

GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET



Report to a meeting of Gwynedd Council Cabinet

Date of meeting:	30 March 2021
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Gareth Thomas
Contact Officer:	Roland Evans
Contact Telephone Number:	01286 679 450
Title of Item:	Gwynedd Sustainable Visitor Economy Principles

1. Decision Sought

To agree on the Gwynedd Sustainable Visitor Economy Principles in draft form in order to start a consultation process on them with the people and businesses of Gwynedd.

To agree to continue discussions on a structure for the future implementation of the principles with Snowdonia National Park and any other relevant partner.

2. THE REASON FOR THE NEED FOR A DECISION

The tourism field has been receiving attention from the Council as part of the Gwynedd Plan priorities.

Several discussions have taken place to develop new Visitor Economy Principles for the county.

The Covid-19 Period and the impact it has on the visitor economy locally has reinforced the need to review and agree on new principles for the future.

3. INTRODUCTION

3.1. Prior to Covid-19, the tourism sector had grown to contribute over £1.35bn to the Gwynedd economy and employed over 18,200 people with 7.81m people visiting annually. This is based on data from the STEAM (Scarborough Tourism Economic Assessment Monitor) model which calculates the value of the tourism sector for an area.

3.2. Although it is an important sector, the STEAM data also highlights that the level of wages within the sector is very low in Gwynedd compared with other sectors and other areas.

3.3. The Covid-19 period has highlighted some matters that require attention, especially in terms of a lack of variety in the county's rural economy with an over dependency on tourism in some areas. In addition, there are concerns in some parts of Gwynedd regarding the lack of tourism balance that creates increasing pressure on the main honey pots and the impact of this on communities and the Welsh language.

3.4. As part of the process to develop draft Sustainable Visitor Economy Principles for Gwynedd, the following activities were undertaken:

- Consideration of examples of tourism priorities and principles in other areas
- Discussions and workshops with the Leadership Team

- Discussions with the sector and the Destination Management Partnership
- Workshops with Members of the Council and Snowdonia National Park
- Discussions with Visit Wales and key partners
- Focus Groups with sector representatives
- Further workshops with Members of the Council and the National Park

3.5 In looking to draw up our principles for the future, consideration was given to the definition of sustainable or responsible tourism by the United Nations' World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO):

"Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities".

3.6 According to the UNWTO sustainable or responsible tourism should:

- Make optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity
- Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance;
- Ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviation.

3.7 Following workshops with Members of the Council and the National Park and business leaders from the sector that took place in February 2020 to consider the threats and opportunities, the matters can be summarised as follows:

- Support the Sector to develop as part of the Foundation Economy and strengthen local supply chains
- Celebrate Gwynedd's unique culture and the Welsh language
- Living and sustainable communities with a good standard of infrastructure for all and an appropriate planning system
- Improve the value of the sector and sustainable careers with good wages for the people of Gwynedd throughout the year
- Ensure that Gwynedd benefits from the tourists that visit - tax / levy + promote enterprise for the sector
- Ensure that our unique environment and wildlife are protected
- Work in partnership
- Balance between the economy - environment - communities

4. THE RATIONALE AND JUSTIFICATION FOR RECOMMENDING THE DECISION

4.1. Following the discussions which have been held, a new vision for the visitor economy in Gwynedd in the future is presented.

4.2. In addition to the new vision, principles and sub-principles have also been drawn up in order to set the direction of the visitor economy in Gwynedd in future. The principles set out the type of visitor economy we want to see here in Gwynedd.

4.3. The principles have been developed with the input of Members of the Council and Snowdonia National Park, and members of the tourism sector.

4.4. Draft vision:

"A Visitor Economy for the benefit and well-being of Gwynedd residents"

4.5. Draft principles:

4.5.1. Gwynedd Council supports a visitor economy that is in line with the Sustainable Tourism principles of the United Nations' World Tourism Organisation.

4.5.2. Gwynedd Council supports a visitor economy that:

- **Celebrates, respects and protects our communities, language, culture and heritage;**
- **Maintains and respects our environment;**
- **Ensures that the advantages to Gwynedd communities outweigh any disadvantages**

4.6. The three main principles include priority sub-principles that set out a further direction.

Celebrate, Respect and Protect our Communities, Language, Culture and Heritage

- A visitor economy in the ownership of our communities which boosts pride in one's area
- A visitor economy that leads in Heritage, Language, Culture and the Outdoors

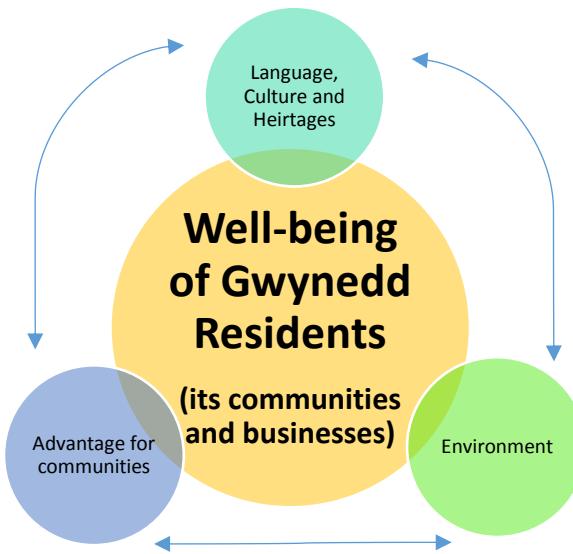
Maintain and Respect our Environment

- A visitor economy that respects our natural and built environment and considers the implications of visitor economy developments on our environment today and in the future
- A visitor economy that leads in sustainable and low carbon developments and infrastructure.

Ensure that the advantages to Gwynedd communities outweigh any disadvantages

- A visitor economy that ensures that infrastructure and resources contribute towards the well-being of the community all year round
- A visitor economy that thrives for the well-being of Gwynedd residents and businesses and that offers quality year-round employment opportunities for local people
- A visitor economy that promotes local ownership and supports local supply chains and produce
- A visitor economy that improves the quality of the experience and the offer for all.

4.7 Our principles for a sustainable visitor economy in future can be drawn on the basis of an interdependent model with the well-being of Gwynedd Residents at its core:



5. NEXT STEPS AND TIMETABLE

- 5.1. If the draft visitor economy principles are approved for wider consultation, the intention is to undertake an engagement exercise with the public, businesses and key partners.
- 5.2. Following the engagement process, it is intended for the Cabinet to adopt the finalised principles.
- 5.3. The important aspect is realising and implementing these principles. In order to do so, the Council will develop a Gwynedd Sustainable Visitor Economy Plan which will contribute to the Gwynedd Regeneration Framework.
- 5.4. In proceeding to consult on the draft principles, the Council needs to continue to develop arrangements to implement the principles in partnership with Snowdonia National Park and any other relevant partner.

Date	Matter
April - May 2021	Consultation with the main partners from the public sector Continuous reporting to the Destination Management Group and through the business support bulletin
June - September 2021	Consultation with the businesses, communities and people of Gwynedd
Autumn	Gwynedd Visitor Economy Conference Further consultation Report for the Cabinet's approval
2022	Launch of the Gwynedd Sustainable Visitor Economy Plan

6. ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO RECOMMENDING THE DECISION

Considerable consultation has taken place when developing the draft sustainable visitor economy principles.

Consultation sessions were held with the tourism sector, Members of the Council and Snowdonia National Park, as well as Members of Senedd Cymru and Members of Parliament and Visit Wales.

Views of the Chief Finance Officer:

Whilst the tourism sector makes a significant contribution to the local economy, this decision on the principles to be consulted upon does not create a financial commitment to the Council.

Views of the Monitoring Officer:

*The recommendations in the report offer a basis for an appropriate consultation process.
No further observations to add in relation to propriety*

Views of the Local Member: Not a local matter; however, consultation sessions have been held and were open to all Council Members.