

CYNGOR GWYNEDD

REPORT TO A MEETING OF GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET

Date of Meeting:	14 February 2017
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Mandy Williams-Davies, Cabinet Member for Economy & Community
Contact Officer:	Iwan T. Jones, Corporate Director
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Title of Item:	Performance Report of the Economy & Community Department

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to update you on what has been achieved in the field I am responsible for as the Cabinet Member for Economy & Community. This will include outlining the latest on the pledges in the Strategic Plan; how the performance measures are doing; and the latest in terms of the savings and cuts plan.
- 1.2 I will remind you that all matters have already been the subject of discussions and have been scrutinised at meetings of the Economy management team, which also included a representation from the scrutiny committee.
- 1.3 On the whole, I am satisfied with the performance of most projects and measures or that the appropriate steps have been taken in order to improve performance.

2. DECISION SOUGHT

- 2.1 The Cabinet is requested to approve the re-profiling of realising the efficiency savings scheme 'EaCh9a - Neuadd Buddug' (£16,000), from the 2017/18 financial year to £9,330 in 2018/19 a £6,670 in 2019/20 2018/19 (Further information in section 6 of this report).

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDING THE DECISION

- 3.1. In order to ensure effective performance management and that we respond pro-actively to the need to achieve efficiency savings as expected.

4. STRATEGIC PLAN PROJECTS

4.1. T1 High Value and Quality Jobs

- 4.1.1. The purpose of this project is to work pro-actively in order to create the correct conditions to develop high value and quality jobs in Gwynedd.

4.1.2 Since I last reported to you, the project has engaged with the Horizon company and has led on the Council's response to Wylfa Newydd's second formal consultation, namely the last formal consultation on the development. It is fair to say that I am disappointed with the lack of change to Horizon's bids as a result of the feedback provided in 2014. As part of this response, I have asked the Department to put pressure on Horizon to consider the implications of building and implementing Wylfa Newydd for the whole of North Wales, and I have asked them to consult further and more comprehensively with the Council and other partners in order to identify the side effects and mitigation measures. We are awaiting a response from Horizon to the points raised.

4.1.3 Discussions are ongoing with a number of developers regarding attracting companies and investments to the County. The digital boost that is generated here at the moment is attracting exciting jobs to the area. In an attempt to have a better understanding of the types of jobs that have been attracted to the area, I asked the Department to carry out an analysis of the **high value jobs that have been created (Uchel07)** so far, noting the sectors and fields. See **Appendix 1** for further details. This analysis shows that the majority of the jobs so far have been created in the digital sector in the Arfon area, mostly due to a digital cluster that exists in the Bangor area in Parc Menai.

4.2. T2 Keeping the Benefits Local

4.2.1 The purpose of this project is to maximise the Council's expenditure with local businesses. There are two aspects to the project, namely, setting out a procurement procedure for new services and products at the Council, and supporting businesses to compete for and win the contracts with the Council and beyond.

4.2.2 **Category Management:** By now, the 'People' Category Team supports schemes that aim to save £900,000. Additionally, Category Managers in the Environment and Corporate fields were appointed in December.

4.2.3 **Maximise Local Business Expenditure:** We have commissioned a Business and Enterprise company to arrange 'Business Health Review' sessions, and eight providers from Gwynedd took advantage of the opportunity. The review and

support seeks to discover areas for improvement to support the providers to be more competitive.

4.2.4 Work has been underway to increase support for tender opportunities with direct support provided for 11 plumbers through the plumbers' framework.

4.2.5 Additionally, as part of the Regional Home Care Framework, the 'People' Category Team have arranged meetings with the local market to develop the framework and hold an initial briefing session. In December, 12 providers attended an eTendering workshop.

4.3. T3 Digital Gwynedd

4.3.1 The purpose of the project is to support the efforts made to transform the use of technology by Gwynedd businesses, services and residents by ensuring that there is a provision of up-to-date broadband across the county.

4.3.2 I am happy to say that superfast broadband is available to 78.2% of properties in Gwynedd by now, which is higher than similar counties (Ceredigion, Powys, Carmarthenshire). Additionally, the percentage that subscribes to superfast broadband in Gwynedd is the highest in Wales (36.77%). Furthermore, the **number of business that have reported to use technology as a result of intervention (YRE1)** has doubled since the last time I reported (36 businesses - January 2017).

4.3.3 Although the above figures are to be congratulated, I am eager for the project to consider the true impact on businesses that have used technology, but also to consider how to target those businesses that do not use technology. As a result, I have asked the project to focus on these elements over the coming months and, therefore, it will be possible for me to report on the effect in my next report to you.

4.4. T4 Rural Gwynedd Innovative Scheme

4.4.1 The purpose of this project is to create the conditions to strengthen Gwynedd's rural economy and encourage local enterprises to establish and develop in order to maintain employment. This will be achieved through Gwynedd Rural Innovation - Rural Development Programme LEADER.

4.4.2 The project was successful in attracting an **investment value of £128,000 to develop innovative rural enterprises in Gwynedd (Measure GW01)**. This is funding for social enterprises to allow them to mainstream points / computer equipment across the County.

4.4.3 By now, 24 pilot projects have received support in the County through the LEADER programme. I would encourage you to watch this video (https://youtu.be/_LiQMCnJFSg) in order to get a taste of the projects' highlights, and the opinions of the people of Gwynedd that have been part of them.

4.4.4 Although the project has been operating the work programme of the Llŷn and Eifionydd Employment Plan, I feel that there is room to put more emphasis on a response. I have asked the Department to focus on this, as well as define the purpose of the project more clearly in order to have clarity on the County's main priorities for the future.

4.5. T5 World Heritage Site

- 4.5.1 The purpose of this project will be to create an economic benefit from Gwynedd's rich heritage. We will focus on existing World Heritage Sites and will submit a case for World Heritage Site status for parts of the slate valleys.
- 4.5.2 The deadline for drawing up an application to UNESCO to gain a World Heritage Site status for the slate industry has been set for September 2017. The work of steering decisions regarding the nomination, and defining the application boundaries will continue to be carried out by the Gwynedd Archaeological Trust Commission and the Govannon consortium. Bearing in mind that there is a substantial work programme to be completed in the space of a few months, I would like the project to put pressure on the consultants to work in line with the timetable that has been set in order to agree on the nature of the nomination.
- 4.5.3 I feel as though we have more work to do to market the nomination locally, and now that the nature of the nomination is more mature, I have asked the project to focus on developing a communication plan and brand in order to raise awareness in the relevant areas.
- 4.5.4 Developmental work is still ongoing with the Glannau Menai project, with a grant offer letter with a value of £2.1m in funding from Welsh Government received in December for the work. The project is still awaiting European funding approval.

4.6. T6 Improving access to employment for the people of the county and responding to barriers

- 4.6.1 The purpose of this project will be to facilitate and implement a package of projects in order to support vulnerable individuals into work. It is a regional project through the work of the North Wales Ambition Board with Gwynedd having contributed towards commissioning the work.
- 4.6.2 Since I last reported to you, the project has supported 86 vulnerable adults in assisting them with finding work. The Opus project will be commencing soon, and will be offering support for adults that have learning disabilities or mental health problems.

4.7. T7 High-profile and Strategic events

- 4.7.1 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.
- 4.7.2 The project has offered assistance to 18 events during 2016/17 and those have taken place by now. These **events have brought an economic benefit of £6.6m to the area (Measure TMGC4)**, with 292 jobs having been safeguarded in the County as a result of this investment.
- 4.7.3 I have asked the project to focus on reflecting the impact of the events on children and young people as the project does not retain this information at the moment.

5. MEASURING PERFORMANCE

- 5.1. **Appendix 2** reports on performance measures that are associated with my portfolio. I have already referred to some of these measures whilst discussing the above projects.
- 5.2. The Economy and Community Department recently has been reviewing their purposes and measures, and a new version of these measures will be included in the department's business plan for 2017-18. However, as the department's work is extensive and not reflected fully in the current list of measures, I am eager to give you a taste of some of these measures that are reported by every service.
- 5.3. The **Business Support Service** provides information, advice and support for businesses in order for them to be established, competitive and develop in Gwynedd. **The number of jobs that have been created with the department's support (PENECON1)** was 38 up until the end of December 2016, compared with 81 in 2015/16 and 234 in 2014-15. This is as expected as we saw the substantial projects such as the Local Investment Fund, that had been providing grants for businesses, coming to an end during the period.
- 5.4 I feel that further work is to be done by the Unit to seize the experiences of the businesses that they work with, and maybe this is something to be considered across the Council. Having one contact point at the Council for Gwynedd businesses is also a matter that I have asked the service to consider.
- 5.5. The **Maritime and Country Parks Service** is attempting to ensure secure quality resources at our country parks, harbours, marinas and on Gwynedd's beaches. The unit is responsible for managing 301km of the Gwynedd coast, concentrating on nine blue flag beaches, four harbours and two marinas, including Hafan Pwllheli that provides accommodation to 700 boats. I'm happy to say that the **percentage of successful International Blue Flag applications was 100%** this year.
- 5.6 The purpose of the **Tourism, Marketing and Events Service** is to maximise the benefits and value of tourism for the economy of Gwynedd. The Unit is responsible for the Snowdonia Mountains and Coast website, and one of the unit's main measures is an **Increase in the number of visitors to the Snowdonia Mountains and Coast website (TMGC5)**. A 30% increase was seen in the visitor numbers figures to the website in this financial year, which is 815,675 compared to 626,498 this time last year. The department gathers information regarding the percentage of visitors that visit the area as a result of receiving Snowdonia Mountains and Coast marketing publications, but this is being reported on annually so it will be possible for me to elaborate on this the next time I report.
- 5.7 The **Museum and and Arts Service** runs two museums in Gwynedd and is responsible for looking at collections and creating exhibitions at both, namely: Storiell and the Lloyd George Museum Much of the field work targets health, well-being, education and tackling loneliness projects. The purpose of the service is to enrich the lives of Gwynedd residents by promoting an understanding of our unique heritage and culture. The department works on attempting to capture the effect and benefit of their work and that this is reflected in their measures.
- 5.8 One matter I have asked the Department to consider is to increase the frequency of gathering data on measures. A number of the measures are being

reported annually by the Department but I am eager for them to gather the data and report more frequently. I look forward to seeing an amended list of the measures in the Department's 2017-18 Business Plan.

6. SAVINGS/FINANCIAL POSITION

- 6.1 I am pleased to be able to report that all the Economy and Community's relevant 2016/17 saving plans have been realised. The Department is also making very acceptable progress towards realising 2017/18 plans where slippage is anticipated with only one scheme, which is Neuadd Buddug.
- 6.2 As a result of the change in the timetable for opening the new school at Bala, which will include a hall for community use, it is inevitable that Neuadd Buddug's closure date needs to be slipped. As the slippage is beyond the Economy and Community Department's control and that an agreement exists between Local Members, the Cabinet Member and Friends of Neuadd Buddug, that the service would not close until the new provision is available at the school, the Cabinet is recommended to approve the re-profiling of the £16,000 saving that derives from the plan from the 2017/18 financial year to 2018/19 and 2019/10.

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. The Chief Executive:

"The submitted report is clear and coherent. Maybe some matters warrant attention. The report is open by showing a reduction in the number of jobs created with a reduction in the department's assistance (paragraph 5.3) and it might be beneficial for the Cabinet to hear the size of the reduction in grants that have led to this decline.

In terms of the Maritime Service, the Communities Scrutiny Committee has just been expressing concern regarding one element of cuts for beach management in this field and I know that the Cabinet Member has agreed to the Scrutiny Committee's request to look at that.

In terms of the application to re-profile the Neuadd Buddug saving, it is a relatively small sum but, obviously, that small deficit will need to be bridged in some way.

ii. The Monitoring Officer:

"No observations from a propriety perspective"

iii. The Head of Finance Department:

"I can confirm the accuracy of the financial aspects of the report. It is encouraging that the Cabinet Member is confident (in part 6.1 of the report) that the Department's services will have realised the vast majority of savings schemes

in a timely manner, and I believe that the request to re-profile one savings scheme is reasonable."

8.2. Views of the Local Member:

8.2.1 Not a local matter.

8.3. Results of Any Consultation:

8.3.1 None to note.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Analysis of High Value Jobs

Appendix 2 Economy & Community Department Measures