



# Highways and Municipal Department



This department provides frontline services that are important to Gwynedd residents, such as waste collection, bereavement services, road maintenance, fleet maintenance, playing fields and green spaces. Caring for the county's special environment is central to the department's work, and it contributes to the Council's Climate Change Action Plan.

## Waste and Recycling

The department is responsible for undertaking over a million waste collections within any three-month period. Some of these collections are missed, and although the figure is low (less than 1%) we recognise the impact of these missed collections on our residents. The department now collects information in order to gain an understanding of why this happens and to enable it to respond to any relevant problems.

We are in the process of introducing new collection arrangements that will reduce the number of missed collections and provide the people of Gwynedd with an improved experience of the service by ensuring that the same crew works the same route every time.



The introduction of three-weekly bin collections, with weekly collection of food waste and recycling materials, has led to an increase in recycling and the Council is now likely to achieve the target of 64% of the county's waste being recycled by the end of 2019/20. This target will rise to **70% by March 2025**.

It is vital to deal with **waste** appropriately in order to protect our environment and avoid creating problems for our children and our children's children. Gwynedd Council is proud that we deal with our waste in a responsible manner, and that we give priority throughout this process to being as eco-friendly as possible.



Burying waste in the ground causes pollution to the land, water and the air. From 2020/21, Gwynedd Council will send almost no waste to landfill due to treating our residual waste at the Parc Adfer waste-to-energy facility. Former landfill sites within the county, now defunct, are also producing green electricity.

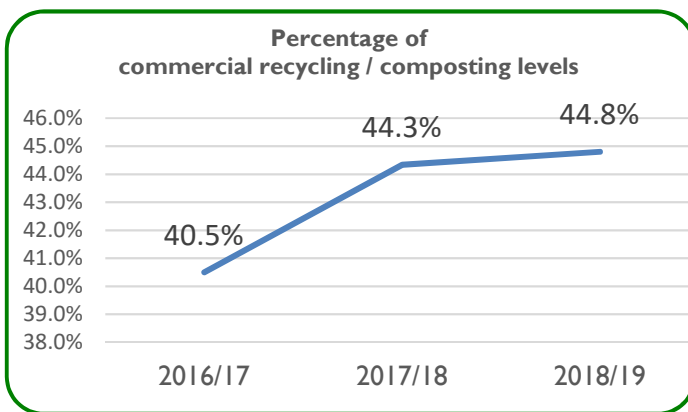
We are also responsible for arranging garden waste collections throughout the county, with the waste being converted to compost. The department makes the compost available to Gwynedd residents at specific times of the year.

## GwryiAD

GwryiAD is our in-county food waste treatment facility, which processes all the food waste collected from residents and businesses in Gwynedd. The facility can handle 11,000 tonnes of food waste, which is converted to green energy that supplies the national grid. This is enough to provide electricity for 850 homes.

Capacity exists on the site to increase the tonnages of food we collect in order to divert any waste from the residual waste bin, and we will be working towards this aim during 2020/21.

## Commercial Waste Services



We provide commercial waste and recycling collections to more than 2,000 business in the county. Some time ago we introduced food and recycling collections as part of the package offered to businesses, in order to ensure that businesses divert their waste from the residual bins and benefit from the recycling service. This has contributed to the Council's recycling performance as reported against our statutory targets, and

performance has improved markedly since 2014. With statutory targets becoming more stringent there is some work to do in order to improve things further, and a requirement will come into force to separate recyclable material, which we currently collect in one mixed bin. The new system will ensure that waste is treated appropriately for the benefit of the environment.

Over the plan period we will:

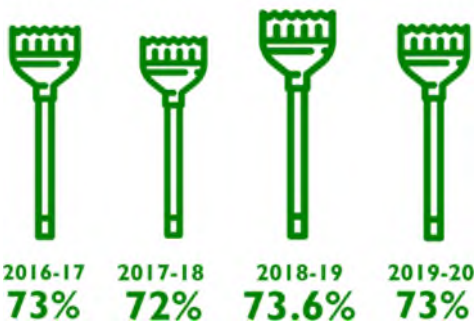
- Complete the transition to Gwynedd's new waste collection arrangements in order to provide an enhanced service and experience to the county's residents, and reduce the number of missed collections.
- Develop a new waste strategy for the county.
- Consider innovative ways to encourage reusing and increasing recycling in order to ensure we can achieve the new statutory target of 70% of all waste being recycled by 2025.
- Increase our domestic and commercial food waste collections for treatment in the GwryiAD facility and reduce the amount of this material found in the residual waste.
- Try to achieve the aim of sending zero waste to landfill.
- Promote the circular economy in Gwynedd (an economy which promotes reusing and recycling to reduce waste).
- Look to increase our commercial provision in order to generate an income stream for the Council, and ensure that the county's waste is treated in a responsible and eco-friendly manner.
- Offer separated recycling collections to commercial customers.

## The Appearance of Streets and the Public Realm

In terms of the local environment, it is vital that our streets are clean and safe, and they must therefore be cleaned regularly. The appearance of streets and public spaces is important to the residents of Gwynedd, and there is a small team of officers responsible for dealing with environmental crimes such as fly-tipping, graffiti and dog fouling. On average, we take 1.76 days to clear fly-tipped items after receiving notice of them. We apply a measure called the 'Cleanliness Index' (a combination of external and internal assessment) in order to assess the cleanliness and appearance of streets.



### Index of street cleanliness (Keep Wales Tidy Survey)



Keep Wales Tidy conducts a survey to determine how many 'defects' such as litter, weeds, dog fouling, chewing gum and cigarette butts can be found on any given street. According to the independent survey, the cleanliness and appearance of Gwynedd streets continues to be of a good standard, and it appears that a recent improvement in behaviour has led to less untidiness. Recently, Keep Wales Tidy conducted its cleanliness review for 2019-20. The score is noted on the right.

We also continue to work on the *Bangor Image project* which aims to enhance the appearance and environmental quality of the city. Bangor Image is a partnership which brings together representatives from the City Council, Bangor Business Improvement District, Bangor University and several other organisations, and serves as a template for working in partnership in order to improve the look of a community.

Since establishing the partnership we have:

- Done away with 'House to Let' signs
- Supported the *Plastic-free Bangor* campaign
- Enhanced the appearance of the High Street
- Trialled advertising on roundabouts

We are eager to establish similar partnerships throughout the county in order to work with communities to improve the appearance and the environment in their neighbourhoods.

## Grounds Maintenance



The department is responsible for maintaining roadside verges and open spaces in order to improve the environmental quality of our towns and villages and to make them safer places for residents. Financial prudence has led by now to cuts becoming less frequent, but we are eager to take advantage of the opportunity to promote biodiversity whilst ensuring that our roadside verges and public spaces remain safe and attractive.

## Children's Playing Fields

Children, parents and carers appreciate playing fields and we maintain 131 of them throughout the county. Playing equipment is very expensive and funding for the purchase of new equipment is exceedingly scarce.



**We also maintain playgrounds so that they are safe for children and young people to be able to enjoy.**



Over the plan period we will:

- Adjust our grass-cutting patterns in order to promote biodiversity
- Explore eco-friendly methods of dealing with weeds, and attempt to avoid the use of harmful pesticides wherever possible.
- Extend the development of community partnerships to improve the county's appearance and environmental quality.
- Look into alternative means of maintaining and retaining playing fields by collaborating with communities.

## Bereavement Service



We manage the Crematorium in Bangor and 16 of the county's largest and busiest cemeteries.

The bereavement service is crucial to residents, and we shall ensure a bereavement service which is appropriate and dignified.

## Public Toilets



The Department is responsible for maintaining and cleaning the county's **public toilets**. The Council is under no obligation to provide public toilets, and a scheme to close a number of the county's toilets was introduced following the Gwynedd Challenge consultation. Nevertheless, the department believes that appropriate provision of public toilets is important in terms of individuals' experiences of the county, and alternative means were developed to keep as many toilets open as possible - by working in partnership with community councils or supporting community toilets within Gwynedd businesses.



We wish to thank everyone who has worked in partnership with the Council to sustain the alternative provision. It is due to this collaborative working that we are among the counties with the highest numbers of public toilets in Wales.

## CCTV



In order to protect and safeguard the community we maintain a network of CCTV cameras in the populated areas of the county, namely Bangor, Caernarfon and Pwllheli. These systems assist in the monitoring of criminal and antisocial incidents.

The department has enhanced the network of CCTV cameras throughout the county to further safeguard the county's residents and property.

Over the plan period we will:

- Offer to extend the network in collaboration with communities.

## Fleet Service

The department is responsible for managing and maintaining the Council's entire fleet of vehicles. The Fleet Service provides guidance and assistance to Council departments in order to ensure the appropriate, safe and lawful use of their vehicles.

In addition, the service is responsible for maintaining over 400 vehicles to a high standard, which is done at three different locations across Gwynedd with workshops in Caernarfon, Pwllheli and Dolgellau.

The department has been attempting to reduce the fleet's carbon emissions by investing in efficient vehicles, including electric vehicles. Fleet emissions were reduced by 19.8% between 2005/06 and 2018.

Over the plan period we will:

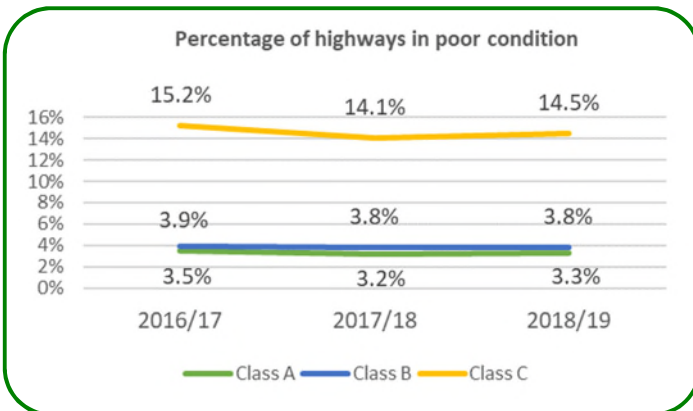
- Prioritise the work on fleet decarbonisation.
- Explore the potential of using hydrogen as a carbon-free fuel on which to run our heavy fleet.
- Establish a pool vehicle system for the Council, and also look into offering community use.

## Highways and Street Lighting



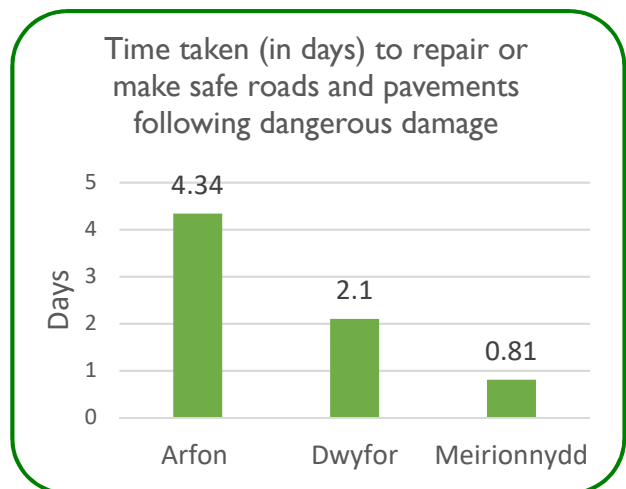
It is important that Gwynedd businesses and residents can move safely and with ease within the county and, in order to ensure this, the Council maintains 2,697km of **county roads** along with 199km of **trunk roads** (namely highways of national importance, on behalf of Welsh Government). Our highways in Gwynedd, which include the Class A and B roads, are currently in good condition with fewer than 4% being defective and in need of attention.

With a reduction in the relevant budget, the condition of our Class C and unclassified roads has continued to deteriorate. Due to the financial pressures on the Council it is inevitable that there will be further pressure on the road maintenance budget, and it will be a challenge for us to prevent the deterioration in the quality of our roads, and in particular the lower priority Class C and unclassified roads.



There is a new national Code of Practice now in force which places an emphasis on risk management. The service is in the process of introducing changes to the Highways Asset Maintenance Plan in the interests of consistency and form, and to ensure that we reflect the new code.

We seek to prevent any sudden deterioration in the quality of our roads. In doing so, we will reflect upon the contents of the new code of practice. The Service is also trialling the use of new materials or reusing materials to fill potholes. This will assist us in reducing waste and will contribute to our efforts towards reducing our carbon footprint.



## North and Mid Wales Trunk Road Agency Highways Maintenance Agreement

Gwynedd Council is responsible for leading a partnership of seven Councils in north and mid Wales which manages and maintains 1,100km of trunk roads (Welsh Government highways of national importance).



Asiant Cefnffyrdd Gogledd a Chanolbarth Cymru  
North & Mid Wales Trunk Road Agent

It is our Highways Service that is responsible for the maintenance work, along with dealing with accidents and incidents that occur due to severe weather and outside normal working hours.



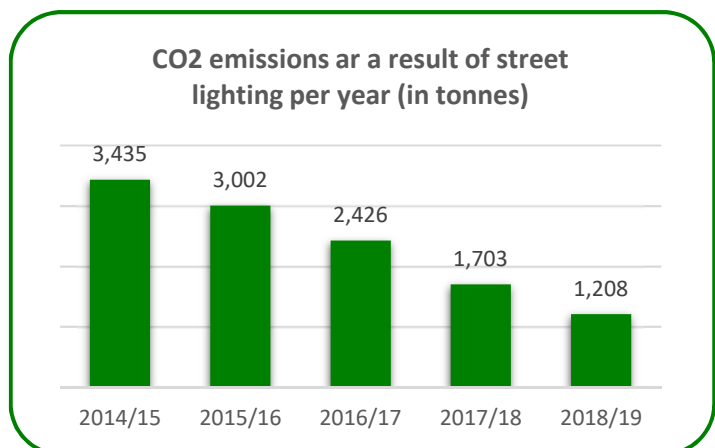
### Maintenance of Bridges and Structures

We maintain 631 bridges throughout the county. They include 338 arched bridges and 96 that are listed and have additional requirements. In addition, we have 1,618 retaining walls throughout the county that are also maintained by the department.

### Street Lighting

We maintain 18,705 **street lights** and 6,067 illuminated **signs** in order to make our roads and streets safer. The lights use electrical power which has a detrimental impact on the environment in terms of carbon emissions and light pollution.

Over the last three years we have been converting street lights and signs to LED technology with the majority of them dimming or switching off when appropriate. This serves to reduce energy costs and carbon emissions, and to prevent light pollution today and for the future. In recent years we have contributed to carbon reduction by prioritising this work.



Over the plan period we will:

- Introduce a new Asset Maintenance Plan with risk-based priorities.
- Trial new, eco-friendly surface treatment methods and encourage the reuse of raw materials.
- Introduce a mobile electronic system for our employees to receive and record their work. This will enable us to work more efficiently.
- Complete the work of converting all street lights in the County to LED, which will ensure a carbon reduction of nearly 12,000 tonnes since work began on the scheme.

This Department's day-to-day work contributes towards the Gwynedd Well-being Objectives, ensuring that Gwynedd residents can:

Enjoy happy, healthy and safe lives

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