able to swim at 11 years old in 2018/19

Gwynedd Council has a network of 12 leisure centres across Gwynedd which attract 1.3 million visits every year. This provision enables Gwynedd residents of all ages to learn new skills and enjoy participating in active activities in safe locations.

Gwynedd Council is committed to continuing to provide these facilities and has established the Byw'n lach Cyf. company to run the centres on its behalf in future. The department has established a contract for the company to manage the service from 1 April 2019 and we will monitor the contract regularly in order to assure the quality of the service.

The Council also manages the country parks in Glynllifon and Padarn. These parks are important heritage sites and are popular attractions to visitors. But the parks are also valuable assets to improve the well-being of Gwynedd residents and to promote healthy living. The Department will seek to secure more local benefit for communities from these assets.

In addition to these facilities, the Council is collaborating with partners in order to ensure that a programme of active and inclusive activities is available for young people via the Sport for Life team in centres, schools, clubs and in the community. A programme of Exercise Referral activities is

also available in Gwynedd to help to reduce the impact of conditions that prevent Gwynedd residents from exercising and to improve their health. There has been a significant increase in the number of clients for this service, especially in the fields of dementia and chronic conditions and there is clear evidence that shows the impact of this investment on the quality of life and health. These two programmes are provided in Gwynedd by means of an agreement with the Byw'n lach company.



49%

of children participate in sports three times a week

In 2020/21, we will:

- support the Byw'n lach company to manage leisure centres across Gwynedd
- establish arrangements to upgrade and invest in our leisure facilities
- collaborate with partners in order to develop a new model to provide a Sport for Life service across north Wales and to establish a new sport development service jointly with the Byw'n lach company in Gwynedd
- collaborate with Sport Governing Bodies to offer a range of inclusive activities that respond to the demand in Gwynedd and the special opportunities that are available in the county through our natural resources
- collaborate with the Byw'n lach company to provide the Exercise Referral service on behalf of the council in future
- develop future management options for the Country Parks of Glynllifon and Parc Padarn.

Local priorities have been noted in the Council Plan since 2018/19 which responded to needs that had been raised by local councillors. The department has used these priorities when developing their wider work programmes and, therefore, a number of the needs are addressed through work that has already been described in this Department Plan.

We have listed local priorities below alongside the programme or project that has been planned in order to respond to that local and county need.

Local Priorities	Programme
<p>In consultation with local councillors in the Porthmadog, Ffestiniog and Penllyn areas in the Summer of 2017, an aspiration was noted to attract more long-term well-paid jobs to improve the economic situation of local residents. The Create High Value Jobs priority is developing new opportunities in Trawsfynydd and Llanbedr that will benefit these communities. In the Porthmadog area, it was also noted that the local councillors were concerned about the condition of some dormant sites in the area and in response we will be looking at opportunities to support, improve or reuse the sites.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Value Jobs • Promoting Town Centres
<p>When we consulted councillors in the Dolgellau area it became evident that the poor connectivity of mobile phones and broadband hinders residents and the area's businesses. We are seeking for Welsh Government to prioritise the county for its schemes in relation to this field by following the principles of Digital Gwynedd.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth Vision for North Wales • Arloesi Gwynedd Wledig
<p>In the areas of Dyffryn Ogwen and Dyffryn Nantlle, local councillors noted that the promotion and regeneration of the high street was a local priority and we have made outline applications for some regeneration activities in the areas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting Town Centres
<p>In consultation with Bangor area councillors, their wish to improve the appearance of the local area was noted and to respond to empty shops, noting a wish to work with partners such as local businesses and Town and Community Councils to generate income to contribute to the work. In turn, this could support local businesses and tradespeople. We are considering the opportunities to build on existing work jointly with the Bangor Business Improvement District and our partners locally and regionally to plan a response. Additional grant funding to maximise the benefit of the interest free Loans Scheme has been secured.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting Town Centres
<p>There is also a link to the county level priority to implement the Gwynedd Slate Heritage plan, as noted above. The regeneration of these areas should improve any negative image that stems from being post-industrialised areas and release their potential.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing the Gwynedd Slate Heritage
<p>During a consultation session in the Ffestiniog area it became evident that local councillors were concerned about the future of the Community Centre and the services located there, and the Regeneration Team recently conducted a survey on public buildings across Gwynedd. This indicated that ineffective use was being made of a number of public buildings in Blaenau Ffestiniog including the Community Centre. In a time of financial hardship, there is an opportunity here to share resources better in the future.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Support Service

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 quality homes within their communities

Live in a natural Welsh society

Take advantage of the beauty of the county's natural environment.