

GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET



Report to Gwynedd Council Cabinet meeting

Meeting Date:	28 March 2017
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Mandy Williams-Davies Cabinet Member – Economy & Community
Contact officer:	Dylan Griffiths Strategy and Development Manager – Economy & Community
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Item title:	Council Plan 2017-18: resources to extend the Rural Gwynedd Development Project (project E6)

1. DECISION SOUGHT

To commit £23,000 of additional funding, and continue with the remainder of the allocated funding, in order to extend the 'Rural Gwynedd Development Project' for 2017-18 to realise the commitments that are a part of the Council's Plan for 2017-18.

2. REASON WHY DECISION IS NEEDED

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

3. INTRODUCTION

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

The Rural Gwynedd Development Project was identified as one of the improvement schemes that would require additional resources to continue to deliver its commitments should it be extended for an additional year.

The Rural Gwynedd Development Project was included as part of the Council's Plan therefore it is subject to the Cabinet's agreement to fund it.

4. REASON AND JUSTIFICATION BEHIND THE DECISION

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The purpose of the project is to increase the sustainability of rural communities in Gwynedd and the most rural areas specifically - paying particular attention to developing the range and value of economic activity in the countryside.

The project:

1. *Responds to the particular needs of rural Gwynedd* by seeking to ensure that projects by the Council and others respond to the needs of the rural economy and communities.
2. *Leads on the council's contact / input to the LEADER programme in the county* (Arloesi Gwynedd Wledig) and ensures that the programme ties in with, and achieves, Gwynedd Council's objectives.
3. *Develops and supports the Llŷn and Eifionydd Employment Plan and the Meirionnydd Employment Plan* along with the Project Group of the Rural Gwynedd Development Project that brings the main stakeholders in the rural economy together.
4. *Develops schemes in response to the needs of rural Gwynedd* and targets resources from the Rural Development Plan for Wales and other sources for their delivery.
5. *Lobbies and influences* regionally and nationally to draw attention to the particular needs of the rural economy and communities.

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

- The Llŷn and Eifionydd Employment Plan was drawn up and adopted and a project group was established. It includes the Snowdonia National Park Authority and Arloesi Gwynedd Wledig to lead on the rural agenda in the county.
- It was ensured that Welsh Government prioritises the most rural counties of Wales when allocating LEADER resources; which led to ensuring that £4M is available in Gwynedd to develop and trial innovative ways of meeting the needs of the county's rural communities.
- Arloesi Gwynedd Wledig was established to implement LEADER in the county. By the end of 2016, 24 trials to test innovative schemes to respond to rural challenges had been conducted / were operational (here is a video of the highlights in 2016 - [hyperlink](#)).
- Five applications for further resources for the Wales Rural Development Programme were submitted, targeting an investment of £800k to support the rural economy of the county.
- Applications from the Corporate Support Department and the Adults, Health and Well-being Department for resources from the Rural Development Plan for Wales were supported.
- It was ensured that the fishing industry and the coastal communities in Gwynedd were eligible to benefit from the Wales Fisheries Fund 2014-2020.
- Gwynedd's input on a regional and national level on future support for agriculture and rural development following the referendum to leave the

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European Union was presented.

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

- Developing the work of Arloesi Gwynedd Wledig and develop and conducting innovative trials across Gwynedd and targeting resources to build on the results of the 24 trials already carried out.
- Working with partners such as Snowdonia National Park, Arloesi Gwynedd Wledig and the business community to develop further projects and secure resources to implement them.

Receiving further funding from the Council to align with the new strategic plan period would allow for the continued employment of the officer who delivers the scheme and would support our efforts to ensure the regeneration of the county's rural economy. The Economy and Community Department, as always, will also seek to use the Council's resources to attract money from other sources such as Welsh Government to increase and extend our efforts in the field.

5. NEXT STEPS AND TIMETABLE

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

6. ANY CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO MAKING THE DECISION

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

Chief Officers' Comments

Chief Executive

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

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Chief Finance Officer

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

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

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

The Monitoring Officer

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