

GWYNEDD COUNCIL

REPORT TO A MEETING OF GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET

Date of Meeting:	22 January 2019
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Ioan Thomas, Cabinet Member – Economic Development
Contact Officer:	Iwan T. Jones, Corporate Director
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Title of Item:	Economy Development Performance Report

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update you on what has been achieved in the field for which I am responsible as the Cabinet Member for Economic Development. This includes outlining progress against the pledges within the Council Plan; the progress of the performance measures; and the latest in relation to the plans for savings and cuts.
- 1.2 We are now implementing the 2018-23 Council Plan, and I herein report on progress since July to the end of October 2018.
- 1.3 In recent months, emphasis has been placed on the implementation of the projects that form part of the Council's 2018-2023 Plan. I am, generally, satisfied with the performance of most projects and each one is on the right track. I will be elaborating on progress in the report, and will refer to examples of good practice.

2. DECISION SOUGHT

- 2.1 To accept and note the information in the report.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDING THE DECISION

- 3.1 In order to ensure effective performance management.

4. COUNCIL PLAN PROJECTS

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GWYNEDD COUNCIL

4.1 Businesses receiving support to Prosper

4.1.1 ***The purpose of the project is to establish a way of working within the Council that places the needs of businesses at the centre, and attempts to remove obstacles that prevent them from establishing and growing in the county.***

4.1.2 The county's businesses work with many Council Departments and they receive a service from them, including rates, planning, trading standards, building control and procurement. The work of scoping and holding intradepartmental discussions about adopting the 'Better Business for All' programme continues.

4.2 Create High Value Jobs (£26,500 + salary)

4.2.1 ***This project will look at targeting sectors that pay well by creating an environment that supports new businesses and grows existing businesses. The project will focus on attracting investment to strategic sites such as the Trawsfynydd Power Station, Llanbedr Airfield and Parc Bryn Cegin/Parc Menai.***

4.2.2 Once more, the project has had a challenging quarter with another important digital company closing four regional offices, including one in Bangor, with the loss of 105 high value jobs. Work has taken place to try to ensure that these individuals will find alternative jobs in other businesses nearby. But, the lack of business space continues to be an obstacle. We are aware of one digital company that plans to expand and create 100 jobs, but office space is a barrier.

4.2.3 The project is continuing to work to attract new development to the Trawsfynydd site, with the UK Government's Nuclear Sector Deal showing strong indications that there is potential to locate the SMR small reactor technology in Trawsfynydd.

4.2.4 The work of developing the Llanbedr site continues and the funding package is now complete after Welsh Government confirmed a £9.5m investment over the next three years. Officers will collaborate closely with the site's owners and the Transportation Department to begin the work in the new year.

4.2.5 Work to support the Creative North Wales Network continues, and a Creative Audit has since been published on the Creative North Wales website.

4.3 Arloesi Gwynedd Wledig Programme

4.3.1 The purpose of this programme is to build on the good work that has already been done to transform the rural economy through the introduction of innovation within traditional sectors (such as agriculture and tourism) as well as supporting investment in digital infrastructure, giving particular attention to the Dwyfor and Meirionnydd areas.

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GWYNEDD COUNCIL

- 4.3.2 Work continues with a number of exciting and ground-breaking developments in the pipeline across the County. Plans include a community transport plan in Harlech for visitors, launching the Cysawd Eryri and the Drone School. The Drone School was run jointly by the High Value Jobs Plan and Arloesi Gwynedd Wledig. Over 25 young people attended activities over six weekends to learn about flying drones and to hear from drone users such as North Wales Police and film-makers.
- 4.3.3 Following a successful bid to Welsh Government to establish public Wi-Fi provision in rural communities, arrangements are in place to install the equipment in seven communities; in addition, public computers will be set up in rural communities.
- 4.3.4 During the period, further work has been done to try to develop some of the successful trials. It seems, however, that further work is required to measure the long term effect of the plans.
- 4.3.5 Gwynedd Council is part of the Arfor plan, and work is currently afoot to create a programme of projects to be implemented in Gwynedd over the next two years to create jobs to sustain the Welsh language within our communities.
- 4.4 **Gwynedd Slate**
- 4.4.1 ***The purpose of the project is to deliver a programme of regeneration activities in the slate areas, and continue to work to secure a World Heritage Site status for the slate industry in Gwynedd.***
- 4.4.2 The UK Government (DCMS) has now confirmed that the Gwynedd Slate nomination will be the next to be submitted from Britain to the World Heritage Committee.
- 4.5 **Increase the Benefits from Major Events**
- 4.5.1 ***The purpose of this project is to attract nationally or internationally high-profile events to Gwynedd in order to take advantage of the economic and social benefit which will ensue.***
- 4.5.2 The project has been promoting a support package for the 2018/19 season, and 23 events have received support. We succeeded in generating economic benefit of £5.7 million.
- 4.6 **Benefiting from Tourism**
- 4.6.1 ***The purpose of this project is to look at the possibility of getting visitors to contribute financially to maintaining and enhancing Gwynedd destinations***

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GWYNEDD COUNCIL

and raising the standards of the tourism sector. By doing so, we will improve the provision of the county's destinations and increase the standard of the provision for the tourist industry.

4.6.2 This work is still in its infancy. A workshop was held with the sector in October in order to find out people's views and assist with the work of setting a course that will form the basis to the business plan of the Benefiting from Tourism scheme. A Project Board has been established, to guide and scrutinize the plans.

4.7 **More Gwynedd residents playing a full part in the world of work**

4.7.1 ***The purpose of this project is to focus on a series of activities in order to get more Gwynedd residents into full time work thereby reducing inactivity and unemployment.***

4.7.2 This project continues to operate a package of activities that reduces the barriers Gwynedd residents face when seeking work or access to services. Following receipt of a Work and More Communities grant from Welsh Government, work has been made to develop the model and the employment team in Gwynedd. The Council's employment support is now being offered through two age-related teams. This will facilitate the individual's journey to find the right support. To date, 929 individuals have received support through one of the five employment projects, of whom several have gone on to work, education or training.

5. **MEASURING PERFORMANCE**

5.1 **Appendix 1** reports on performance measures that are associated with my portfolio.

5.2 **I am satisfied that the department is on the right track in terms of performance measures.**

5.3 The department collects field measures (where more than one service feeds into the measure) and measures for each service.

5.4 **Field Measures**

5.4.1 Grant / Match funding secured for the County - up to the end of October 2018. £10.7m has been attracted to the County through the Snowdonia Aerospace Centre infrastructure plan in Llanbedr, the STEM Gogledd project will encourage young people to pursue careers in the STEM sector, and LleChI will support communities to capitalise on the World Heritage Site nomination.

5.5 **Service Measures**

5.5.1 The **Business Support Service** provides information, advice and support for businesses so that they can establish themselves, be competitive and develop in Gwynedd. The service is responsible for implementing, managing and

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GWYNEDD COUNCIL

promoting loan funds such as the Caernarfon Town Centre Loans Fund and the Bangor Area Fund.

- 5.5.2 An example of a company that has been supported by the Business Support Service is Kehoe Countryside Ltd, which has received Financial support for the delivery of ISO accreditations. Since receiving this support, the company has earned contracts with Horizon Nuclear Power and Wales & West Utilities and has established itself as a framework contractor. The company has also created five new full time posts.
- 5.5.3** The '**Business enquiries acted upon**' shows that the number of business enquiries has fallen (105) compared to previous years due to a lack of financial schemes. The Unit has held sessions to raise awareness of the Town Centre Loans Fund.
- 5.5.4 The 'Council owned industrial/commercial space that is full' shows that 96% of our units are full. And, as I previously stated, this is reinforced by the High Value Jobs programme that shows that a lack of space is a barrier to several companies who wish to become established in the County.
- 5.5.5 The Maritime and Country Parks Service has successfully completed the work of dredging the Victoria Dock marina basin. The work of draining the filtration bund at Pwllheli Harbour will begin on 11 December. I am confident that the work will be carried out in accordance with the Strategy.
- 5.5.6 The purpose of the Tourism, Marketing and Events Service is to maximise the benefit and value to the Gwynedd economy that derive from tourism. The work of creating a Snowdonia Mountains and Coast tourism website continues. One of the main measure is the number of visitors to the Snowdonia Mountains and Coast website. A Beta version of the website is about to be released to the sector for input. It will go live in a month or two after that. We anticipate an increase in the use of the website once it is up and running. Another piece of work by the Service was a review of accommodation. The desktop exercise has been completed and the analysis work will be completed by May.
- 5.5.7 Work of implementing a programme of projects to regenerate Caernarfon Waterside is moving forward, and two strategic regeneration plans for Caernarfon have been completed. Galeri2 has been completed and an official opening held; Welsh Highland Railway has been completed and is expected to open in spring. The construction work at Cei Llechi has commenced. Following initial investment to re-establish the Business Improvement Area (HWB Caernarfon), there has been success with investments in buildings, free wi-fi network available in town, art plans, discussions to reopen the Tourist Information Centre.
- 5.5.8 The Bangor regeneration projects plan has received support in principle by the Cabinet for a package of proposed plans as prioritised by the Partnership. Project groups will move forward with plans.

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GWYNEDD COUNCIL

6. FINANCIAL/SAVINGS SITUATION

6.1 The Department has made satisfactory progress in delivering all the plans in my portfolio; as such, there are no matters to discuss here.

7. NEXT STEPS AND TIMETABLE

7.1 None to note

8. ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO RECOMMENDING THE DECISION

8.1 Views of the Statutory Officers

i. Monitoring Officer:

No observations in relation to propriety.

ii. The Head of Finance Department

Nothing to add to the report from a financial propriety perspective.

8.2 Views of the Local Member:

8.2.1 Not a local matter.

8.3 Results of Any Consultations

8.3.1 None to note

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Measures of the Economy & Community Department (Economy Development)

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