

APPENDIX 2

Gwynedd Economy Strategy – Engagement Report

GWYNEDD 2035

An Economy that Works for All

An innovative, productive and low-carbon economy which strengthens the Welsh language, creates new opportunities and contributes towards everyone's well-being

Overview

This report provides a summary of the engagement work undertaken over the twelve-month period from November 2024 to the end of October 2025 in connection with the development and production of the Gwynedd Economy Strategy.

Extensive engagement was undertaken with stakeholders, including the Council's strategic partners, as well as businesses and residents across the county. A series of one-to-one meetings was held with the Council's key partners in the field of economic development at county, regional and national levels, with input received from the public and private sectors, as well as third-sector organisations.

In order to gather input from Gwynedd's business community, the Council's Business Surveys for 2024 and 2025 were used. These surveys captured messages from businesses regarding their future intentions, the opportunities and challenges they face, and the types of support they require. The survey results are available on Gwynedd Council's website: [Gwynedd Council Business Survey 2024](#).

Wide-ranging engagement sessions were also held to capture the views of stakeholders and Council Members during the development of the Strategy and the draft policy.

Feedback was received on the themes and priorities to be included, the strengths and weaknesses of Gwynedd's economy, the county's needs and challenges, and the opportunities that should be responded to.

In addition, a high-level assessment of the Strategy's alignment with the requirements and aspirations of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act was undertaken. The outcome of this assessment informed the development of Section 3 of the Strategy (The Case for Action)

Engagement approach

Meetings were arranged with strategic partners and external stakeholders on a one-to-one basis, as well as attendance at group meetings.

Stakeholders who have provided input into the Strategy include representatives from:

- Welsh Government
- Ambition North Wales
- North Wales Skills Partnership
- Business Wales
- Bangor University
- Eryri National Park Authority
- Adra Housing Association
- Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) Wales

- Mantell Gwynedd
- GISDA
- Gwynedd and Eryri 2035 Sustainable Tourism Partnership
- National Farmers' Union (NFU) and Farmers' Union of Wales (FUW)
- Gwynedd Social Enterprise Network
- Menter Môn

An effort was also made to secure feedback from experts in the fields of community wealth building and the foundational economy through Professors Karel Williams and Julie Froud (Foundational Economy Research Ltd).

In addition to external partners, the Strategy was discussed with a range of officers within the Council, including:

- Language and Equality Unit (Corporate Services)
- Procurement Unit (Corporate Services)
- Sustainable Visitor Economy Plan (Economy and Community)
- *Llechen Lân* Strategy (Corporate Leadership Team)

A list of sample questions was developed to support and stimulate discussion with stakeholders (attached).

Response

Useful comments and suggestions were received from partners and stakeholders regarding the direction and content of the Strategy. Following these discussions, amendments were made during the policy development process to reflect the feedback received.

The responses identified a number of overarching themes, and the feedback has been summarised under the following headings:

- Workforce and skills
- The context within Gwynedd
- Local communities
- The Welsh language and the culture of Gwynedd
- Collaboration
- Businesses
- Infrastructure
- Environment

Comments provided prior to the development of the Strategy are set out below:

| Theme | Issues Raised | Response |
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| Workforce and skills | Recruitment challenges | Priority 3, Point 1 addresses this specifically |
| | A need to provide training and to increase the skills of the workforce to meet the specific requirements of available jobs. Apprenticeships are an important means of achieving this; however, challenges arise due to a lack of sufficient advance notice of major developments. | Priority 3, Point 2 addresses this specifically. The Foreword also refers to the funding landscape. |
| | A need to invest in young people to reduce the number who disengage from education. | Priority 3, Point 5 addresses this specifically. |
| | Address the challenge of retaining young people in the area, and to attract them back to the area to work. | Priority 3, Point 3 addresses this specifically. |
| | Equality within the workforce is important | Priority 4 Point 4, 7 and 8 address this specifically. |
| | Conditions that encourage the creation of high-quality jobs for the people of Gwynedd are needed. | Priority 1 and 2 contribute to this and Priority 4 Point 2, 3 and 5 refer to working conditions. |
| Context | The regional economic context of Gwynedd's economy should be demonstrated. | Section II – <i>Gwynedd Economy Profile</i> provides detailed consideration of this issue. |
| | Reference the challenge posed by short-term funding programmes. | This is referenced in the Foreword. |
| | The need for consistency and alignment with other Council strategies, for example the Well-being Plan, the Procurement Strategy and the Language Strategy. | Section V – <i>Developing Gwynedd's Economy Strategy</i> considers this in detail. |
| Local Communities | Ensure that support is available across the whole county, including rural areas, and that resources are targeted fairly, rather than opportunities being concentrated in specific areas. | Priority 5, in its entirety, addresses this issue. |
| | The need to retain local benefits from enterprise expenditure. | Priority 6 Point 5 addresses this specifically. |
| | Encourage the procurement of local services and products | Section V – <i>Influence and Collaboration</i> refers to supporting |

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| | | local suppliers, and Priority 1, Point 7 also refers to this. |
| | Consider how to ensure that local communities benefit from tourism. | The <i>Gwynedd and Eryri 2035 Sustainable Visitor Economy Strategic Plan</i> has been considered within the strategic context. The Foreword refers to tourism. |
| Welsh language and the culture of Gwynedd | The vital role of the Welsh language in employment and in the county's economy should be prioritised and safeguarded. | This forms one of the core values highlighted within the Strategy. Priority 6, Point 3 refers to this specifically. |
| | The important contribution of the arts and heritage to Gwynedd's economy should be recognised | Priority 6 Point 2 refers to this specifically. |
| Collaboration | Collaboration between the Council, local and regional partners, and communities in order to deliver the Strategy should be ensured | Section V – <i>Influence and Collaboration</i> refers to this. Section VII – <i>Delivering the Strategy</i> sets the foundation for the establishment of the Gwynedd Economy Forum. |
| | There is a need for a forum to promote economic partnership working. | Section VII – <i>Delivering the Strategy</i> sets the foundation for the establishment of the Gwynedd Economy Forum. |
| Businesses | The Strategy should include support for businesses and enterprises, including the need for assistance to enable business growth and development. | The purpose of Priority 1 as a whole is to support businesses and enterprises. |
| | Support for entrepreneurs in developing their businesses is needed | Priority 1 addresses this issue. |
| | The need for premises and workspace for growing businesses. | Priority 5 Point 6 addresses this specifically. |
| | Encourage opportunities arising from major developments. | Priority 2 Point 6 and 7 address this specifically. |
| | Encourage collaboration and networking between enterprises | Priority 1 Point 10 addresses this specifically. |
| Infrastructure | A response to challenges relating to community transport and public transport is needed. | Priority 5 Point 2 addresses this specifically. |

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| | The geography of the county, including transport needs and digital Connectivity should be referenced. | Priority 5 Point 1 and 3 address this specifically. |
| Environment | Major developments should demonstrate that they protect and safeguard the environment. | Section IV – <i>The Change Required</i> refers to this issue. |

Following its development, a draft version of the Strategy was circulated to partners and stakeholders in order to gather feedback on the document. An effort was also made to seek the views of the Council's Elected Members through Cabinet Members and the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee.

Overall, there was widespread support for the Strategy; however, a number of comments were provided, as detailed below. The final document was amended to reflect the suggestions arising from the feedback received.

| Theme | Issues Raised | Response |
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| Workforce and skills | Working patterns and flexible ways of working need to be referenced. | Priority 3 Point 7 addresses this specifically. |
| | The upskilling of young people, and to utilise key educational institutions within the county to provide training to meet demand in new sectors and industries needs to be addressed. | Section IV – <i>The Change Required</i> and Priority 3, Points 2, 3, 4 and 5 address this specifically. |
| Context | Reference to opportunities arising from statutory and national influences is needed | Section V – <i>Developing the Strategy</i> refers to this. |
| Local Communities | Tourism should be referenced in the Foreword | Included. |
| | Strengthen the reference to procuring local services and strengthening the local supply chain in order to retain expenditure and benefits locally across the public and private sectors | Included in Sections V and VI. Priority 1, Point 7 and Priority 6, Point 5 address this specifically. |
| | Need to show that resources will be targeted towards deprived and rural areas | Section IV – <i>The Change Required</i> refers to the improvements expected to arise from delivering the Strategy. |
| | The Freeport should be referenced. | Included in Priority 2, Point 2. |
| Welsh language and the culture of Gwynedd | There is a need to demonstrate that Welsh identity and culture are important for growth. | Included in the Foreword and Priority 6. |

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| | It is positive that the Welsh language is reflected in the vision, but a desire for the language to be more prominent within the priorities | The Vision and Priority 6, Point 3 specifically refer to this. |
| | Reference to the bilingual nature of Gwynedd | Included in Section II – <i>Economic Profile</i> . Priority 6 also addresses this. |
| | To be explicit that the Strategy is relevant to the Welsh language and local communities | This is one of the core values highlighted within the Strategy. Priority 6 as a whole addresses this. |
| | Reference to Cyngor Gwynedd’s Language Strategy | Included within the Economic Profile. |
| Collaboration | It should be demonstrated more clearly that Council departments will work together and collaborate with major external bodies | Section V – <i>Influencing and Collaboration</i> addresses this. |
| | Provide more information on the role of the Gwynedd Economy Forum | Section VII – <i>Delivering the Strategy</i> addresses this. |
| | Place greater emphasis on strategic partners delivering the Strategy alongside the Council | The Foreword, Section V – <i>Influencing and Collaboration</i> , and Section VII – <i>Delivering the Strategy</i> address this. |
| | Stronger reference to influencing governments to maximise economic investment in Gwynedd and to collaborate in attracting investment | Section VII – <i>Delivering the Strategy</i> addresses this. |
| | The references to increasing links between the University and Gwynedd communities, and to utilise expertise and resources to undertake research that benefits the economy need to be strengthened. | The Foreword and Section V – <i>Influencing and Collaboration</i> address this. |
| Businesses | Greater reference to attracting and encouraging private sector investment | Section V – <i>Influencing and Collaboration</i> and Priority 2, Point 1 address this. |
| | Hospitality and agriculture should not be grouped together, as they are very different sectors | The Foreword has been amended to reflect this. |
| | No reference to piloting or testing new and innovative ideas is made; there is a need to recognise existing community innovation hubs also. | Priority 1, Point 4 addresses this. |

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| Infrastructure | There is a need for clarity regarding which infrastructure is being targeted | Priority 5 sets out specific targets. |
| | Strengthen the consideration of commuting and active travel across the region | Priority 5, Points 2 and 3 address this. |
| Delivering the Strategy | There is a need for clear indicators linked to the priorities, which can be used to measure the success of the Strategy. Include outputs to demonstrate the number of jobs created | The Monitoring and Evaluation Framework includes indicators. Included within the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. |
| | An annual review of progress and learning through delivery of interventions should be included. | The Gwynedd Economy Forum will undertake this, as set out in Section VII. |
| | There is a need for an indicator to measure the impact on the number of Welsh speakers holding professional roles | This is difficult to measure in practice. |
| | Objectives could be clearer in terms of how they will be delivered and which are most critical; support expressed for the monitoring framework | The Monitoring and Evaluation Framework includes indicators to be measured. |
| | There is a need to show more clearly how interventions will improve the economy and which sectors will be targeted | Section IV outlines the key improvements to the economy. The annual Delivery Plan will set out more detailed targets. |

Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

A framework was developed to measure the impact of the Strategy, with indicators selected specifically to address the themes raised through the engagement process.

Expert professional advice was also sought from specialists in the field of economics in order to standardise the selection and ensure that the indicators align with the Vision and the Priorities set out in the Strategy.

Conclusion

A significant effort was made over an extended period to engage with partners from a range of sectors, as well as experts across a variety of fields relevant to the economic development of Gwynedd. Comments were received to help shape the direction and content of the Strategy prior to the commencement of the document drafting process, and wide-ranging feedback was also gathered on a draft version to ensure that relevant issues had been adequately addressed.

Sample Questions to Stimulate Discussion with Stakeholders

1. What aspects should be reflected in the strategy's vision statement?
2. What aspects should be reflected in the strategy's priorities?
3. What economic challenges need to be overcome in Gwynedd, within your sector or your local area?
 - What are the main barriers limiting economic growth?
 - Are there any specific barriers related to skills or technological infrastructure?
4. What economic opportunities do you feel could be capitalised upon?
 - Which areas have potential for growth or innovation?
 - How can the Council make the most of these opportunities?
5. Do you have any plans or activities that will contribute to the economic development of the county?
6. What key priorities should the new Economic Strategy focus on?
 - In your view, which actions would have the most positive impact on the local economy?
 - Do you feel that specific strategies are needed for individual sectors, or a more general strategy?
7. How can we promote sustainable development and green growth within the local economy, and ensure that the benefits of development are retained locally?
8. How can the Strategy contribute to the vitality of the Welsh language in Gwynedd?
9. Are there any additional ideas or feedback you would like to share in relation to the Strategy?