



Gwynedd Council Annual Performance Report 2019/2020



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Leader's Foreword



It is a very strange feeling these days to try and take stock of the work that Gwynedd Council has managed to complete during 2019/20. Since March 2020 our worlds have been turned upside down due to Covid-19. It is important for me, firstly, to extend my sympathies to any residents of Gwynedd who have suffered as a result of Covid-19. Amid the concerns surrounding the present situation, I have also seen numerous examples of individuals and communities supporting each other, which makes me very proud of this county in which we live.



I am sincerely grateful to every member of staff and elected member of Gwynedd Council who have continued not only to provide routine services, but who have re-directed and have been innovative as they designed new services.

You will see several references to work carried out by the Council's departments in response to Covid-19 in this report, but we will only be touching on that work. Since we are measuring the work carried out up until the end of March 2020, the full details of our response to the situation will be available when publishing our Annual Report for 2020/21.

This report will offer you a clear, accurate and fair illustration of the Council's achievements over the year, but we will also highlight those areas where we were not so successful. It is as important as ever that we learn and change our arrangements for the future, where needed, for the sake of our residents.

One of the biggest changes we witnessed within the Council during the year was establishing the new Housing and Property Department. We are committed, through the 'Homes for the People of Gwynedd' Strategy 2019-24, to increasing the supply of affordable housing and housing options, and the new department will be thoroughly focused on realising this.

Our commitment remains to protecting our environment and avoiding creating problems for future generations. It is pleasing to report that we have reached and surpassed the statutory target for recycling waste, indeed, over 64% of household waste in Gwynedd is now recycled, re-used or composted.

The community of Bala and Penllyn received a brand new, state of the art educational and community resource, Ysgol Godre'r Berwyn, in September 2019. We wish to provide the best opportunities to our children and young people, and to the same end, 17 new apprentices have joined the Council's workforce during the year, in areas ranging from engineering to care services.

Unfortunately, behind the wide range of services being provided by the Council remains a very difficult financial situation. Due to the austerity of Westminster's financial policies, we do not have sufficient resources to be able to provide services to the people of Gwynedd as we would wish. Despite this, you will see that our financial management is sound, and I can assure you that we are doing everything within our power to find the resources to support us in the future.

By working in partnership – the Council, public and voluntary organisations, and communities – we will use our strengths and experience to plan a positive future for the residents of Gwynedd.

Councillor Dyfrig Siencyn,
Gwynedd Council Leader

Introduction



The Council published its 'Gwynedd Council Plan for 2018-2023' in March 2018, in which our ambition and priorities were set for the period in question. This report reports on the progress made against those priorities across the Council during 2019/20.

The end of 2019/20 brought the Covid-19 crisis to hit us, and all the Council Departments efforts were directed at responding to the crisis from mid-March.

During the lockdown, the Council focused on providing services in the following fields:

- Providing childcare for key workers
- Supporting children and vulnerable people
- Collecting rubbish from houses
- Playing our part in supporting businesses
- Anything else which promoted community safety / saving lives.

The Council has also had to carry out some duties that it would not normally perform and officers across various services have transferred from their normal posts to carry out those duties. It has been encouraging to see the willingness of a large number of individuals to redirect and transfer their skills to support vulnerable adults and families, whether as a member of the Covid Support Team within the Community Resilience Plan, volunteering within the care field or assisting in setting up plans for the distribution of personal safety equipment to front line officers. Clearly this will continue for some time into the future.

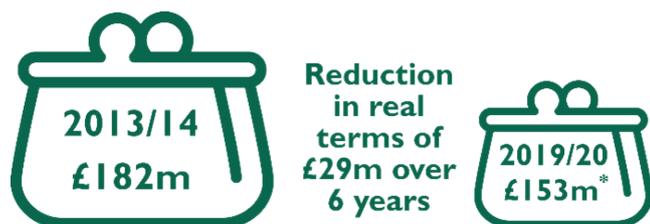


The performance reports of the various Departments (part 2) highlight the initial steps they took to react to the crisis at the end of 2019/20. It should also be noted that performance reports in 2020/21 and the next annual report will give a better picture of the effect the crisis had on the Council's Departments and will also outline the steps taken to respond.

There are two parts to the report: the first part concentrates on what we achieved through the projects we chose to focus on in order to make a difference for the communities of Gwynedd (our Improvement Priorities).

The second part of the report concentrates on the performance of the day-to-day work carried out on behalf of the people of Gwynedd by the different Council Departments. We will also report on the Local Priorities identified by elected members.

As we have reported previously, our financial situation as a Council has changed significantly over recent years and it will continue to challenge us as we plan our services for the future. We have delivered our projects and have provided our services despite facing substantial cuts of £29m in the Government grant since 2013/14.



*2019/20 figure adapted to give a true reflection when taking inflation and transfers into consideration

The progress of the Gwynedd Council Plan is monitored consistently during the year at Departmental performance challenge meetings. At these meetings, the Cabinet Member, with the support of the Chief Executive or the Corporate Director, reviews the progress of the Department's improvement priorities projects and its day-to-day work. Furthermore, members of the

relevant Scrutiny Committee attend so that they can report the achievements to the rest of the members.

Following the performance challenge meetings, Cabinet Members prepare individual reports in which they summarise the current situation in terms of the performance of the fields for which they are responsible. These reports are discussed at regular meetings of the Cabinet in order to consistently review our work and ensure we are on the right track.

At the end of each financial year, an Annual Performance Report such as this one is prepared, which reports on the progress of the Gwynedd Council Plan. The report is presented to the Cabinet and the Full Council for approval at its July meeting usually; however, due to the Covid-19 crisis, this has slipped to October 2020.

With the introduction of the **Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015)** (the Act) designated public bodies are required to work individually and collectively to improve well-being in Wales.

In line with the requirements of the Act, the Council adopted seven Well-being Objectives for 2018/19, which contribute to the seven national well-being goals and these remained in place for 2019/20. The objectives are based on the well-being assessment carried out by the Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board and engagement sessions held when developing the Plan.

The need to act in accordance with the five sustainable development principles has also been noted, through:

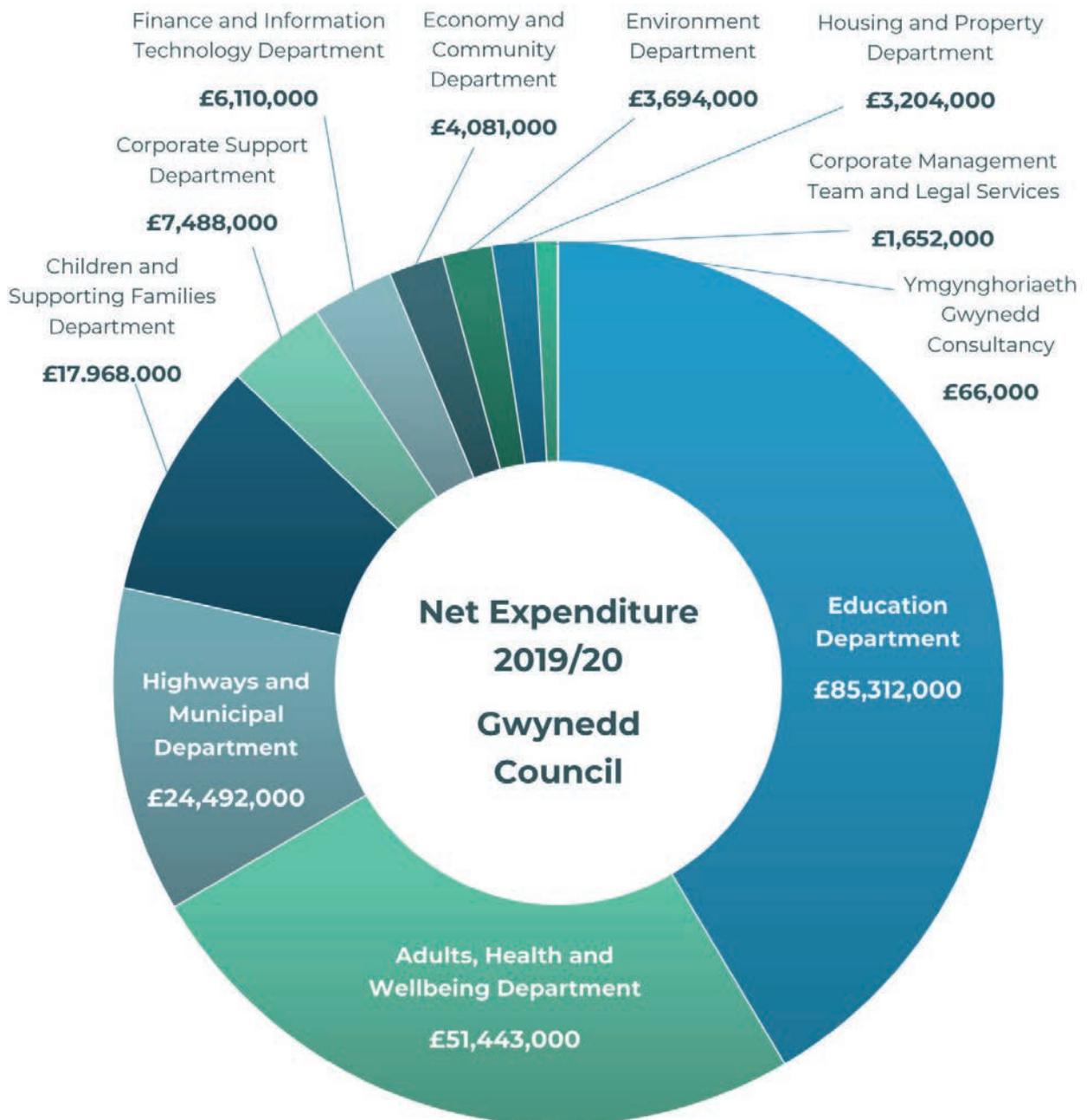
- considering the long-term
- prevention
- integrated working
- working collaboratively
- and being inclusive of people of all ages.

We are expected to report on our contribution to the principles of the Act, and information about many of these activities can be found in the body of the report. In addition, the Well-being Objectives, to which each individual project contributes, and the Departments' day-to-day work are noted at the end of each chapter.

We have agreed that the best way to embed the responsibility for acting in accordance with the five sustainable development principles is for the Department Management Teams to pay attention to the principles when forward-planning. There is some evidence to suggest that this does happen, but the need to assess whether this method is successful has been recognised. We will continue to look at how the five ways of working can be embedded within the Departments.

Gwynedd Council Well-being Objectives	National Well-being Goals						
We will ensure that the residents of Gwynedd:	Prosperous	Resilient	Healthier	Equal	Cohesive Communities	A vibrant culture where the Welsh language is thriving	Globally responsible
Enjoy happy, healthy and safe lives							
Live in quality homes within their communities							
Earn a sufficient salary to be able to support themselves and their families							
Receive education of the highest quality which will enable them to do what they want to do							
Live with dignity and independently for as long as possible							
Live in a naturally Welsh society							
Take advantage of the beauty of the County's natural environment.							

Our Expenditure



Part 1

Improvement Priorities

Seven Improvement Priorities have been identified within the Gwynedd Council Plan 2018-2023. These are the key fields within which we believe we need to take action in order to make a positive difference to the lives of the people of Gwynedd. Under the seven Improvement Priorities below, a description is provided of the projects which will contribute towards realising the ambition that the Improvement Priorities describe. On the following pages, a report is provided on the progress of those projects during 2019/20 which also notes the well-being objectives that they contribute towards.

Further information on what we will do in the future in the Gwynedd Council Plan 2018-2023 can be obtained by visiting www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/councilplan

Improvement Priority 1

Improve the conditions to create a viable and prosperous economy whilst aiming towards securing more jobs which offer good salaries.

North Wales Growth Deal

Improvement Priority 1

What did we promise to do?

At the end of 2017 a partnership of the six North Wales Councils, business partners, colleges and universities formally launched the North Wales Growth Bid. The aim of the bid is to attract business investment in North Wales, helping local companies to take advantage of supply chain opportunities, and encourage work-related skills in the region. Over 5,000 jobs could be created, together with new businesses and housing (including affordable housing).

As a Council, we are an active member of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board (NWEAB) which leads on the **Growth Vision for North Wales**. In future, we will continue with our work with the Board in order to ensure that Gwynedd benefits fairly from investment in the North Wales region, and we will continue to work together with our partners in order to maximise that investment.

What progress was made in 2019/20?

- The NWEAB has been established as a legal entity with Gwynedd Council acting as Lead Body serving the Board.
- The NWEAB has agreed on five programmes of investment projects to create the foundations on which to transform the economy of North Wales, including Digital Infrastructure; Low Carbon Energy; Land and Property; Advanced Manufacturing; Agri-Food and Tourism.
- Heads of Terms details note that the Final Deal Agreement will be for a period of 15 years up to 2035 with £240m funding in equal parts from UK Government and Welsh Government with the potential of safeguarding up to 4,300 jobs, supporting a 5% increase in GVA and attracting an additional £500m in investment from the private sector.

Well-being Objectives:

- **Enjoy happy, healthy and safe lives.**
- **Earn a sufficient salary to be able to support ourselves and our families.**
- **Live in quality homes within their communities.**
- **Live in a naturally Welsh society.**
- **Receive education of the highest quality which will enable us to do what we want to do**

What did we promise to do?

The Council is responsible for purchasing a number of goods and services and is eager to try to ensure that local businesses can compete and win these contracts in order to ensure that as much of the Council's expenditure as possible remains local. In 2017/2018, we succeeded to increase the percentage of local expenditure to 62% compared with 58% the previous year. In future, we will continue with that work to raise awareness and understanding among businesses of the Council's procurement procedures and find other ways of supporting them further to deliver the services we need.

What progress was made in 2019/20?

The percentage of local expenditure has dropped from 60% to 57% compared with the percentage for the previous financial year. Despite the reduction and the financial pressures, an additional £4m was spent with local businesses during 2019/20.

The 3% reduction stems from the fact that less maintenance work has been commissioned compared to the previous year as well as the need to commission further residential care packages for children from a company outside the county (no local provision is available).

Well-being Objectives:

- Earn a sufficient salary to be able to support ourselves and our families.
- Live in a naturally Welsh society.

What did we promise to do?

Low salaries are an obvious feature of Gwynedd, with the weekly pay of Gwynedd residents (£478) amongst the lowest in Wales, and the low pay at its worst in our rural communities (£418), namely the second lowest in the UK.

In order to address this, one of the Council's main priorities is working with partners within the public and private sectors to create more **high value jobs**. In future, we will continue to seek to create conditions to attract investment in strategic sites such as the Trawsfynydd Power Station, Llanbedr Airfield and Parc Bryn Cegin/ Parc Menai. We are targeting sectors that pay well by creating an environment which supports new businesses and grows existing businesses and ensures that the local workforce is able to take advantage of the opportunities that exist.

What progress was made in 2019/20?

- The owners of Trawsfynydd Power Station were persuaded to continue to decommission the site. With the agreement of the Treasury, up to 250 good jobs for the people of Gwynedd will be safeguarded as a result.
- Work to create a high standard work space for 31 small and medium sized businesses which could result in 165 jobs for the people of Gwynedd has commenced at Snowdonia Aerospace Centre in Llanbedr.
- £850,000 has been secured to research the development of a space port at the Snowdonia Aerospace Centre in the future and to test the use of drones to transport defibrillators to rural communities.
- The STEM Gogledd scheme is currently preparing 150 young people in Gwynedd to be ready for the high-value jobs which will stem from the scheme in the future.

Well-being Objectives :

- **Earn a sufficient salary to be able to support ourselves and our families.**
- **Live in a naturally Welsh society.**

What did we promise to do?

The nature of our rural economy means that 78% of Gwynedd businesses do not employ more than one person and there are too many jobs within sectors which don't pay well. This leads to threats in terms of the sustainability of our rural communities.

Ensuring digital connectivity for our rural communities, and that the workforce and rural businesses have the skills to take advantage of them are matters which require attention if we are to have prosperous communities.

We have already attracted £4million from the Wales Rural Development Programme to develop innovative working approaches and to trial a number of new and exciting ideas. We can now move on to develop our projects which will encourage innovation in the traditional sectors (such as agriculture and tourism) and improve digital infrastructure in our rural communities. We will continue to collaborate with Grŵp Llandrillo Menai and the private sector to establish a rural innovation hub in Glynllifon to lead on the work. We will also continue to work with the counties of Anglesey, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire to learn how to develop the rural economy and also sustain the Welsh language. We also influence and lobby regionally and nationally on behalf of the needs of rural Gwynedd.

What progress was made in 2019/20?

- A programme of activities was delivered to develop the economy in order to support the Welsh language including grants to businesses and an activity to encourage young people to stay in the area. 88 jobs for the people of Gwynedd will be created as a result of the work.
- There has been close collaboration with Grŵp Llandrillo Menai to develop their proposals to establish a rural innovation hub in Glynllifon through the North Wales Growth Deal.
- We continued to assist people, enterprises and organisations in Gwynedd to find new ways of meeting their needs. 150 people took part in activities over the course of the year.
- Securing good digital connectivity in rural Gwynedd has remained a priority. Over the course of the year, public Wi-Fi services were introduced in eight communities, funding was secured to extend the broadband provision to more people and businesses in Gwynedd and we continued to work on introducing the internet of things technology in the county.

Well-being Objectives:

- Earn a sufficient salary to be able to support ourselves and our families.
- Live in a naturally Welsh society.
- Receive education of the highest quality which will enable us to do what we want to do.

What did we promise to do?

Public events offer a commercial opportunity for local businesses to provide or deliver services. By staging major events, it is possible to raise the profile of Gwynedd and market the area as an exciting and vibrant place to live, to visit and an ideal location for businesses to invest.

In future, we will continue to work to ensure that local businesses benefit from high-profile events, which brought in an investment of £5.7m to Gwynedd in 2018/19. This will lead to an increase in the number of opportunities to promote the county, an increase in the number of visitors to the county and increase in the number of opportunities for local companies to work at or offer services to the events.

What progress was made in 2019/20?

The events supported succeeded in attracting **£5,470,143** in investment in the county's economy. This success came despite the fact the Festival No. 6 had been cancelled, which would have invested at least an additional £1.5 million in the economy. These events led to raising awareness about Gwynedd and increasing the number of visitors to the county, in addition to creating opportunities for local businesses and services to supply the events. We also managed to give an opportunity to young people and volunteers to work or volunteer at these events. The following is a summary of the scheme's outcomes:

Direct expenditure of events in the economy	£521,293
Number who attended the events	110,781
Number of participants in the events	13,004
Companies from outside Gwynedd who were employed	448
Companies from within Gwynedd who were employed	504
Number of young people who were given an opportunity at the event	2,372
Number of volunteers who were given opportunities at the event	1,552
Jobs safeguarded	215
Gwynedd Council contribution	£41,000
Welsh Government contribution attracted to support events	£250,000

Well-being Objectives:

- Earn a sufficient salary to be able to support ourselves and our families.
- Live in a naturally Welsh society.

What did we promise to do?

Lively town centres are able to make substantial contributions to the economic and social success of local areas. The “high streets” of a number of Gwynedd towns need support to ensure that they thrive by maintaining and creating work and providing a range of goods and services that residents and visitors need. We will, therefore, continue to work as a Council to look at how we could support and facilitate town centre regeneration to maintain a range of services for local residents and visitors within a lively environment with a Welsh atmosphere.

What progress was made in 2019/20?

Town centre regeneration work in 2019/20 has continued to focus on the priority towns. The emergence of the Regeneration Board has meant that there is strategic leadership for the regeneration work which will be an effective medium when planning and regenerating town centres throughout the county in future. 2019/20 highlights include:

Caernarfon:

- Significant progress with the construction work to transform Cei Llechi to become Artisan Units for local craftspeople.
- Detailed designs for physical improvements around the strategic sites and the Castle.
- Continued support to the HWB as they develop schemes and plan for the ballot year (20/21).
- A third positive Benchmarking Report for the town was published. It appears that the town's businesses have confidence and that 35% of the businesses anticipate that their turnover would increase over the coming 12 months.
- Collaboration with partners to develop a marketing package to open new markets and to extend the season. Visit Wales have confirmed financial support.

Bangor:

- Bangor Regeneration Programme Co-ordinator was appointed in May 2019. A bid for revenue funding of £25,000 to support efforts to regenerate the City has been submitted to Welsh Government.
- A Property Investment fund (£2.16m) has been set up, with considerable interest. Four bids have been approved to proceed to Panel, with 37 enquiries.

- Continued support for the Business Improvement District which has gone through a period of change in the Board.
- Supporting the Business Support Unit in communicating with businesses as a result of the fire on the High Street.
- The draft masterplan, looking at mobility and links within the city, has been completed.
- Leading on the wider regeneration agenda in Bangor, particularly priority schemes such as the Homelessness Centre, Health Hub, Nyth (Fran Wen) etc.
- The Council has received an offer of £338,000 from Welsh Government to implement the Green Infrastructure scheme in the City. The scheme will be implemented by Ymgynghoriaeth Gwynedd Consultancy.

Harlech

Leading on the Strategic Regeneration Partnership in identifying opportunities to develop regeneration schemes. Work in 2019/20 has focused on supporting Snowdonia National Park to demolish the Gwesty Dewi Sant building.

Others:

- A bid for a budget of £2m for a regional Major Buildings fund has been approved. Suitable property for the fund have been identified. Holding discussions with owners and prospective owners of prominent properties in Caernarfon and Bangor in order to develop their schemes.
- Schemes to Upgrade Blue Banner Beaches and Phase 2 of Plas Heli have been completed.

Well-being Objectives:

- Earn a sufficient salary to be able to support ourselves and our families.
- Live in a naturally Welsh society.

What did we promise to do?

A number of Gwynedd's most needy communities are rich in heritage and are home to existing or proposed World Heritage Sites, such as the former traditional slate areas.

During 2018/19 the slate areas were selected by the Westminster Government as the UK's next nomination to UNESCO for a World Heritage Site designation. Also, more than £60,000 in lottery funding was secured to support communities to benefit from the designation.

In future, we will continue to work to secure the World Heritage Site status for the slate industry in Gwynedd. This work will include a programme of regeneration activities in these areas which will lead to an increase in residents' ownership of their heritage, an improvement in the form and appearance of communities and in the quality of tourists' experience.

What progress was made in 2019/20?

2019/20 was a crucial year in the development and implementation of this scheme. Work has proceeded since the bid was included on the tentative list of the UK's World Heritage Sites in 2012 to respond to UNESCO requirements in order to prepare a full bid, and years of work took place prior to 2012 to get the evidence base in place in order to commence the process.

Highlights of the year include:

- A public consultation on the Slate Landscape Management Plan; drop-in sessions were held across the slate communities, as well as an on-line questionnaire and direct contact with the major stakeholders.
- Submission of the World Heritage Site nomination to UNESCO and a visit by Helen Whately (MP) and David Davies (MP) to the area in order to announce that UK Government had formally submitted the bid.
- Community activities through the LleCHI scheme including creating young ambassadors, developing art and interpretation schemes, supporting local events and performances and establishing local beneficiary groups to prioritise local regeneration activities.
- Commissioning various pieces of work in order to assist with the development and management of the proposed World Heritage Site (Supplementary Planning Guidance, Interpretation Strategy, Marketing Guidelines, Opportunities and Threats Report for the Development, Local Management Plans).
- Significant increase in our on-line profile via Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts, coverage for the area in several radio and television programmes and through newspaper and online articles.

- Securing funding through the RCDF 7.1 fund (£69,844.10) for the proposed World Heritage Site management activities as well as individual sites within the area.
- As part of events to mark 50 years since the closure of Dinorwig Quarry, we collaborated with the Slate Museum to arrange a lecture by Lord Dafydd Wigley about the campaign to secure compensation for quarrymen and their families due the side-effects of dust on their health.

Well-being Objectives:

- Enjoy happy, healthy and safe lives.
- Earn a sufficient salary to be able to support ourselves and our families.
- Live in a naturally Welsh society.
- Take advantage of the beauty of the county's natural environment.



Image: Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales

What did we promise to do?

Tourism is one of the main economic sectors in Gwynedd, nevertheless visitors put a significant added pressure on the infrastructure of the county's destinations; a cost which is mainly shouldered by Gwynedd residents.

In future, we will collaborate with the industry to consider the possibility of getting visitors to contribute financially to maintaining and enhancing Gwynedd destinations and raising the standards of the tourism sector. In doing so, we will improve the provision of the county's destinations and increase the standard of industry provision for visitors.

What progress was made in 2019/20?

A project board was established to assess how county tourism priorities could be funded in the future.

Independent research was commissioned to scrutinise the field and highlight good practice and operational models in other areas. An on-line survey and workshop with the sector were held. Items were presented to the Leadership Team and the Scrutiny Committee and two workshops were held in February 2020 with members of Gwynedd Council, Snowdonia National Park and the scheme's Project Board in order to report on progress and hold discussions in order to create recommendations in terms of tourism priorities for 2020 - 2030.

As a result of Covid-19, the timeframe has been delayed, but it is intended to develop a new Tourism and Destination Management Plan for Gwynedd during 2020.

Well-being Objectives:

- Earn a sufficient salary to be able to support ourselves and our families.
- Live in a naturally Welsh society.
- Take advantage of the beauty of the county's natural environment.

What did we promise to do?

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. By adopting an operational approach which places the needs of businesses at the centre, and makes it easier for businesses to contact and collaborate with the Council, businesses can be supported and encouraged to establish and grow in the county. Following research we have identified examples of good practice including the "Better Business for All" programme by Denbighshire Council.

In future, we will continue with the work of reviewing how Council services are provided to businesses to consider whether there is room for improvement and will implement any lessons which become apparent to ensure that businesses are assisted to prosper. We will also support the development of the North Wales Business Network collaborating with partners in the public and private sector across the region.

What progress was made in 2019/20?

- Held and analysed an opinion survey for businesses regarding the Council's services.
- Identified and agreed initial fields to improve the service for businesses including the Regulatory field and improving the Council's engagement with businesses.
- Participated in a regional discussion regarding improving the business support provision across North Wales.

Well-being Objectives :

- **Earn a sufficient salary to be able to support ourselves and our families.**

What did we promise to do?

Welsh Government has outlined its national vision to address the need to develop vital skills in Wales and the broader economy to identify the priority fields and how apprenticeships will be an integral part of fulfilling this.

The Council has already identified appropriate fields for establishing apprenticeships and has allocated funding to realise these schemes for the next two years. We will establish an Apprenticeships Scheme that will employ at least 20 new apprentices during 2019/20.

What progress was made in 2019/20?

17 apprentices were appointed during 2019/20. As a higher than expected percentage of the employment cost has been shouldered by the departments in which the current apprentices are placed, what is left of the fund approved by the Council will allow us to recruit more than the 20 originally budgeted for.

Well-being Objectives:

- Earn a sufficient salary to be able to support ourselves and our families.
- Live in a naturally Welsh society.

Improvement Priority 2

Ensure that every pupil has the opportunity to reach his or her potential by ensuring that we have a sustainable education system, which provides development opportunities relevant to everyone whatever their background or where they live.

Bangor catchment area, Berwyn catchment area (Bala), Trefferthyr catchment area (Cricieth), Post-16 provision

Improvement Priority 2

What did we promise to do?

In order for Gwynedd's children and young people to be educated in the best possible learning environment, we are planning and realising innovative projects to adapt schools or build new schools.

We will continue, or start work to improve the learning provision and its standards in the **Bangor catchment area, Berwyn catchment area and Trefferthyr catchment area**. We will also consider the merits of the current **Post-16 Provision** across the county in order to see how it can face the opportunities and challenges of the future.

What progress was made in 2019/20?

Ysgol Godre'r Berwyn

Following a significant investment worth £10.27 million, Ysgol Godre'r Berwyn was opened officially in September 2019. This new school is located on the former Ysgol y Berwyn site in Bala and provides education for pupils aged between three and 19 years old. In addition, the campus has a public library, as well as specific resources for the arts which include a dance studio and theatre with a video projector to show films.

Trefferthyr

The Council has decided to build a new primary school in the Trefferthyr catchment-area, Cricieth, in light of the poor condition of the existing building. In 2019/20, we identified potential sites for the school and held a number of meetings with representatives of Ysgol Trefferthyr in order to agree on the school's needs and identify the best location for it.

Bangor

We have reviewed the primary education provision in Bangor, and the Cabinet has approved a £12.7m plan. As part of this scheme, a new school for 420 learners will be built for Ysgol y Garnedd and the existing site and building of Ysgol y Faenol will be adapted for 315 learners and will include a community space. During 2019/20, construction work proceeded well on the Ysgol y Garnedd site, with contractors starting on the Ysgol y Faenol site in April 2020.

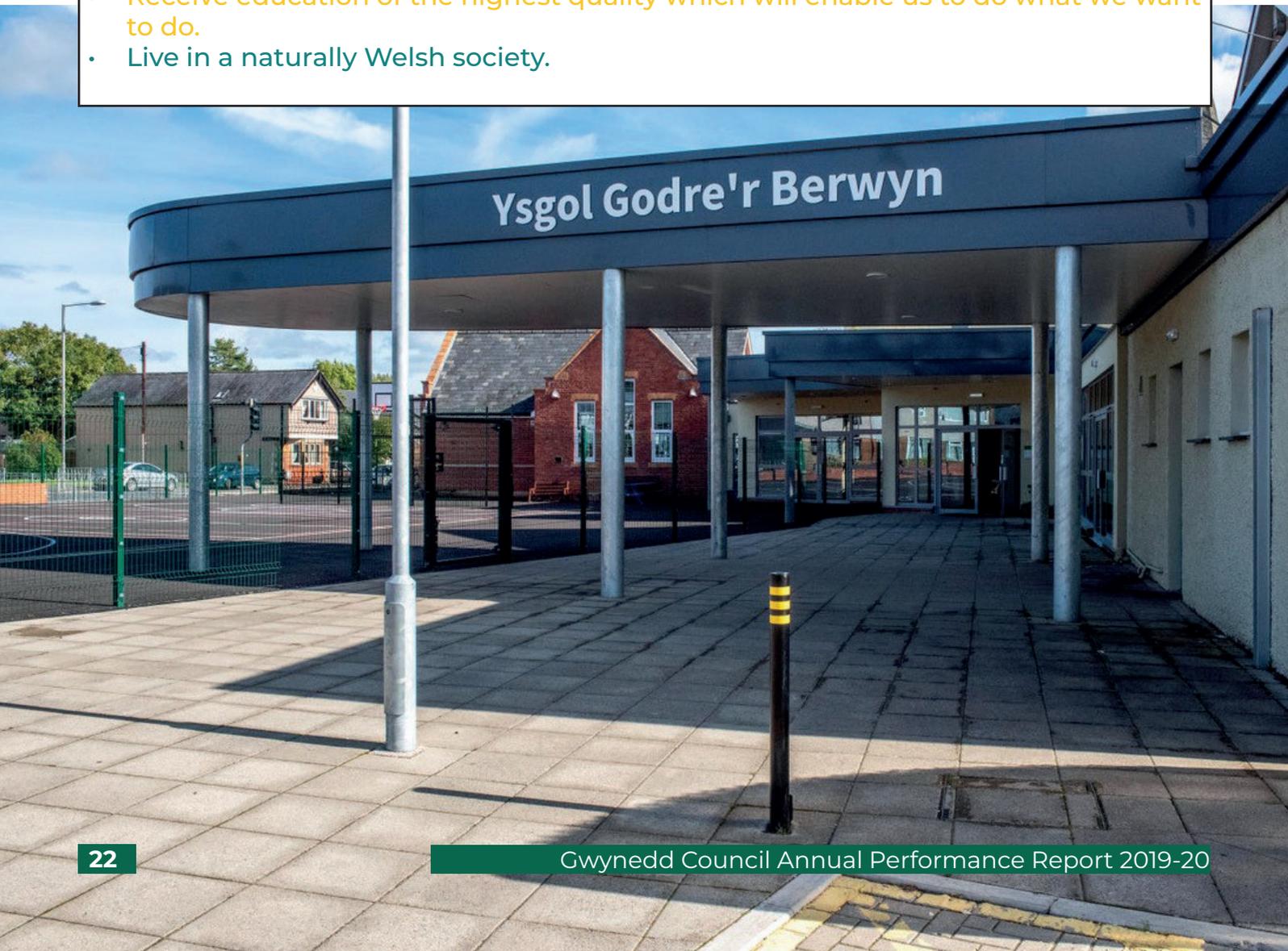
Post-16

Field work which included the input of key stakeholders in order to consider the merits of the various provisions currently operational, along with future opportunities and challenges, has now been completed. In addition, a series of meetings with stakeholders such as headteachers and elected members in Arfon was held.

At their meeting on 10 March 2020, permission was granted by the Cabinet to begin local discussions regarding the opportunities to improve the post-16 provision in Arfon. It is hoped that the formal discussions with the secondary heads first, will begin in the autumn, followed by a wider group of stakeholders.

Well-being Objectives:

- Enjoy happy, healthy and safe lives.
- Receive education of the highest quality which will enable us to do what we want to do.
- Live in a naturally Welsh society.



What did we promise to do?

We need to **Strengthen Leadership** in our schools in order to create the best circumstances for our learners to have the best possible learning experience. We will develop clear directions and plans for each tier of leadership needed in our education system in Gwynedd now and in future and encourage and promote leaders' professional learning at every level within our schools. We will also identify and target future leaders, ensuring that they follow an appropriate programme of professional teaching.

What progress was made in 2019/20?

The Education Department has benefited from guidance from an experienced co-ordinator who was a part of the exiting secondary system, placing a particular emphasis on ensuring:

- a system that has been planned and developed to ensure appropriate leaders on all levels
- consistency for the best experiences and opportunities for the pupils of Gwynedd
- effective methods that develop current leaders
- that specific conditions are in place to enable leaders to thrive.

Additionally, in collaboration with GwE, the Department is planning to put relevant training arrangements in place to support the career development of future leaders, and to promote the professional development of the existing leaders in our schools. As part of this project's work, it is aimed to identify the qualities, behaviours and characteristics needed for individuals to become successful leaders and to be able to respond to any change to the system in future.

The first scheme of this project will address Leadership, Middle Management and recruitment issues to Core Departments in Meirionnydd Schools (including Ysgol Eifionydd). The Department had received several comments and concerns regarding specific matters involving planning the secondary provision in the Meirionnydd area. Consequently, the Department has commissioned two external individuals to produce a joint report that presents evidence on the challenges of the existing provision in secondary schools in Meirionnydd, together with identifying conceptual solutions and opportunities to respond to those challenges. This work remains underway in collaboration with secondary school heads in Meirionnydd.

Well-being Objectives:

- **Receive education of the highest quality which will enable us to do what we want to do.**

What did we promise to do?

We have identified that we need to **Transform the Provision of Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion**, in order to ensure that children and young people who need support have access to the most suitable support to enable them to fulfil their potential. We will continue to develop the support in the classroom and how it is organised, pre-school provision, post-18 provision and Special Schools.

What progress was made in 2019/20?

We have been preparing towards the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 which will become effective from September 2021, and this work is continuing.

In order to improve the provision for young children with additional needs, changes have been made to the Early Years Assessment and Observation Service (ABC). The ABC Service is now part of the ALN&I Integrated Service and offers a new outreach service as well as its centres. A training programme is underway in order to ensure that early years placements are ready to address the requirements of the new ALN Act. 92 placements have received training to raise awareness of the ALN Act and person-centred training and skills to create one-page profiles. The ALN website www.adyach.cymru has been extended to include a specific section for the early years.

An Authority/College Liaison Group has been established to improve the arrangements of transferring between school and college, prepare early on and ensure that suitable processes are in place to operate under the new ALN Act. By now, every team within the ALN&I Integrated Service has a team support map which has been created jointly with the College to identify layers of support for young people in Gwynedd as they transfer to College.

Since September 2019, every school in Gwynedd uses an on-line system - On-line IDP - to facilitate the additional learning needs process. The On-line IDP supports collaboration between learners, families, schools and professionals and is a method which is entirely person-centred when creating the Individual Development Plan and plan the provision, in order to ensure the best outcomes for learners with additional learning needs.

Well-being Objectives:

- **Enjoy happy, healthy and safe lives.**
- **Receive education of the highest quality which will enable us to do what we want to do.**
- **Live with dignity and independently for as long as possible.**

Improvement Priority 3

Reduce inequality within the county.

Gwynedd Residents to Play a Full Part in the World of Work

Improvement Priority 3

What did we promise to do?

We will assist more Gwynedd People to play a full part in the World of Work, which could result in benefits in terms of health, children's life chances and pride in communities, as well as increasing their earnings. Being outside the world of work and unemployment is higher in Arfon than the county average, but we will continue to focus on a series of activities in order to get more Gwynedd residents into employment.

What progress was made in 2019/20?

- 74 people in Gwynedd were among the most exempt from the workforce have been supported into employment.
- The Communities for Work scheme has been extended until 2022/23 to allow more people in Gwynedd to receive support.
- A strong relationship has been established with some of Gwynedd's main employers in the tourism industry including Hafan y Môr and Zip World to ensure opportunities for the people of Gwynedd.
- A Jobs Fair has been trialled jointly with Job Centre Plus, attracting 366 people from Gwynedd and with over 250 employment opportunities available.

Well-being Objectives:

- **Enjoy happy, healthy and safe lives.**
- **Earn a sufficient salary to be able to support ourselves and our families.**
- **Live in a naturally Welsh society.**

What did we promise to do?

The purpose of this project is to ensure that support is available for people to address their own well-being needs in an easy, co-ordinated way that is available locally. We will help with various issues such as: difficulties with parenting and raising a family, having and maintaining a home, maintaining healthy relationships, dealing with substance misuse, alcohol, violence, crime and the effects they have, living healthy and active lives, insufficient income and lack of work, inability to stay in education, lack of qualifications and basic skills, care, ageing, loneliness and lack of social contacts.

What progress was made in 2019/20?

The Supporting People Board has established the direction and confirmed the work streams to be delivered during the year which have included :-

- Mapping the Council's front doors and the Local Preventative Pathways in order to see how we can improve our arrangements and provide support for citizens in a way that is suitable for them.
- Follow citizens' journey through our service to understand their experiences, and what matters to them.
- Link the Council's IT systems to identify vulnerable citizens.
- Review our preventative grants (10 in total).
- Analyse supporting people arrangements in a specific community through the Kids' Zone, namely Maesgeirchen, jointly with families and front-line workers. Trialling new methods of working in that community.

Well-being Objectives:

- **Enjoy happy, healthy and safe lives.**
- **Earn a sufficient salary to be able to support ourselves and our families.**
- **Receive education of the highest quality which will enable us to do what we want to do.**
- **Live in a naturally Welsh society.**

What did we promise to do?

Offering support to some families before matters escalate will be essential to help children and families prosper and to reduce the need for more intensive services. We have already mapped the provision and support available to families, and in future we will continue to develop the **Supporting Families Strategy** together with our key partners, such as the Health Board, third sector services and the communities of Gwynedd.

What progress was made in 2019/20?

Following the mapping work, we have completed the work of changing our referral arrangements, reviewed our provisions, and commissioned and provided new interventions to respond to needs and gaps. We have also started establishing a Parenting Scheme across the Council and our partners. The work of the Strategy has now been transferred to the day-to-day work of this department and we will focus on identifying and implementing opportunities to integrate further with Education as part of the Supporting People's Well-being agenda.

Well-being Objectives:

- Enjoy happy, healthy and safe lives.
- Live with dignity and independently for as long as possible.



What did we promise to do?

We will review the working conditions and environment in order to ensure that we take the lead in encouraging **Women in Leadership** and identifying and seeking to remove any barriers which could be preventing women from reaching leadership and management posts within the Council.

What progress was made in 2019/20?

A Project Group was established which has a membership of women and men from across the Council, including Elected Members.

Workshops have been arranged for male and female managers and team leaders as an initial step in order to introduce the project to the workforce and to seek their opinion. The content of the workshop discussions and feedback was used to contribute to creating an action plan. The action plan has been agreed and contains the following main actions:

1. Present a Developing Potential Programme for women in the Council.
2. Revising recruitment and appointment arrangements.
3. Creating a forum / opportunities for women in the Council to come together to discuss specific matters raised in the workshops.

Well-being Objectives:

- Earn a sufficient salary to be able to support ourselves and our families.
- Live with dignity and independently for as long as possible.

Improvement Priority 4

Ensure a greater supply of suitable housing available to our residents.

Housing Strategy for the people of Gwynedd 2019-24

Improvement Priority 4

What did we promise to do?

We will implement the **Housing Strategy for the People of Gwynedd 2019-24** taking steps to ensure that the people of Gwynedd are able to find a suitable home, that nobody is homeless, and that health and well-being needs are addressed. We will also ensure that these homes are environmentally-friendly and that we offer seamless preventative services at a local level.

What progress was made in 2019/20?

Since the establishment of the new Housing and Property department in September 2019, work has commenced of transferring this Strategy into a Housing Action Plan, namely a series of specific projects which will aim to increase the supply of affordable housing and the housing options available to the people of Gwynedd. These projects have already been scrutinised by the Care Scrutiny Committee and have been challenged in more detailed by a Working Group of that Committee. The challenges of responding to Covid-19 at the end of the year has meant that work of completing the Action Plan has been pushed forward to 2020/21.

Well-being Objectives:

- Enjoy happy, healthy and safe lives.
- Live in quality homes within their communities.
- Live with dignity and independently for as long as possible.
- Live in a naturally Welsh society.

Improvement Priority 5

Ensure that we encourage and promote the ability of the people of Gwynedd to live their lives through the medium of Welsh.

The Welsh Language in Public Services

Improvement Priority 5

What did we promise to do?

We will collaborate with other public organisations, through the Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board, to ensure that we innovate in the provision of **The Welsh Language in Public Services** in the county. We will also encourage the people of Gwynedd to use the Welsh language when coming into contact with those organisations.

What progress was made in 2019/20?

We have been working on developing the use of the Welsh language within the Integrated Teams / Community Resources Teams, which include Gwynedd Council and Health Service staff. Work is also underway in this field through the Arfer project, with five public organisations (including Gwynedd Council) taking part in research in order to assist with changing linguistic practices in mixed language teams.

Well-being Objectives:

- **Live in a naturally Welsh society.**

What did we promise to do?

We will encourage **Gwynedd Businesses to use the Welsh Language**, and to discover the benefit of communicating bilingually when providing services. We will need to consider how the Council will be able to promote this and how we and other organisations can influence the use made by businesses and their customers of the Welsh language most effectively.

What progress was made in 2019/20?

In order to promote businesses to use the Welsh language, the language and scrutiny team monitors the progress and developments of several projects and provides input and advice as and when necessary. An example of this is the Arfor scheme. Hunaniaith (Gwynedd's language initiative) has also been working with businesses in order to hold and promote competitions such as decorating shop windows or treasure hunts that promote the Welsh language. Attention has also been given to further collaboration with the Gwynedd and Anglesey Welsh in Business Officer.

Well-being Objectives:

- **Live in a naturally Welsh society.**



What did we promise to do?

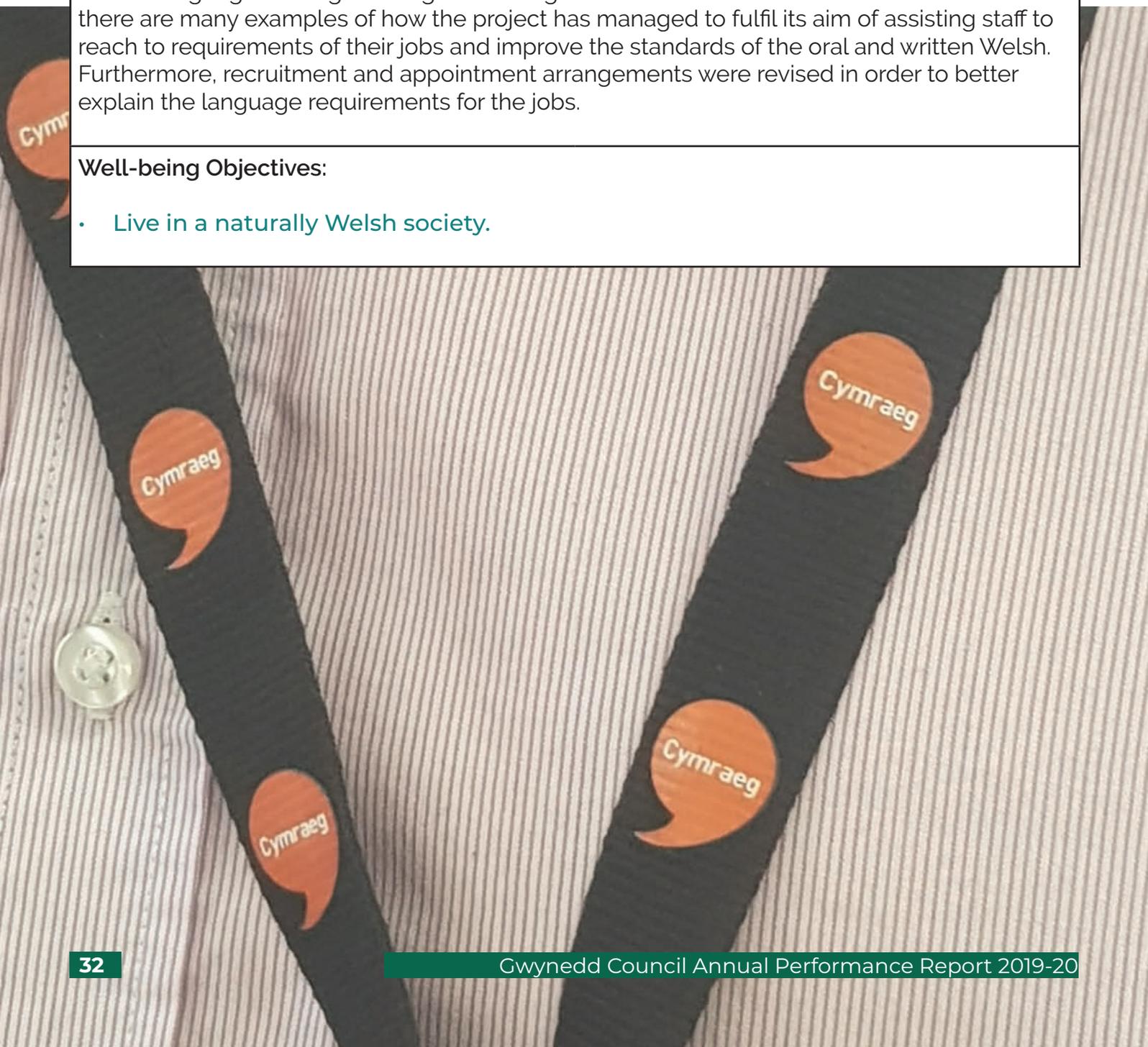
Gwynedd Council has been prominent in terms of ensuring that services for residents are available through the medium of Welsh as we operate through the medium of Welsh internally. It is continual work to **Promote the use of the Welsh language within the Council's Services**, and the emphasis over the next phase will be on working with front-line services to develop the skills of new and existing staff to ensure that we continue to offer a fully bilingual provision for all aspects of our services.

What progress was made in 2019/20?

We assessed the language attainments of 3,312 staff against the language designation for their jobs. It was confirmed that 3,070 (92.7%) of those individuals reach the language requirements of their jobs in full, with 242 (7.3%) identified as people who would benefit from further language training. Training was arranged for a vast number of these individuals and there are many examples of how the project has managed to fulfil its aim of assisting staff to reach to requirements of their jobs and improve the standards of the oral and written Welsh. Furthermore, recruitment and appointment arrangements were revised in order to better explain the language requirements for the jobs.

Well-being Objectives:

- **Live in a naturally Welsh society.**



What did we promise to do?

We will develop the pioneering work of the Language Charter for primary schools by extending the support to the **Secondary Sector Language Strategy**. The aim of the strategy is to promote and increase the use of the Welsh language among young people within the curriculum and socially. Every secondary school will have an individual and unique action plan which will reflect the linguistic context of the school and the surrounding community.

What progress was made in 2019/20?

Over the course of the year, a cluster model was set up by GwE across the North Wales region in Welsh. As a result of the cluster model, there has been collaboration between the primary and secondary schools in every catchment to present and implement cluster schemes to promote the use of the Welsh language among young people within the curriculum and socially.

A pilot project was started with Ysgol Bro Idris, which looked at children's language use practices when transferring from KS2 to KS3, visiting them in their final weeks in year 6 on the primary sites, and then visiting them at the end of the first half term on the secondary site. The intention was to hold a case study which would focus on attitude towards the language as they mature and try to identify periods when clear changes are seen in their approaches.

Through a questionnaire, a baseline of Welsh provision was established across the curriculum in every secondary school for KS3, KS4 and KS5. Similarly, a baseline of language skills situation was established among secondary school workers, and the process of identifying training needs and any necessary support needed was started in order to increase the workforce's skills and confidence in Welsh.

Well-being Objectives:

- **Live in a naturally Welsh society.**
- **Receive education of the highest quality which will enable us to do what we want to do.**

Improvement Priority 6

Ensure that we have care services which help people to live their lives as they wish.

Community Resilience

Improvement Priority 6

What did we promise to do?

Work with communities to help people live independently in their communities for as long as possible. Work had already been done in order to increase the care options for people within their communities and linking individuals requiring assistance with those services, building on individuals' strengths, identify gaps in the service and promote community activity.

Our intention to continue with this work was noted, while trying to improve our understanding of the needs of our population at a local level and the best way of responding to that.

What progress was made in 2019/20?

We have mapped and identified gaps in services and groups and have worked to promote community enterprises. Examples include establishing the Dyffryn Nantlle Community Transport Scheme, the Blaenau Ffestiniog Meals on Wheels, the Pwllheli Men's Shed and collaborating with Antur Waunfawr on opportunities to include isolated older people in activities in their area.

As part of our efforts to support individuals and their mental welfare and promoting a positive mental health, a second version of the 'Looking after myself' booklet was launched in order to share practical ideas. We have also worked with the Arts Unit in the Council's Economy and Community Department to establish the 'Arts on Prescription' project here in Gwynedd in order to promote the positive effect of the arts on mental health. Initial discussions were held with relevant partners in terms of how to get to grips with mental health issues and men's well-being also, and it is intended to continue with these after the situation has improved following the Covid-19 crisis.

In the field of Learning Disabilities, the well-being team has established various events and groups which help to address the well-being needs of a large number of individuals within the service. For example, over 100 individuals from all parts of North Wales joined a walking football tournament, and the numbers who attended 'Discover the Song' continued to grow also. These opportunities create a lot of new contacts and friends, and also give an opportunity for the well-being team and the social workers to identify any further input that the individuals need.

It is crucial that different ages and backgrounds live together and mix in our communities and the Bridging the Generations scheme is a way of ensuring this by encouraging discussions about what people wish to see in their areas, and include everyone in new developments. There are several examples of work throughout the county where schools and colleges work in partnership with care placements within the communities (e.g. Ysgol Glancegin with Plas Hedd Day Centre). The benefits are clear, with the children seeing that the experience is beneficial to their social skills and the adults enjoying feeling they have a contribution to make to society. We also produced a Bridging the Generations booklet to encourage schools to twin with care homes or local societies in order to see the benefits.

As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic which struck during the final quarter of the year, the department contributed to the Council's effort to establish Covid helplines within the 5 care areas in order to support the most vulnerable individuals in our communities during the Government's 'shielding' period. We will report further on this work in our performance reports during 2020-21.

Well-being Objectives:

- Enjoy happy, healthy and safe lives.
- Live with dignity and independently for as long as possible.



What did we promise to do?

Re-designing our Care Service jointly with the Health Board and third sector partners in order to ensure that adults living in Gwynedd have easy and direct access to services that matter to them.

We were intending to continue to transform community services to enable more early and preventative responses at a local level. We also intended to experiment with new ways of providing home care packages and joint-planning learning disabilities services. We wanted to see effective arrangements for hospital discharge that correspond to what matters to the individual and we wanted to continue to invest in our residential homes, and ensuring suitable care for individuals in crisis in the mental health field.

What progress was made in 2019/20?

The Transformation team that works across Gwynedd Council, Anglesey County Council and Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board continue to provide leadership and support to identify and eliminate obstacles to working in an integrated way, with the aim of creating a single point of contact for information and advice within a specific area, and ensure that one person co-ordinates the care of an individual.

We have been extending the work of piloting the new way of commissioning and providing domiciliary care across the county. The new model is based on sub-areas, and the intention is that it will ensure that all relevant agencies and individuals will come together to work more effectively locally.

Work has been carried out at Ysbyty Gwynedd to strengthen arrangements for returning home and we will use the lessons learned during the Covid-19 crisis to build on the initial arrangements, ensuring that the correct model is developed as we move forward.

Following work to develop dementia specialist provision within the Council's homes, new dementia units have opened in Tywyn, Nefyn and Bangor and the investment has improved the quality of care and the environment for residents. Though the time-frame for completing the unit in Llan Ffestiniog has slipped, work has continued during 2019/20 with the aim of opening in 2020/21. During the year, further schemes have been developed for Dolgellau and Barmouth and these will be implemented during 2020/21.

We have undertaken work to try to measure the effect of our efforts in the Learning Disabilities Service where our relationship with individuals will often be a long-term one. We have also developed a specialist respite care unit at Tan y Marian, Pwllheli. An essential work programme is underway also to develop community hubs across the county to offer employment and training opportunities for individuals with learning disabilities, with the 'Galwch Acw' shop and 'Cegin' café now open in Caernarfon.

Within mental health, we have been implementing the 'Together for Mental Health' Strategy and in partnership which is led by the Health Board, the ICAN centres have been established to offer early support for individuals, in the community, close to home.

Well-being Objectives:

- Enjoy happy, healthy and safe lives.
- Live with dignity and independently for as long as possible.
- Live in quality homes within their communities.



What did we promise to do?

Recruiting to the Care field is challenging for various reasons. We have an effective and committed workforce, but we must ensure that we have enough workers with the necessary skills in order to cope with the increasing need which is likely to arise in future.

Work is currently underway to try to understand what the problem is in Gwynedd in terms of recruiting in the field. We said that we would publish the findings and consider whether anything different or additional needs to be done. The initial findings of the investigation show that we are on the right track in terms of our efforts to re-design the Domiciliary Care business model.

An intention to raise the profile and status of care workers has been noted, by promoting career paths in the field and reviewing our apprenticeships scheme within the Council also, so that a career in social care work is a positive career choice.

What progress was made in 2019/20?

A piece of work, with broad consultation, has been commissioned to better understand the challenges in the field of domiciliary care. Following the findings, a Recruitment Group was set up in Gwynedd and a work programme was created in order to identify and respond to the biggest challenges. The work of the Recruitment Group has developed during 2019/20 to include the children and residential care fields.

The Recruitment Group incorporates the work of the Regional Recruitment Group and the 'WeCare Wales' national campaign groups in order to ensure that there is no duplication and that we build on good practice across Wales.

During 2019/20, we planned to fill the post of Regional Care Careers Co-ordinator with a successful appointment made in March 2020 and a start date in 2020/21. We look forward to developing the post and building on our work of establishing structures and relationships with our key partners such as Careers Wales and DWP.

We have also undertaken work to review the Council's Apprenticeships Scheme to try to influence the number of apprenticeships available in the care field. We have targeted fields in which specific difficulties arise e.g. leadership skills within the residential care field and suitable expertise together with the ability to work in Welsh within occupational therapy.

It should be acknowledged that the Covid-19 pandemic has brought additional challenges to the sector and to our staff during the last period of the year. This means that many care staff have adjusted in order to undertake different responsibilities or to work in a different way. During 2020-21, we will consider the lessons learnt in order to shape and strengthen our services for vulnerable adults, concentrating on meeting what's important and ensuring the sustainability of our services in the face of emergency to the future.

Well-being Objectives:

- Enjoy happy, healthy and safe lives.
- Receive education of the highest quality which will enable us to do what we want to do.
- Earn a sufficient salary to be able to support ourselves and our families.
- Live with dignity and independently for as long as possible.

Improvement Priority 7

Ensure that the whole Council places the people of Gwynedd at the centre of everything we do.

Empowering Units to Implement Ffordd Gwynedd

Improvement Priority 7

What did we promise to do?

As a Council, it is our responsibility to ensure that it is the needs of the people of Gwynedd that steer how we offer the services that we provide. In doing so, we should avoid any unnecessary working arrangements.

We will review our existing work arrangements, to challenge whether or not they place the people of Gwynedd centrally, and to consider whether or not there is room for improvement. Work is already underway to train heads, senior managers and managers in the principles of **Ffordd Gwynedd**, and a number of service reviews have been undertaken, or are underway.

In future, we will continue to offer training to new managers and support services to hold reviews in order to ensure that they place the people of Gwynedd at the centre of their activities.

What progress was made in 2019/20?

An amended Ffordd Gwynedd Plan for the 2019-22 period has been approved and implemented over the course of the year, while the intensive training has been extended to team leaders as well as new managers. Furthermore, specific workshops have been provided to support several services to drive forward with reviews.



What did we promise to do?

We will **Develop Leadership** by being progressive in empowering and honing the skills of leaders across the Council in order to reach the aim of placing the people of Gwynedd at the centre of everything. All Cabinet Members have developed their leadership skills as individuals and jointly during the last year, whilst the majority of Council managers have completed the development programme that concentrates on leaders' behaviours.

We will continue to offer development opportunities for Members and managers with a focus on leading people rather than merely managing people. The Managers Network will also be re-established and this will give managers across the Council the opportunity to share good practice and receive training.

What progress was made in 2019/20?

Two series of the "Managers Network" sessions were held in 2019/20 with firm arrangements for continuing with those sessions in future. This work has now been incorporated within the project of "Implementing Ffordd Gwynedd" and, therefore, we will not continue to identify it as a separate project.



Part 2

Departmental Reports

Education Department

Together with the work this Department undertakes to realise the Improvement Priorities in Part 1, the remainder of its 'day-to-day' work also contributes to the Council's ambition.

One of the Council's main priorities is to ensure that the children and young people of Gwynedd are all given the same opportunities and have the best possible education and experiences.

The Foundation Phase standards in Gwynedd are generally good. As was widely anticipated, following the implementation of the new Foundation Phase Framework, a reduction was seen in the 2018-19 academic year in the percentage of pupils achieving the expected outcomes throughout Wales; however, the reduction in Gwynedd was slightly more than the average. This is reflected in the Foundation Phase Indicator (FPI) and in all Areas of Learning. The percentage of pupils who achieve the FPI was below the national average in summer 2019 after being close to the average over the previous two years.

Welsh Government has stated clearly that Value Added progress between the baseline and end of Foundation Phase should be the focus when evaluating pupils' achievement in the Foundation Phase. The progress of equivalent pupils from the Gwynedd 2017 Reception classes cohort between the baseline and the end of the 2019 Foundation Phase is good. Pupils are expected to progress by 3.0 outcomes during the Foundation Phase; Gwynedd pupils progress by approximately 3.6 outcomes in every area. This Value Added data confirms that the Local Authority's schools demonstrate an effective and consistent approach to supporting pupils to make progress throughout the Foundation Phase.

The Key Stage 2 standards in Gwynedd are very good. The Core Subject Indicator (CSI) results at the end of year 6 are high - although they represent the small reduction seen nationally - and remain higher than the national average. In terms of the individual subjects, the expected levels results are very close to the national average.

In terms of the Value Added progress between the end of the Foundation Phase, the progress of pupils from the Gwynedd 2015 Foundation Phase cohort to the end of Key Stage 2 in 2019 is positive. Pupils are expected to progress by 2 levels during Key Stage 2; and on average in Gwynedd pupils progressed by 2.13 levels in Maths and 2.01 levels in Welsh. This Value Added data confirms that the Local Authority's schools demonstrate an effective and consistent approach to supporting pupils to make progress throughout Key Stage 2.

The Key Stage 3 standards in Gwynedd are robustly good, with the performance of learners in the Core Subject Indicator (CSI) higher than the national average, with a reduction of 1.2% compared to the 2018 performance (-1.9% nationally). The performance of the 2019 cohort was higher than the national average in every core subject at the expected level.

For Key Stage 4, the new main indicator (Capped 9 Point Score) is a performance for the best awards for every learner, capped at a specified volume of GCSE's or equivalent qualifications. Gwynedd's performance in the Capped 9 score was 8.1pt higher than the national average of 353.3pt. Nonetheless, it was slightly lower than the expected performance of -1.6pt.

In 2019, the performance of the 14 schools

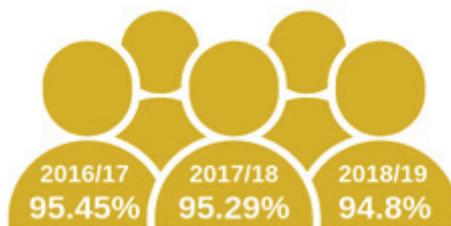
was higher than the national average, with the performance of six of them better than the expected performance, and in the case of five of them, significantly higher. However, the performance of four schools is lower compared to the expected performance, with gaps in performance ranging from -3pt to -53.7pt.

The performance of the pupils who claim free school meals (FSM) was higher than the national average of 298.3pt in eight schools, but lower than the national average in six others. The gap between the performance of FSM pupils and non-FSM pupils is lower than the national gap in eight schools, but significantly higher in two schools. (It should be remembered that the numbers in some schools are very low in Gwynedd).

Estyn continues to inspect our schools, and the inspection profile of primary schools in Gwynedd is excellent, with a more mixed picture in the secondary schools. During the 2018/19 academic year, Estyn held inspections at 17 schools in Gwynedd and no follow up action was deemed necessary at 14 of the schools inspected, with two schools placed in special measures, namely the most intensive follow up category, and the other in the Estyn review category. In collaboration with GwE, the Department ensures appropriate support and challenge for specific schools in response to the issues highlighted by Estyn.

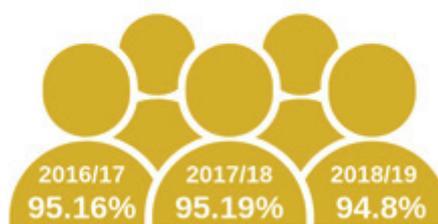
A national matrix and process for school categorisation is used. The category colour notes the level of assistance the school needs - green, yellow, amber or red (the schools in the green category need the lowest level of assistance, and those in the red category need the most intensive assistance). In the 2018/19 academic year, 99% of our primary schools and 71% of our secondary schools were in the green or yellow category.

Primary school attendance percentage for the academic year:



The welfare service supports schools to promote attendance, positive behaviour and support for children and young people who experience behavioural, emotional and/or social development difficulties. Learners' attendance at primary and secondary schools in Gwynedd in the 2018/19 academic year was at 94.8%, which remains consistently good.

Secondary school attendance percentage for the academic year:



Gwynedd Council is part of the Gwynedd and Anglesey post-16 Consortium, which sets the direction for the area's post-16 provision.

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.
- Receive education of the highest quality which will enable us to do what we want to do.
- Live in a naturally Welsh society.
- Live with dignity and independently for as long as possible.

Adults, Health and Well-being

Together with the work this Department undertakes to realise the Improvement Priorities in Part 1, the remainder of its 'day-to-day' work also contributes to the Council's ambition by providing the timely support necessary to allow the people of Gwynedd to live their lives as they wish to live them.

It must, of course, be recognised that the Covid-19 crisis struck us during the last quarter of the 2019/20 year. This crisis has unavoidably influenced our ability to provide services to Adults in Gwynedd and on the data we were focusing on collecting during the last part of the year. Very positive work has stemmed from this period as well, specifically in relation to supporting our communities. The effect of the crisis on our work will be highlighted more clearly in our performance reports in 2020/21.

The performance of the Adults, Health and Well-being Department for 2019/20 is encouraging. We have taken steps in order to develop our relationship with our key partner in the field, namely the Health Board, as well as with our partners in the third sector and beyond. We have noted for many years that we are on a transformation journey and while we have faced a few challenges along the way, on the whole, we have been able to set objectives agreed jointly with the individuals receiving the service in order to ensure that what matters to the people of Gwynedd is embedded in our work.

The department has seen enormous changes, based on fundamental changes to the way we all work. In the **field of older people and physical and sensory disabilities**, five locality teams have been established, which include members of staff from the Health Board, Gwynedd Council and the third sector. The intention is for the teams to work to specific

principles when dividing the areas into more local patches and offer a lead person to the individual in order to facilitate their journey through the care and health system. The change in the way of working has encouraged the culture which is necessary in order to ensure that staff naturally pursue "what matters" to individuals as the main driver for the decisions they make. We are developing measures to reflect this new way of working. Naturally, working together towards the same principles across organisations and professions brings with it its own challenges. As we try to combine culture, procedures, budgets and policies and develop the infrastructure and technology to support and reflect this, the need to invest time and resources to realise this vision is highlighted.

We have revised the way we report on measuring the purpose, focusing on assessing whether we have achieved what matters to an individual. We are pleased to note that 84% of our cases have been assessed against this measure now and the picture is encouraging, as can be seen below:

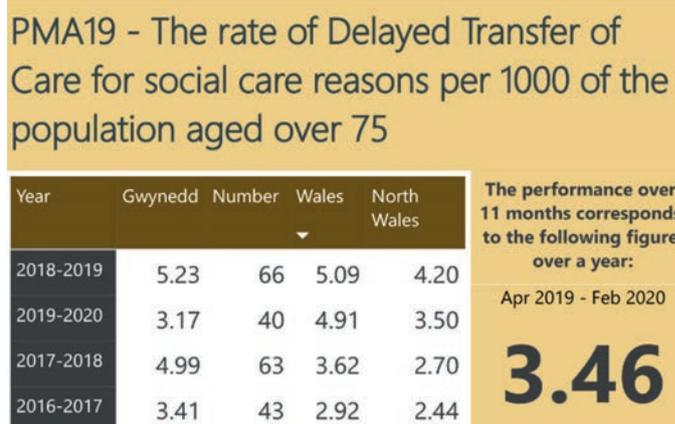


We continually consider the obstacles to achieving what matters to some individuals and discuss them and work with the individuals and their families to try to find alternative options which are in line with what matters to them.

Work is also underway to improve people's experiences by strengthening the capacity of our community teams to respond and provide support as people transfer from hospital to the community. The development of the community resource teams (CRT), the development of domiciliary care plans in the Tywyn and Nefyn areas, as well as a trial on Ogwen Ward at Ysbyty Gwynedd, has improved the situation. We have seen positive results to these efforts but they have highlighted the importance of commitment by all partners and robust collaboration to ensure success.

For example, at Ysbyty Gwynedd, a procedure was trialled whereby our domiciliary care service would visit the individuals who would usually receive a service from them, taking responsibility for taking the patient out of the hospital and co-ordinate their care. This simple procedure led to consistency in the individual's care and a focus on what matters to them, omitting the practice of bringing in more professions than is necessary. This means that the length of stay at the hospital reduces significantly and that the patients are closer to the decisions which affect them.

Stats Wales data (July 2020) highlights that the number of individuals who cannot be discharged in a timely manner from hospital due to social reasons has reduced significantly this year compared to last year; however, it should be noted that, due to the Covid-19 crisis, data for March 2020 was not available. Therefore the following is based on 11 months of data.



Despite this improvement, we continue to face challenges in providing care services within some communities in the county, specifically some rural areas where there is a shortage of carers and an ageing population which leads to increasing pressure on our services.

Offering preventative intervention drives improvement in the **Learning Disabilities field** with a focus on developing community services that address what matters to individuals. The service's performance measure shows a positive performance, noting that 89% of our cases have reported that we achieved what matters to them, and a further 9% noting that we had partial success in achieving what matters. Issues which prevent us achieving what matters mainly involve accommodation and work opportunities. We have set up project groups around these themes in order to bring in relevant stakeholders to enable us to get to grips with issues as soon as possible.

We are endeavouring to provide information, advice and support to people in a simple and accessible way which enables us to achieve what matters to them. As mentioned in the improvement priorities, community hubs are being developed across the county to support and create opportunities for individuals with Learning Disabilities to develop skills as part of their local communities. The focus is on how we can support individuals to look after

their own well-being by developing various different opportunities jointly with them.

We have been working to modernise **the Council's care provisions** by:

- improving the service of our residential homes and extend the specialist care provisions available
- investigate the care options available in order to move away from traditional models and support adults remaining independent e.g. Extra Care Housing, and
- reconsidering the way we provide domiciliary care in order to place more focus on what matters to the individuals.

In relation to the department's **Local Priorities**, Adra housing association has been granted the relevant permissions to develop Extra Care Housing in Pwllheli, and work on the site will commence during 2020/21. With this, we will also be looking at improving the care provision in rural area of Llŷn in future. Initial work is underway to extend the provision in Meirionnydd.

This work is being addressed as part of the 'Re-designing Care Services' project.

We have redirected resources temporarily in order to increase our capacity to complete the **quality assurance** work in a more proactive way. We have continued to improve our work by collecting information early on; however, we continue to see a shortage in permanent capacity to complete the preventative work in full.

In a period of 12 months, 437 **safeguarding enquiries** have been made, 419 of which were completed within 7 days (96%). This percentage is an improvement on last year and is a sign of the positive performance of the Safeguarding Hub established during

2018/19.

However, though there were 18 enquiries which had not been completed within 7 days, it should be noted that they were addressed and the risks were managed in every case.



It should be noted that the above figure includes those cases where the individual refused intervention (we managed the risk 97% of the time with the exception of those cases).

During 2019/20, the Department became responsible for the Council's **Community Safety** work. This work happens in partnership across Gwynedd and Anglesey in order to tackle and reduce crime and disorder to improve the safety and welfare of the residents of both counties. The Partnership's 2019-20 plan has been completed, and a report on the partnership's performance will be submitted to a scrutiny committee in October.

This Department's day-to-day work contributes towards the following Well-being Objectives, ensuring that Gwynedd residents can:

- Enjoy happy, healthy and safe lives.
- Live in quality homes within their communities.
- Live in a naturally Welsh society.
- Live with dignity and independently for as long as possible.

Children and Supporting Families Department

Together with the work this Department undertakes to realise the Improvement Priorities in Part 1, the remainder of its 'day-to-day' work also contributes to the Council's ambition.

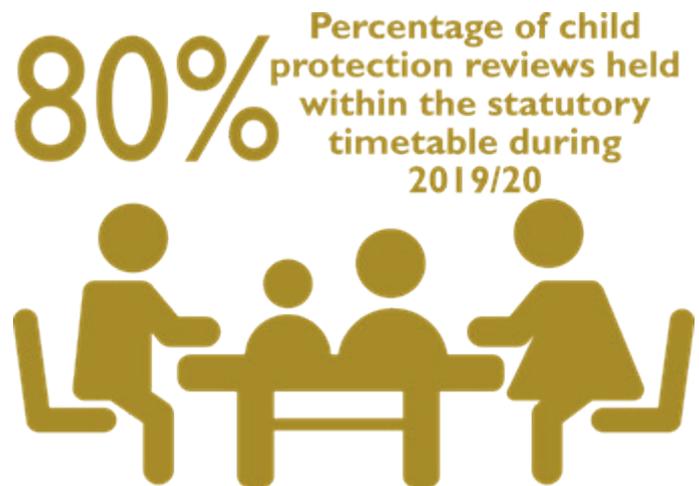
Practice and performance throughout the Children's field is generally strong. A Full Inspection Report by Care Inspectorate Wales in August 2018 confirmed this. They identified many fields for further development and, over the past year, we have proceeded to respond to those through the Supporting Families Strategy and our units' work programmes.

We have extended the Information, Advice and Support Service, focusing on how families access information. A virtual information Hub (Gwynedd Families Hub) has been established, with Community Connector roles also a part of the service.

Through the Information, Advice and Support Service, families have access to timely support. Families are also able to gain access to a wide range of therapeutic and support services in order to meet their individual needs. We are continuing to review what is available to families and, in 2019-2020, we undertook pilot work jointly with Y Bont and Barnardos in the fields of managing conflict within families, and supporting children's well-being in order to address local needs.

We are continuing to maintain high standards when responding to referrals, which could be safeguarding referrals, or referrals for care and support.

Similarly, the Social Work Teams have offered prompt support and intervention for children and their families.



As part of the day-to-day work of operational teams within the department, workers offer professional support and intervention. In addition, they have the option of using more specialist interventions if appropriate. The Trobwynt Team (as part of the Edge of Care services) works intensively with vulnerable children and families, and children who are on the verge of going into care. They are able to support the Social Work Teams and families with matters such as parenting, counselling, substance misuse, meetings in order to bring in members of the extended family, moderation, family therapy, support with coping with adverse childhood experiences (ACE's). We are continuing to develop this specialist support, depending on the needs and feedback of families.

The success of collaboration between families and the team means that a number of children have been able to stay at home with their families, some have been able to return home from foster and residential care, and it has ensured that vulnerable foster placements have been substantially stabilised. Although the number of looked-after children increased during the team's operating period, the number of children in

foster or residential placements has remained stable.

At the end of March 2020 there were 291 children being looked-after by the Council. Compared with the number of looked-after children over a five-year period, the total has increased from 194 to 291, which is almost a 50% increase. Nevertheless, the number of children who are in residential placements has remained consistent, and the number of children in foster placements has reduced from 74% to 69% of the looked-after children population.

Children placed at home with their parents under a Protection Order to the Council



The increase in the number of looked-after children who have been placed at home with their parents under a Care Order for the Council continues, and has risen from 27 to 60 over the last five years.

The profile of the population of looked-after children has changed; the average cost of residential placements has increased, as have the complexity and intensity of cases. The lack of more specialist residential placements is also an enormous challenge for the Department. The lack of available residential placements, and the increased costs associated with them, is a matter receiving national and regional attention. At a regional level, under the leadership of the North Wales Heads of Children, we have been collaborating on establishing a Multi-disciplinary Sub-Regional Team which

would provide intensive, short-term support for families with profound and complex needs. Though we developed a business case, agreed on various roles jointly with our partners in health and education, and began the recruitment process, the pilot scheme had to be paused when the Covid-19 crisis began.

Children and young people come into our care under highly challenging circumstances, but we are as ambitious for these children as we would be for our own children. We have Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) who monitor the care plans of each child and young person we look after, and they assure us as a Council that the interests of the child are safeguarded throughout their time in care. In 2019-20, we reviewed the role of these Officers following feedback from children and young people about their experience, as well as feedback from the Full Inspection. Officers have responded to what matters to children and young people and have adapted their arrangements and ways of working.

According to our Independent Review Officers 94% of reviews are ambitious for children in care



Our ability as a Council to place children with foster parents is a key part of the service for children. We as a Council are extremely proud of our foster parents, and the Fostering Team continues to ensure that we have enough foster parents to meet the needs of children who cannot reside at home. However, ensuring the capacity and availability of foster parents is a challenge.

Hearing and listening to the voice of the child has remained a priority for us over the past year. The Corporate Parent Panel has been working to strengthen this element of its

work so that it maintains close links with what matters to the children in our care. In addition, the Children and Supporting Families Department has a Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Unit that assures the Council that our safeguarding arrangements are robust.

The reasons for any slippage in performance have been challenged and are mostly related to staff sickness, availability of colleagues from other statutory bodies, and families' availability. On the whole, the delay is short (days) and longer delays have been carefully assessed and have not led to an unacceptable impact on the child.

The pioneering 'Safeguarding Children Effectively' scheme continues to progress. Initial results show a clear improvement in terms of the efficiency of our safeguarding work with a better focus on change to keep children safe. Our aim is to share any lessons learned across the region as a model of good practice. The work is supported by the development of a practice pack and distance learning materials to disseminate the work to other counties.

We are extremely fortunate to have successful partnerships with the Health Board, schools, Police and many third sector organisations. In 2019/20, we saw that partnership work developing, particularly in terms of co-producing interventions and arrangements to prevent problems arising. We have collaborated with the Police on an ambitious training programme for the police workforce through the Early Action Together Programme; we have also established the Early Years Transformation Programme to create a single integrated system for care, education, health and play; and we have also led on establishing an Emotional Well-being Pathway for 11-25 year old Young People.

We are extremely fortunate of our workforce

yet again this year. Our staff are committed and staff turnover has been very low over the past year.

At the end of the year, all the Department's services and workforce refined their efforts towards supporting children and families through the Covid-19 crisis. The Department managed to keep in touch with children and families through visits, keeping in touch calls and virtually. More than ever, the Department made an effort to support the stability of families and placements, and provide every possible support to keep families together during this challenging time. We have led on providing food supplies to vulnerable families and young people leaving care; we have ensured that baby goods were sent to Flying Start families; and supported schemes to create and provide Arts and Gardening Activity Packs and Play Sacks to homes throughout the county. The county's young people have benefited from on-line chat and support forums, social activities such as making music, quizzes, fitness and cookery - all on-line - in an effort to build resilience and promote well-being in difficult times.

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- Live in a naturally Welsh society.
- Live with dignity and independently for as long as possible.

Economy and Community

Together with the work this Department undertakes to realise the Improvement Priorities in Part 1, the remainder of its 'day-to-day' work also contributes to the Council's ambition.

Developing Gwynedd's Economy

Covid-19 has created an economic crisis in 2020. Prior to this, Gwynedd's economy had been performing fairly well at a Wales level but not in comparison with other regions of Britain and Europe. Salary levels in Gwynedd are much lower than in other parts of Wales and the productivity value of Gwynedd businesses is low compared to other areas. Gwynedd Council took proactive measures in 2019/20 to try to create the conditions that would respond and enable businesses to grow and stimulate economic growth at a time of economic uncertainty as Britain prepares to leave the European Union.

We have been working to target the highly-paid sectors by creating the conditions that support new businesses and that grow existing businesses. During 2019/20, 10 high value jobs (with salaries of £26,500 or more) were created; however, a reduction was seen in the number of schemes being delivered by businesses as a result of uncertainty stemming from the UK's decision to leave the European Union.



High value jobs created	
2017/18	20
2018/19	57
2019/20	10

We have worked with partners by leading on the STEM North project (Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths), securing £1.9 million to coordinate the STEM extracurricular provision for pupils, in order to secure a local workforce that will be able to capitalise on development that will lead to high value jobs.

Rental income levels have increased as the Council's industrial / enterprise spaces are 96% full. There is still demand for empty units across the county, and there is a shortage of spaces for businesses that wish to expand or move into the area.

During 2019/20, 250 businesses received support, compared to 213 in 2018/19 and 394 in 2017/18.

As part of the work to regenerate Caernarfon town centre to improve quality, visitors' experience of the area, and the appearance of the town, two strategic regeneration schemes were completed: Ffestiniog Railway building and the Galeriz Scheme.

The tourism industry is a key employer in Gwynedd. With an economic value of nearly £1 billion, over 15,000 people work in this field. This is one of the sectors that has been hit hardest as a result of Covid-19 due to restrictions on businesses to recover safely. During 2019/20, there were over 944,000 hits on the Snowdonia Mountains and Coast Website - this figure is slightly lower than the previous year - partly due to Covid-19.

Funding from Visit Wales was secured to fund activities to promote the Coast Path outside the main visitor season, jointly with Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire as well the North Road with partners from the six Local Authorities in north Wales - both projects under the guidance of the Council's Tourism,

Marketing and Events Service. During the period, a survey of the county's bed stock was completed in order to count the number of available beds for visitors and nature of those beds.

The Department manages 301km of the Gwynedd coastline, concentrating on eight blue flag beaches, four harbours and two marinas. During the year, attention was given to reviewing the management arrangements for the marina and harbour for the future and to programme detailed dredging work at Pwllheli Harbour.

Supporting Strong and Healthy Communities

The Community Support Service continues to support voluntary groups and local enterprises to respond to local opportunities and needs. 57 community projects were supported with 26 of them developing a new service or safeguarding access to a service in 2019/20. Over £290,000 of match funding was invested in Cist Gwynedd projects.

The Libraries Service has continued to ensure that the people of Gwynedd have access to support, resources and information, with over 340,000 people visiting Gwynedd Libraries during the year. 99% of users reported that they were satisfied with the service they received. Over 13,000 enquiries were responded to in 2019/20 - 68% were Information Technology and digital training sessions enquiries. Support was provided on over 5,000 occasions for renewing bus travel passes during 2019/20 following changes to the registration procedure in Wales. 1,786 children in Gwynedd took part in the Summer Reading Challenge in 2019 and over 418,000 items were borrowed during the year.

People visiting Gwynedd libraries



The Council continues to maintain galleries, museums and archives in Gwynedd, with almost 55,000 visitors to the galleries and museums in 2019/20. Over 26,000 people attended Gwynedd Community Arts sessions. The Archives Service was used by over 24,000 people during the year - including enquiries to the on-line catalogue, and 92% were satisfied with the service. 2,763 children in Gwynedd received education sessions and 100% of teachers felt that the sessions had improved the children's understanding of their history and heritage.

The Department is responsible for a network of 12 Byw'n lach Centres across Gwynedd, but since 1 April 2019, management of the centres was transferred via a contract to Cwmni Byw'n lach Cyf. During 2019/20, 90% of customers were satisfied with the service.

The Department organises and supports a range of sports activities in schools, the community and outdoors including Active Family, Triathlon, Squash and Badminton sessions. The Future Leaders scheme proved a success during 2019/20, with many winning volunteering prizes during the year.

The Exercise Referral Team supports Gwynedd residents to improve their health, with 65% reporting that their quality of life has improved after receiving the support, and 80% saw an increase in their fitness level.

Local Priorities - The Council's Plan

One of the local priorities noted in the Council's Plan is the desire to attract more long-term, highly-paid jobs to the areas of Porthmadog, Ffestiniog and Penllyn; the Creating High Value Jobs project develops new opportunities in Trawsfynydd and Llanbedr that will benefit those communities.

Improving the poor connectivity of mobile phones and broadband in the Dolgellau area is another local priority. We are pressing on Welsh Government to prioritise the county for plans in the field, thus adhering to the principles of Digital Gwynedd.

New financial assistance packages for local businesses were launched during the year. These are the Penygroes and Bethesda Interest Free Loans Fund, and the Bangor City Centre Regeneration and Investment Fund, which respond to the local priorities for the regeneration of the areas of Dyffryn Ogwen, Dyffryn Nantlle and Bangor. During the year, four empty properties have been returned to use after receiving support.

Because of concerns around the future of the Ffestiniog Community Centre, the regeneration team recently conducted a review of public buildings throughout Gwynedd. This review showed that public buildings in Blaenau Ffestiniog, including the Community Centre, were used ineffectively and this identified an opportunity to improve resource sharing in future.

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 support ourselves and our families.
- Live in quality homes within our communities.
- Live in a naturally Welsh society.
- Make the most of the beauty of the county's natural environment.

Highways and Municipal Department

Street Cleaning

Maintaining a high quality local environment and the appearance of streets and public places is important to the residents of Gwynedd. In terms of the local environment, it is very important that our streets are clean and safe. The performance of the Cleanliness and Street Appearance Measure in 2019/20 was 73% which showed a slight decline since the performance at the end of 2018/19 (74.1%). Nevertheless, the performance remains at a higher level than the Welsh average, which is 70.1%. The Department will be reviewing the cleaning zones in 2020/2021 and will introduce new routes which will include an emphasis on campaigns and working with communities. We will also be looking at increasing recycling bins on the street.



Keep Wales Tidy carries out a survey to assess how many 'defects' such as rubbish, weeds, dog fouling, chewing gum and cigarette stumps can be found on our streets. According to the independent survey, the

cleanliness and appearance of Gwynedd streets continues to be of a good standard, and it appears that a recent improvement in behaviour has led to less untidiness.

Roads

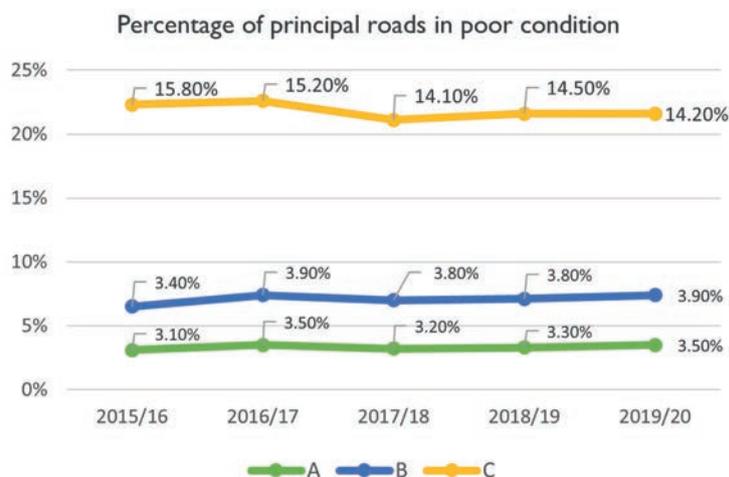
It is important that businesses and residents are able to move safely and with ease within the county and, in order to ensure this, the Council ensures the upkeep of 2,697km of county roads and 199km of Trunk Roads (highways of national importance) on behalf of Welsh Government. Our highways in Gwynedd, which include the Class A and B

roads, are currently in a good condition with fewer than 4% being defective and in need of attention. Due to a reduction in the funds available for Local Government, it has been more difficult for us to maintain the class C and unclassified roads to the same standard.

As a result of the financial pressures on the Council, it is inevitable that there will be further pressures on the road maintenance budget, and it will be challenging to prevent deterioration in the quality of our roads, in particular lower priority roads namely Class C and unclassified roads.

Whilst the condition remains stable, with 14.2% defective and in need of attention, there is considerable pressure on our budgets in order to maintain this stable condition.

A road maintenance grant is currently in place and will undoubtedly help with maintaining the current levels. However, with the effects of climate change, the condition of our unclassified roads is deteriorating quickly.



Waste



It is vital that we deal with waste appropriately in order to protect our environment and avoid creating problems for future generations.

By the end of 2019/20, 64.74% of waste from Gwynedd homes was recycled, reused or composted, which is an increase of 1.44% since 2018/19. As this year is a statutory target year, the Department is pleased to report that we reached and exceeded the statutory target of 64%.

Through the commitment of the county's residents and businesses to reducing our over-dependence on the disposal of waste to landfill, this change has been crucial in improving our performance.

The county's businesses have also contributed to improvements and, by the end of 2019/20, 49% of commercial waste had been composted or recycled.

It also matters to the people of Gwynedd that their waste is collected when we say we will collect it. During 2019/20, we made a total of 4,556,708 refuse collections, and we received 11,344 complaints about missed collections (or 0.24%). Some of these failures were due to severe weather and others because of shortcomings on our part. In order to improve the service we provide the people of Gwynedd, we have been reviewing our work practices. The arrangements implemented confirm a slight improvement compared with 2018/19 figures.

The percentage of urban waste sent to landfill was lower in 2019/20 at 16.2%, compared with 43.33% for the 2014/15 year. This improvement could be attributed to the fact that more

residual waste had been treated through the incineration process and, consequently, had not been sent to landfill.



Street Lighting



We continue to fix street lights promptly and it takes two and a half days on average - a figure that has remained broadly constant over the past five years.

As part of the Council's "invest to save" programme, our substantial programme to change street lights to LED has been implemented over recent years. During 2019/20, 1,730 street light units and LED signs were changed and, since 2015/16, we have changed over 12,000 street lights and signs to LED technology. As a result of these changes, it is anticipated that we will save £260,000 a year and will reduce carbon emissions (414 CO₂). Work of changing the lights to LED has continued during the year with an estimated saving of £185,000 as well as a reduction in carbon emissions (572 Co₂).

Public Toilets

There are 62 public toilets in the county, together with 35 community toilets in places

such as cafés, pubs etc., and 17 public toilets owned by Snowdonia National Park Authority. As with other counties throughout Wales, Gwynedd has faced a period of substantial budgetary cuts, which has meant finding savings in the public toilets' expenditure over recent years. But through collaborating with community and town councils and community groups, we have been able to maintain a high number of toilets for public use in Gwynedd. In May 2019, as a Council, we adopted the Public Toilets Strategy which is a statutory requirement on all authorities.

Local Priorities

In response to complaints about mess and rubbish falling from/being left by waste and recycling collection vehicles, a number of steps have been put in place to try to improve the situation. This includes using Romaquip vehicles rather than Kerbside vehicles, which means that there is no tipping above the height of the vehicles and they are therefore safer for the workforce. Using these new vehicles also means a reduction in the number of materials falling from the vehicles as materials are not stored freely when moving from property to property, which leads to greater organisation when serving the cartgylchu. Over the coming year, we will continue to respond to our residents' concerns and ensure an improvement in the situation by focusing on the smaller vehicles.

The work of changing the arrangements of the routes is continuing. We have already completed the changes in Arfon and Dwyfor and subsequently seen an improvement in collection arrangements. Due to the restrictions of Covid-19 it was not possible to complete the work in the Meirionnydd area. This work will be completed by February 2021.

In 2019/20, we continued to collaborate on the Delwedd Bangor project which is a partnership comprising of representatives

from the City Council, BID Bangor, Bangor University and several other organisations, and this work is proceeding well. The group's main focus is to improve the City's image. We will learn from this work in Bangor and will then introduce the lessons learned in other areas. We also work with a group in Dyffryn Nantlle to improve the area's appearance. We will learn from our experiences of working with the Bangor project as we continue with this work.

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Housing and Property Department

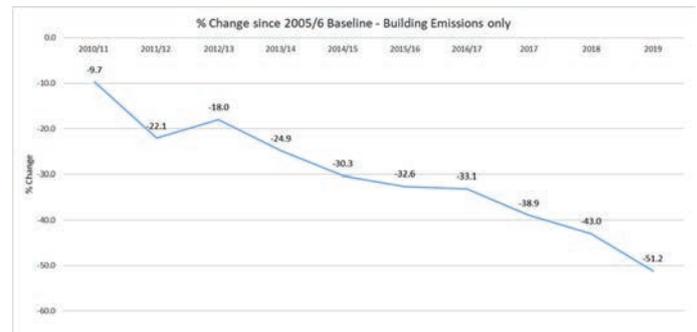
Together with the work this Department undertakes to realise the Improvement Priorities in Part 1, the remainder of its 'day-to-day' work also contributes to the Council's ambition.

This new department was established in September 2019 and work of merging the Property Service and the Housing Service has proceeded smoothly. A new structure has been introduced in the Housing Service in order to allow us to give the attention that the increasing challenges in the field of affordable housing for the people of Gwynedd deserves.

Property

In order to respond to the challenges that arise from climate change, and ensure that Gwynedd communities are prepared for the future, the Council adopted a **carbon management plan** in May 2010. The plan has been a substantial investment in order to reduce the carbon emissions of the Council's activities, in addition to contributing towards the wider aim of a low carbon Gwynedd.

The nature of such plans is integrally measured over a long period of time, with small differences between monitoring periods having a cumulative impact over a more extensive period. Since the baseline was established in 2005/06, by the end of 2019, the Council's carbon emissions have reduced by 51.2%, with a further reduction of 8.2% in 2019/20. This has all led to annual financial savings of over £1.2m for the Council.



The **Energy Team** is also responsible for purchasing electricity and gas on behalf of all Council services and by implementing the principles of Ffordd Gwynedd and taking the plunge with new procurement approaches over the course of the past year, they have been able to secure a reduction of over £230,000 a year in our gas bills.

The responsibility of ensuring that all our schools, care homes, leisure centres etc. are safe to be used by the county's residents lies with the **Property Service**. A further improvement was seen during 2019/20 in the fire and asbestos risks monitoring arrangements and new arrangements were introduced to manage radon and Legionnaires' disease risks. This included bringing work, which used to be carried out by external contractors, in-house, which has resulted in better control and carrying out the work with a saving of approximately £30,000 a year.

Similarly, continuing to extend the internal maintenance workforce has led to being able to complete work sooner, reducing the average number of days it takes to complete the work from 7.5 days in 2018/19 to 6.9 days in 2019/20. Of course, this has also resulted in better customer satisfaction.

The customer satisfaction of the **Pest Control Team** has been very high throughout 2019/20

also, with great praise for prompt and effective work. On average, the customers gave a score of 9.7 out of 10 over the course of the year.

Housing

The main challenge facing the Housing Service is trying to contribute to increase the supply of housing for local people and the housing options available to the people of Gwynedd. Impact on homelessness as a result of Covid-19 is also an increasing concern which is bound to worsen during 2020/21.

The **Housing Grants and Projects** team's 'Grants for first-time buyers' and 'Empty Housing Grants' schemes have been a great success again this year. During 2019/20, the team received 114 applications for this grant, and has already approved £1.9 million of the grant to these 114 applications. This will assist with housing nearly 308 individuals and families.

The Housing Service has been operating in order to prevent **homelessness** but also provides support for families or individuals who find themselves homeless. An increase of 35% has been seen in the number of people who present themselves as homeless or under threat of becoming homeless over the past five years. The demand remains higher than ever with 745 individuals receiving a service in 2019/20. This has placed great pressure on our temporary housing options and at present we are far from being able to cope with the demand. The result of this is having to over-use bed and breakfast accommodation which will unavoidably create overspend. During 2020/21, we will try to increase the temporary accommodation options and ensure that appropriate support is available for these vulnerable individuals also.

With grant money from Welsh Government, the Homelessness Service has also

financed a project to co-ordinate a service for prison-leavers. One officer in the team takes responsibility for people who return to Gwynedd to live following a period of imprisonment and attempts to identify and arrange accommodation for them to avoid homelessness. The project has developed a good relationship with the prisons, the Probation Service, and a number of other agencies who work with the individuals.

In response to the shortage of one-bedroom properties in the county, the Service works jointly with the third sector agency, Cais, to find property for single, vulnerable people in the Bangor area. A scheme is being developed that will provide accommodation and intensive support, with an emphasis on developing the skills of individuals to enable them to live independently.

Another development in the field of homelessness is the 'intensive support for rough sleepers' project. The Service collaborates with North Wales Housing and, with the aid of a Welsh Government grant, a support officer has been appointed to encourage people to work together to help solve their problems, and to support them to move on to stable accommodation. As Covid-19 restrictions were implemented across the country at the end of March 2020, we were able to respond to a request from the Government to attempt to secure emergency housing for all rough-sleepers. We have been able to house 29 individuals, but the big challenge ahead for us now is to try to provide permanent homes for them with the necessary support. There remains a major shortage in the housing stock available for vulnerable individuals with complex needs such as these individuals.

To this end, the Service has started our first housing development in developing flexible units or 'pods'. These units will offer homes with support for the most vulnerable people

in our communities for whom it is difficult to find placements. The aim is to develop four pods for four individuals. The work has commenced on site and will be completed during 2020/21. There are more schemes in the pipeline following the success of applications for grant funding from the government and we will be able to provide new supported accommodation in Bangor, Caernarfon and Dolgellau over the coming 18 months.

The **Supporting People Programme** provides support for vulnerable people to manage or retain their tenancy and live independently. During 2019/20, the programme in Gwynedd has supported 1,956 people to access and maintain permanent or temporary tenancies and prevent homelessness. Due to a change in legislation and the conditions of the supporting people grant, more emphasis is now placed on targeting homelessness prevention by means of earlier and more creative intervention. Over the coming year - until the end of 2021/22 - we will review what is achieved by this grant in order to ensure that it gives the best possible benefits to the people of Gwynedd, particularly as the Government has been considering reducing the funding that will be available in future.

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- Live in a naturally Welsh society.
- Live with dignity and independently for as long as possible.
- Take advantage of the beauty of the county's natural environment.

Environment Department

The main areas of responsibility of the Environment Department are Planning, Public Protection, Transportation and the Countryside, and the Corporate Property Service.

Planning

The Planning Service facilitates and manages sustainable developments for the benefit of our communities, the economy and the environment within the Gwynedd planning authority area (which does not include the National Park area) with **83%** of customers stating that they are happy with the service provided.



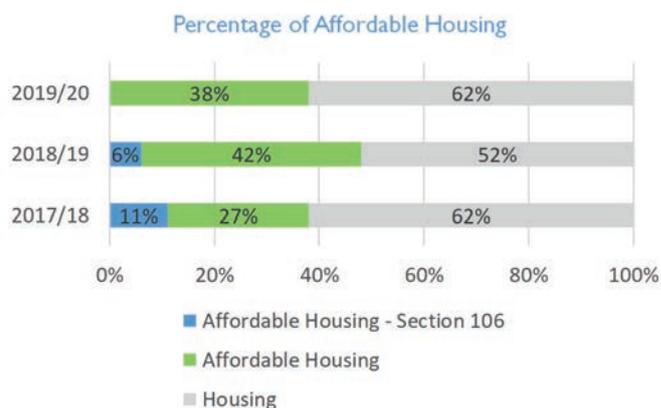
Of those who are unsatisfied, the observations received state dissatisfaction with arrangements to contact the service, with communication difficulties noted in the observations received by happy, as well as unhappy customers. The service will work to improve the situation by looking at and implementing the reasons why customers are dissatisfied in 2020/21.

In 2019/20, on average, planning applications took 62 days to be determined compared to 57 days in 2018/19, with applications determined by a Committee taking 183 days, on average to receive a decision (an old

application in August 2019 has affected this).

The performance reflects the fact that applications that are submitted to the Committee tend to be complex or contentious applications, and it is not unusual for decisions to be deferred in order to provide an opportunity to receive more information or to hold discussions.

Affordable housing is a matter of priority for the Council, with 38% (118 units of 311) of the housing approved through the planning system in 2019/20 being affordable housing, either through a 106 agreement or because they are housing built by registered social landlords. This figure is still higher than the target set in the Joint Local Development Plan. This means that the Planning Service contributes directly towards the affordable housing provision in Gwynedd in a significant way.



The Planning Service also deals with planning enforcement, by taking enforcement action on developments that have not been given planning permission. 302 Enforcement cases were submitted in 2019/20. 179 of these cases were investigated (59%) and, on average, they take 65 days to be investigated. During the year, 71 cases that required remedial

action were recorded, with 20% completing remedial action and the other 80% under way. It should be noted that the process of taking enforcement action is lengthy due to the nature of investigation requirements, statutory requirements and legal processes, but a satisfactory solution to the case is often more important to the customer than the time it took to deliver on it.

Public Protection



99.23% of Gwynedd food establishments roughly comply with food hygiene standards, namely 2,070 out of 2,086 establishments.

Over the last few years, the Public Protection Service has found it very difficult to cope with the number of required inspections, and additional resources had to be obtained to clear the backlog of inspections that has developed. For 2019/20, there was a backlog of 35 food hygiene inspections, along with a backlog of 130 Food Standards inspections. This backlog is in the low risk food establishment category, but in July 2018, the Cabinet resolved to allocate more resources to the service in order to appoint two additional officers to be able to cope with the work. However, it takes time to become fully qualified to undertake food hygiene inspections and, therefore, we will not see the full impact of the additional resources for some time.

Otherwise, encouraging performance is seen in the field of Public Protection with all air pollution inspections and animal food organisations being inspected in accordance with the programme. 459 offences were resolved during the year by means of intervention by the Public Protection Service and another 70 are waiting to be resolved.

In relation to the animal health high risk sites inspection programme, it was not possible to complete the programmed inspections due to officer illness and the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions.



Traffic and Street Works

Seeing an order being enforced is important to the person requesting traffic orders, and the practice we had of advertising the number of applications in one pack has come to an end as it would often be possible for one contentious order to hold back a number of other orders. This change in the process has led to a reduction in the average time it takes to put a Traffic Order in place from 519 to 297 days.



Public Transport

The public transport sector in Gwynedd has been faced with a turbulent period over the last few years, with the service having to respond swiftly to major changes in terms of available providers in the field. The Transportation and Countryside Service has now commenced the work of undertaking a comprehensive survey of the public transport network. The Service is collaborating with Bangor University in order to plan a network that will be based on social value rather than cost and the number of passengers. It will also consider innovative methods of offering a public transport network. The review is expected to become operational in October 2020.

In the meantime, the service continues to deal with complaints submitted by the public and collaborates with the industry to maintain services that meet the needs of Gwynedd Residents. The Service is monitoring the punctuality of bus companies, with 70% of services arriving on time in 2019/20. Of the

services that were not on time, the majority had arrived within 5 minutes of the time on the timetable.

Parking

A Parking Task Group was formed towards the end of 2019 in order to address various parking issues and present potential solutions in order to address the financial deficit facing the Council and improve the current parking arrangements as well. The working group placed an emphasis on the importance of the need to hold a review in a considerate and cautious way and every effort was made to reach an appropriate balance between generating adequate income levels and prioritising the needs of Gwynedd residents.

Joint Planning Policy Unit

Annual Monitoring Report - A report was prepared and presented to Welsh Government for the period between 1 August 2017 and 31 March 2019. The Report provides details of the Plan's performance during this period and assesses whether the Plan's strategy and policies work. The Report's findings were that the Plan delivered the strategy and that the Plan's policies did work; there was no evidence of the need to revise the Plan early.

Supplementary Planning Guidance - Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) reiterate the Plan's ability to give a sound basis on which to make decisions on future planning applications. Four SPGs have been adopted during the 2019/2020 period: Affordable housing, Maintaining and creating sustainable communities, Planning obligations, Converting buildings and re-building houses in the countryside.

The National Development Framework - The planning policy service prepares responses to planning policy consultations by different

agencies, including Welsh Government and other local authorities, where appropriate. In August 2019, Welsh Government conducted a consultation on the National Development Framework (NDF). The NDF is a new development plan, and its purpose is to set a direction for development in Wales from 2020 to 2040. The service, with input from other departments and services across the Council, provided a detailed response to the NDF consultation.

Countryside

During 2019/20, the Countryside Service completed the Learning phase of its Ffordd Gwynedd review. Following this review, the key issues implemented were:

- Adapting the Purpose to better reflect the Service's main work - Access / Biodiversity / Llŷn AONB.
- Prepare new Purposes as well as performance measures for the individual fields of work.
- Monitor efficiency and improvements to the system used to record work and calls in relation to rights of way.
- Identify resource requirements to meet the risks to the public as a result of a lack of budget to manage lands.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, this work has slowed down but it will be completed in 2020/21.

Building Control

The Building Control Unit collaborates with the public and partners to ensure safe buildings for our communities that are in line with the latest technical requirements. This Unit is responsible for ensuring that construction work meets building standards.

This is important and valuable to the people of Gwynedd, as it will ensure that any building work is safe and is of the required standard.

The Building Control Unit continues to provide a good service for residents and the satisfaction score has remained high and fairly stable over recent years. In a customer satisfaction survey in 2019/20, an average score of 9.7 out of 10 was given compared to 9.6 in 2018/19. Work is underway to establish the reason for any dissatisfaction.

One of the Building Control Unit's duties is to process applications for Full Plans. The Unit undertakes an assessment of the plans, and issues decision notices within its statutory target of 5 and 8 weeks. The Unit aims to inspect the plans within 15 days, and release decisions on the applications as soon as possible.

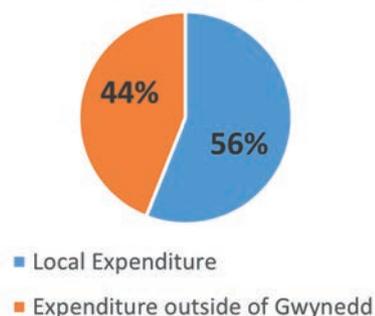
Corporate Category Management

The purpose of this service is to collaborate and support services within the Council to spend public funds in a strategic and accurate manner which gives value for money and encourages keeping the benefits local.

During 2019/20, the team manages to support services to save £165million. Also, a further £78million has been identified as potential savings, and efforts continue to encourage services across the Council to join the corporate agreements.

The Team tries to keep the expenditure local, where possible and where legal rules allow. Before deciding on a suitable procurement method, a standard procedure has been established to identify whether there is a local market with the desire and capacity to compete for work from the Council first. Within the Corporate category, 56% of the expenditure was within Gwynedd during 2019/20.

Local Expenditure - Corporate Category



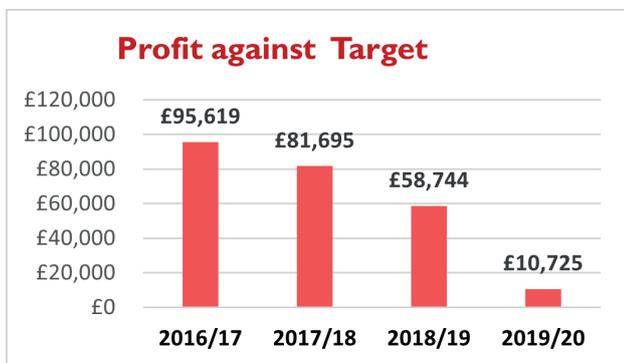
The Department's day-to-day work contributes towards the Gwynedd well-being objectives, ensuring that Gwynedd residents can:

- Enjoy happy, healthy and safe lives.
- Live in quality homes within their communities.
- Take advantage of the natural beauty of the County.

Ymgynghoriaeth Gwynedd Consultancy Department (YGC)

Ymgynghoriaeth Gwynedd Consultancy (YGC) operates commercially in the engineering and construction fields to secure high quality employment within the County and generate profit to help the Council's financial position.

For 2019/20, a profit of £10,725 was generated, which was above the target set.



Performance of the Water and Flooding Unit



2019 / 2020 Projects – CRMP (Welsh Government Coastal Risk Management Programme), small schemes (Welsh Government fund for small flooding risk management projects to a maximum of £100,000), assets plan (expenditure plan on Council assets, expenditure on flooding risk assets is one of the elements of the plan).

In the same manner as other coastal areas in Wales, some coastal areas of Gwynedd are at a greater risk of flooding. The service attracts grant monies to undertake studies or design work to reduce the risks of flooding that exist in areas of Gwynedd. All these

are communities that have either suffered historically, or where there is strong evidence that climate change is likely to increase the risk in future.

During 19/20 our flooding prevention projects included:

- Viaduct Gardens, Barmouth - development of options to reduce the risk of coastal flooding
- Northern Promenade, Barmouth - development of options to reduce the flood risk and coastal erosion
- Hirael Bay - investigate the risk level of coastal flooding as well as surface water flooding
- Afon Gwyrfai - investigate the nature and risk level of flooding in the Afon Gwyrfai catchment area
- Ogwen Catchment Area - preparing a detailed business case to carry out improvements along the catchment area, to manage the risks from surface water
- Cwm-y-Glo - study of measures to reduce the flood threat at Dolafon Estate, Cwm-y-Glo

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions, it was not possible to complete all 2019/20 projects. However, these projects will commence or recommence as soon as the current restrictions are lifted.

Monitoring Assets

During the last year a new assets management system has been developed jointly with the Council's Information Technology service, this enables us to store all our data assets, along with data regarding flooding events all within one system. By developing the system in-house, rather than paying an annual fee to an external company, the Unit has made a saving that can be reinvested in the work of maintaining our land and coastal drainage assets.

All land and coastal drainage assets maintained by the Unit have now been inspected for 2019/20, with the results of every survey being recorded on the new system. The new procedure will enable the Unit to develop a long-term asset plan. Work to investigate any historical assets under the responsibility of other departments has also been incorporated into this system.

By making these changes to our assets management system, the Unit will continue with the arrangements to have a system in place that is in keeping with the requirements of British Standards Assets Management ISO55001.

Flooding Reports (Section 19)

We continue to gather information about the level of flood risk within the County, and have developed specific maps and databases for this purpose. During 2019/20, **23 incidents of internal flooding were recorded** with approximately **65 close calls or reports of surface water difficulties**. During this period, the Council has been advised by the Environment Agency (England) on over 30 occasions that there was a possibility of flooding.

We continue to collaborate with the public sector, and other bodies, by raising awareness

of flood risk and coastal erosion. Regulatory

During 2019/20, we have processed **28 applications to work in general water courses** across the County. The consultancy service offered means that each request received during this period have been acceptable, with an average response time of **25 days** within a permitted response period of up to two months.

The purpose of the ordinary watercourse consent process is to manage specific activities that may have a detrimental impact on flooding. During the last year, we have also been discussing the requirements of the new land drainage byelaws with various developers in order to ensure that they are aware of the implications on future developments. This process of raising awareness will continue in the future.

Since April 2019, we have also provided comments on 160 planning applications, to ensure that the threat of flooding and coastal erosion to new developments are acceptable and that the details of the application conform to national policies.

SuDS (drainage systems that favour the use of more natural/green methods to deal with surface water), number of applications (and pre-application advice) in Gwynedd and regionally.

Raising awareness:

We continue to work with the planning departments of the Council and Snowdonia National Park, to highlight the requirements to their applicants. We do this by means of a note of information when a planning application is registered, consultation with SAB (SuDS Approval Body - Sustainable Drainage Systems) via the Principal Flood Prevention Authorities (PFPA) during

application assessment, and a note of information at the end of the planning permission.

We continue to investigate planning applications that require an application with the SAB (SuDS Approval Body - Sustainable Drainage Systems) including those that have not contacted the Department directly and we work jointly with a number of Architects and Agents to raise awareness of the legislation.

We use YGC social media websites as well as corporate accounts to cascade educational information to a wide audience electronically.

Pre-application Service:

We continue to operate a service free of charge where developers or consultants can contact us for advice prior to the submission of a full application. This service has been extremely popular, especially as the new requirements are relevant to all. The meetings that have taken place have been positive, and are appreciated by developers as the majority have highlighted minor problems and therefore this has given them an opportunity to amend the plans prior to the submission of a formal application.

The offer of this service has encouraged good relationships and has been beneficial to the Council and developers, with many developers asking for the service to continue, however, the feeling is that the service cannot continue free of charge. Therefore, we are in the process of formalising the pre-application procedure with a fee arrangement, dependent on the level of service - similar to what is offered by the Planning service. We are collaborating closely with north Wales councils, and for consistency we hope to use the same fees structure. However, we are keen to offer an 'open door' policy where the applicants can discuss requirements directly with an officer, before moving on to

a formal pre-application service, if required. An investment in this time is beneficial to the applicant and the Council by giving peace of mind to the applicant that they are on the right track, and speeds up the process of checking the full application for the Council.

We will raise awareness of the free pre-application service while it continues to exist free of charge.

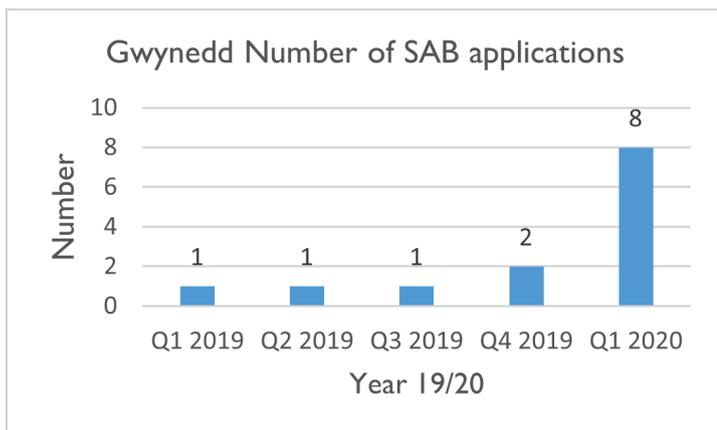
Regional and National Work

Gwynedd Council has been appointed by the Isle of Anglesey Council to process and check all their SuDs (Sustainable Drainage Systems) applications. We are also commissioned to check all SuDs (Sustainable Drainage Systems) applications for Wrexham Council.

We operate regionally across north Wales, and collaborate with the County Councils of Anglesey, Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham. This work comprises drafting policies and procedures that can be used regionally to share resources and have consistency in the way the requirements are implemented.

Number of Applications

As we expected, the number of applications have increased every quarter in 2019/20. In future, we will look at the Department's structure to ensure that the service is maintained as the numbers increase.



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
- Live in quality homes within their communities
- Benefit from the beauty of the County's natural environment.

Finance and Information Technology Department

The Finance Department ensures the appropriate support for the Council in managing, safeguarding and developing its financial position in addition to providing services, such as collecting revenue and paying benefits, in a fair manner. The Council's Information Technology services are also part of the Finance Department and they offer high quality technical guidance and support which promotes the Council's basic values.

Financial Management and Savings

Since 2015, the Council's budget has reduced, with a total of £32 million in savings scheduled to be carried out over the past five years. This means that the Finance Department's financial management work and responsible support is an asset to the Council's departments when delivering for the people of Gwynedd at a financially difficult time. Through conscientious financial management, the Department has helped the Council manage to keep within its budget every year between 2015/16 and 2019/20.

In a financial climate where the Council is required to reduce its budgets every year due to continuous restrictions on public expenditure, as well as reliable financial estimates and accurate and fair accounts, the Finance Department is responsible for the Council's robust arrangements to ensure that all departments realise what is expected of them.

The latest information shows that 91% of schemes programmed for delivery by the end of 2019/20 have been realised, a value of £29 million in savings. In terms of 2019/20 schemes, 60% of the £5.4 million of planned

savings have been realised during the year, with 16 schemes slipping and eight schemes at risk in terms of achieving.

Internal Audit

The Council's Internal Audit service gives confidence to the citizen and the Council on the Council's control environment and governance arrangements through independent and objective reporting to the Head of Finance and the Audit and Governance Committee.

During 2019/20, the service undertook 49 audits, with the majority either being awarded a 'high' or 'adequate' assurance level, but four inspections received a 'limited' opinion.

In addition to the Internal Audit work within Gwynedd Council, the service has offered an internal audit service to 70 town and community councils in Gwynedd and Anglesey. Very positive observations were received from the councils that collaborated with the Service, which in turn has led to invitations to fulfil the same role again.

The Service also undertook internal audits on behalf of Snowdonia National Park Authority, GwE and Byw'n lach company.

Pensions

The Pensions Service administrates the Local Government Pension Scheme on behalf of over 40 employers, including Gwynedd, Anglesey and Conwy councils. The service focuses on operating accurately and promptly on behalf of its members. The general performance of the Service is stable, with an

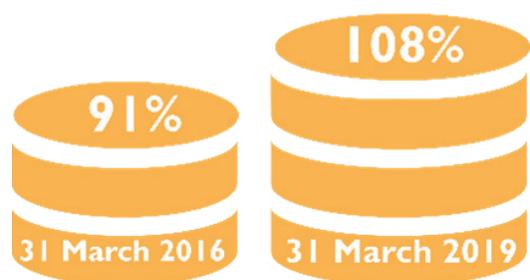
improvement in the time taken to send out estimate letters, but an increase in the days taken to acknowledge a member's death. The Service will try to improve this in 2020/21.

In January 2020, a self-service website was launched, which allows staff and pensioners to update their personal details, and estimate their pension and lump sum when retiring.

Significant progress has been made with the i-Connect project, which allows the Fund's employers to share data on a monthly basis with the administering authority, rather than at the end of a financial year. This means that the information in the pensions system is as current as possible. In 2020/21, it is intended to transfer the final employer to the system.

Another project completed in 2019/20 was the three-yearly valuation of the Pension Fund. The Actuary praised the fact that the quality of the data was of a high standard. At the end of the valuation, it was noted that there had been an improvement in the Fund's position - an increase from 91% on 31 March 2016 to 108% on 31 March 2019.

Valuation increase of the Gwynedd Pension Fund



As a result of the Covid-19 crisis, on 31 March 2020, the value of the Pension Fund had dropped to £1.94 billion, due to a 15.9% slump in the global equity markets in the final quarter of 2019/20. By 20 May 2020, markets had picked up, and the value of the Gwynedd Fund had returned to the level seen on 31 March 2019, namely £2.08 billion, and the

Fund 108% funded.

Taxes

In 2019/20, the Council Tax collection (i.e. collection rate during the year) was 96.8% compared to 96.6% in 2018/19 and 97.1% in 2017/18. The collection rate during the year is the national performance indicator, but it should be noted that the vast majority of the money that is due is collected eventually.



Benefits

The average time taken to process a new Housing Benefit application in 2019/20 was 15.68 days, and the average time taken to process a notice of change in circumstances for Housing Benefit was 4.78 days. This is an improvement on the 2018/19 figures (10.62 & 5.51) and also compares favourably against the national processing figures published by DWP, namely 17 days (new applications) and six days (changes).

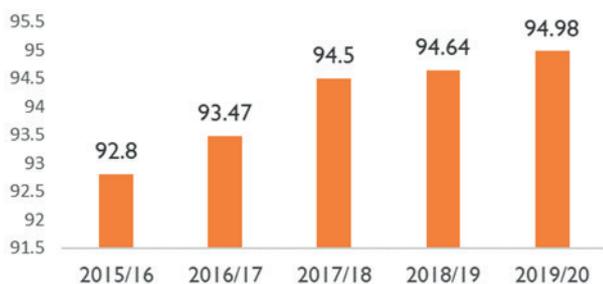
In addition, we have assisted 1,737 families through support from the Discretionary Housing Payments Fund (DHP), which is extra support towards paying rent. In doing so, we have been able to assist a significant number of Gwynedd tenants to remain in their existing homes or move to a new property.

Income

The Income Service processes cash receipts and collects the Council's debts promptly and efficiently. The service managed to collect

94.98% of invoices raised by the Council in 2019/20, compared to 94.64% in 2018/19. The rate of prompt collections (i.e. payment received within the quarter) was consistently approximately 89% throughout the year. The Income Service deals sensitively with the circumstances of debtors by agreeing on a payment arrangement with some debtors.

Rate of various debt collection within the quarter - Value (%)



Information Technology

The Information Technology (IT) Service provides and supports technology of all kinds to help the people of Gwynedd to gain easy access to the Council's information and services, and for staff to work efficiently.

The Council's current IT Strategy was adopted in 2016 and implementing the strategy has enabled the service to develop and pioneer when providing support for the Council's services. In light of the Covid-19 crisis, the new IT strategy will require a different slant and we will develop a digital strategy to support recovery during and after the pandemic.

Prior to the crisis, a maximum of 138 users were working flexibly via VPN (technology to be able to work safely over the web outside the office). By 30 March 2020, the figure increased to 1,292 VPN users, with the requirement for Council staff to work from home for an indefinite period. Over 30 Wi-

Fi points were distributed, to enable staff to use their computer and desk phone from home, including allowing Galw Gwynedd to operate fully from home during the crisis. This has enabled the Council to continue to provide services and respond to the people of Gwynedd during the crisis.

Likewise, a significant number of staff were assisted to load systems (e-mail and others) onto their personal devices, increasing their flexibility to work from anywhere.

With officers and elected members working from home, holding face-to-face meetings was brought to an abrupt end. A few officers were using 'Skype for Business' and the work of migrating to 'Microsoft Teams' was hastened and this now is the cornerstone for contact and officer meetings within the Council.

Several other provisions have been introduced by the IT Service in 2019/20 to enable the Council's services to use technology in a more effective and efficient manner. A system to Manage Relationships with Customers was developed for the Consultancy Department, which not only improves the Department's efficiency but has also avoided the cost of procuring an external system. Among the improvements to other services, the 'Managing Organisations' Income' project will lead to improving efficiency within the Income Service, as well as deliver savings.

An obvious change which is continuing is developing on-line and self-service services in order to access the Council's services. In 2019/20, an electronic student transport pass was introduced within the 'Gwynedd app', and an app for supply teachers is currently under development.

One of the priorities of the IT Service is

to ensure that the Council's website is available to the public, and that the Council's network is available to its staff. The service's performance on these aspects has been consistent, with the network available 99.99% of the time in 2019/20.



The national 'Gold' standard on the standard and cleanliness of data contained in the Gwynedd Land and Property register was not achieved lightly, and we will continue to work hard to maintain that standard in 2020/21.

Corporate Support Department

Together with the work this Department undertakes to realise the Improvement Priorities in Part 1, the remainder of its 'day-to-day' work also contributes to the Council's ambition.

Customer Contact

2019/20 was a successful year in increasing the number of services available to Gwynedd residents through on-line self service. It is now possible for Gwynedd residents to access a number of services at a convenient time for them, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It also provides a more cost-effective way of contacting the Council for a service.



Gwynedd residents and businesses can now get in touch about 27 matters relating to highways, ordering and paying for a parking ticket, paying for school meals, and creating a self-service business account. This year, for the first time, it is possible to show that 50% of service requests in four fields are presented on-line, with 84% of the requests to renew a parking permit presented in this way. During 2019/20, 9,641 residents have opened a new self-service account.



We provide a telephone service through Galw Gwynedd, but the performance has declined compared to the previous year.

Time taken to answer phone calls in Galw Gwynedd



We are aware that there is room to regain some ground in this respect and have agreed on amended arrangements for the future in order to improve the performance. One of the steps taken already is to introduce the on-line chat service and there are plans to extend this provision shortly. 50% of residents who contacted Galw Gwynedd gave 10 out of 10 for the service with a high percentage of the reasons for a lower score because there was no follow-up by individual services to the original contact.

Communication

Holding a two-way dialogue with the people of Gwynedd in order to share information about the Council's services and to hear our residents' opinion is a priority. Eight exercises to gather the opinion of the people of Gwynedd about various services were held in 2019/20 with 2,200 individuals taking advantage of these opportunities to give their opinion. We also managed to recruit 654 members to the Citizens' Panel in its new guise. By March 2020 29,500 individuals were receiving video clips, digital images and messages daily through the Council's Twitter, Facebook and Instagram accounts. In addition, the Council website received 1,925,832 individual hits over the course of the year.

Registering Births, Deaths and Marriages

The service's performance was maintained with 93% of registrations of death being made within five days, which exceeds the Government's expectations of 90%.

A very positive report was received about the performance of the Service from the General Register Office and work of establishing an on-line appointments system has been completed with the intention of introducing this provision during the first few months of 2020/21.

Council Business Support

In 2019/20, an Equality Plan for 2020-24 was adopted which reflects the priority the Council wishes to give to this field, and which identifies specific on which to focus during the Plan period.

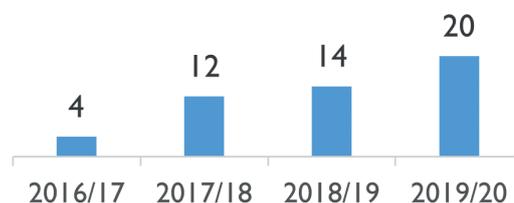
Support is provided to the Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board which seeks to ensure that public services providers collaborate in order to improve the well-being of citizens. Following the publication of the Well-being Plan, the Board has confirmed the delivery arrangements and is implementing work programmes in order to contribute towards the well-being goals and priority fields.

Research and Information

We are acutely aware that the information we hold about people and resources constitutes sensitive and valuable data.

There has been a small, but consistent, increase in the number of information incidents in recent years and plans are in place in order to draw attention to and emphasise how crucial it is to protect information across the Council's departments.

Number of information breaches where information about an individual has been stolen/lost/sent to the wrong address

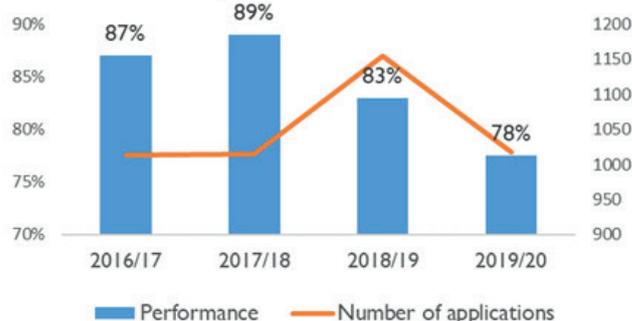


Our priority is to continue to ensure that every member of staff has received training on how to protect data, including providing repeat training as and when necessary, so that similar incidents do not occur in future.

During the year, the number of requests from individuals wishing to see information about themselves (data protection requests) has increased again to 66. Despite the further increase in the number of requests received, the average time taken to respond to these requests has reduced from 40 to 28 days, which is line with the requirement to respond within the expected time-frame of one calendar month.

Additionally, 1,018 freedom of information requests were made during the year. However, the prompt response rate dropped and this was mainly due to the number of requests made to one Service.

Freedom of Information Requests - percentage replied to within 20 working days across the Council



The Service's officers were prominent in the successful effort to get the Office of National Statistics to change the ethnic group question in the 2021 Census while the 'Gwynedd Areas Profile', which is a tool that holds information about small areas across Gwynedd (180 different pieces of information), has been developed by us to help services.

Furthermore, a survey of tourism bed stock in Gwynedd was completed, which will help the Economy and Community Department to support the sector, and obtain more resources for Gwynedd in order to respond to the pressures on services stemming from the presence of tourists.

Purchasing

In addition to the work on the 'Keeping the Benefit Local' Improvement Priority, the Procurement Service also collaborated with departments across the Council in order to establish contracts and arrangements that have given them the opportunity to save money. In 2019/20, opportunities were identified to save a total of £425,115.

Democracy and Language



The purpose of the Democracy Service is to support Councillors in order that they can make decisions and act in the interests of the residents of Gwynedd. For the 2019/20 period, the percentage of committee agendas published within the

timetable (at least five working days before the meeting) reduced to 92%, compared to 97% in 2018/19. Work with report authors is continuing in order to improve this performance.

The standard of the work produced by the Translation Unit continues to be appreciated,

with 98.5% of the satisfaction questionnaires completed scoring the written translation service a 5 out of 5. The project to allow remote access to Council meetings has progressed significantly at the end of 2019/20 and it is anticipated that virtual meetings will become increasingly familiar within the Council in future.

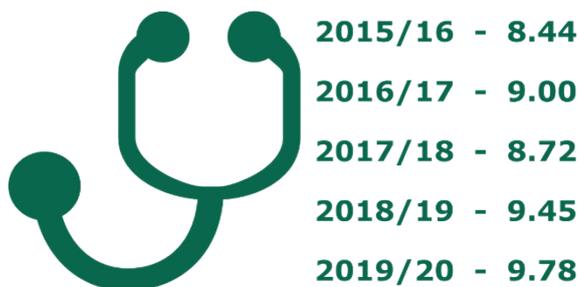
There has been a campaign on social media to increase the profile and promote the work of "Hunaniaith" (Gwynedd's language initiative). New arrangements were established for the Management Board and a public consultation has been arranged in order to obtain the public opinion regarding what could be done to promote the Welsh language in our communities.

Human Resources

We are delighted that the changes made in 2018/19 have again meant that minimum wage at the Council has increased to £9.43 per hour from April 2020 onwards. This compares with £8.72 for the National Living Wage and the £9.30 per hour recognised as the Real Living Wage by the Living Wage Foundation.

Although we saw an increase in the number of sick days per staff member during 2019/20 compared with the previous year, we continue to be among the Councils with the lowest level of sickness absence.

Number of days lost on average per head as a result of sick leave



further training within one specific Service.

Support Service

The Support Service provides administrative assistance to the Council's staff. The work of introducing the Self-service system to staff without an IT account has been given priority over the course of the year. This means that managers have convenient access to the DBS status of staff in regulated jobs, that pay slips are received electronically as well as receiving information in a more convenient and quicker way than in the past. By now, 71% of Council staff are live on the Self-service system with further work to extend this figure during 2020/21.



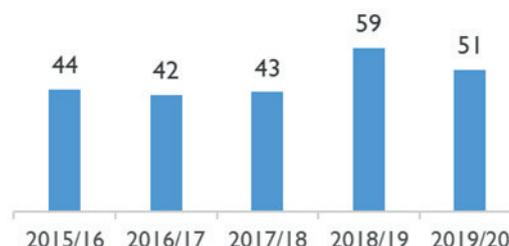
Learning and Organisational Development

The Learning and Organisational Development service provides a learning and development service for the Council's staff and elected members. The Service also leads on schemes for trainees and apprentices as well as being prominent in supporting the Council's Ffordd Gwynedd culture. During the year, 80 workshops have been held to this end, in addition to the training which forms part of the annual work programme.

Health, Safety and Well-being

The number of RIDDOR accidents that need to be reported to the Health and Safety Executive has reduced this year compared to last year; however, last year's figure was significantly higher than the previous three years. One of the main reasons for this is the significant increase we have seen in manual handling injuries and this will be the subject of

Number of RIDDOR reported accidents



In order to ensure that our health and safety procedures are as robust as they can be, the Unit continues to run a programme of inspections and assesses any weaknesses that exist in individual departments and discusses those weaknesses with the relevant heads.

Local Priority

Investigating the possibility of collaborating with Partneriaeth Penllyn in order to transfer responsibility for resources within the community in order to allow them to use the income to maintain local services has been identified as a priority in the Penllyn area. Discussions have been held and these will continue in order to develop an alternative model for transferring responsibility for the resources within the community.

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 support themselves and their families
- Live in a naturally Welsh society.

Legal Services

The Legal Service provides a full legal service for all the departments within the Council. In order to generate income, we also provide the same service for external clients. We continue to receive consistently positive feedback, with the 2019/20 customer satisfaction survey showing that 86% of clients were fully satisfied (a score of 10 out of 10) with the service provided. We monitor the performance level and the reasons for attributing a score lower than 10/10 closely, and respond to messages that derive from the data. Naturally, the information contributes to the procedure for managing and monitoring our performance.

Customer Satisfaction Survey - score of 10 out of 10



One common factor that we are aware of is that building better understanding with clients regarding the impact of factors such as external legal processes on expected timescales sometimes explains what appears to be a delay on behalf of the Service.



The Service is also responsible for supporting the Returning Officer and the Electoral Registration Officer by administrating all the county's elections and the Electoral Roll. During 2019/20, we administrated the European Parliament Election and the UK Parliament Election which had not been programmed, together with Community Council by-elections.

As Gwynedd Council is host authority for the North Wales Economic Ambition Board, the Monitoring Officer has supported the establishment of the Joint-committee and its governance procedure as well as working on the Growth Deal leading up to the signing of Heads of Terms and preparing for the next steps.

As part of the Standards Committee's work, a programme of training sessions on the Code of Conduct for Town and Community Councils was started, based on providing a trainer rather than arranging a course. However, due to the Covid-19 crisis, despite holding the first pilot, it has not been possible to proceed with the programme.

During the year, work on preparing to extend the Senedd and Local Government elections franchise in Wales was started, securing grant funding from the Government for the promotional scheme.

The Service carries out a statutory function supporting the North West Wales Coroner Service. As part of this work, the process of appointing a new Assistant Coroner for the area was carried out successfully.