



# 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.



## Developing Gwynedd's Economy

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.

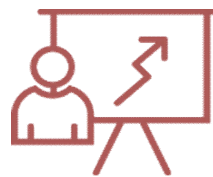
**The economy's performance has an impact on the quality of life of Gwynedd residents influencing household living costs and income.**

Gwynedd's economy is performing fairly well at a Wales level but not in comparison with other regions of Britain and Europe. Wage 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 growth in the economy and this during a time of economic uncertainty as Britain leaves the European Union

This is a brief outline of the Department's work in 2019/20:

### Business Support

There are 15,100 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 places a particular focus on supporting Gwynedd businesses to succeed when tendering for work and to keep the



**394**

**of businesses have  
received support in  
2017/18**

benefits of public and private sector contracts local by collaborating with Gwynedd Council's Procurement Team and the North Wales Economic Ambition Board. The Department also provides 87 work units throughout the county to enable businesses to be competitive and in the coming year we will include new management arrangements for these units. 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 change.

Our improvement priority in 2019/20 will be:

## Businesses Receiving Support to Prosper

### Improvement Priority 1



The county's businesses work with many Council Departments and they receive a service from them, including rates, planning, trading standards, building control and procurement.

By adopting an operational approach which places the needs of businesses at the centre, and makes it easier for businesses to contact and collaborate with the Council, businesses can be supported and encouraged to establish and grow in the county. Following research we have identified examples of good practice including the "Better Business for All" programme.

In future, we will continue with the work of reviewing how Council services are provided to businesses to consider whether there is room for improvement and will implement any lessons which become apparent to ensure that businesses are assisted to prosper. We will also support the development of the North Wales Business Network collaborating with partners in the public and private sector across the region.

## Economic Development Programmes

In addition to directly supporting businesses, the Department works with partners across the North Wales region to target resources to invest in a package of infrastructure projects and skills for businesses to prosper in the future.



**320 million**

of investment by projects in the economy since 2000



Our improvement priorities in 2019/20 will be:

## Growth Vision for North Wales

### Improvement Priority 1



The North Wales Economic Ambition Board is leading on the growth vision. The growth deal is based on seven programmes namely the Low Carbon Energy Programme; Advanced Manufacturing Programme; Land Industries and Tourism; Land and Property Programme; Skills and Employment Programme; Digital Programme; Strategic Transport Programme.

Over the coming year we will contribute towards the work of the North Wales Ambition Board to ensure that Gwynedd benefits from the investments associated with the Growth Vision.

## Create High Value Jobs (£26,500 + salary)

### Improvement Priority 1



Low salaries are an obvious feature of Gwynedd, with the weekly pay of Gwynedd residents (£478) amongst the lowest in Wales, and the low pay is at its worst in our rural communities (£418), namely the second lowest in the UK.

In order to address this, one of the Council's main priorities is working with partners within the public and private sectors to create more, better-paid jobs.

Among the highlights of 2018/29 was securing £7.5m in European funding to develop the infrastructure of the Llanbedr Airspace Centre to attract businesses to the site, and the Trawsfynydd Power-station site's profile received a significant boost when the British Government's nuclear sector deal was launched there.

We will continue to target sectors that pay well by creating an environment which supports new businesses and grows existing businesses and ensures that the local workforce is able to take advantage of the opportunities. We will also continue to seek to create conditions to attract investment in strategic sites such as the Trawsfynydd Power Station, Llanbedr Airfield and Parc Bryn Cegin/ Parc Menai.

## Arloesi Gwynedd Wledig project

### Improvement Priority 1



The nature of our rural economy means that 78% of Gwynedd businesses do not employ more than one person and there are too many jobs within sectors which don't pay well. This leads to undermining the sustainability of our rural communities.

Ensuring digital connectivity for our rural communities, and that the workforce and rural businesses have the skills to take advantage of them are matters which require attention if we are to have prosperous communities.

We have already attracted £4million from the Wales Rural Development Programme to develop innovative working approaches and a range of exciting developments in order to target the rural communities in Gwynedd.

During 2018/19 we secured money to support 10 rural towns and villages in the county to develop a WiFi service for the public. A range of ideas was trialled through Arloesi Gwynedd Wledig, including launching the digital playground in Glynllifon, that offers exiting opportunities to experiment with the Internet to respond to the challenges of rural areas.

We will build on the work which has already been done to transform the rural economy by introducing innovation within traditional sectors (such as agriculture and tourism) and support investment in the digital infrastructure of our rural communities through Digital Gwynedd giving particular attention to the Dwyfor and Meirionnydd areas. We collaborate with Grw p Llandrillo Menai and the private sector to establish a rural innovation hub in Glynllifon to lead on the work.

We will also continue to work with the counties of Anglesey, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire to learn how to develop the rural economy and also sustain the Welsh language. We also influence and lobby regionally and nationally on behalf of the needs of rural Gwynedd.

## 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 here to use the World Heritage Site designation as a tool to regenerate our slate communities and to increase the value of the tourist industry.

During 2018-19 the slate areas were selected by the Westminster Government as the UK's next nomination to UNESCO for a World Heritage Site designation. Also, more than £60,000 in lottery funding was secured to support communities to benefit from the designation.

We are looking to bring forward a programme of regeneration activities in these areas which will lead to an increase in residents' ownership of their heritage, the form and appearance of communities and the quality of tourists' experience, along with continuing to work to secure a World Heritage Site status for the slate industry in Gwynedd.

## Promoting Town Centres

Improvement Priority 1



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

The high streets 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 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.

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

Improvement Priority 3



A range of residents are unable to fulfil their full potential as they are underemployed or excluded from employment. Being outside the world of work could lead 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.

In 2018/19, money from the Communities for Work fund and more was secured for the County, which will address any gaps in the current provision and offer support to individuals who are unemployed or underemployed.

We will be continue to focus on a series of activities in order to get more Gwynedd residents into full-time work thereby reducing inactivity and unemployment.

## Tourism, Marketing and Events

The tourist 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 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.

**37,439**

of followers on  
Snowdonia, Mountains  
and Coast's social  
..



Our improvement priorities in 2019/20 will be:

### Increase the Benefits from Major Events

#### Improvement Priority I



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 brought in an investment of £5.3m in 2017/18.

We are eager to continue with this in 2019/20 and to ensure that local businesses benefit from the events. This will lead to an increase in the number of opportunities to promote the County, an increase in the number of visitors to the County and increase in the number of opportunities for local companies to work at or offer services to the events.

### Benefiting from Tourism

#### Improvement Priority I



Tourism is one of the main economic sectors in Gwynedd, nevertheless visitors put a significant added pressure on the infrastructure of the county's destinations, a cost which is mainly shouldered by Gwynedd residents.

We are looking to collaborate with the industry to consider the possibility of getting visitors to contribute financially to maintaining and enhancing Gwynedd destinations and raising the standards of the tourism sector. In doing so, we will improve the provision of the county's destinations and increase the standard of industry provision for visitors.

## Maritime and Country Parks

As the Gwynedd landscape and natural environment is so important for the county's prosperity, the Department seeks to ensure quality and safe resources in our country parks, 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 700 boats. The Department also manages the Country Parks in Glynllifon and Padarn.



**2,700**  
boats annually use our  
harbours

In 2019/20 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
- Develop future management options for the Country Parks of Glynllifon and Parc Padarn

Our local priorities will be:

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 good salary 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.

When we consulted councillors in the Dolgellau area it became evident that the poor connectivity of mobile phones and broadband hinder 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.

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.

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 an income to contribute to the work. This, in turn, would support local businesses and tradespeople. We are considering the opportunities to build on existing work jointly with the Bangor Business Improvement District and out partners locally and regionally to plan a response. Additional grant funding to maximise the benefit of the interest free Loans Scheme has been secured.

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.



## Support Strong Communities

We ensure access to information, support and facilities to empower communities and to enable people to achieve their full potential. We also promote access, and protect and celebrate our culture and heritage.

**The Department provides services for the people of Gwynedd which will help to create resilient communities; support the inclusion of people in their communities and tackle poverty.**

We ensure access to information, support and facilities for residents to develop their skills and achieve their full potential. In order to create attractive communities, the Department also promotes access to the arts and protects and celebrates our culture and heritage.

This is a brief outline of the Department's work in 2019/20:

### Supporting Communities

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.



72

of projects that are developing a new service / safeguarding access to a service

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

In 2019/20 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

### 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, e-books, audio books or DVDs of their choice.

However, not all Gwynedd residents can reach their local library and therefore the Council also provides a

mobile library that visits 129 stops in towns and villages as well as the homes of 87 individuals, (home service for those who are confined to their homes). Gwynedd Libraries are 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. Gwynedd residents borrowed 491,275 books in 2017/18.

30,283

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 - reading and learning, access to information about matters such as health and welfare, job seeking, local services as well as 'Gwynedd Ni' which has specific information for families about services and activities for children. Gwynedd residents can also use one of the 110 computers or Wi-Fi, in the libraries for free.

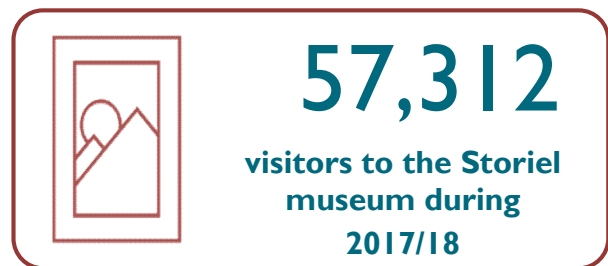
In 2019/20 we will:

- Prepare a business case for resources to upgrade the facilities at Pwllheli Library
- Introduce self-service arrangements in every library across the county
- Continue to work with communities and promote access to the new service
- Consider the role of Libraries within communities in future

## 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 opportunities for all.



The Service support various arts programmes to ensure that arts are alive in our communities and there is access to the arts in our rural areas.

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

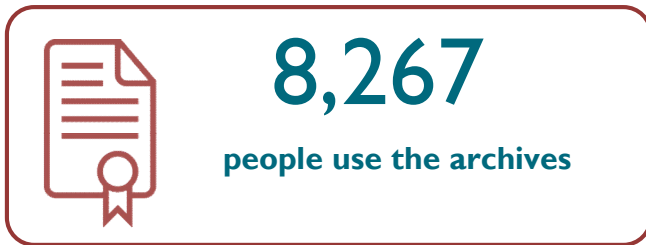
In 2019/20 we will:

- 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 in future work with the arts and heritage sector in Gwynedd.
- 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.

## 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.





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 collections, official and private 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 2019/20 we will:

- promote access to the service
- work 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.

Our local priorities will be:

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.

## Improving the Health of Gwynedd's Residents

We work with partners 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.**

This is one of the Department's main aims, namely to collaborate with partners locally, regionally and nationally in order to inspire, support and enable Gwynedd residents to be active and live healthy lives.

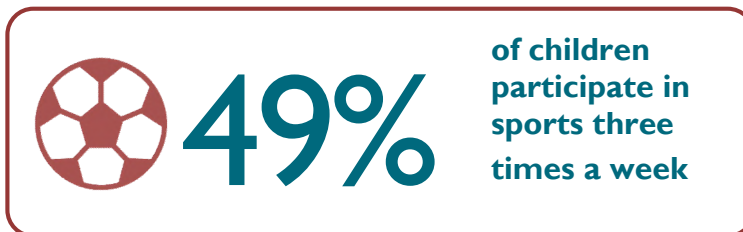
This is a brief outline of the Department's work:

## Healthy Living Programmes

### Sports for Life Team

The Department organises and supports a range of sports activities in schools, the community and outdoors to inspire children and young people to participate and enjoy sport.

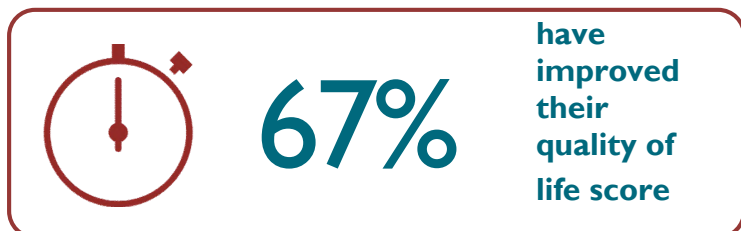
The percentage of Gwynedd children who participate in sport at least three times a week has increased from 43% in 2013 to 49% in 2018, and we aim to increase this in 2020. However, due to the national uncertainty regarding the arrangements to fund future sports programmes it will be a challenge to support some activities. In order to get the best impact with the available resources, we are looking at different ways to provide programmes to inspire young people to be active in the future.



In 2019/20 we will:

- Work jointly with partners to develop a new model to provide a service across north Wales.
- Collaborate with Sport Governing Bodies to offer a range of activities that respond to the demand and opportunities that are available in the County.

### Exercise Referral Scheme



The Department supports Gwynedd residents to improve the condition of their health via the Exercise Referral Team. This is a specialist service with a range of activities to help reduce the impact of conditions which 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. However, there is a threat to the service budget as it is very dependent on grants and it will be necessary to look at different models to support the service in the future.

In 2019/20 we will:

- Respond appropriately to the reduction in the financial investment in order to try and support a county service.
- Agreements with the Byw'n lach company to provide the service on behalf of the Council in future.

## Healthy Living Centres

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 to enjoy participating in energetic activities in safe environments.

In a recent satisfaction survey it was shown that 90% of our users are very satisfied with what is on offer and this feedback has been crucial in enabling the Council to plan future improvements.



81%

of 11 year  
old children  
could swim  
in 2017/18

Gwynedd Council is committed to continuing to provide Healthy Living Centres in future, however, in order to deliver financial savings, it has established the Byw'n lach company to run the centres on its behalf in future. The Department will establish a contract with

the Byw'n lach company to manage the service from 1 April 2019 and the staff of every centre will be transferred to the Company by that date.

In 2019/20 our priority will be:

- Supporting the Byw'n lach company to establish and provide the service to Gwynedd residents in accordance with the agreement.
- Establish arrangements to monitor the performance of the Byw'n lach company in accordance with the agreement.
- Establish arrangements to upgrade and invest in the facilities in accordance with the agreement