

MEETING	Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee
DATE	16 October 2025
TITLE	Strategy for the economy of Gwynedd (2025 to 2035): presentation of draft document
REASON FOR SCRUTINY	At the request of the Committee and a desire to secure the input of Members to develop a strategy for the economy of Gwynedd.
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CABINET MEMBER	Cllr. R. Medwyn Hughes Cabinet Member for Economy and Community

1. WHY DOES IT NEED TO BE SCRUTINIZED?

- 1.1. In accordance with the request of the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee, to submit a draft strategy for the development of Gwynedd's economy between 2025 and 2035.
- 1.2. To give the Scrutiny Committee an opportunity to comment and provide feedback on the draft strategy before it is further developed.

2. WHAT EXACTLY NEEDS TO BE SCRUTINIZED?

- 2.1. There is no formal strategy for the development of Gwynedd's economy as a whole.
- 2.2. A Prosperous Gwynedd is one of the priorities of the [Cyngor Gwynedd Plan](#) It has highlighted that there is an increasing emphasis on regional collaboration, and that there is uncertainty about funding projects to strengthen Gwynedd's economy into the future. Within this context it was agreed that there was a need for a clear statement of intent from Gwynedd's partners of how we want the local economy to develop.
- 2.3. Following significant research and extensive consultation – including with the Scrutiny Committee – the Department for Economy and Community has produced an initial draft strategy for Gwynedd's economy that reflects the input received.
- 2.4. It is now desirable to receive further input and feedback from stakeholders and Council partners before confirming the content of the strategy.

3. SUMMARY AND KEY ISSUES

- 3.1. Comments and feedback are sought from the Scrutiny Committee on:
- Vision of the Strategy and description of the change needed (pp. 7, 19).
 - The three themes that have been identified; Enterprise, Place and People (pp. 7, 20 - 23).
 - The six priorities and associated areas of action (pp. 7, 20 - 23).
 - The intention to work in partnership to realise the strategy (p. 24).
 - Form and structure of the proposed action plan (p. 27 onwards).

4. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee

- 4.1. The [January 2024 committee](#) scrutinised the project 'Creating the best possible conditions in Gwynedd for businesses and community enterprises to thrive, and support the people of Gwynedd into work' within the Council Plan's Prosperous Gwynedd priority. It was noted that the need to ensure a clear statement of needs and priorities for Gwynedd's economy was emerging.
- 4.2. At the [February 2025 committee](#) the intention to develop a strategy for the economy of Gwynedd was confirmed; information on the state of the economy and initial stakeholder feedback was provided. There was a commitment to return to the Scrutiny Committee with a draft of the strategy to receive further input from Members.

Context of implementation

- 4.3. There is no strategic plan in place for the development of Gwynedd's economy as a whole. Other schemes have been adopted that either deal in part with the economy in the corporate context, or that address specific economic aspects.
- 4.4. The [Council's Plan](#) identifies A Prosperous Gwynedd as one of seven priorities and establishes four projects within the priority. The [Gwynedd and Snowdonia Sustainable Visiting Economy Plan](#) focuses on one part of the economy and [Area Ni Local Regeneration Plans](#) refer to the economic needs of communities but there is no formal strategic plan for the development of the economy as a whole over the longer term.
- 4.5. The field's funding structure for the future is also less certain due to:
- The Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) is coming to an end next year, uncertainty about the future of ARFOR and no successor to the Levelling Up Fund (LUF) which funds the Llewyrch o'r Llechi programme.
 - An increasing emphasis by the Welsh Government on regional collaboration, particularly in the context of Ambition North Wales and the economic wellbeing responsibility of the Joint Corporate Committee.
 - Significant investment by the Welsh and UK Governments in the Isle of Anglesey Free Port and the Flint and Wrexham Investment Zone, but no equivalent plans for Gwynedd.

The basis of the strategy

- 4.6. The strategy is derived from a quantitative analysis of the performance of Gwynedd's economy and the qualitative input of a wide range of stakeholders.
- 4.7. The performance and composition of the economy in comparison to the region, Wales and the UK was investigated and the context – local, regional, national and international – in which Gwynedd's economy operates, was considered. A review of other district strategies/plans was also undertaken to try to identify good practice
- 4.8. In autumn 2024, businesses in Gwynedd were invited to respond to a Business Survey. It was an opportunity for them to express the opportunities and challenges they faced, their intentions for the future and what support would be beneficial to them.
- 4.9. A cycle of interviews has also been conducted with stakeholders in order to understand the strategic and policy context implemented in it. It was an opportunity to share expertise and understand the opportunities, challenges and possibilities of working together. Externally, it includes the following organizations:
 - The Welsh Government
 - Ambition North Wales
 - North Wales Skills Partnership
 - Business Wales
 - Bangor University.
 - Snowdonia National Park Authority
 - ADRA
 - Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) Cymru
 - Gwynedd and Snowdonia Sustainable Tourism Partnership 2035
 - National Farmers' Union (NFW) and Farmers' Union of Wales (FUW)
 - Gwynedd Community Initiatives Network
 - Mantell Gwynedd
 - GISDA
- 4.10. On 9 July 2025, an item was presented to the Gwynedd SPF Advisory Group as a means of engaging with a further range of stakeholders across the private, third and public sectors.
- 4.11. Within the Council, conversations have taken place with officers in the following teams:
 - Welsh Language Officers (Corporate Services)
 - Procurement Unit Officers (Corporate Services)
 - Sustainable Visitor Economy Scheme Officers (Economy and Community)
 - "Llechan Lan" Strategy Officers (Corporate Leadership Team).

Form of strategy

4.12. An initial draft strategy for Gwynedd's economy is enclosed in Appendix 1 for the receipt of feedback and comments from the Scrutiny Committee, the Council's partners developing the local economy and key stakeholders.

4.13. The document consists of two parts:

Part one:

OUR STRATEGY TO DEVELOP GWYNEDD'S ECONOMY FOR 2025 TO 2035

It is this part that recognises the need and sets out the long-term direction for developing an economy that works for the benefit of local residents and our communities.

This includes:

- A summary of Gwynedd's qualities and characteristics
- The case for action and the change that is needed
- The proposed vision
- Themes for action identified
- Priorities for each theme with action areas
- A method of measuring progress against the vision and priorities of the strategy

This part of the document also includes a section on the implementation of the strategy (section 8). You will find that securing a strategy for the Gwynedd area (not just for the Council) and working in partnership are core qualities which are reflected in the desire to establish a 'Gwynedd Economy Forum'.

Part Two

OUR DELIVERY PLAN TO DEVELOP GWYNEDD'S ECONOMY IN 2025/26

By its nature a strategy emphasizes a long-term effort to be realized through a range of activities over time.

The objectives of the strategy need to be translated into action and to this end an annual action plan for the strategy has been developed by the Gwynedd Economy Forum, and will be continuously updated.

The Action Plan will list a) plans to develop the economy that are already in place and b) those plans that are in the process of being developed, with the intention of targeting funding when available.

Operational and proposed plans will be measured against the priorities of the strategy and the areas that will benefit.

The strategy's first action plan for 2026/27 will be prepared by the Gwynedd Economy Forum once it has been established. In the meantime, an illustrated example of the proposed form of the Action Plan is included in the attached draft

document (appendix 1).

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1. The consultation that has underpinned the draft strategy is outlined in 4.6 to 4.11 above

6. THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS (WALES) ACT 2015

- 6.1. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 places a responsibility on public bodies in Wales to act in a sustainable manner and contribute to the well-being of today's generations, as well as future generations. It considers well-being in a holistic manner, including economic and social, environmental and cultural aspects.
- 6.2. Appendix 2 contains our Well-being Act assessment for the Strategy. It outlines Gwynedd's Economic Strategy, and how it has been developed, and meets the requirements and purpose of the Act, including the Principles of Sustainable Development (i.e., the Five Ways of Working) and the Seven Well-being Goals.

7. IMPACT ON THE CHARACTERISTICS OF EQUALITY AND THE WELSH LANGUAGE

- 7.1. Appendix 3 outlines the consideration given to the Welsh language in the Gwynedd Economic Strategy. It identifies the main features of the relationship between the Welsh language and the economy in Gwynedd, and shows how the Strategy responds to these features in order to strengthen the Welsh language.
- 7.2. The Equality Assessment will be prepared at the completion of the Strategy in its final form.

8. NEXT STEPS

- 8.1. The draft document is now being shared with local partners and key stakeholders.
- 8.2. Based on any feedback, the strategy will be modified and then designed ready for adoption.
- 8.3. The revised Strategy will be presented to Gwynedd Council's Cabinet early in the new year and will be adopted by the full Council in the spring.
- 8.4. Meanwhile, the Gwynedd Economy Forum will be informally established to draw up an action plan for 2026/27.