



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) Create High Value Jobs - (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 - forming a Sustainable Tourism Plan - (Improvement Priority 1)
- 8) Regeneration: Forming regeneration plans for our areas - (Improvement Priority 1)
- 9) More Gwynedd residents to play a full part in the world of work - (Improvement Priority 3)

Here is an outline of the Department's work in 2022/23:

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 2020/21. A broad range of businesses had to close during the first part of the year and this, in turn, affected the whole economy. As a result, the number of businesses, productivity and value of businesses has reduced. Brexit has also caused uncertainty for a number of businesses, especially businesses that depend on the import and export of key goods, and a broad range of businesses find it difficult to recruit enough workers.

Salary levels in Gwynedd continue to be 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 steps 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 support and innovation promotion packages for businesses by encouraging them to make better use of technology particularly in the most rural areas.

2,188



grants have been shared with Gwynedd businesses in 2020/21, to the value of £4.3M

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 continue to try to ascertain the long-term impact of COVID-19 and Brexit on Gwynedd businesses and raise awareness of support sources to enable businesses to cope with the change. We will also review our priorities in order to ensure that we provide help that benefits the people of Gwynedd and contribute to maintaining and regenerating our communities.

Tourism, Marketing and Events Service

The tourism industry is a key employer in Gwynedd. With an economic value of nearly £1.35 billion, over 18,200 people worked in this field in 2019, but the visitor economy has been affected substantially by COVID-19 with businesses being closed for substantial periods and cancelled events. The value of the sector in 2020 dropped substantially to £575 million and employment fell to 9,570. As the restrictions were relaxed during the summer the number of visitors to the main tourist

77,570

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



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 welfare of the people of Gwynedd.

In 2022/23, the service will focus on realising and embedding the Gwynedd and Snowdonia Sustainable Visitor Economy Plan 2035 and its Action Plan.

Maritime Services

As the Gwynedd landscape and natural environment is so important for the county's prosperity, the Department tries to ensure **safe resources of quality in our harbours, our marinas and on beaches** in Gwynedd in order to create a recreational resource to promote the well-being of local residents and visitors. The Department is responsible for managing up to 301km of coastline and beaches but are focusing efforts on managing the main award-winning beaches. It also manages 4 harbours in Aberdyfi, Barmouth, Porthmadog and Pwllheli as well as two marinas, namely Hafan Pwllheli that offers moorings for 400 boats and Victoria Dock in Caernarfon that offers moorings for 95 boats.

1,777 boats and **923** personal water craft were registered in 2018/19



Regeneration Programmes 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 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.**

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. The Regeneration Programmes Services is coordinating these efforts across the Council and is leading on a series of projects that have been identified as priorities by Gwynedd communities. One obvious field that has been identified by communities is the condition of town centres and concerns about the role of commercial centres in the future.

During 2022/23, the service will give particular attention to town centre regeneration programmes, and will target areas where the greatest change has been seen in retail patterns.

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 officers to support and empower communities and 'CIST' grants to support specific community projects.



57

community organisation projects were supported during 2019/20

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

In 2022/23, we will focus on developing local regeneration plans for each of the 13 catchment areas in Gwynedd.

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 and 77,641 items in 2020/21 (a reduction due to the restrictions on the service because of the pandemic). 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, Special and All-through School twice a year to lend reading books for 3-11 year olds. We also provide a Theatre/Cinema and a Library in the Neuadd Dwyfor building in Pwllheli.

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. The Gwynedd and Anglesey Adults Education Partnership, with assistance from the Adults Community Education Grant, is working with Grŵp Llandrillo Menai and Adults Education Wales to offer a number of short courses and taster sessions in a range of fields. 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 access local services, as well as being able to photocopy and scan. A programme of films, shows and cultural events are provided in Neuadd Dwyfor, Pwllheli.

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.

During 2022/23, we will:

- continue to collaborate with communities and promote access to the service, ensuring that our provision reflects the requirements and needs of the people of Gwynedd
- collaborate as the Gwynedd and Anglesey Adults Education Partnership to plan a comprehensive programme of learning opportunities for the people of Gwynedd in communities
- fully re-open Neuadd Dwyfor to the public and prepare a business case for future support

35,596

Gwynedd residents
are Library members



Archives Service



9,843

documents seen by the public in 2019-20

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, official and private collections that reflect the culture and heritage of Gwynedd communities. Record Offices provide taster sessions and genealogy courses and collaborate with Gwynedd schools.

During 2022/23, we will:

- lead on collaborating with archives across the North and with the Welsh Government to implement the North Wales Archives Partnership Business Case, which seeks to identify opportunities to make the best use of archives resources in the region for the benefit of the people of North Wales
- identify the cost of digitising the collections and collaborate to identify systems to enable access to digital collections.
- highlight the opportunities that Gwynedd archives can offer to the Curriculum for Wales.

Museums and Arts Service

The Service runs two museums in Gwynedd, namely Storiell in Bangor and the Lloyd George Museum in Llanystumdwy, and is responsible for looking after their collections; providing access to them and arranging activities for our communities.

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 were reopened in 2021 with some elements opening gradually such as loans and activities. The arts activities are provided virtually; with packages being sent to our communities and some being physically arranged on sites from October 2021.

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

During 2022/23, 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 the future
- work with the arts sector to realise our plan for the arts and implement its objectives
- contribute to the development of a Culture Plan for Gwynedd.

64,000

people have engaged with our museums in 2019/20

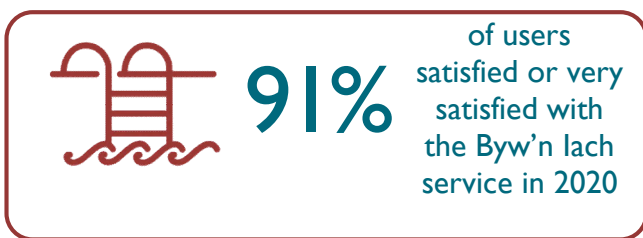


Leisure and Country Parks Service

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 among four-year-olds in Gwynedd amongst 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 awarded a contract to the Company to manage the service from April 2019 and we are monitoring 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.

As well as managing these facilities, the Council has also entered into a contract with the Byw'n lach company to provide key programmes to improve inclusion in sport and fitness activities. The Community Sports Programme promotes active and inclusive activities for young people and older people in centres, schools, clubs and in the community and the Exercise Referral Scheme helps to reduce the impact of conditions that prevent the residents of Gwynedd 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.

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.

During 2022/23, we will continue to support Byw'n lach and will:

- invest in sport and recreation activities in response to the demand
- collaboration with North Wales Sports to promote inclusion in sport
- upgrade the facilities of Parc Padarn and develop options for managing the Glynllifon and Parc Padarn Countryside Parks in the future.

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 to secure priority for the county from Welsh Government for plans in the 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. 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 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. 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 the Ffestiniog area consultation session, it became apparent that there were concerns amongst local councillors regarding the future of the Community Centre and services located there. The Regeneration team held a recent 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

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 sustain themselves and their families

Live in quality homes within our communities

Live in a natural Welsh society

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