

GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET



Report to Gwynedd Council Cabinet meeting

Meeting Date: 28 March 2017

Cabinet Member: Cllr. Mandy Williams-Davies
Cabinet Member for Economy & Community

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Department

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Item Title: **Council Plan 2017-18:
Resources to extend the 'High Value and Quality Jobs' scheme
(project E2)**

1. DECISION SOUGHT

To commit £117,000 of additional funding, and continue with the remainder of the allocated funding, in order to extend the 'High value and quality jobs' scheme for 2017-18 to realise the commitments that are a part of the Council Plan 2017-18.

2. REASON WHY DECISION IS NEEDED

Committing resources from the Transformation Fund is an issue for the Cabinet.

3. INTRODUCTION

The Full Council adopted the 'Council Plan 2017-18' on 2nd of March 2017.

The 'High value and quality jobs' scheme was identified as one of the improvement schemes that would require additional resources to continue to deliver its commitments should it be extended for an additional year.

'High Value and Quality Jobs' was therefore included as part of the Council Plan subject to the Cabinet's agreement to fund it.

4. REASON AND JUSTIFICATION BEHIND THE DECISION

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The purpose of this scheme is to work pro-actively to create the right conditions to develop high value and quality jobs in Gwynedd and respond to the low average salaries in the county.

The project:

1. *Attracts quality inward investment in the county* by promoting and marketing Gwynedd to specific sectors; develops a relationship and provides specialist support to prospective investors and lobbies the UK Government and Welsh Government to ensure that they support investment in Gwynedd.
2. *Supports local businesses to establish and grow* within higher value sectors by providing specialist advice and assistance to businesses and promotion of the provision by others like the Welsh Government. The scheme also supports local businesses to network and collaborate to support their sectors.
3. *Ensures that the local workforce has the correct skills* to gain well paid employment within the higher value sectors by facilitating the development of links between businesses and educational establishments (schools, higher and further education).

Here is a summary of the project's highlights and main outcomes thus far:

- Ensuring that Welsh Government designated the Trawsfynydd nuclear power station and Llanbedr airfield sites as the Snowdonia Enterprise Zone (one of only eight Enterprise Zones in Wales).
- The continuation of the Trawsfynydd Nuclear Power Station decommissioning programme was ensured, safeguarding 250 higher value jobs for an extended period of time.
- Over £1.5m of investment was secured from Welsh Government and private sector, in the infrastructure at Llanbedr airfield (Snowdonia Aerospace Centre) and the development of further schemes to make a substantial investment in the site including the provision of a new entrance.
- The designation of Snowdonia Aerospace Centre as one of six sites favoured by the UK Government for the establishment of a space port was ensured.
- The establishment and development of business networks in the digital sectors (North Wales Tec and Parc Menai Technology Businesses Group) and the creative industries (Gogledd Greadigol), which brings over 200 businesses together, was supported.
- The 'Byw a Bod - Digital' scheme by Arloesi Gwynedd Wledig to raise awareness of the opportunities for the children and young people of Gwynedd within the digital sector in the county was promoted.
- A new phase of the Llwyddo'n Lleol scheme that will support children and young people to study science, technology and engineering based subjects was developed.
- Although it is a long-term project, we have already supported over 100 prospective investors in the county which has led to the creation of 76 higher

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value jobs across Gwynedd.

Securing the resources to extend the scheme would ensure the following by March 2018:

- Developing the package of innovative activities to attract inward-investment to Gwynedd by targeting businesses within the significant sectors identified, paying particular attention to the Snowdonia Enterprise Zone in Trawsfynydd and Llanbedr.
- Supporting a number of prospective investors and ensuring the greatest benefit to Gwynedd from the developments
- Developing the business clusters in the target sectors identified
- Starting to implement a new programme to support young people to study science, technology and engineering based subjects under the Llwyddo'n Lleol banner
- Collaborating with the North Wales Economic Ambition Board and the Energy Island programme to ensure that the people of Gwynedd benefit from the development of Wylfa Newydd.

Over 2,000 higher value jobs are associated with the developments we are working to attract to the county in the medium / long term.

Receiving further funding from the Council to align with the new period of the strategic plan, will allow for the continued employment of the team of officers who are delivering the scheme. It will also maintain the service of the field experts who are supporting prospective investors in Gwynedd and the continuation of our efforts to attract further investment to the county. The Economy and Community Department, as always, will also seek to use the Council's resources to attract money from other sources such as Welsh Government and the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority to increase and extend our efforts in the field.

5. NEXT STEPS AND TIMETABLE

Should the Cabinet commit further resources to the scheme, it will continue to the end of the Council Plan 2017-18 on 31 March 2018.

6. ANY CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO MAKING THE DECISION

Cabinet Members and senior officers were informally consulted regarding the continuation of the scheme before the matter was submitted to the Cabinet for a decision.

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Chief Officers' Comments

Chief Executive

'Four requests for funding relate to these papers, all relating to commitments in the new strategic plan. Clearly, two are relatively small amounts and two are larger. Obviously the aim with such projects is to fund them from existing resources. I understand that insufficient funds are available for these requirements. However, it is suggested that these funds are provided for only a year to consider if more permanent resources can be redirected to these projects if they need to continue once the one-off funds come to an end.'

Chief Finance Officer

'A number of deserving needs / uses will be competing for scarce resources from the Transformation Fund, and it is a matter for the Cabinet to prioritise the relevant applications.'

In the full Council on the 2nd of March 2017, when 'bids' for additional resources to meet unavoidable pressures on services were approved, I noted that the Council's main priorities, developmental matters to make a difference, were to be funded through the 'Strategic Plan' procedure. It is a matter for the Cabinet members, with the guidance of the Chief Executive, to prioritise the Transformation Fund to this end.

Following the Cabinet's decision on 22 November 2016 to approve the transfer of £635k to the Transformation Fund, I confirm that there is sufficient provision to realise the projects presented to the 28 March 2017 Cabinet meeting, and that further funds are in reserve for some further projects that may mature / come to the fore and reach the Cabinet for a decision in future.'

The Monitoring Officer

'As noted in the report these recommendations stem from commitments in the Council Plan for 2017-18 and are reasonable and appropriate proposals.'