

# CYNGOR GWYNEDD

## REPORT TO A MEETING OF GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET

**Date of Meeting:** 16 January, 2018

**Cabinet Member:** Councillor Ioan Thomas,  
Cabinet Member – Economic Development

**Contact Officer:** Iwan T. Jones, Corporate Director

**Contact Telephone Number:** 01286 679685

**Title of Item:** Economic Development Performance Report

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to update you on what has been achieved in the field I am responsible for as the Cabinet Member for Economic Development. This will include outlining the latest on the pledges in the Strategic Plan; the position of the performance measures; and the latest in terms of the savings and cuts plan.
- 1.2. I will remind you that all matters have already been the subject of discussions and have been scrutinised at meetings of the Economy Department management team, which also included representation from the scrutiny committee.
- 1.3. On the whole, I am satisfied with the performance of most projects and they are all on the right track. The department has further work to do to develop measures, and I will expand on this in section 5 of the report.

### 2. DECISION SOUGHT

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

### 3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDING THE DECISION

- 3.1. In order to ensure effective performance management.

### 4. STRATEGIC PLAN PROJECTS

#### 4.1. E2 High Value and Quality Jobs

- 4.1.1 ***The purpose of this project is to work pro-actively in order to create the correct conditions to develop high value and quality jobs in Gwynedd.***
- 4.1.2 The one to one work programme with prospective investors is continuing, with high praise from those businesses who receive the support. 14 investors have received support since I reported to you last, and consequently, 10 high value jobs have been created in the County and 92 high value jobs (salary in excess of £26k) have been safeguarded.

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- 4.1.3 I requested that the Department scrutinise these job figures as I was eager to see in which areas and sectors the jobs are based. This analysis shows that the jobs created/safeguarded are based in the Arfon area. 75% of these jobs have been created in the digital sector and 25% in the food sector. It appears that the main reason for this is because the high value sectors are more developed in Arfon.
- 4.1.4 Every effort is being made to work on developments in the Meirionnydd area, especially the Trawsfynydd and Llanbedr Aerospace Centre sites. These developments are still not developed enough to create jobs, however we must continue to lay the foundations to enable significant developments that are likely to create hundreds of jobs in the area.
- 4.1.5 It has become apparent that there are fewer enquiries about setting up and growing high value businesses in the Dwyfor area, and there are also fewer strategic sites for locating high value businesses. In acknowledging that the situation in that area is difficult and challenging, I have asked the department to revisit the Llŷn and Meirionnydd Employment Plan to see if we can focus on specific matters within those areas.

## 4.2. E5 Digital Gwynedd

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

### Infrastructure

The project is continuing to collaborate with Welsh Government / BT to deliver the Superfast Wales project in the county. There is some delay in the Government's new scheme but I've recently received confirmation that Superfast Cymru 2 will begin in 2018. By now: **86% of homes and businesses can receive superfast broadband in the county**, with the number of subscribers at 43%, namely the highest in Wales. Though these figures are encouraging, I am eager for us to increase the number of businesses subscribing by raising awareness.

In terms of the mobile phones infrastructure, the county has witnessed a constant flow of planning applications for installing 4G equipment. Nevertheless, I am aware that companies at Parc Menai, Bangor are having great difficulty as they do not receive 3G coverage. I am eager for this project to influence and to press on mobile phone operators to improve provision at the park.

### Businesses

To date, 125 of Gwynedd's businesses have benefited from the Superfast Cymru programme. I am eager for the department to consider whether or not there is any evidence that businesses' use of technology is increasing in the County because of this intervention.

## 4.3. E6 Rural Gwynedd Innovation Scheme

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

- 4.3.2 A number of small exciting innovative developments have been approved since I last reported to you. A scheme to trial a model for supporting mothers in the countryside to develop their Information Technology skills with the Techmums charity and Coleg Meirion Dwyfor has commenced, and a bid for funding has been submitted to extend the community Wi-Fi model developed in Aberdaron. I feel that the scope to trial new ideas under this fund gives our rural communities an opportunity to consider different methods of working.
- 4.3.3 A copy of the latest Gwynedd Rural Innovation newsletter can be found in this link  
<http://www.arloesigwyneddwledig.com/gwybodaeth/cylchlythyrau/?lang=en>.  
This newsletter shows the wide range of trials that are being held here.
- 4.3.4 I feel that further work is needed to seek to capture and consider the impact of these trials in the long term, as I am eager for us to secure the future of these plans, beyond their trial period.

#### **4.4. E7 World Heritage Site**

- 4.4.1 ***The purpose of this project will be to create economic benefit from Gwynedd's rich heritage. We will focus on the existing Edward 1 Castles World Heritage Sites at Harlech and Caernarfon and will introduce World Heritage Site status for the heritage of the slate industry.***

##### **Caernarfon**

Work has commenced on the implementation of an improvements programme of £15m to develop Caernarfon Waterfront, with work to be seen at Galeri and the Eryri Train Station. The spending on this Capital Plan is in line with the spending timetable. As the construction work goes ahead, the work of identifying marketing opportunities for the developments has begun.

##### **Harlech**

The work of supporting local partners to respond to the needs and opportunities in Harlech has taken a step forward, with a report on Prioritising Strategic Opportunities in the area now concluded.

In relation to the nomination for World Heritage Site status, we have received positive feedback from the Westminster Government Arts Department following a technical appraisal which has set a clear direction and a new timetable for the bid. We aim to submit the nomination by March 2018.

#### **4.5. T7 High-profile and strategic events**

- 4.5.1 ***The purpose of this project is to attract nationally or internationally high-profile events to Gwynedd in order to take advantage of the economic and social benefit that will ensue.***
- 4.5.2 The project has been working closely with organisations and businesses and has identified more than 80 events that will take place in the County next year. We have managed to attract three year investment to the Hardline Red Bull Mountain Biking event in Dinas Mawddwy thus securing its future within the County.

- 4.5.3 Further work has also been undertaken to attract additional investment in events at Plas Heli and Festival No. 6. One challenge faced by this project is Welsh Government's expectation that the Council should fund a number of these major events.
- 4.5.4 Up to the end of September 2017, it was reported that a benefit of £2.5m had been generated (37% of the outcome for 2016/17) but having challenged this I have been given to understand that a number of the major events, including Festival No. 6 are yet to report. It should also be noted that I am confident that this figure will be more than £6m by the end of the financial year.

## 5. MEASURING PERFORMANCE

- 5.1. **Appendix 1** reports on the performance measures that are associated with my portfolio. I have already referred to some of these measures whilst discussing the above projects.
- 5.2. I have had a number of discussions with the department during recent months regarding the measures that are being introduced, in an attempt to ensure that they are meaningful to the residents of Gwynedd. I have held discussions with them about redefining their measures in order to ensure that they capture the information that will be of greatest benefit to them in shaping their services in future. I have also emphasised that I wish to see these measures being reported visually.
- 5.3. Following discussions, it was agreed that the Department would undertake further work on its measures and submit its Business Plan for 2018/19. In acknowledging that further work is to be done, I am comfortable that the department is on the right track and I will continue to work with them as they find new measures.
- 5.4. Meanwhile, I have agreed for them to submit the department's current measures, but in a visual format.
- 5.5. The Department collects field measures (where more than one service feeds into the measure) and measures for each service.

### 5.6 Field Measures

- 5.6.1 **Secured Grants / Match-funding for the County** - Up until the end of September 2017 seven schemes have received financial bids this year including Slate Quay, Ad-Trac, two schemes that have targeted funding from Visit Wales and a scheme that is about to receive funding from the Rural Development Programme.
- 5.6.2 **Jobs created by enterprises that receive the Department's support** - It can be seen that 39 jobs have been created since April 2017. In light of the department's support, a distillery has been set-up resulting in new jobs. These jobs also include those which have derived from the Caernarfon regeneration scheme. The rate of high value jobs is lower than what was achieved in 2016/17 (46%), and consequently I have asked for this to receive further attention during the remainder of 2017/18.
- 5.6.3 **Jobs safeguarded by enterprises that receive the Department's support** - 105 jobs have been safeguarded in the County. A vast majority of the jobs have been protected as a result of providing advice to local businesses in the digital field to

persuade their new owners to maintain their presence in the county. 92 of these jobs are high value jobs, as I mentioned under project T1 - High Value Jobs.

## 5.7. Service Measures

- 5.7.1 The **Business Support Service** provides information, advice and support to businesses to enable them to set up, be competitive and to develop in Gwynedd. The service is responsible for implementing, managing and promoting loan funds such as the Caernarfon Town Centre Loans Fund and the Bangor Area Fund. The budget for the Caernarfon Fund has now been earmarked, with six empty buildings brought back to commercial use. However, the situation is disappointing in Bangor, and only one full application has been received so far. I feel that this reflects a deeper problem in Bangor and that there is a real need to consider how we can regenerate the town centre.
- 5.7.2 The '**Business Enquiries acted upon**' measure has fallen in recent years (494 in 2014/15 to 94 in 2017/18), mainly because of the lack of financial support schemes to help the businesses. I feel that the service has more work to do to consider its measures and I want it to capture the experiences of the businesses it works with, as this is something that could give us invaluable information about the quality of the support. The Council has a wider role in supporting businesses. I am eager to consider how the Council could provide a single point of contact for businesses - this would provide a much better service and experience for the businesses.
- 5.7.3 The **Maritime and Country Parks Service** seeks to ensure secure resources of high quality in our rural parks, harbours, marinas and on Gwynedd beaches. The unit is responsible for managing 301km of the Gwynedd coastline, concentrating on seven blue flag beaches, four harbours and two marinas, including Hafan Pwllheli that offers accommodation to 700 boats. Over the past months, the service has been going through a Ffordd Gwynedd exercise, therefore a number of the measures will be amended in light of that review. In terms of the main improvements achieved by the service, the work of demolishing the Trefor Pier is now completed, and the work of preparing a new strategy for our Gwynedd Beach Management Plan which will be ready by January, 2018.
- 5.7.4 The **Pwllheli Marina Moorings** measure is full and demonstrates the performance of the Maritime and Rural Parks Service in terms of meeting its income targets and also suggests there is user satisfaction with the Marina. To date, this year's performance is better than expected, which reflects the Service's efforts to improve provision and maintain access to the Marina.
- 5.7.5 The purpose of the **Tourism, Marketing and Events Service** is to maximise benefit and value of visitors to the Gwynedd economy. During recent months the work of creating the Snowdonia Mountains and Coast tourism website continues, with the intention of including the details of more than 2000 businesses on the website. One of the main measures is the **number of visitors to the Snowdonia Mountains and Coast website**. The numbers visiting the Snowdonia Mountains and Coast website have fallen during the year up to the end of September 2017. This fall reiterates the need to deliver a new website - one of the service's main tasks for 2017/18. I have challenged the Service and received assurance that the new modern website that is compatible with mobile devices will be in place before the 2018 tourist season begins.

## **6. FINANCIAL/SAVINGS SITUATION**

- 6.1. I am pleased to be able to report that the Department has realised all of this year's schemes (2017-18) for the fields of economic development. Generally, the department is also making acceptable progress towards realising the remaining schemes for 2018/19 and 2019/20 also.

## **7. NEXT STEPS AND TIMETABLE**

- 7.1. None to note.

## **8. ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO RECOMMENDING THE DECISION**

### **8.1. Views of the Statutory Officers:**

#### **i. Monitoring Officer:**

"No comment from a propriety perspective."

#### **ii. Head of Finance Department:**

"I can confirm the accuracy of financial aspects of the report. The contents of part 4.4.1 are an accurate reflection of the expenditure on the capital scheme, and it is encouraging to note from part 6.1 of the Cabinet Member's report not only that the 2017/18 savings plans relating to the portfolio have been realised, but that there is acceptable progress on implementing the plans that have already been established for future years."

### **8.2. Views of the Local Member:**

- 8.2.1 Not a local matter.

### **8.3. Results of Any Consultation:**

- 8.3.1 None to note.

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## **Appendices:**

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