



# Performance Report

Gwynedd Council

2016/17

Putting the people of Gwynedd at the centre of everything we do





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## The Council Leader's Foreword



Councillor Dyfed Edwards, **Leader of the Council** during 2016/17

The purpose of this annual report is to provide a clear and balanced summary of the performance of Gwynedd Council for the year 2016/17. I'm pleased to be able to reflect and report that the Council was able to provide strong and stable services to our citizens during a period of change. The Council has attempted to plan sustainable services for the people of Gwynedd, whilst considering the needs of our various communities and future generations.

Through careful financial planning, the Council has succeeded in finding £31m of financial savings over the past 4 years, whilst trying to protect those services that are important to the people of Gwynedd. It is important to remember that the financial challenges persist, but our internal procedures are firmly in place in order to rise to the challenges that lie ahead.

Our priority as a Council was to continue to provide the best possible service to our citizens. Whilst looking to the future, it is very pleasing to see that 92% of pupils in Key Stage 3 (11-14 year old) have reached expected levels of attainment in Welsh, English, Mathematics and Science. It is also important to note that the number of pupils leaving school aged 16 and who don't go on to education, training or work has fallen to 1% (13 young people) during the year. This figure is a significant decrease on 3% in 2012.

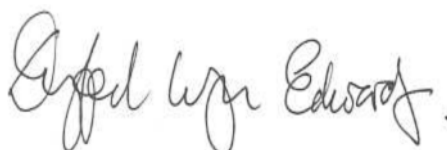
The financial environment of the past few years has led us to plan new means of providing services. By working in partnership with other organisations, and with individuals and communities, we are designing our care services by concentrating on what is important to the individual. Even though the work of Ysbyty Alltwen Integrated Team is a successful example of such provision, great challenges lie ahead because of the issues of recruitment to the care and nursing sector. We will continue to work in partnership with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board during 2017/18 in order to try and secure a deserved workforce able to provide the best services to the people of Gwynedd.

Ensuring an able and skilful workforce for all parts of the county, both rural and urban, remains a challenge. As a Council, we are committed to securing the sustainability of our communities, and a budget of £4m under the Rural Wales Development Programme is a step in the right direction.

Obstacles to digital communications can be a hindrance to businesses and individuals, therefore improving the digital infrastructure remains a priority. Super-fast broadband is now available to 83% of homes and business premises in Gwynedd, which is a higher percentage than in similar counties (Ceredigion, Powys and Carmarthenshire). Work on this aspect will continue in 2017/18.

The Council plan for 2017/18 shows that we are building on the progress made in 2016/17, and that we recognise areas of improvement. As we look into the future I wish the new Council every success with the work of leading and scrutinising the important work ahead. Likewise, I wish the best to the Council, both members and officers, and to the people of Gwynedd for the future.

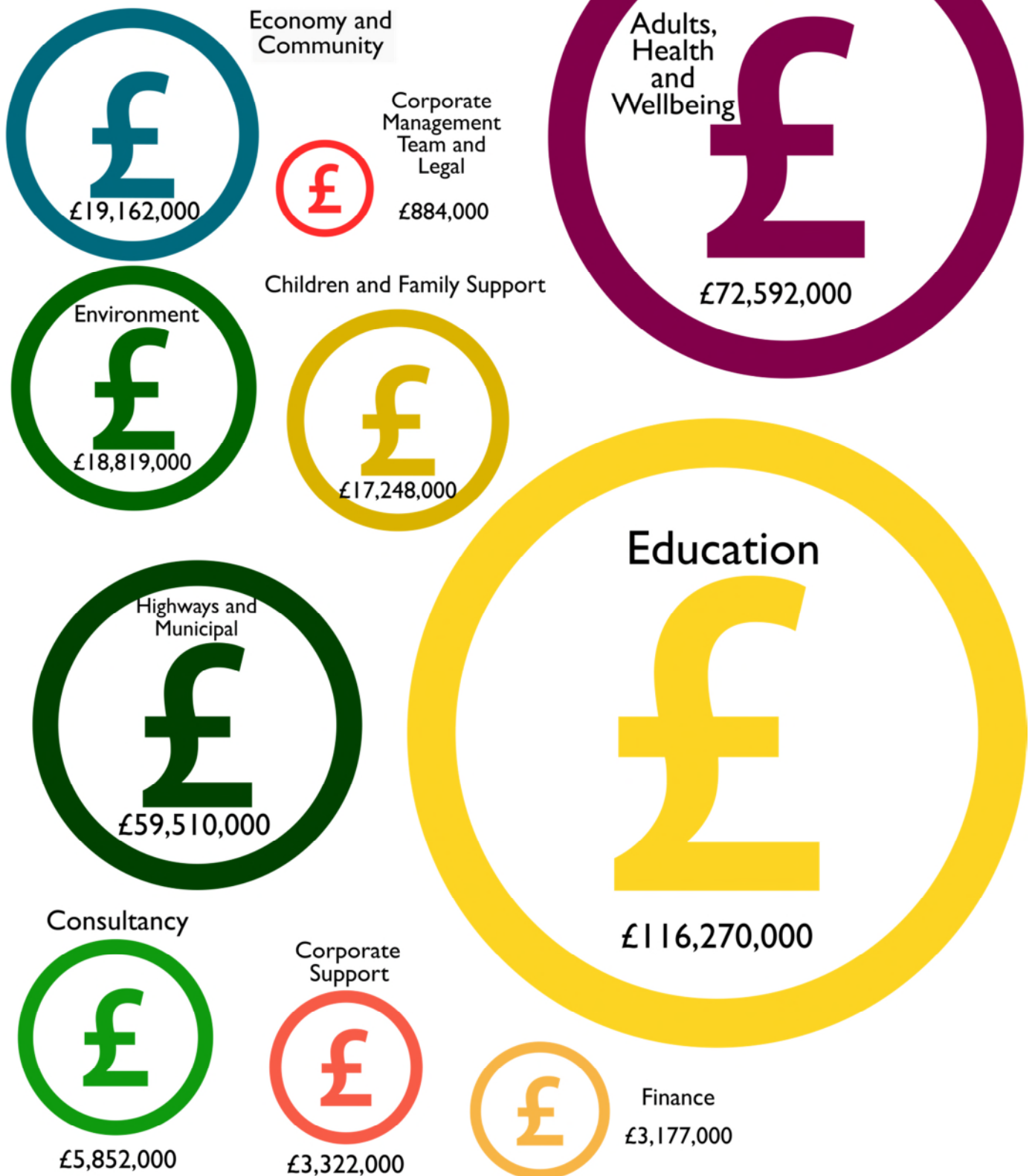
The potential is great; the challenge lies in realising it.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Dyfed Edwards". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D'.

Councillor Dyfed Edwards

# Our Expenditure

Council Departments' gross budgets to provide services to the people of Gwynedd in 2016/17:



# Conversing with the people of Gwynedd

Conducting a dialogue with the people of Gwynedd is very important to Gwynedd Council in order to better understand the needs and priorities of our people and communities. This information can then be used to steer that which needs to be done.

4,574 of the people of Gwynedd took part in engagement exercises



In the present economic climate, conducting a conversation is even more important as the Council faces difficult challenges and decisions. One example of including the people of Gwynedd was *Gwynedd Challenge* when local people were invited to give their opinion on 118 different options for cutting services in order to save money and close the financial deficit. The result of this exercise was an agreement on a high percentage of options to save money.

The challenge to us as a Council is how to conduct a conversation with as many people and communities as possible, and to reflect their diversity. As many different methods as possible are used to try and achieve this.

**Gwynedd Citizens Panel** is a group representative of about 1,200 of the people of Gwynedd who are regularly given the opportunity to have their say on local services in order to assist the Council with planning, delivering and reviewing our local services.

To reach specific groups of people **focus groups** are used when more detailed discussion is needed. 51 young people attended the 'Have your Say' events in Bala, Caernarfon and Pwllheli where the future of young people's services were discussed.

**Public meetings** are also held, and they are an opportunity for the people of Gwynedd to discuss and question options and changes before decisions are taken.



An increasingly popular method of conversing is new technology. This could be an online questionnaire, video clips, messages on social media and live streaming. The Council has almost 20,000 followers on *Twitter* and *Facebook*. 1,471 of the people of Gwynedd responded to a survey on the standard of the streets of Gwynedd.

We must also remember that we shouldn't disregard the more traditional means of communication such as the press and paper surveys. Our aim is to reach a diverse public, including XXX grwpiau nodwedd cydraddoldeb via the methods most suited to them.

We are, nevertheless, aware that there is a way to go before we reach our destination in this area, and we have plans to improve further.

The opinion of the people of Gwynedd is important to us. It is also important that we as a Council report back after receiving comments from the public, and to explain our decisions and why they were taken.

Please will you help us and take every opportunity to have your say!

[www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/ymgyngori](http://www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/ymgyngori)

[twitter.com/CyngorGwynedd](https://twitter.com/CyngorGwynedd)

[facebook.com/CyngorGwyneddCouncil](https://facebook.com/CyngorGwyneddCouncil)



# Satisfaction of the people of Gwynedd

1,144

Gwynedd people completed the questionnaire about their satisfaction.

This is what they had to say...



Gwynedd - a good place to live?



Satisfied with Council services?



## Waste and Recycling Arrangements (313 comments)

The main concern of residents was issues regarding waste collection and recycling, but recent figures show that more than 61% of Gwynedd's waste is now recycled or composted.

## Standard of Streets (228 comments)

Residents are concerned about the standard of Gwynedd streets. But the report "How Clean are our Streets" 2016/17 by Keep Wales Tidy shows that 97.9% of the streets of Gwynedd reach the necessary standards of cleanliness.

## Children and Young People

Ensuring a more consistent quality of education across the county's schools and making sure that every child and young person has the same opportunities has remained a priority for 2016-17. During the year we have seen the fruition of many projects which seek to transform the education system in the county and improve results for our children and young people.

We have been focusing on reconciling education standards in every school in the county by challenging and targeting specific subjects and fields which require further attention. Good progress was seen in the performance of our schools across the Key Stages.

In our **Secondary** schools, the performance is very good in Key Stage 3 (11-14 years old) with 92% of pupils attaining the expected levels in English or Welsh, Mathematics and Science. This positive increase in performance since 2012 continues to place Gwynedd among the best authorities in Wales.

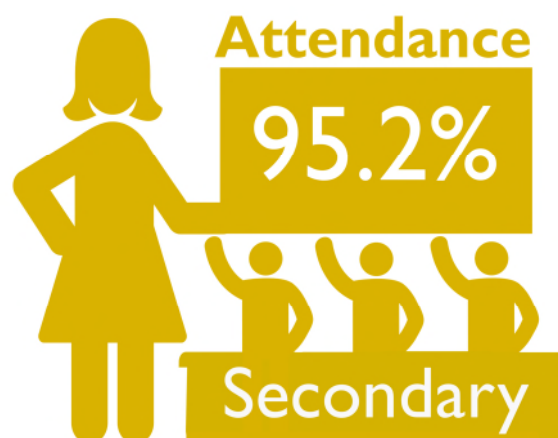
Similarly, our performance remains strong by the end of Key Stage 4 (14-16 years old) with 65.9% of 16-year-old pupils achieving 5 GCSE grades A\* to C, including Welsh or English, and Mathematics. During 2017/18, we intend to improve the performance and raise standards further by targeting specific subjects which are under-performing in our schools.



We are aware that further work needs to be done to improve outcomes for children in the Foundation Phase (7 years old) in our Primary schools. The number of children who reach the expected level at 7 years old has been stable since 2012; therefore we intend to focus on this field during 2017-18.

Estyn inspections of Gwynedd Schools have been very positive in this year. By now, no school is in a special measures category and only two schools are in the Estyn monitoring category (important fields for improvement).

During the year, attendance rates of secondary school pupils have increased again, with 95.16% ranking Gwynedd highest in Wales. Though the attendance figure has increased to 95.46% in our primary schools also, we will be focusing on raising this figure again in 2017-18.



We are pleased to see figures which show that the number of pupils leaving school at 16 years old and not entering education, training or employment has dropped to 1% (13 young people) during the year. This shows a significant reduction from the 3% figure in 2012. We will continue to work with the schools, youth service and other partners to reduce this figure in 2017-18.

In order to promote education of the best quality we have prioritised work to improve the quality of leadership in our schools. The support and training available for Leaders and Managers has developed well over the course of the year, with Heads and Senior Managers giving positive feedback on training programmes. We have also started to identify future leaders. Next year, we intend to build on this work and focus on improving the quality of middle-leadership in our secondary schools in particular.

We have already introduced our viable schools network programme, which is progressing well. Since 2012, we have secured investment of £56 million in the viable schools programme in order to ensure the best learning environment for the children and young people of Gwynedd.

**“This whole process has been a very exciting experience for pupils and staff as they have been able to see the site at various stages from its design to the construction work. The children and staff are delighted to be in their new school. I strongly believe that pupils will benefit greatly from the new building and the excellent facilities offered here.”**

**Head of Ysgol Hafod Lon**

Ysgol Hafod Lon, which educates children and young people with additional learning needs from the Dwyfor and Meirionnydd areas, was opened in October 2016. The new school, which is located in Penrhyndeudraeth, has modern classrooms with the latest resources, as well as a hydrotherapy pool, therapy rooms, sensory equipment and an open-air play area. Good progress has been made with other sites also, with Ysgol Glancegin opening in October 2017 and work continuing in the Ysgol y Gader and Ysgol y Berwyn areas.

Over the course of the year, we have continued with the process of transforming the provision for approximately 4,000 pupils with Additional Learning Needs in Gwynedd. The progress of this project has been a little slower than expected but we have now agreed to collaborate with Anglesey Council to adopt the Additional Learning Needs Strategy which will address the early years and establish a central team of professionals with specific specialisms. During the next year, we will focus on establishing a new Service for Gwynedd and Anglesey Additional Learning Needs.

We have been working hard over the last year to ensure that we fulfil our responsibilities under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. The act has been in force since April 2016 and it places responsibilities on us to develop a preventative approach in everything we do. The Early Intervention / Preventative project for groups of vulnerable children and young people in Gwynedd has been a priority for the Council since 2015.

We have already held an assessment of identified needs and specific fields which need to be targeted when planning early intervention into the future. These fields include: Speech and Language Delay, Parenting and Behaviour Support, Access to Mental Health Services and Support for Teenagers.



**Percentage of families who have reported improvement following the intervention of the Team Around the Family**

Over the course of the year we have been supporting children and families by offering access to services in the community or via a service which is co-ordinated by the Gyda'n Gilydd Team. The Gyda'n Gilydd Team offers support and early intervention for children, young people and their families to ensure that the problems they face do not become more severe and complex.

Though very good progress has already been made as a result of the work of our Flying Start and Gyda'n Gilydd teams and our wider partners, development against the pledges in our Strategic Plan has been slower than expected. But, looking at re-commissioning services that are funded via Families First grants gives us an opportunity to set a new direction and priorities that are ambitious and innovative to support young people and families in Gwynedd.

**"Just wanted to say thank you for everything, you've gone above and beyond for me and my child and it means a lot to us, so thank you from the bottom of our hearts"**

**One child's family.**

## Gofal

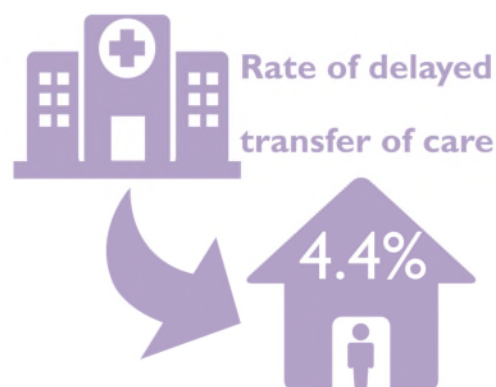
The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 emphasises the need for the Council to work in close partnership with service users, families, informal carers and communities. In order to respond to the evident challenges in the Care field, it is crucial that we work effectively, and when appropriate, in an integrated manner with the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board.

The 'Integrated Working Project, focusing on what counts for individuals' has focused on redesigning our current way of working to ensure that we place the people of Gwynedd at the centre. The Ysbyty Alltwen Integrated Team has been operational since 2015 and has merged specialists from the Social Services and Health fields. This project has set strong foundations in order to extend an entirely integrated model to provide care services for adults across Gwynedd.

In order to continue to offer care to our residents in an environment that suits them, it is essential that the individual's natural contacts with family or the community are used. A key part of ensuring that this support is available in our communities is the need to improve the understanding of the people of Gwynedd of the way communities can support people to live there longer. In order to ensure that the people of Gwynedd truly understand the challenge which faces us, during the year we have held various engagement events with our citizens and partners to discuss responding to this need in the future.



In order to help individuals to live their lives as they want to, it is crucial that we can offer the varied accommodation options across the county which address the needs of our residents. The exciting work of building Extra Care Housing in Porthmadog has moved on over the year and it will be ready during the next year. It is anticipated that the show-flats will be ready in August 2017 and an open day arranged thereafter. Developing a new accommodation model for adults with learning disabilities on the Frondeg site in Caernarfon has been addressed during the year with engagement with families to ensure their contribution to planning the new provision.



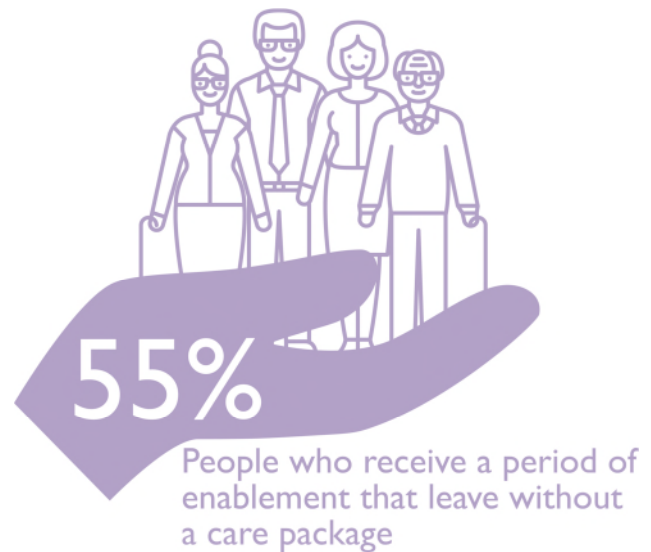
One of the main matters that has been a cause for concern for the Council is the stability and sustainability of our nursing homes across the county within the context of a very fragile sector. The situation with transfers from hospitals for social care reasons has deteriorated, with an increase in the rate of delay from 2.38% in 2015/16 to 4.44% in 2016/17. Despite this, Gwynedd's performance is comparable to the Welsh average, but it must be acknowledged that there is room for improvement. The performance reflects the current situation in the health and care system. It reflects the high demand on hospitals, lack of nursing beds in the community and also a lack of capacity in terms of professionals and home carers in some specific areas of Gwynedd.

Though recruiting to the care and nursing workforce remains extremely challenging, efforts to attract and keep workers are continuing and are being reinforced. Recruitment events and awareness raising sessions of career opportunities continue, and jointly with the Health Board a programme is being prepared to make better use of social media for recruitment.

The Council is currently planning and collaborating with its partners in order to overcome the obstacles which exist in this field. The 'Capacity and sustainability of the Care and Health System' project seeks to respond to the current problems in relation to provisions within the older people field mainly. Jointly with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board and Anglesey Council, work has been commissioned during the year to respond to some of the obstacles. The work will look at the availability and quality of the provision of care services in north-west Wales. The three public bodies will work closely with our main stakeholders over the course of the next year.

Work on the Llys Cadfan project was completed during the year and individuals have begun to move to the new Early Onset Dementia Unit there. This provision will make the lives of service users and their families easier and will mean that they do not have to leave their local areas and travel for miles to receive the specialist support in question. Though there has been some slippage in the programme to improve special and respite services in the south of the County, we are confident that the new provision will be available during this year.

On the whole, the performance measures suggest that the service is on the right track. There seems to be a reduction again this year in the proportion of people who choose to receive traditional support in the community and also in our residential homes. This positive trend suggests that we as a Council are collaborating effectively with our partners to plan the care required for our residents in the future.



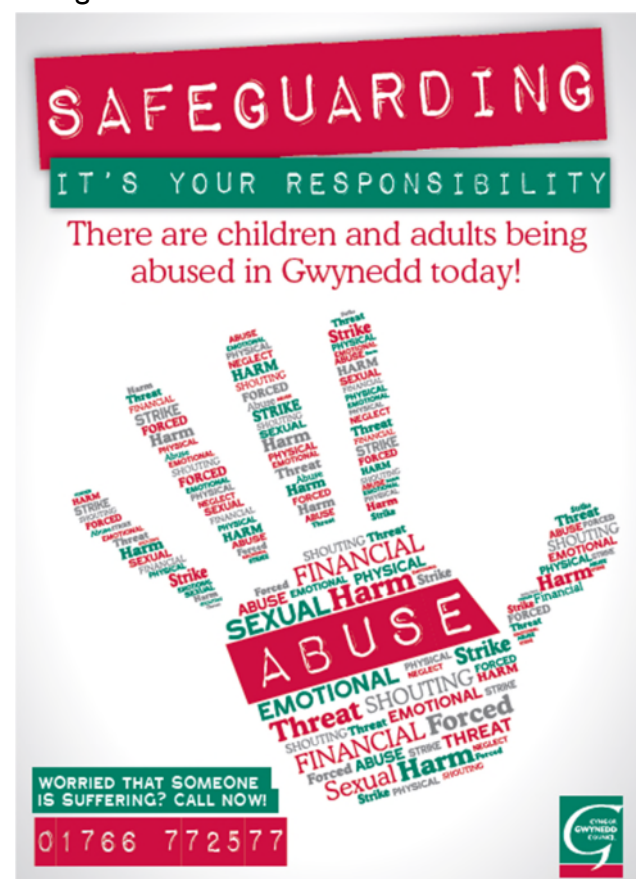
## Safeguarding

The responsibility for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults is one of the Council's most important responsibilities. For a number of years now, the Council has identified this important field as a priority and has reviewed its corporate arrangements in order to ensure that robust and suitable arrangements are in place.

The Strategic Safeguarding Children and Adults Panel gives specific attention to corporate and statutory matters relating to safeguarding. These priorities have also been incorporated within the Council's Strategic Plan. Three main projects have been commissioned in response to some of the challenges which have faced the Council in recent years, namely Ensuring Whole Council Ownership of the Safeguarding field, Safeguarding Children and Young People and Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults.

Efforts are continuing in terms of improving awareness of safeguarding across the Council. The Council has ensured that we have adopted safeguarding policies and procedures across all our services, with much work undertaken to raise awareness and provide training across the entire workforce. We have undertaken an annual survey to measure the impact and improvement of awareness levels of the safeguarding field among the workforce, together with undertaking annual inspections to ensure that our arrangements are robust in the field. The Awareness Audit has shown that there has been an increase in awareness level of the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures this year.

The Adults, Health and Well-being Department has put robust arrangements in place during the year in order to ensure expertise and full understanding of all the issues involving safeguarding. This allows the Council to be proactive in order to respond appropriately and effectively to concerns as they arise. There has been a general increase in cases involving safeguarding issues recently; however, from discussions with other Authorities within the region, it is clear that we are all in a similar situation. A meeting was held with the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales at the beginning of March 2017 and, in acknowledging that there was work to do and a challenge ahead of us, the proposed arrangements were described as 'exciting' changes. This feedback is very encouraging at the beginning of a period of change.



During the year we have ensured that we understand the trends in relation to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Gwynedd. We have reviewed our operational arrangements and have ensured that they comply with regional arrangements. We have also ensured that we have robust arrangements to gather information which improves our understanding and awareness of this particular safeguarding field. Multi-agency training was conducted during the year by experts in the field in order to develop skills to identify signs of CSE and how to identify vulnerability in individuals exposed to exploitation. We are also continuing to contribute to this work field regionally and nationally.

The Strategic Safeguarding Panel has recently extended its focus and has added the 'PREVENT' agenda to its remit. This is the Home Office-led programme that relates to attempting to prevent individuals from being radicalised. The modern slavery agenda is also a matter which is being addressed.

## Manage Risk



Our measures in relation to adults and children suggest a solid performance again in 2016/17. It was seen again this year that the adults safeguarding referrals completed during the year had managed to control the risk 100% of the time.

Specifically regarding safeguarding children, the rate of risk assessments submitted to case conferences that were considered ones that showed quality when making decisions suggests a solid performance again this year - 94% in 2016/17 compared with 97% in 2015/16.



## Poverty, Deprivation, Economy and Housing

The challenge facing the Gwynedd economy is significant. The structure of the economy remains narrow, with work opportunities still over-reliant on the public sector. Issues such as low salaries and the need to ensure that we have a workforce with the relevant skills for the world of work are key things which we need to focus on. We also need to be creative when overcoming geographical or technical obstacles which could make it harder for some of our residents to participate in the world of work.

As the role of the private sector is not strong in a rural area such as Gwynedd, the Council has been proactive by working in partnership with Welsh Government and other partners, in attracting investment to the area. Work to attract investments to sites at Trawsfynydd and Llanbedr has maintained momentum over the year, and has a clear focus on attracting a small reactor to Trawsfynydd, and to develop an aerospace centre at Llanbedr.

It is too early to see the effect of these investments on the residents and businesses of Gwynedd, but the work is setting firm foundations which will attract transformational investments to the area over the next five years, with the potential of creating approximately 200 jobs. We have safeguarded high value jobs in the County also by ensuring the continuity of the Trawsfynydd Nuclear Power Station decommissioning programme and protecting 250 jobs in the Meirionnydd area.

We have now identified the most significant sectors to Gwynedd in terms of creating high value jobs, namely the Energy, Digital and Creative sectors. A package of marketing materials for the sectors has been developed and we have established business networks to support them further.

Work to attract inward investment is long-term, but, since 2012, we have supported over 100 prospective investors in the county which has led to the creation of 76 higher value jobs.



We also continue to attract nationally or internationally high-profile events to Gwynedd in order to take advantage of the economic and social benefit which will ensue. During the year, an investment of £6.7 million was made to the economy as a result of these events, which in turn has led to safeguarding 298 jobs in the county.

Securing a quality information and communication technology infrastructure throughout Gwynedd and supporting businesses and residents to take full advantage of it remains a priority. Superfast broadband is now available for 83% of homes and business sites in Gwynedd, which is higher than similar counties (Ceredigion, Powys and Carmarthenshire), with 41% of those who can access it already taking advantage - the highest in Wales. Though these figures are encouraging, we will focus on further improving performance by encouraging and facilitating access for businesses to the opportunities available.

Ensuring the sustainability of rural communities remains a priority. We have secured a budget of £4million from the Wales Rural Development Programme to develop new, innovative methods of responding to the challenges of rural Gwynedd. This funding has allowed us to create a range of exciting developments that are being trialled throughout the county (see a video of the highlights of the year [here LINK\](#))

We have continued with the work of implementing a programme of schemes to reduce the impact of poverty on the County. Over the course of the year, 558 Gwynedd residents in the Communities First areas have received assistance with their skills to cope with household income and debts. While offering this assistance, approximately £300,000 worth of residents' debts has been managed successfully. Attention is also being given to implementing schemes which will give work opportunities for people who are not a part of the labour market. During the year, the OPUS project was established which targets vulnerable, unemployed individuals and offers a support and skills package for them to take a step closer to the world of work.



In addition, a budget of £659,887 was received from the UK Government in order to make Optional Housing Payments during the year, and an Optional Housing Policy was created as a result. This funding was used to support 1,534 households to alleviate the effect caused by the Government's range of welfare reforms.

During the year, we have been implementing our strategy to increase the supply and variety of housing available in order to ensure that they are suitable for the needs of the people of Gwynedd. The project will lead to different solutions in different areas. During the year, the Housing Department has succeeded in bringing 54 empty homes back into use and these have been used to accommodate people nominated by the Homelessness Unit.

Some slippage was seen in the programme to develop provision for homeless people and further work will need to be undertaken during 2017/18 to develop an alternative model and ensuring different provision for homeless people. However, our general efforts to prevent homelessness have been successful and the national performance measures reiterate this. We have focused on seeking to prevent homelessness in the first instance by assisting and offering stability to a number of families in difficult times.

Progress against our pledges has been slower than hoped during 2016/17. Nevertheless, we have consulted across Gwynedd on a Scheme to increase the number of local housing. Work is under-way to submit planning applications in three specific areas for intermediate rent houses and affordable housing for purchase, which would create approximately 39 homes in Gwynedd.

We have continued with the work to maximise expenditure with local businesses, and during 2016/17 the Council's expenditure on goods and services by local businesses was worth over £47m (figures up to the end of December 2016?) to the local economy.

We offered support to 40 companies during the year via various activities which will assist them to compete for contracts with the Council and others.

As part of the project to construct Ysgol Dalgylch y Berwyn, 53% of the sub-contracts have been executed by companies within 30 miles of the site; the percentage was 43% for Ysgol Glancegin, Bangor. This is equivalent to £2.9m. In addition, there are many social advantages which derive from such projects including offering periods of work experience to local students, apprenticeships and creating employment with local contractors.

Since the start of the project, £1 million of savings has been delivered and foundations have been set for a new procurement procedure or buying services and goods, in the Council. However, further work needs to be carried out in order to ensure that we succeed to strike the right balance between making financial savings and ensuring that local benefits emanate from our procurement decisions.

## The Welsh Language

Gwynedd has always been a stronghold of the Welsh language and culture; however it has witnessed a gradual decline in the number of Welsh-speakers. According to the 2011 Census, there has been a decline of 846 in the number of Welsh-speakers in Gwynedd, namely -3.5% compared with the 2001 Census. Though an element of uncertainty exists regarding the impact we can have on preventing the decline, as an organisation, we have decided to focus on work within communities, schools and public organisations in the first place.

There are many reasons which militate against the use of the Welsh language in social situations. In order to try to respond to the situation we have been working with the communities of Bangor, Dolgellau, Porthmadog and Pwllheli in order to promote the use of the Welsh language in those communities.

During 2016/17, we have continued with the action plans for the communities and delivered 107 projects which gave those attending an opportunity to experience community events through the medium of Welsh. In addition, in Bangor, we saw the opening of the Popdy language centre and the appointment of a Manager and Development Officer for the Language Initiative which is seen as a focus to maintain and strengthen the language in the city.

Though it is difficult to establish whether the use of the language has increased within the communities, signs of success can be seen in terms of promoting and increasing the status of the language; but further work needs to be done. In the future we will be engaging with specific groups within the community and will try to get to grips with the apathy amongst some Welsh-speakers towards the language.



Dolgellau Resident

"It's so good to see the town full of energy...thank you to Hunaniaith for the boost...We want to keep this going!"

At present there is inconsistency in the provision of bilingual services by public bodies in Gwynedd which means that it is not always possible for residents to use the Welsh language naturally when communicating with public bodies.

Over the past year we have held an assessment in order to discover the level of every public body in terms of their ability to offer the first contact to the citizens of Gwynedd through the medium of Welsh. We have also identified the implications for the various bodies of implementing changes in order to achieve the aim of providing Welsh or bilingual services.



The progress of the work has been a little slower than anticipated. We acknowledge that the only way for us to move this matter forward will be by ensuring our partners come with us, and this is taking time. A lot of time and effort has been invested in order to ensure that the bodies are aware of what they are committing to and that no unrealistic expectations are set. Consequently, it is hoped that this will set a firm foundation for the work of the project in the future.

As a firm succession to the Language Charter project which has been operational in Gwynedd primary schools, it was decided to focus on developing the work in the secondary schools during 2016-17. We now have a strategy in place that sets expectations and will provide clear guidance to the county's secondary schools. It includes the techniques of changing language habits and the different ways of influencing the pupils' social language within and outside the school.

In 2017-18, we intend to create and implement comprehensive training programmes for secondary teachers to promote the value and advantages of bilingualism.

Although Gwynedd Council is at the forefront of using the Welsh language as a living language, we are eager to push the boundaries further to ensure that this happens consistently across all our services.

We have identified gaps which exist in terms of our Welsh-language provision. In order to respond to the gaps, intensive work has been undertaken with four Departments within the Council (Economy and Community, Adults, Health and Well-being, Regulatory and Gwynedd Consultancy) with action plans developed in order to improve the situation. In addition, a series of activities has been identified on a corporate level and we will implement those over the coming year.



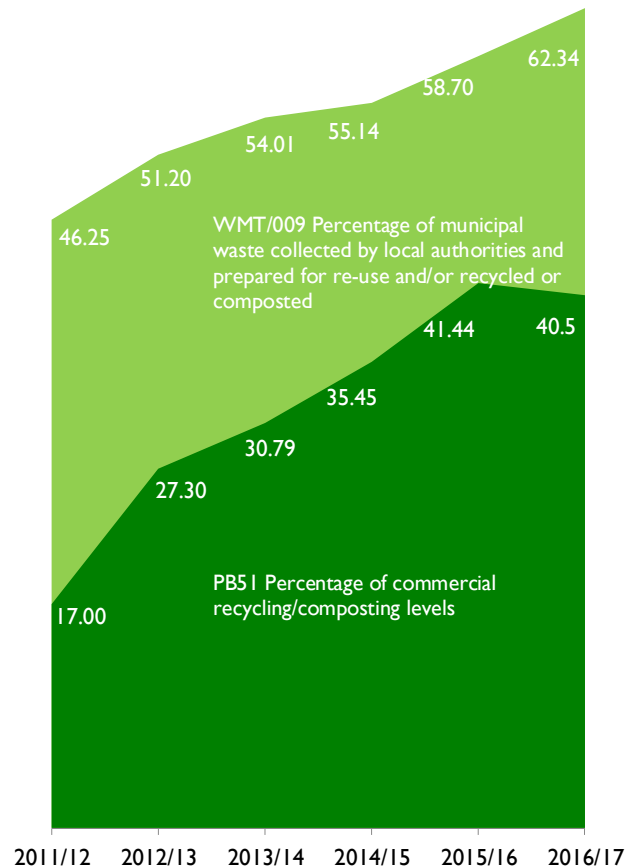
# The Environment

Gwynedd has a natural environment of a high standard and there are several challenges in trying to ensure that we protect that environment. At the same time we must ensure that we do not hinder the ability of our residents to live and prosper within the county.

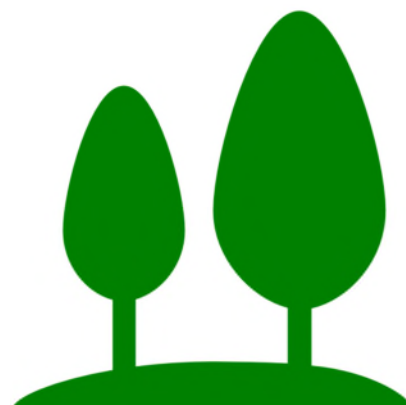
For some years now, emphasis has been placed on the need to reduce our dependency on sending waste to landfill by disposing of our waste in a more environmentally-friendly way by increasing composting and recycling levels.

By now, the three-weekly green bin collection system is operational throughout the County. Through the commitment of the county's residents and businesses to reducing their over-dependence on the disposal of waste to landfill, this change in the system has been crucial in improving our performance. At the end of 2016/17, 62.34% of waste from Gwynedd homes is reused, recycled or composted, which is an increase of over 8% in the rate since 2013/14. In 2015-16, we were in 16th position (out of 22) among Welsh local authorities with a recycling/composting rate of 58.70%.

The county's businesses have also contributed to the improvement, and though the rates have reduced a little to 40.5% in 2016/17 compared with 41.44% at the end of 2015/16, it is important to remember that the recycling rates by businesses was only 30.79% in 2013/14.



We will continue to implement the Waste Strategy in future, with the intention of reusing, recycling or composting 64% of the waste from our households by 2020.



The cleanliness of our streets is an important issue for the people of Gwynedd and the cleanliness standards of our streets scored 75.7 out of 100 in an assessment carried out by independent Inspectors which is comparable to the score of 76.26 in 2015/16 and an improvement on the score of 73.5 in 2013/14.



Carbon emissions in Gwynedd have a harmful effect on the local environment as well as contributing towards the climate change effects on a global level. In this context, it could be argued that the contribution of the people of Gwynedd and the Council is only very small, but it is important that we play our part by reducing our carbon emissions to an appropriate level.

By reducing the use of energy in our buildings, street lighting, upgrading lighting, installing solar panels and reducing business journeys we have succeeded to reduce our carbon footprint by 26.20% since 2005 and have succeeded in delivering accumulative financial saving of over £3.09 million since starting to roll-out the scheme. This means that the people of Gwynedd benefit environmentally and financially.

One of the side-effects of climate change is the likely increase in flood risk. Over the last year, we have started a process to develop flood prevention schemes in seven coastal communities which would lead to protecting up to 1,138 properties. If bids for financial resources are successful further work must be carried out during the coming year in order to develop detailed schemes.

During 2016/17, work of preparing the Joint Local Development Plan with Anglesey County Council was carried out, which will set out the framework for planning applications in future. The Planning Inspectorate is considering the robustness of the plan and their report is expected shortly. The Plan will be ready to be adopted during the summer of 2017.

Our performance in dealing with planning applications remains good with applications taking 59.26 days on average to be determined compared with 60 last year.

## Effective and Efficient Council

Despite the financial pressures, the Council's objective is to ensure that the resources we have are used to give the biggest benefits to the people of Gwynedd.

Work of seeking to ensure a consistent culture across the Council and the principle of placing the people of Gwynedd at the centre of everything we do continues. It is noted that time and effort have been invested over the past year in ensuring that we have the right material to promote the principles, to train Senior Officers in the principles and to implement the programme to develop leaders. By now, we are trialling a new way of working within eight services in the Council.

Although it is still very early days, and a culture shift in a large organisation such as the Council will take time, some evidence can be seen that awareness has improved among staff members and examples where trialling new ways of working has led to improving services for the people of Gwynedd.



We will continue to place the people of Gwynedd at the centre of all our efforts in 2017/18 by focusing on changing culture, trialling new ways of working within service units and providing a training programme for all Council Managers. Over the year, it became apparent that it may not be possible to use the same methods to develop elected members as are used for officers and our arrangements in this field will need to be reviewed. Nevertheless, there is a feeling and an element of evidence that the standard of leadership has improved within the Council over the years.

We completed the work of reviewing the performance system within the Council during 2016/17 and by now, the services' performance measures focus more on what matters to the people of Gwynedd. Major steps have been taken to improve our arrangements and, over the next year, we will undertake further work to ensure that the measures are meaningful and are used in order to manage and improve performance.

Work has continued to improve the way the Council gathers opinion and holds discussions with the people of Gwynedd. We have focused on high-level engagement plans such as the Public Survey in Summer 2016 (Satisfaction), a consultation on raising the Council Tax Premium on second homes and a consultation on charging a fee for garden waste collections.

In recent years, nearly 23,000 individuals and organisations have had an opportunity to contribute and voice their opinions on the work and priorities of the Council. We acknowledge that we started from a low level and that there is further room for improvement. But, in order to establish where we have reached we will hold an audit of individual Departments' ability to engage effectively with their customers during 2017/18.

The information kept by the Council about people and resources is essential and valuable, and we are required to ensure that our working arrangements mean that it is kept securely. Over the course of the last year, we have continued with the training sessions and the latest evidence regarding the number of cases where we haven't complied with data protection requirements suggests that our arrangements are improving. There were three incidents in 2016/17 compared with 10 in 2014/15. We will of course continue with our efforts to protect sensitive information during the coming year.

In the modern age, many people prefer to make contact with services by using technology and they are therefore able to do so at a time convenient to them. The self-service system is now live with several services, such as paying for garden waste bin collection services, offered through this medium as well as via more traditional methods. More services will be introduced to the system over the coming year.

The Well-being of Future Generations Act came into force in April 2016, and it requires specific public bodies in Wales to work alone and in partnership to improve the well-being of the people of Wales. The seven well-being goals and five ways of working sets a common purpose for public bodies. They also aim to ensure better decisions are made by considering the longer term, preventative measures, working integrated and in partnership, and including people of all ages.

As part of our response to the Act, the Council announced our Well-being Statement and Aims in our Gwynedd Council 2017/18 Plan. A multi-agency Public Services Board was formed, and this Board was responsible for co-ordinating the Gwynedd Well-being Assessment X Mai 2017. But, the main challenge lies in integrating the five ways of working formally into all our daily working practices, and to try and meet the needs of today without stifling the ability of future generations to act upon their own priorities.





# Financial Planning

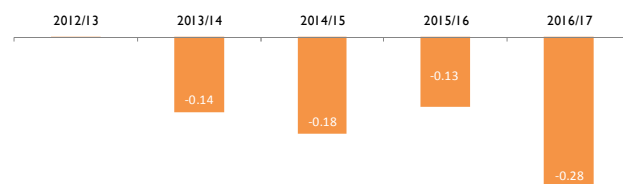
The cuts in funding that the Council receives from the Government means that we must cope with receiving less money to maintain our services. We had identified that the financial deficit over the period of four years up to 2017/18 could be as much as £50 million. Consequently we have been looking at ways of ensuring that the effects of the savings on the people of Gwynedd are kept to a minimum and to continue to deliver more in those priority fields.

The grant reductions we were facing in 2017/18 were not as much as expected. The deficit of £50 million to be met has reduced to £40 million through a combination of a moderate increase in the Council Tax and delivering savings to the value of £31 million over the period.

All the developmental plans noted in this report are being delivered at the same time as resources for local government are declining.

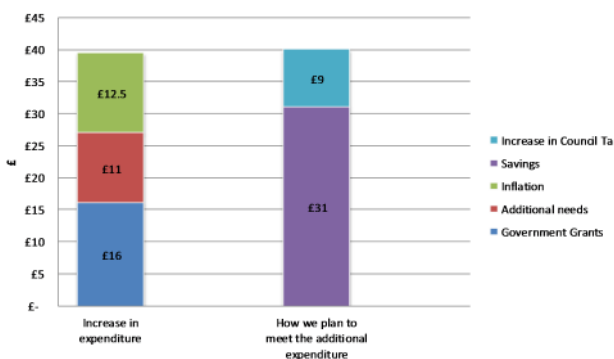
The graph shows that the Council has had to close a deficit of £39.5m over the past four years due to inflation, increased demand for services and a significant loss in the support given to local government by Welsh Government. After the Council Tax increase, we have had to identify £31m in savings over a period of four years. This is in addition to the £31m we had to find in the previous eight years.

This, of course, means that the work of improving the Council's services is much harder.

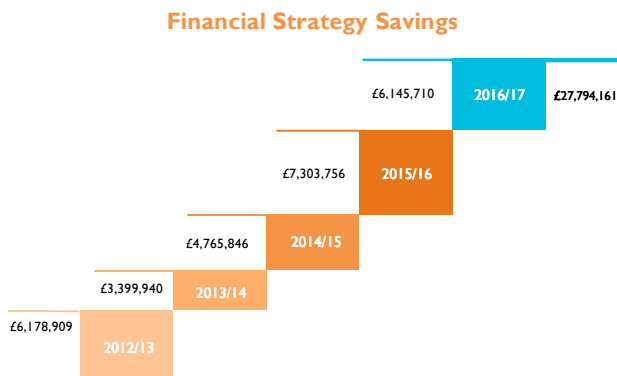


It is crucial that the Council keeps within the budget and over the course of the last year we managed to keep within £469,000 (or 0.28%) of the budget. Every year since 2013/14 it is seen that we have managed to keep within the budget available.

2014/2018  
£39.5m



One of the year's main successes is that a further £6.15 million of efficiency savings have been delivered by changing the way we provide services, whilst maintaining or improving the standard of the service for residents at the same time. Further work needs to be done within some departments in order to ensure that they deliver their plans in full, in accordance with our pledges.



In addition we have a programme to find and develop further efficiencies which aim to ensure as few service cuts as possible. We have managed to identify schemes worth £1.084 million in 2016/17 in order to address a financial deficit of £1.082 million during 2017/18.

Since 2014/15 the Council has identified savings worth £31million with £26million of this being efficiency savings, and of that, schemes worth £23.4million have been realised. By planning and taking proactive action we have been able to avoid making unnecessary cuts.

Unfortunately, however, due to the reduction in grant from the Government, we unavoidably have to look at cutting services. After undertaking the 'Gwynedd Challenge' consultation during 2015/16 a series of cuts worth £4.9million was approved, which was based on the response of the public and businesses. During 2016/17 we implemented cuts worth £2.58million and we will continue with the implementation programme during 2017/18.