



## 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.**

Together with the day to day work outlined below, this department leads on the following priority projects:

- 1) Growth Vision for North Wales - (Improvement Priority 1)
- 2) Creating High Value Jobs (£28,500+ salary) - (Improvement Priority 1)
- 3) Arloesi Gwynedd Wledig - (Improvement Priority 1)
- 4) Promotion of Town Centres - (Improvement Priority 1)
- 5) Implementing the Gwynedd Slate Heritage - (Improvement Priority 1)
- 6) Businesses Receiving Support to Prosper - (Improvement Priority 1)
- 7) Tourism - creating a sustainable tourism plan - (Improvement Priority 1)
- 8) Regeneration: Creating regeneration plans for our areas - (Improvement Priority 1)
- 9) More Gwynedd residents playing a full part in the world of work - (Improvement Priority 3)

This is a brief outline of the Department's work in 2021/22:

### Economic Development Service

The economy's performance has an impact on the quality of life of Gwynedd residents, influencing household living costs and income. We collaborate with partners to create the conditions for businesses and enterprises to establish themselves, to be competitive and develop in Gwynedd and to create high quality jobs across the county.

**Covid-19 has had a significant impact on Gwynedd employers and businesses in 2020 - the number of businesses, productivity and value of businesses have been reduced. Unemployment figures have increased significantly and the economy has gone into recession. Brexit has also caused uncertainty for many businesses, especially businesses in the agricultural sector and those depending on the import and export of key goods.**

Gwynedd's economy was 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 will stimulate economic growth at a time of economic uncertainty.

There were 16,010 businesses, enterprises and community companies in Gwynedd in 2019. The Department provides information, advice and practical support to assist them to establish, stabilise and develop in order to support and create jobs. The Service gives specific attention to supporting businesses by providing different business

**1,200**



of grants distributed to Gwynedd businesses in 2020, worth £2.6m

support and innovation promotion packages for businesses by encouraging them to make better use of technology particularly in the most rural areas.

The service works closely with the North Wales Economic Ambition Board to develop projects to improve the region's economic productivity and to create higher value jobs in the county. As a result of the significant increase in employment we also work with partners to support businesses to employ workers and the people of Gwynedd to gain access to jobs.

During the next year we will seek to ascertain the long term impact of Covid-19 and Brexit on Gwynedd businesses and raise awareness of business support sources to enable businesses to cope with the change.

## Tourism, Marketing and Events Service

**The tourism industry is a key employer in Gwynedd.** With an economic value of over £1.35 billion, over 18,200 people worked in this field in 2019. However, the visitor economy has been affected significantly by Covid-19 as businesses have been closed for most of 2020 and events have

been cancelled. As the restrictions were relaxed during the summer the number of visitors to main tourist destinations increased significantly placing pressure on local communities. In order to be able to respond to the concerns of communities and businesses, the Council reviewed the field and adopted a series of principles to enable the sector to recover and develop sustainably in the future for the benefit and well-being of the people of Gwynedd.

**77,570**

followers on Snowdonia, Mountains and Coast's social media in 2020/21



In 2021/22 the service will focus on supporting a visitor economy that:

- celebrates and respects our communities, language and culture;
- maintains and respects our environment;
- ensures that the advantages for Gwynedd communities are more than any disadvantages

## 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 to create recreational attractions for local people and visitors. The department manages 301km of Gwynedd's coastline, concentrating on eight Blue Flag beaches, four harbours and two marinas, including Hafan Pwllheli that accommodates 400 boats.



**1,777** boats and **923** personal watercraft registered during 2018/19

In 2021/22, we will:

- update the Gwynedd Beach Management Scheme
- implement Dredging Strategies for Pwllheli Harbour and Victoria Dock
- establish future management options for Pwllheli Marina and Harbour

## Regeneration Service

Several 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 2021/22 it will collaborate with partners to identify future priorities giving special attention to town centre improvement programmes.

## 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 specific community projects.



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

In 2021/22, we will:

- support community networks to support the most vulnerable individuals as a result of Covid-19
- measure 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. 463,370 items were borrowed by Gwynedd residents in 2019/20. However, not all Gwynedd residents can reach their local library and therefore the Council also provides a Library Service for the Home that visits 479 individuals every month. Gwynedd Libraries are also commissioned by the Education Department to provide the Lori Ni service, which visits every Primary School, Special School and All- through School twice a year to lend reading books for 3-11 year olds.

**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 get information about services, together with help and support to find on-line information. Through the Gwynedd and Anglesey Adults Education Partnership we can organise and offer a number of short courses and taster sessions, such as digital sessions, mindfulness and craft sessions. We also hold activities for Welsh Learners, and hold sessions for infants and story time for children. Through our Better Reading Collections, it is possible to gain access to trusted information on health and wellbeing matters, including Dementia and Mental Health. Gwynedd residents can also use one of the 96 computers or Wi-Fi, in the libraries for free to seek work, or to find local services, as well as being able to photocopy and scan.

The Gwynedd Libraries service received an excellent report for its performance in 2019/20, which shows that the service is performing well within the Welsh Public Libraries Standards Assessment Framework. As a result of Covid-19, libraries have been closed to the public for extensive periods, however alternative services, including click and collect have been available.

In 2021/22, we will:

- continue to collaborate with communities and promote safe access to the service
- learn from the experience of the Covid-19 period and review the mobile library service
- re-open Neuadd Dwyfor to the public and prepare a business case for future support



## 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.



9,843

documents seen by the public in 2019-20

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 2021/22, we will:

- 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
- 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 and collaborate to identify systems to enable access to digital 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 in Bangor and the Lloyd George Museum yn Llanystumdwy.

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 arts opportunities for all.

The museums have been closed for extensive periods last year and the arts activities have been provided virtually and through various media.

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

In 2021/22, we will:

- work with the Friends of the Lloyd George Museum to create a new way of managing the Museum
- ensure the success of the Storiell scheme and establish a Development Trust to enable it to 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.



64,000

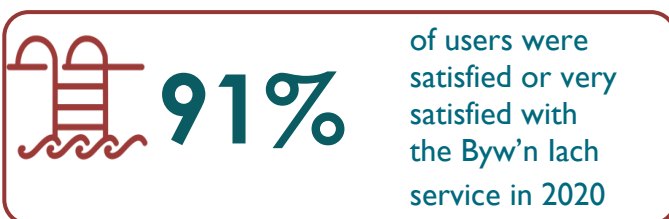
people have engaged with our museums in 2019/20

## 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.**

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. As a result of Covid-19 restrictions the centres have had to close for extensive periods during 2020 and 2021.

The Council also manages the country parks in Glynllifon and Padarn. These parks are important heritage sites and are popular attractions to visitors. However, 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 the future.

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 improving 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.

In 2021/22, 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 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 Iach 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.

<b>Local Priorities</b>	<b>Programme</b>
<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"> <li>• High Value Jobs</li> <li>• Promoting Town Centres</li> </ul>
<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"> <li>• Growth Vision for North Wales</li> <li>• Arloesi Gwynedd Wledig</li> </ul>
<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 these areas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting Town Centres</li> </ul>

<p>In consultation with Bangor area councillors, their wish to improve the appearance of the local area and to respond to empty shops was noted, and 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"> <li>• Promoting Town Centres</li> </ul>
<p>There is also a link to the county level priority to implement the Gwynedd Slate Heritage plan. 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"> <li>• Implementing the Gwynedd Slate Heritage</li> </ul>
<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"> <li>• Community Support Service</li> </ul>

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

Earn a sufficient salary to be able to maintain ourselves and our families

Live in quality homes within our communities

Live in a naturally Welsh society

Benefit from the beauty of the County's natural environment.