

# Gwynedd

Performance Report 2014-15



[www.gwynedd.gov.uk/performance](http://www.gwynedd.gov.uk/performance)

Content	Page
The Council's Aim	03
Council Leader's Foreword	04
The Year's Events	05
Our Performance	06
Citizens' Opinion	12
Our Expenditure	13
Thematic area:	
<b>Children and Young People</b>	14
<b>Care, Health and Well-being</b>	17
<b>The Economy</b>	21
<b>The Environment</b>	24
<b>Stronger Communities</b>	27
<b>The Council</b>	30

## For further information, contact:

Strategic Planning and Performance Unit  
Corporate Support Department  
Gwynedd Council  
Council Offices  
Shirehall Street  
Caernarfon  
Gwynedd  
LL55 1SH

E-mail: [strategicplanningandperformance@gwynedd.gov.uk](mailto:strategicplanningandperformance@gwynedd.gov.uk)

Phone: 01286 679 661

**For a copy of this document in large print,  
Braille, on audio tape or in another  
language, contact Hawis Jones on  
01286 679661**



Printed on recycled paper

The Council's aim is to ensure

## 'THE BEST FOR THE PEOPLE OF GWYNEDD TODAY AND TOMORROW'

In 2010, the Values of the Council were revised and several suggestions were received from residents of the county, Council staff and members. After much analysis work and discussion, 5 values were adopted for Gwynedd Council based on the central principle.

### The Council's Values

#### **RESPECT**

Respect our people, our language and our environment

#### **POSITIVE**

We will succeed by being positive

#### **VALUE FOR MONEY**

Making the best use of Gwynedd's resources

#### **SERVING**

Services of the best quality for our customers

#### **WORKING AS A TEAM**

Achieving for Gwynedd by working together

The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 places a duty on local authorities to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement and to be accountable for it. We address this through the Strategic Plan and through our annual report on performance presented here.

The process of accountability for performance takes place in two stages:

**Stage 1:** The requirement for authorities to publish their plans for improvement, and to include a set of improvement objectives (our Strategic Plan).

**Stage 2:** The requirement for authorities to publish an assessment of performance relating to their plans and improvement objectives (Gwynedd Council's Performance Report 2014-15).



Dyfed Edwards  
**Council Leader**

The intention of this Annual Report, as in the past, is to attempt to summarise the performance of Gwynedd Council for the year 2014-15 in an objective and balanced way. Our aim is to ensure that the people of Gwynedd receive a full picture of how the Council performs in those key areas which count and make a difference, in particular the many areas which have been identified as our priorities in plans such as the Council's Strategic Plan.

I am very glad to report once again this year that the Council's performance is consistently good and that we achieve in accordance with our aims across a broad spectrum of services. And the thanks for that goes to our staff and officers as well as Cabinet Members and all other members of Gwynedd Council. Nevertheless, we need to continue to improve in some areas and quicken the transformation of the way in

which some services are delivered, e.g. in the care field. But whatever reports, tables and statistics demonstrate, we must remind ourselves that the goal every time is to provide services of the first rate which will meet the needs of the people of Gwynedd today and tomorrow.

As is apparent to all, maintaining quality public services is not easy at all in the current financial climate. And we – the Council and people of Gwynedd – need to be prepared to identify what we are to really prioritise during this time of financial constraints. This means working together with others in order to consider new ways of maintaining services. Less money from Central Government will no doubt lead to less priorities. But the challenge remains the same: working with others in order to develop the new exciting and unique Gwynedd. The journey continues.


*Dyfed Edwards*

Follow us on Twitter [@cyngorgwynedd](https://twitter.com/cyngorgwynedd)




 **Gwynedd Council** @CyngorGwynedd · April 3  
Success in attracting European Cyfenter Funding to renovate Rhyd Ddu Open Air Center to enable outsourcing of the service to the Third Sector



 **Gwynedd Council** @CyngorGwynedd · April 12  
European funding to support economically inactive people, over age 25, to be ready for work. This targets people with mental health conditions or learning disabilities



 **Gwynedd Council** @CyngorGwynedd · June 19  
'O Ble Daw ein Bwyd?' by Gwynedd Environmental Partnership and the gardener Russell Jones has raised children's awareness of the origin of the food that they eat, and the environmental effect



 **Gwynedd Council** @CyngorGwynedd · September 2  
The Social Enterprises Forum has been officially launched to strengthen the relationship between enterprises and the Council



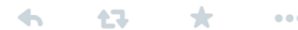
 **Gwynedd Council** @CyngorGwynedd · September 24  
GwyrAD receives recognition for the high quality of the fertilizer produced by recycling food waste in Gwynedd



 **Gwynedd Council** @CyngorGwynedd · October 15  
If you live in the Dwyfor area of Gwynedd, your residual waste collection arrangements are changing on 20 October 2014!



 **Gwynedd Council** @CyngorGwynedd · October 23  
Gwynedd identified as a Social Enterprise County by Social Enterprise Wales



 **Gwynedd Council** @CyngorGwynedd · November 10  
Opportunity to learn more about exercise for people living with dementia in taster sessions next week



 **Gwynedd Council** @CyngorGwynedd · December 15  
Gwynedd Schools celebrating the use of the Welsh Language with @Siarterlaith



 **Gwynedd Council** @CyngorGwynedd · February 17  
Insport Award to Gwynedd Healthy Communities Service. @BywlachGwynedd @dsw\_news



 **Gwynedd Council** @CyngorGwynedd · February 19  
Free classes to keep fit in Bangor, Talysarn and Caernarfon. @BywlachGwynedd



 **Gwynedd Council** @CyngorGwynedd · March 26  
The Lloyd George Museum, Llanystumdwy will be re-opening its doors for another holiday term Monday, 30 March 2015



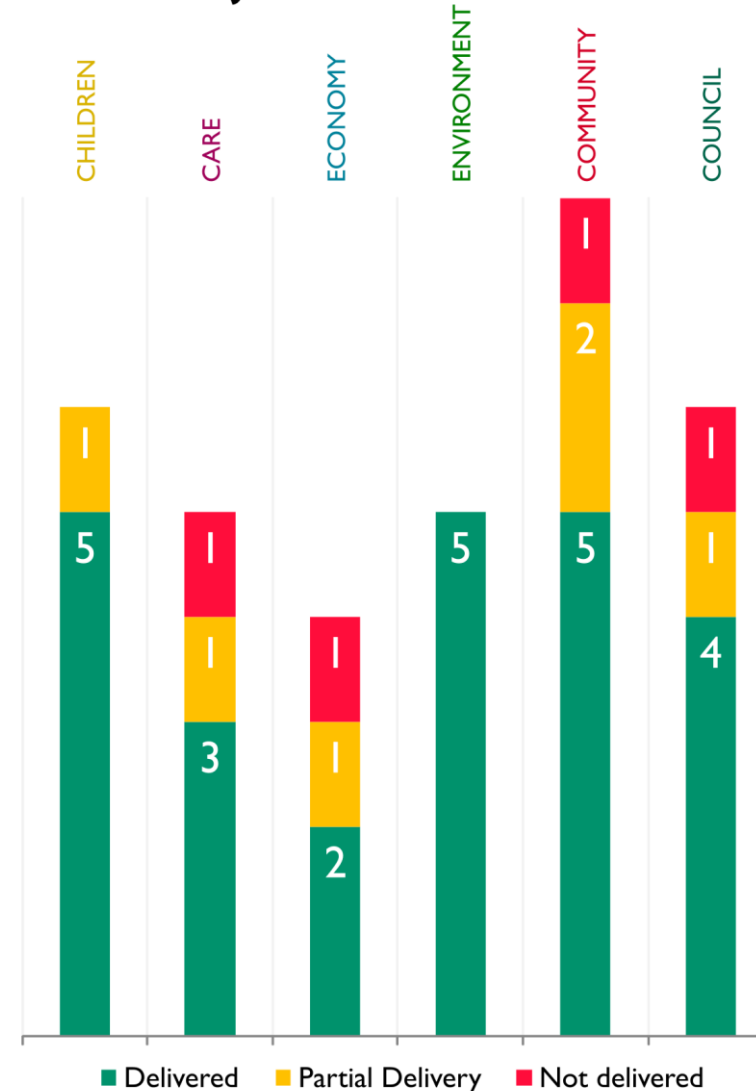
The 2013-17 Strategic Plan is Gwynedd Council's main plan, and our aim is to ensure **The Best for the People of Gwynedd Today and Tomorrow** through our day to day services and by prioritising what is important and has the largest impact on the lives of the people of Gwynedd.

The demand for core services such as Education and Social Care continues to increase, whilst the budget we receive from the Government has reduced further in 2014-15 by around £7million, and is likely to reduce further. Therefore, the Council's main vision through our Strategic Plan is **Supporting the people of Gwynedd to prosper in difficult times**.

The 2014-15 national data publication shows that we have maintained or improved our performance since 2013-14 on 25 of the 42 (60%) measures which are compared with the rest of Wales, with over half of those measures performing above the Welsh average. We continually want to improve our performance, or to maintain it where that is not possible, despite the challenge facing us.

Although we've been implementing efficiency savings and rationalising our corporate management structures, as well as beginning to change our culture within the Council, the year's performance has been good. It also shows that we have progressed on our transformative projects while maintaining a high quality day to day service.

## Project Performance



In the **Children and Young People** field, we have been working towards **supporting every child and young person to live fulfilling lives**. The work focussed on transforming the service, in order to ensure that most vulnerable pupils prove successful.

Progress was seen in our preventative work with the establishment of the Care Threshold Team to ensure early intervention for children and families with severe needs. As well as positively affecting the lives of children and families, the work has reduced the risk of children coming into the authority's care. **816 families received a preventative service through the Gyda'n Gilydd project, with 80% of those reporting a positive impact on their lives.**

**The educational achievements are improving, with an increase in the percentage of pupils who gain five A\*-C GCSE grades, including Mathematics, Welsh and English; from 58% in 2013-14 to 61% this year.**

Although it was decided to decommission the Sport and Active Recreation Project, it's anticipated to be implemented as part of the Council's day to day work following clarity of the Leisure Provision Review findings.

There was much progress in the work of developing a network of viable schools for the future, although national timetables and unsuccessful applications for funding had influenced some projects within the field. This work will support us to close the gap between the best school and the worst in terms of the percentage of 16 year old pupils who succeed in gaining five A\*-C GCSE grades, as the largest gap between our schools at present is 27.60%. Although the performance of pupils continues to improve, the gap between children who are eligible for free school meals

and other children continues.

Estyn undertook follow-up work after their original inspection of our education services in March 2013, and a letter was received in December 2014 which noted the final results of the post-inspection monitoring, stating that adequate progress on the recommendations had occurred and that there would be no further action to follow.

Despite this good news, we need to give further attention to improve the quality of education to all children and young people in Gwynedd, as well as strengthening leadership in order to raise standards and attain a situation where the quality of education is more consistent across the county. This is prominent within the 2015-17 Strategic Plan.



It has been a challenging period for the **Care, Health and Well-being** field to work towards **supporting children and vulnerable people to live fulfilling lives and to inspire the people of Gwynedd to live healthy lives.**

The transformative work that has been implemented has been a way for



us to set foundations for the future. Innovative work has been taking place between us and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board to establish a completely integrated Multidisciplinary Team based on putting the people of Gwynedd at the centre. The 2015-17 Strategic Plan will continue with this work.

Four short-term units were also created in residential homes, which led to a reduction in hospital stays and patients being able to return home sooner. **This has enabled 27 people to be discharged from hospital and has prevented 89 from being admitted to hospital.** An improvement was also seen in the rate of delay when transferring from hospital for social care reasons from 1.55 per thousand of the 75+ year old population in 2013-14 to 1.05 this year.

User independence and safety has been promoted, with **65% of users reporting that telecare has enabled them to live independently at home.** Also, **453 enablement packages were provided in order to support vulnerable people. Over half of them did not require further care services.**

Emphasis was placed on improving and strengthening safeguarding procedures and awareness, and **100% of all staff members who work directly with children, young people and vulnerable adults have an up-to-date criminal record check.** The Safeguarding work will receive due focus in the 2015-17 Strategic Plan.

An Annual Review and a Performance Evaluation of our social services was received from the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales in 2013-14. The review stated that "A slight improvement was seen in the social services in Gwynedd during 2013-14, with new services promoting independence in the services for adults, a continuous

improvement in the performance of the children services and robust results for looked after children." The service has developed an action plan for improvement, and the 2015-17 Strategic Plan will reflect that.

In the **Economy** field, we have been working to **improve opportunities for the people of Gwynedd to live, work and succeed locally**, and the success of the Digital Gwynedd project has meant that every business community can connect to a fast broadband network, with **53% of Gwynedd now having access to fast broadband.** We are continuing with the work and encourage people and Gwynedd communities to contact us so that we can support you to improve your Broadband connection.

Public events have been supported with **12 having been held within the county, 232 companies benefitting and 1,303 young people benefitting from new experiences.** This contributed to the **£6million investment in the Gwynedd economy over the period.**

Numerous posts were created in the county as a result of the High Value Jobs project's direct intervention. **234.5 posts were created in the county** with 62% of these in the Meirionnydd area where the primary need exists.

Unfortunately, we were not successful in establishing regional procurement arrangements as part of the Keeping the Benefit Local project: Council Procurement, but the percentage of council spending with local business continued to be 40%. We will establish new procurement arrangements in order to be able to buy goods and services more efficiently during 2015-17.



**There has been an increase of 885 in the number of visits to sports and leisure centres, which is an increase of 6%.**

In the **Environment** field, we have been working towards **promoting an appropriate supply of homes for the people of Gwynedd and promoting a safe and sustainable environment with convenient links.**

We have increased the number of affordable housing that is available in Gwynedd, bringing **69 vacant housing units back into use, which means that 140 people have been homed.** Furthermore, **268 people have been homed in 143 established affordable housing units. 188 people (out of 268) have been homed in smaller units** in line with their wishes.

**The total waste collected has decreased by 184 tonnes since 2011-12, whilst the rate of recycled waste has increased 9% to 55.14% during the same period.** The recycling work continues to be a high priority for us, and we will continue to ensure that we meet our long-term target, which is 64% of waste being recycled/reused/composted by 2020.

**The condition of 96.35% of our main roads (Category A and B Roads) is good or satisfactory, with only 3.65% in a bad condition.**

Although we have succeeded to do better than we anticipated and **raised awareness 1,871 of coastal households about flood risks,** it is necessary to continue to work in this field in order to ensure that inhabitants that live in over a thousand other households are aware of the risks that they face, and that they can suitably respond to them.

In the **Strong Communities** field, we have been **working together to create a confident and Welsh future and to reduce the impact of deprivation on the people of Gwynedd.**

We have been able to **use funding from the Government's Hardship Fund to support 1,658 people.** We have also been able to **support 140 families with a rent deposit** to ensure that they avoid being homeless. **An improvement was seen in the number of days taken to process new claims for Housing Benefits and Council Tax Benefits, from 21 days to 19 days this year.**

We have faced a challenge to prevent people from becoming homeless due to the increase of those who present themselves with more complex problems, e.g. mental health problems. It has been a challenge to identify stable placements for some individuals, especially those with a history of offending in previous accommodation (e.g. getting into debt, anti-social behaviour). It is also difficult to find private accommodation due to a lack of units for single people, especially affordable units.



We were unsuccessful in achieving the specific objectives with the Welsh

language Strategic Project in Education, because the Education Quality Scrutiny Investigation was not complete, therefore an action plan was not agreed as a result. Also, the percentage of year 9 pupils that are assessed in Welsh (first language) had not increased. However, **97% of primary schools (94 out of 97) succeeded in gaining the Language Charter's Silver or Bronze award**, and collaboration commenced with the county's organisations to promote the use of the Welsh language socially. Measuring the pupils' use of the Welsh language socially shows that 318 (12.5%) pupils have increased their use of the Welsh language on the school playground. This work will continue in the 2015-17 Strategic Plan.

It has been a difficult period for us over the year to implement efficiency savings as well as to maintain the standard of services. In the field of the **Council's Culture and Business Arrangements**, we have been continuing with the vision of putting **the people of Gwynedd at the centre of everything we do**, and we succeeded in realising £3.3 million of savings, as well as developing further efficiency plans equivalent to over £13 million to be realised in 2015-18. The effect of this is to reduce the financial gap and to avoid cuts. Of course, changing the culture within such a big organisation takes time and is a long term plan, which means it is rather premature to report the impact of the work.

We have also succeeded in obtaining £1.3million from the Government by coming to an agreement with them, the 'Outcome Agreement', on our performance on projects and associated measures. This has contributed to reduce the financial gap.



However, the rate of people in Gwynedd who state that they are pleased with our services has decreased, from 63% in 2013-14 to 52% in 2014-15. Only 28% of Gwynedd residents (compared to 32% last year) felt that they could influence decisions in their local community. We therefore need to improve our engagement with the people of Gwynedd on decisions that affect their lives and local communities, and we will be mindful of this when implementing our Engagement Strategy in 2015-16.

### Scrutiny Work Overview

The role of scrutiny is to scrutinise the decision makers (the Cabinet) and bring them to account. The members of the scrutiny committees consist of those members who are not responsible for those decisions.

During 2014-15, the scrutinisers have kept an eye on the performance of the Council's services at their meetings and have worked on four scrutiny investigations. Some examples are noted here:

### Services Scrutiny Committee

- Scrutinise and challenging the opinions of external investigators, Estyn and the Care and Social Services Inspectorate on the Council's arrangements in the Education and Care fields
- Challenge progress on some important strategic projects such as the Enablement project and the Improving the Quality of Education project
- Scrutinise and challenging the Chief Executive of the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board on the Health Board's plans for health services in Gwynedd
- Complete the first part of the scrutiny investigation on the care arrangements when patients leave hospital to go home and begin further work in the field
- To continue also to look at the implementation of the Welsh Language Education Policy in the county

### Corporate Scrutiny Committee

- Scrutinise the Council's services' efficiency savings of £14.9m; some elements were scrutinised and challenged further before being implemented; some were referred to be considered as “cuts” rather than “efficiency savings”
- Scrutinise the Council’s proposals for taking advantage of its “purchasing power”; this led to offering a cheaper way for residents to buy energy
- Scrutinise the most recent work on implementing the recommendations of the scrutiny investigation on the council’s procurement arrangements which has now led to introducing “category management” arrangements

- Scrutinise the Council’s proposals in terms of improving its engagement arrangements with the county’s residents

### Communities Scrutiny Committee

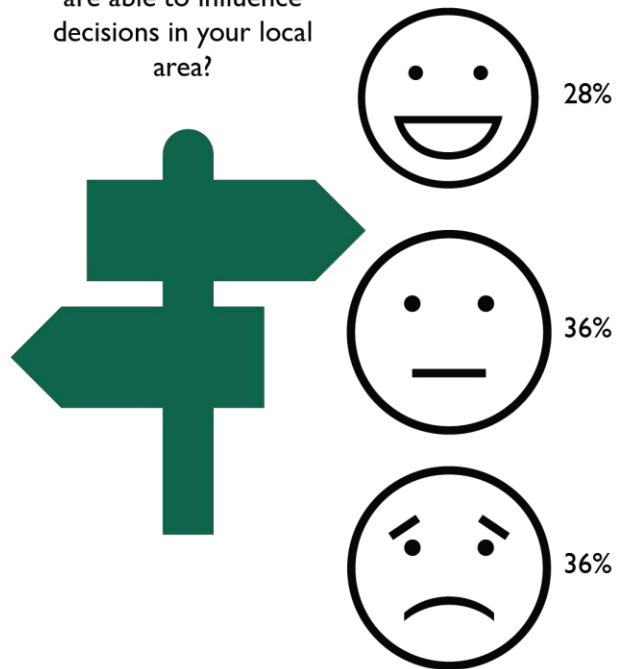
- Scrutinise progress on the Council’s project to change its recycling and residual waste collection arrangements
- Scrutinise and challenge the Council’s response to a critical review on some aspects of the Council’s food hygiene work
- Scrutinise the problems that arose during the year in terms of the work on the Briwet Bridge, Penrhyndeudraeth
- Complete a scrutiny investigation on transport arrangements for pupils who are over 16 years old and to submit recommendations to the Cabinet Member
- An investigation has begun on the way in which the Council responds to the homelessness problem in the county

Finally, the Wales Audit Office’s Annual Improvement Report 2014-15 came to the conclusion that: "the Council's commitment to become a more citizen-centered organisation and its track record in delivering its service and financial objectives, mean that it is well placed to secure continuous improvement in 2015-16."

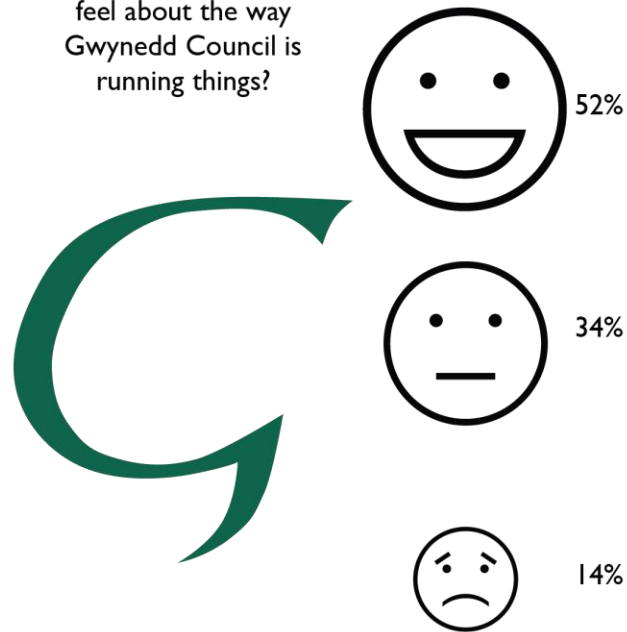
Our vision for the Council in 2015-17 is to ensure that we continue to meet the needs of the people of Gwynedd despite the fact that resources are becoming more scarce. The emphasis of our 2015-17 Strategic Plan will be on improving the Council’s ability to ensure the best for the people of Gwynedd and we will be able to do that by transforming services to become services that we can maintain for the future.

Gwynedd citizens were asked for their opinion focusing on these three questions:

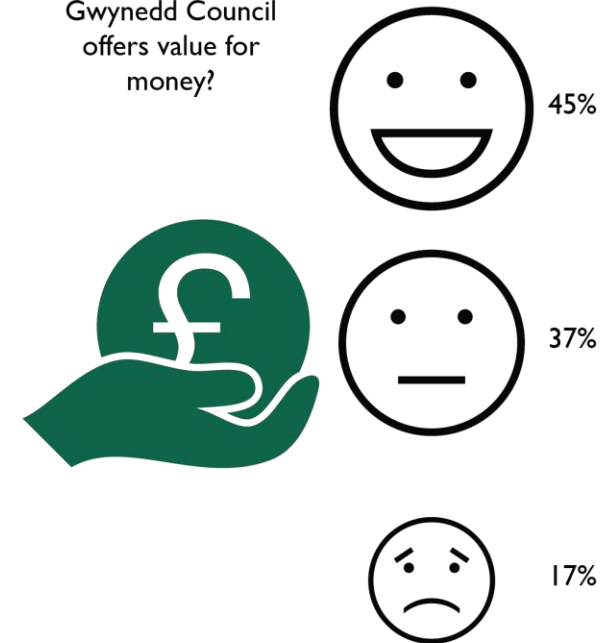
Do you feel that you are able to influence decisions in your local area?



Generally, how do you feel about the way Gwynedd Council is running things?

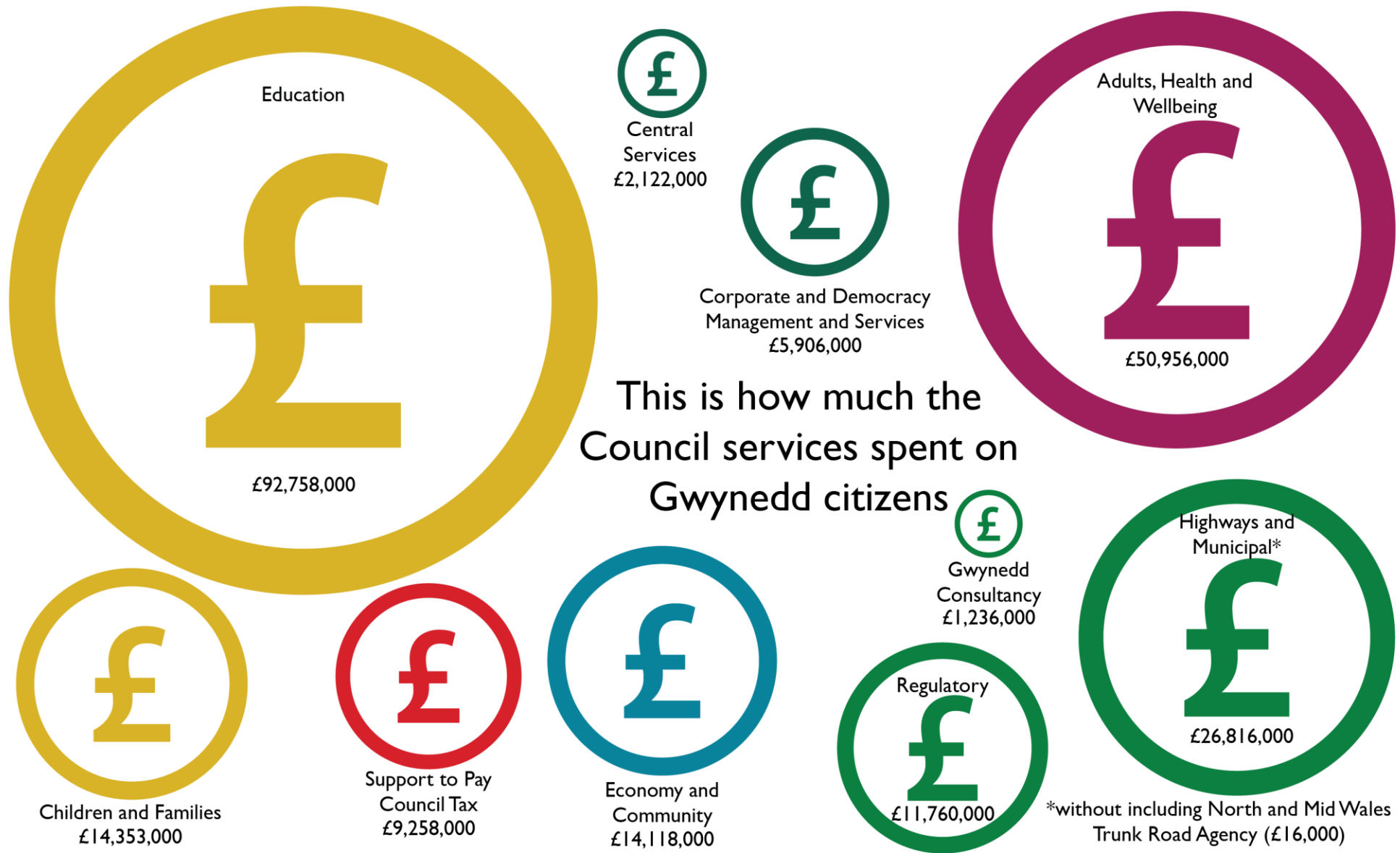


Do you feel that Gwynedd Council offers value for money?



 Satisfied/  
Very Satisfied
  Not Satisfied or  
Dissatisfied
  Dissatisfied/Very  
Dissatisfied

This response came from our Citizens Panel that contributes towards a number of surveys on Gwynedd Council services. If you would like to join the Citizens Panel, or for more information, contact the Citizens Panel Co-ordinator by going to [gwynedd.gov.uk](http://gwynedd.gov.uk), emailing [citizenspanel@gwynedd.gov.uk](mailto:citizenspanel@gwynedd.gov.uk) or calling 01766 771000.



To find out more about our expenditure visit [gwynedd.gov.uk](http://gwynedd.gov.uk)

**Supporting all children and young people to live fulfilled lives**

Children

Care

Economy

Environment

Community

Council

We must ensure that all children and young people receive the same good standard of education within the county's schools, and that we can offer them the best learning environment. This means that we have focused on ensuring that there is a consistent quality of education on offer for the children and young people of the county, placing the emphasis on ensuring that the most vulnerable learners experience success. We have also reviewed and invested in our preventative and early intervention work for children and families in order to provide the right type of service which allows children and young people in the county to live more independently.

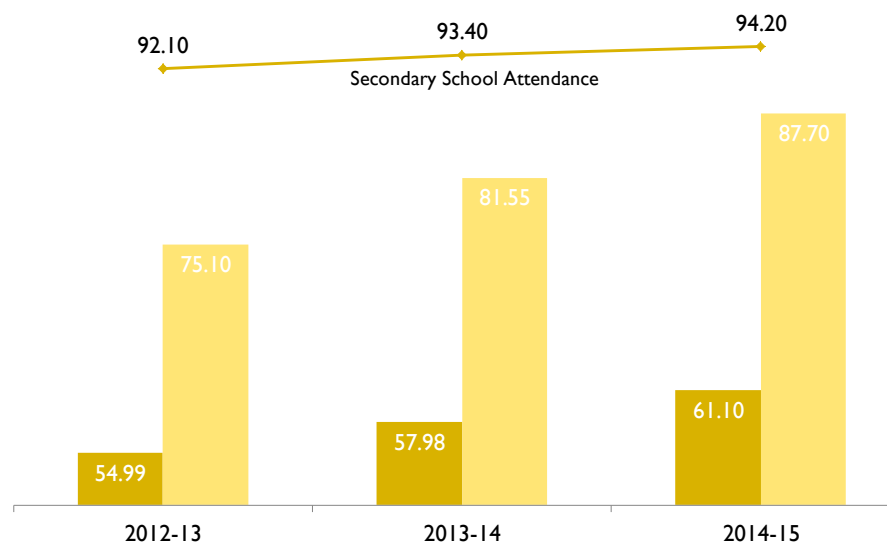
We have invested in the preventative field during the year in an attempt to make a difference to vulnerable groups of young people. Work has commenced on schemes to transform Care Services for Children with the establishment of the Care Threshold Team to ensure early intervention for children and families with severe needs who are at risk of coming into the authority's care. The demand for preventative services has been higher than expected and we have succeeded to support the majority of families within the year. **816 families received a preventative service through the Gyda'n Gilydd Project, with 80% of those reporting a positive impact on their lives.**

Five of the six projects in the field of Children and Young People have been delivered successfully. There has also been acceptable progress with the Schools Organisation project, which has been affected by consultation work and work to revise business applications which are linked with attracting capital funding from the Government.

One of the main successes of this year is the improvement in the attendance and standard of education for children and young people throughout the county.

**Attendance at secondary schools has increased further in 2014-15 to 94.2%,** which is an increase of 0.8%. These figures are higher than the corresponding national figures (93.6%). In addition, the figures for permanent exclusions in secondary schools have reduced, which in turn has led to an improvement in attendance. During this time also, **the achievements of school pupils succeeding to gain five GCSE grade A\* - C increased from 58% to 61%,** which was partly due to the **increase in achievement in Mathematics to 65%.**

■ EDU/017 Level 2+ Threshold (5 GCSE A\* - C inc. Language and Maths) ■ Level 2 Threshold (5 GCSE (A\* - C))



We have also committed to develop a network of viable schools for the future, and a considerable amount of work has been undertaken in this field during the last year. A specific model for the New Hafod Lon school has been developed and has been through statutory consultation. Consultation work has also been carried out in the Gader and Berwyn catchment areas, namely discussions on schemes involving the



reorganisation of 16 schools, including two secondary schools. Work in this field will continue in the 2015-17 Strategic Plan.

However, we are awaiting the decision of Welsh Government on the business cases of the secondary schools of the Gader catchment area (capital investment of £4.34million), the Berwyn catchment area (capital investment of £9.27million) and a new building for Ysgol Glancegin, Maesgeirchen (capital investment of £5.11million). It is crucial that we ensure that the work of constructing Ysgol Bro Llifon, a capital investment of £4.84million, proceeds to schedule during this year so that it opens for pupils in September 2015. Schools reorganisation work will support us **to close the gap between the best school and the worst in terms of the percentage of 16 year old pupils who succeed in gaining five A\*-C GCSE grades, as the largest gap between our schools at present is 27.60%.**

Although the performance of pupils continues to improve, the gap remains between children who are eligible for free school meals and other children.

In terms of the post-16 agenda, we have succeeded to promote collaboration between secondary schools and further education in the Meirionnydd area in 16-19 education and training, with six courses identified and a curriculum prepared for September 2015. In addition, we have succeeded to develop 110 joint courses in Gwynedd and Anglesey.

We need to give further attention to improve the standard of education and leadership in Gwynedd. We need to see a situation where the quality of education is more consistent in the county, and there will be robust arrangements in place to assist children with additional learning needs to achieve their potential. We also need to improve the conditions of leadership in order to raise standards, and the 2015-17 Strategic Plan will focus on this.

We have to make sure that our preventative plans are more sustainable and that we concentrate our efforts in the right places. In addition, we are preparing for the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, which places a focus on the individual and which will involve changes to procedures across care services for children, young people as well as adults.

GY25 Percentage difference in the performance between pupils in L2+ Threshold (5 GCSE A\* - C inc. Lang. & Maths)



**Inspiring the people of Gwynedd to live healthy lives**  
**Supporting vulnerable people to live fulfilled lives**

Children

Care

Economy

Environment

Community

Council

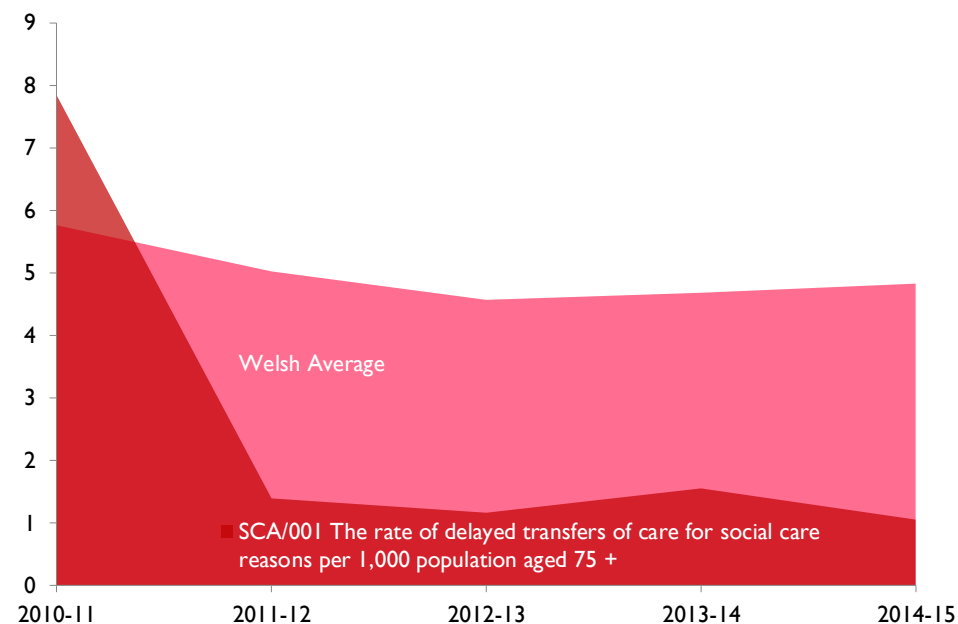
Supporting the most vulnerable people in our community is one of the Council's main priorities, and although it has been a challenging year, on the whole performance has been positive, with three out of five projects in the field successfully delivered and the Accommodation project partially delivered.

We are in a very important period in terms of changes in the care field, with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 about to come into force, and several changes are at work or are being planned for the coming year.

As we know, there is an increase in the older people population of Gwynedd, and the county is now home to over 26,000 people aged over 65 (22% of the population). What most of us want as we get older is to stay at home in our communities for as long as possible. In order to achieve this, it was a priority within the Strategic Plan to introduce programmes that would ensure that people had options in terms of selecting appropriate accommodation, that they had a broad choice of preventative services and that they therefore received community support which met their needs. This was made clear with the intention that we address the wishes of individuals and also avoid providing statutory services to those who do not yet need them. At the same time, we continue to protect, safeguard and support the most vulnerable people who have the most severe needs within our community.

Similarly, we also needed to work towards improving the well-being of those people and of course their carers who sometimes need support also. In 2014, the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 became law. Together with supporting the well-being aspect, the act emphasises the individual's choices, as well as opportunities to work in

an integrated manner across sectors in order to improve services for vulnerable people. We welcome this opportunity and in response to some of these aspects, the Council and the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board have been trialling a completely new way of working since January 2015, which has meant establishing a completely integrated Multi-Disciplinary Team based on putting the people of Gwynedd at the centre. It is early days in terms of measuring the team's success, but from the early cases it seems that this way of working proves better for people and is also more effective.



Grant funding from the Welsh Government Intermediate Care Fund was used to fund several joint plans between the Council, the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board and the third sector, including the above plan. The number of respite beds was increased and the



enablement and intermediate provision was strengthened, creating four short-term units in residential homes. This led to being able to reduce stays at hospitals and patients being able to return home sooner, during weekends also. Therefore, working in an integrated way and providing joint services has helped several people to avoid unnecessary admission to hospital and has enabled some patients to be discharged sooner. **The four short-term units that have been created have enabled 27 people to be discharged from hospital and have prevented 89 people from being admitted to hospital.** This has saved 1,998 days at hospital, which is a saving of around £685,000 for the Health Board.

With more accommodation developments than ever this year, vulnerable people in different parts of Gwynedd have real options in terms of the type of accommodation they want, which is also suitable to meet their needs. Specifically, in terms of the accommodation provision, **42 Extra Care Housing units have now been developed for older people in Bangor.** Unfortunately, it was not possible to agree on an Older People Accommodation Strategy by the end of the year and therefore we are doing so during 2015-16.

By collaborating with Age Cymru Gwynedd and Anglesey, we succeeded in establishing more Ageing Well Centres which serve to promote the well-being of older people. Through the centres, it is possible to provide activities to keep older people healthy and to create opportunities to socialise. DementiaGo classes were launched in November with the aim of helping people who live with dementia and those who care for them. These classes focus on exercises to improve balance, strength, co-ordination and to promote socialising. Since launching the classes **all users have shown an improvement in their quality of life, with 90% showing an improvement in physical mobility and grip**

### strength.

Developments in community support have meant that Gwynedd's vulnerable people have more opportunities to live their lives fully, and according to their own choice. The increasing collaboration across organisations and sectors means that there are real opportunities to put the benefit of the customer central, to improve the service provided, and also their general experience. The independence and safety of users is promoted with **65% of service users reporting that telecare enables them to live independently at home.** 453 enablement packages were provided to support vulnerable people, with over half of them not needing further care services.

During the year, priority was also given to the 'Safeguarding Children and Adults' field and the need to ensure that safeguarding procedures and policies are clearly understood by all staff and Council members. The training programme on safeguarding continued by targeting staff and relevant external service providers, in order to ensure awareness of the important matters at hand, including the need to ensure a current criminal record check. **100% of all staff members who work directly with children, young people and vulnerable adults have an up-to-date Disclosure and Barring Service record check (DBS).**

**SAFEGUARDING**  
**IT'S YOUR RESPONSIBILITY**

There are children and adults being abused in Gwynedd today!

**ABUSE**

WORRIED THAT SOMEONE IS SUFFERING? CALL NOW!  
01766 772577

Gwynedd Council logo

The Care, Health and Well-being field includes the aspect of promoting opportunities for Gwynedd’s residents to be able to live healthily throughout their lives. Although it was decided to de-commission the Sports and Energetic Activities project, it is anticipated that we will implement the project in question as part of the day to day work of the Council's services following clarity on the findings of the Leisure Provision Review.

2014-15 has been a period of setting firm foundations within the Adults Care, Health and Well-being field in Gwynedd. As one of the Council’s main duties is to safeguard the most vulnerable people in our communities, we will further strengthen our corporate arrangements within the safeguarding field. We will continue to collaborate across organisations and sectors in order to ensure that we give the best possible service to the people of Gwynedd, and certainly we will have to commit to changes that will meet the Act’s requirements.

**Further focus will be given**, where relevant, to developing teams and integrated structures, provided it is anticipated that this will deliver an improved service for the people of Gwynedd. While continuing to develop accommodation options, we will work with communities to ensure that they are aware of the challenge that is facing the adults care field for the future. We will work towards ensuring that Gwynedd is a county with resilient communities which naturally support vulnerable individuals to live full lives.

Children

Care

Economy

Environment

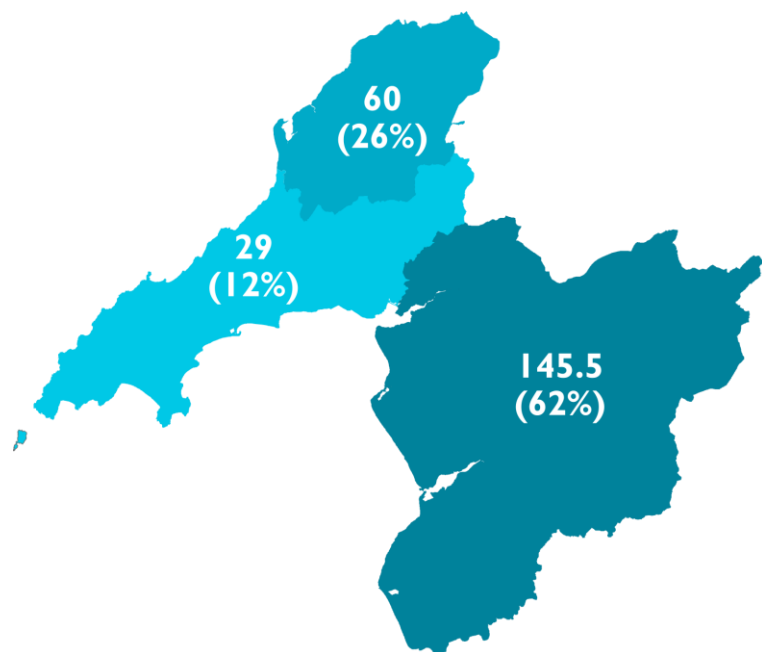
Community

Council

## Improving opportunities for the people of Gwynedd to live, work and succeed locally

One of the Council's main priorities within the economy is strengthening the resilience of the county's businesses in order to help businesses to survive and find other markets to develop. The Council identified some time ago that we must keep the benefits local in terms of employment, and that the county's salary levels must be improved and that we must attract more high value jobs.

Two of the four projects in this field have been delivered successfully, with the High Value Jobs project also partially delivered. **Numerous posts were created in the county as a result of the project's direct intervention, with 234.5 posts created** with 62% of these in the Meirionnydd area. **34 of the jobs are "high value" ones** within the county, namely jobs with a salary of over a third more than the county average.



The Council has made progress within the field by developing infrastructure and specialist business clusters such as the establishment of the Snowdonia Enterprise Zone jointly with Welsh Government. Within the Snowdonia Enterprise Zone, the low carbon energy and digital sectors are targeted for the Trawsfynydd site and the Air and High-manufacturing sector for the Llanbedr site. The Wales Transport Plan Report has adopted improvements to the road in Llanbedr in preparation for the development work on Snowdonia Enterprise Zone this year.

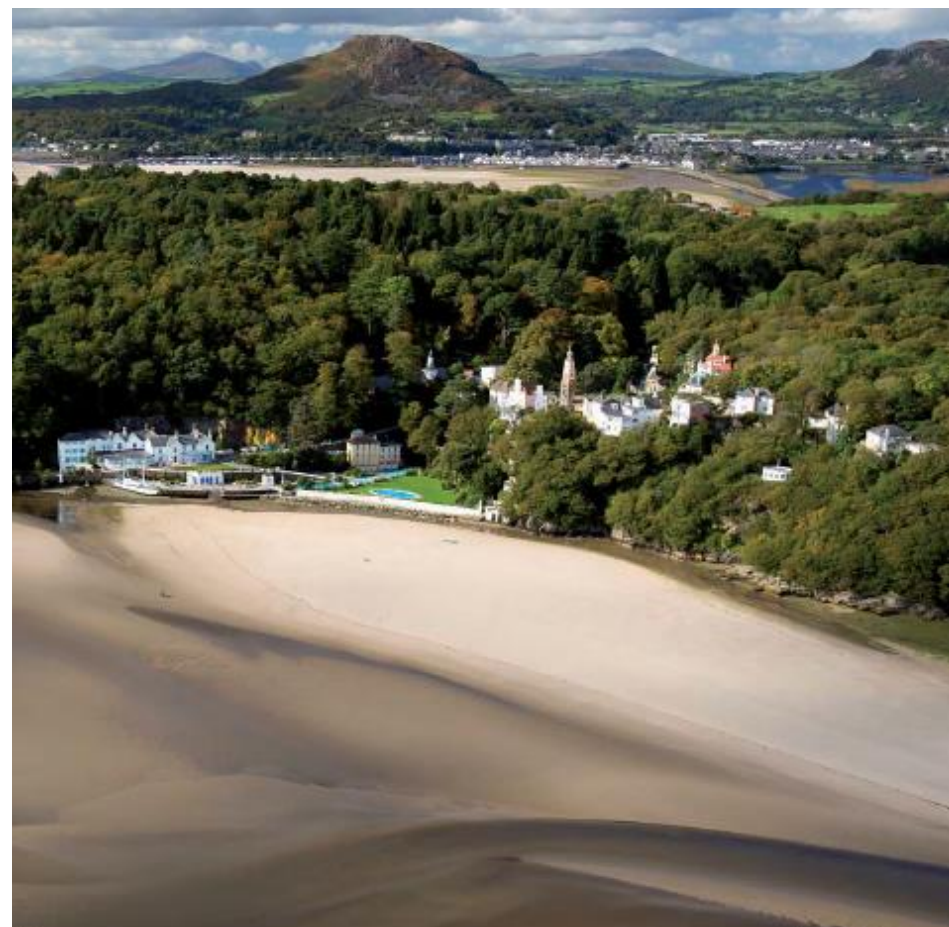
Considerable attention has been given over the year to developing the creative industries sector. Networking events and conferences have been held within this sector to develop local and regional businesses for the future. Discussions have been held with 30 new businesses that are interested in locating in the county. There will be further action during 2015 and the Economy and Community Department will submit a bid to the North Wales Economic Ambition Board for a regional priority sector designation for the creative industries. We will also continue to work with Xpo North to discuss the development of the North Scotland network and opportunities for the creative industries in North Wales.

Public events have been supported and **12 public events have been held within the county, with 232 companies benefiting and 1,303 young people have benefited from new experiences.** This contributed to the **£6million investment in the Gwynedd economy over the period.** By collaborating with Llandrillo-Menai Group young local people have had opportunities to appear as artists in events such as Festival No. 6 and Wakestock. We are already preparing local companies for public events in 2015.



There has been considerable progress during the year with the development of the Digital Gwynedd scheme. This scheme has ensured that every business community in the county can take advantage of linking into high speed broadband infrastructure, with **53% of Gwynedd now having access to fast broadband**. We are continuing to support the high speed broadband availability programme to realise the Superfast Wales programme in order to improve the county's broadband infrastructure, and therefore creating the conditions to make the county's businesses more competitive.

Unfortunately we were unsuccessful in receiving funding from Welsh Government this year to establish regional procurement arrangements as part of the Keeping the Benefits Local project: The Council's Procurement, but the percentage of the Council's expenditure with local businesses remained to be 40%. The Cabinet has now agreed on a new direction to introduce category management procurement arrangements. This means arranging resources to procure within the specific fields in order to purchase in a more pioneering and efficient way whilst strengthening our understanding of the market. Work of establishing the new procedure will continue in 2015-16 starting with the People category, and the Environment and Corporate categories will follow. The aim here is to create better conditions to support the business sector to access contracts set by the Council.



Children

Care

Economy

Environment

Community

Council

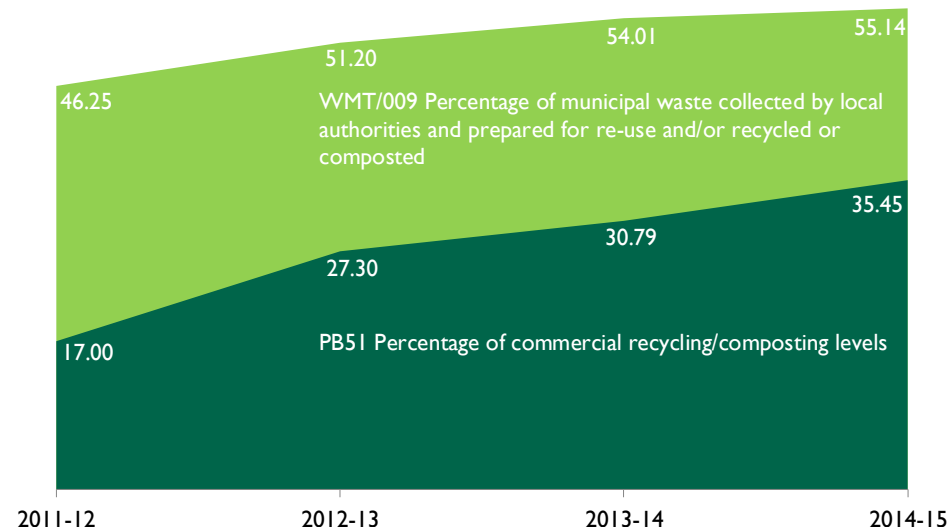
**Promoting a suitable supply of homes for people in Gwynedd**  
**Promoting a safe and sustainable environment, with  
convenient connections**

Gwynedd is a large county geographically, which poses several environmental challenges. We must ensure that our residents are able to live full lives within their areas whilst also trying to protect that environment. We can report that all five projects in the Environment field have delivered successfully.

We identified that there weren't enough suitable houses available for local residents in the county and in the right places. Priority was given to housing homeless people and applicants on the common housing register. **We brought 69 empty housing units back into use, which means that 140 people have been housed.** We did this with grant assistance to provide housing at an affordable rent or price, loans assistance and enforcement and encouragement measures. Furthermore, **268 people have been housed in 143 established affordable housing units. 188 (out of 268) people have been housed in smaller units in line with their wishes.** We always try to ensure that the people of the county who have been housed in suitable houses see a positive impact on their lives in terms of social aspects, and this is true of 67% of these cases. We are very eager to promote opportunities for the people of the county to benefit from affordable housing and we will be focusing on developing a business case for a suitable funding model which will help us to increase the affordable housing provision in the county.

We also needed to reduce the amount of waste that goes to landfill, and reduce carbon emissions. In the past, we disposed of waste by sending everything to landfill, without a second's thought about the environmental impact that this would have. It is very important that we do not place ourselves or future generations in a position which would make us open to the destructive impact of this. In order to address the situation, we have ensured that we have waste collection and disposal

arrangements which will reduce how much we send to landfill. It is essential that we satisfy recycling and composting requirements; therefore, we held awareness raising campaigns and reduced the frequency of residual waste collections in the Dwyfor area to three-weekly. We will be extending this to the Meirionnydd and Arfon areas during 2015-16. The commitment of the county's residents and businesses to reducing their overdependence on disposing of waste to landfill has played a crucial part in improving our performance and by now **55.14% of waste from Gwynedd homes is reused, recycled or composted, an increase of 9% since 2011.**



The county's businesses have benefited from increasing their commercial recycling and composting levels through a service provided by the Council, as this is the least costly method for them. Awareness raising campaigns and changes to waste collection arrangements in the Dwyfor area have resulted in financial savings of £100,000. We will continue to implement the Waste Strategy, which is a series of schemes to reduce our dependence on landfill and to reuse/recycle/compost more of our waste (58% by 2015-16 and then 64% by 2020).



We have also reduced the detrimental impact that carbon emissions from the Council's buildings have on our environment and climate. By reducing the use of energy in our buildings, upgrading lighting and heating controls and installing solar panels on 54 buildings, **the Council has succeeded to reduce its carbon footprint by 26% since 2005** and has succeeded to deliver accumulative financial savings of over £2.2million. This means that the people of Gwynedd benefit environmentally and financially. We will be implementing Carbon Scheme 2, a follow-up to the current scheme to ensure a further reduction in our carbon emissions over five years (2015-2020).

Another priority of ours was to improve arrangements to respond to the threats of climate change. Over 3,000 of the county's coastal properties are facing flood risk. As part of the work to raise their awareness of this and how to cope better, we distributed information leaflets and held 'Drop-in Sessions' in Pwllheli and Porthmadog. Although we have exceeded in what we expected to achieve and have **raised the awareness of 1,871 coastal properties of flood risk**, we must continue to work within this field to ensure that residents living in the remaining 1,129 properties that are at risk are aware of what they are facing, and can respond appropriately to the situation.

Though we have fulfilled the tasks which we set ourselves, the question remains as to whether we have succeeded to deliver the objective of ensuring that those residents fully understand the risks and what they can do to respond to that risk. As part of our day to day work, we will ensure that the residents living with flood risk understand what to do to mitigate the effects and will try to reach more people by holding further events, outside of normal working hours.

**Working together to create a confident and Welsh future  
Reducing the impact of deprivation on the people of Gwynedd**

Children

Care

Economy

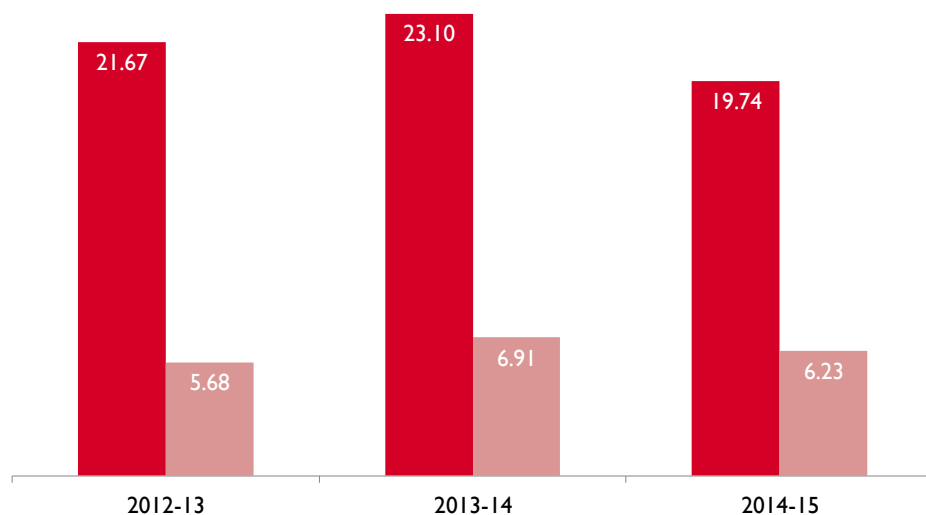
Environment

Community

Council

Gwynedd is a large rural area in geographical terms and has 64 communities. The Welsh language plays an important role socially and as part of the county's day-to-day business. In addition, we are eager to see the impact of poverty on groups and communities within the county being mitigated. The Stronger Communities work field focuses on promoting the Welsh language in our communities and supporting people in need in order to reduce the effects of poverty on local residents. We continue to focus on reducing homelessness, by ensuring that units of the right type are available in the right locations and addressing what the actual needs of vulnerable individuals are.

■ CD12.03 The time taken to process new Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit claims  
■ CD12.04 The time taken to process changing events in Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit



Five of the eight projects in this field have been delivered successfully, with the Welfare Reform project partially delivered. Integrated support was provided for people in need in order to mitigate the effects of poverty and deprivation as part of this project. We attracted additional funding equivalent to £788,910 to the Hardship Fund from the Government in 2014-15; this money was used to support families to mitigate the effects caused by the bedroom tax, and **the money from the Hardship Fund was spent on supporting 1,658 people**. We continue to implement the Hardship Fund to support those who require assistance due to the bedroom tax, although the budget in 2015-16 is smaller due to the reduction in the contribution to every Council. The working together against poverty work remains a priority for us in 2015-16; however, it is important to note that up to 4,000 Disability Living Allowance (DLA) claimants in Gwynedd will be transferred to the Council from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) for their cases to be processed. We also saw **an improvement in the number of days it takes to process new Housing Benefit claims and Council Tax Benefit claims from 21 days to 19 days in 2014-15**.

Individuals and families have received support to avoid becoming homeless and we have increased the number of housing units in areas of need. **We succeeded in exceeding expectations in the homelessness field with 140 families receiving support with rent deposit**, therefore as a result, only one family needed to be placed in bed and breakfast in order to avoid being homeless. Following work to look at what is needed in terms of housing units across the county, **we ensured that housing units are better provided in areas of need across the county, with 63 additional units secured for Gwynedd** over the last two years through the Private Housing Leasing project. As part of this work, we collaborated with the private sector to



identify the areas of Bangor and Dolgellau as areas of need in order to increase the number of available one and two bedroom housing units. This has ensured that the people of Gwynedd can continue to live in their locality. Work on preventing homelessness, affordable housing and bringing empty houses back into use remains a daily part of the Council's work.

We were unsuccessful in achieving the specific objectives with the Welsh language Strategic Project in Education, because the Education Quality Scrutiny Investigation was not complete, therefore an action plan was not agreed as a result. Also, the percentage of year 9 pupils that are assessed in Welsh (first language) had not increased. However, **97% of primary schools (94 out of 97) succeeded in gaining the Language Charter Silver or Bronze award**, and collaboration commenced with the county's organisations to promote the use of the Welsh language socially. The School Effectiveness and Improvement Service (GwE) has measured the pupils' use of the Welsh language socially, which shows that 318 (12.5%) pupils have increased their use of the Welsh language on the school playground. We will continue to promote the Welsh language in organisations and improve the percentage of children who are assessed through the medium of Welsh.

The Council continues to promote the Welsh language on a strategic level, in schools, public services, socially and in communities where the percentage of Welsh-speakers has decreased to fewer than 70%. We will also undertake an audit of the position of the Welsh language in Gwynedd Council in order to discover if we are succeeding to take advantage of every opportunity to promote the Welsh language in our services.



Children

Care

Economy

Environment

Community

Council



**The people of Gwynedd central to everything we do**

Children

Care

Economy

Environment

Community

Council

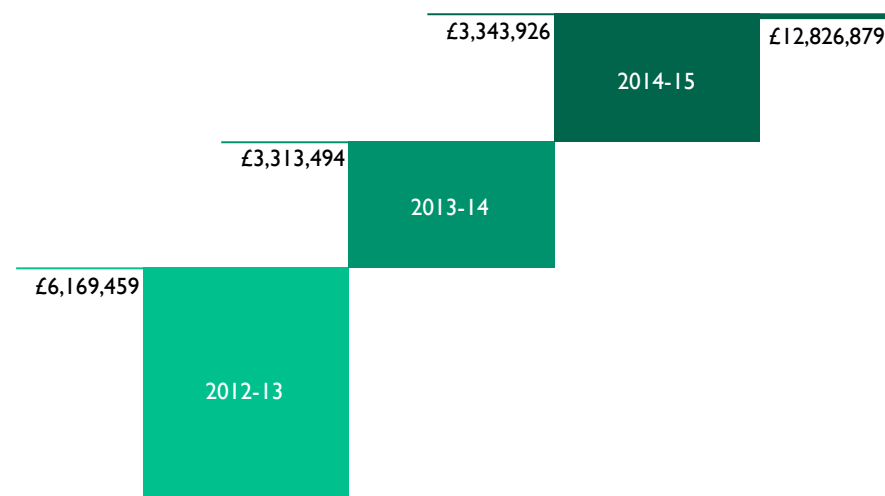
The cuts in funding that the Council received from the Government means that we must cope with receiving less money to maintain our services. We identified that we could be facing a financial deficit of as much as £50million over the next four years, which poses a significant challenge. As the Council needs to save a considerable amount of money, we need to be innovative in the way that we plan in order to avoid service cuts. At the same time we must be awake to the fact that balancing the books is not our sole function and we are very eager to ensure that arrangements are in place which will facilitate our ability to place the people of Gwynedd at the centre of everything we do. Work over the last year has indeed steered this.

Four of the field's six projects have been delivered successfully, namely the projects that are associated with our savings. **One of the year's main successes is that more efficiency savings have been realised which means that we can avoid cutting services for the people of Gwynedd. We delivered efficiency savings of £3.3million this year** by changing the way we provide services, whilst maintaining or improving the standard of the service for the people of Gwynedd at the same time. A further £1.5million in respect of other savings was also achieved, for instance, savings in respect of future years targets' achieved early.

In addition, a savings programme has been planned for 2015-18 onwards. We have identified over £13million worth of efficiency savings to be delivered over the next three years, as well as developing further efficiencies of £6million in order to get to grips with closing the financial deficit. Work to find efficiency savings was an enormous task; however, it is our ambition to deliver results for the people of Gwynedd despite the difficult financial climate that we face.

Having said that, it is unavoidable that the Council will have to face cuts in services in due course, and during the year we established arrangements in order to ensure that the opinion of the residents of Gwynedd is heard when we reach conclusions about their priorities.

### Financial Strategy Savings



It is important that the impact of the savings on the people of Gwynedd is kept to a minimum. Another way of ensuring that austerity has the least impact on the people of Gwynedd is by attracting funding which is available from Welsh Government. We have agreed with Welsh Government to deliver five key outcomes during the financial years of 2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015-16. This year, **we have received the full amount of £1.3million as we have succeeded to deliver on the key outcomes** during 2013-14, which contributes to the Council's financial strategy and therefore reduces the financial deficit. The financial pressures have placed an additional responsibility on us to make sure that we have the ability and arrangements to respond to the needs of the people of Gwynedd now and in the future despite the fact that we will have far fewer resources to do so.

Therefore, we have proceeded to ensure that every service within the Council challenges itself and asks the question of whether it places the people of Gwynedd at the centre of all its work and decisions. The objective is to ensure a consistent culture throughout the Council. Naturally, changing the culture of such a large institution will take time and is a long-term scheme; consequently it is a little premature to report on the impact of the work. We will continue to give further attention to promote the culture of placing the people of Gwynedd at the centre of all our efforts through the Council and we will be undertaking reviews within specific service units in order to ensure that this continues.

We have also created an Engagement Strategy, in order to ensure that we improve the contact between the people of Gwynedd and the Council. It was our intention to implement it this year, but due to the work involved with coping with the financial situation, it was not possible to do so as expected.

It's a matter of concern that the rate of Gwynedd people who say they are satisfied with council services is falling, from 63% in 2013-14 to 52% in 2014-15. **Only 28% of Gwynedd residents (compared with 32% last year) feel that it is possible for them to influence decisions in their local areas.** Therefore, we need to improve engagement with the people of Gwynedd on decisions which affect their lives and their areas, as well as ensuring a consistent culture throughout the Council of placing the people of Gwynedd at the centre of everything we do.

We will need to continue with the Engagement Strategy project in order to be able to include the people of Gwynedd in our decisions whilst ensuring that they contribute towards the future of our services. We will need to implement the Engagement Strategy in 2015-16, whilst ensuring that the appropriate support is available for managers to implement it.