

## **DECISION NOTICE OF AN INDIVIDUAL MEMBER OF GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET**

**DATE OF DECISION 7 September 2021**

**DATE DECISION PUBLISHED 13 September 2021**

**DATE DECISION WILL COME INTO FORCE** and implemented,  
unless the decision is called in, in accordance with section 7.25 of  
the Gwynedd Council Constitution **20 Spetember 2021**

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Cabinet Member: Councillor Gareth Thomas

Cabinet Member for Economy and Community

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### **SUBJECT**

Submitting the Glannau Scheme bid to the UK Government Levelling Up Fund

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### **DECISION**

- a To support the intention of targeting the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund to develop and implement a package of projects under the Glannau Regeneration Scheme;
  - b To authorise the Head of Finance Department and Head of Economy and Community Department to sign an offer letter for the scheme;
  - c To authorise the Head of Economy and Community Department to establish a management structure for the scheme jointly with the Head of Finance Department, Head of Legal, Head of Environment Department, Head of Highways and Municipal Department and Head of YGC.
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### **REASON WHY THE DECISION IS NEEDED**

Please see attached officer report

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### **DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST AND ANY RELEVANT DISPENSATIONS APPROVED BY THE COUNCIL'S STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

None

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### **ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO MAKING THE DECISION**

Consultation with  
Gwynedd Council Statutory Officers  
Snowdonia National Park  
Local Members

The results of the consultations are reported upon in the attached report

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## DECISION NOTICE OF AN INDIVIDUAL MEMBER OF GWYNEDD COUNCIL'S CABINET – OFFICER'S REPORT

Name and title of Cabinet Member(s):	Cllr Gareth Thomas Cabinet Member for Economy and Community
Name and title of the Report's Author:	Esyllt Rhys Jones Regeneration Programmes Manager
Date of Decision:	7 September 2021
Cabinet Member's Signature:	

**Subject:** Submitting the Glannau Scheme bid to the UK Government Levelling Up Fund

### **Recommendation for the Decision:**

- a To support the intention of targeting the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund to develop and implement a package of projects under the Glannau Regeneration Scheme;
- b To authorise the Head of Finance Department and Head of Economy and Community Department to sign an offer letter for the scheme;
- c To authorise the Head of Economy and Community Department to establish a management structure for the scheme jointly with the Head of Finance Department, Head of Legal, Head of Environment Department, Head of Highways and Municipal Department and Head of YGC.

### **The reason for the need for a Decision:**

On 18 June this year, the Economy and Community Department submitted a bid for the Glannau Regeneration Scheme to the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund. The timetable for submitting the package was tight and was submitted subject to receiving a decision notice.

### **Rationale and justification for reaching the Decision:**

The UK Government recently launched the Levelling Up Fund. It is one of a package of funds launched by them following leaving Europe and the Structural Funds that were available at that time.

Between 2021/22 and 2024/25, up to £4.8bn is available in capital funding with UK Government guaranteeing a minimum of £240m (5%) for Wales. The maximum for bids is £20m with a possibility for transport schemes to be up to £50m. It is a competitive application process throughout the UK.

The aim of the fund is to invest in local, visual and good quality infrastructure schemes in the fields of transport, regeneration and town centres together with cultural investments. A particular emphasis is placed on post-industrial areas, deprived towns and coastal communities.

There was an expectation for the schemes submitted to be mature and the bids will be assessed against the area's features (i.e. If the area is in priority category 1, 2 or 3), capacity to implement, local priority, strategic link as well as value for money. Gwynedd, in accordance with the Local Authority Priority Category List, is in the lowest priority tier, namely Category 3.

### Fund Considerations

The Fund has three main themes.

- **Transport investments** - public transport, active travel, bridges, bus lanes, improving local roads, major infrastructure maintenance and accessibility improvements.
- **Investing in town centre regeneration** - upgrading buildings and infrastructure, regenerating brownfield land sites, investing in safe community infrastructure and reducing offending.
- **Cultural investment** - maintain, regenerate or make other creative use of museums, galleries, visitor attractions (and associated green areas) and heritage assets.

In accordance with the guidelines, there were further considerations connected to the type of bids that could be submitted such as maturity, value, commencement period and completing the expenditure, number of sites that could be included in one bid as well as match funding (at least 10%).

### Gwynedd Council Priority Plan

In accordance with the themes and operational matters associated with the Fund, a cross-departmental scoping exercise was conducted to look at practical possibilities. It should be noted that the level of interest and the concepts discussed were broad but to comply with the fund's operational requirements, only a very small number of schemes were practicable to be considered based on being mature enough, within budget, available to be implemented within a tight timetable and responding directly to the criteria.

Guidance was received from Members of Parliament and the Leadership Team (25 May) to proceed with the Glannau Regeneration Scheme package. Based on the guidance, a bid was submitted to the Levelling Up Fund on 18 June.

### Glannau Regeneration Scheme

The Glannau Regeneration Scheme is a scheme which responds to priority theme **investing in town centre regeneration** in the Fund. It is a package worth slightly over £24M to regenerate three rural and deprived town centres within the County (Bangor, Barmouth and Bala) by intertwining shoreline protection schemes with developing and regenerating the urban fabric. The aim is for the work of environmental regeneration and protection in the towns would lead to economic regeneration, long-term investments and creating employment.

The financial allocations are as follows:

<b>Town</b>	<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Cost of Scheme</b>
<b>Bangor</b>	Protecting Hirael Bay	£3,238,329
	Links with City Centre, Penrhyn Port and the Pier	£3,500,000
<b>Barmouth</b>	Coastal Protection	£2,720,000
	Link with the Railway Bridge	£4,000,000
	Town Centre Environmental Improvements	£3,500,000
<b>Bala</b>	Extending the Lake Railway to the town centre	£5,535,619
	Town Centre Environmental Improvements	£1,000,000
<b>Project Management</b>		£650,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>£24,143,948</b>

The scheme is expected to contribute to outputs and results such as the following:

- Improvements to the environment and public spaces within the towns;
- Town centres and shorelines protected;
- New attraction created;
- Green transport links created and developed;
- Jobs created and protected;
- Expenditure in the local economy and by visitors increased;
- Empty properties brought back into use;

A comprehensive Risk Assessment has been created for the Scheme. The following summarises the risks identified for the Council

- Failure to secure expenditure in the current financial year which is one of the Fund's requirements;
- Failure to spend the money in total by the end of the 2023/24 financial year which is one of the Fund's requirements;
- No confirmation for the Scheme;
- Difficulties involving land issues;
- Difficulties in obtaining the necessary statutory permissions;
- Problems arising as a result of third party agreements to realise the scheme (such as the Bala Railway Trust).

The award of the Levelling Up Fund is expected to be received in the autumn.

#### **ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO MAKING THE DECISION :**

Consultations have taken place with:

## Snowdonia National Park

### Local Members

Chief Finance Officer - I confirm that the financial figures on the notice are fair estimates. Also, the decision sought here does not create an additional commitment for the Council. Therefore, I support the bid to target the Levelling Up Fund due to the benefits to the local Economy if the bid is successful.

Monitoring Officer - The arrangements established by UK government have quite specific elements for applying for the support. This is particularly in relation to the arrangements for prioritising and qualification. The report highlights this and provides appropriate arrangements for acceptance and administration of any offer which might be received.

Local Member/s -