

CYNGOR GWYNEDD CABINET



Report for a meeting of Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet

Date of meeting: 20 February 2024

Cabinet Member: Councillor Dyfrig Siencyn and Councillor Nia Jeffreys

Contact Officer: Sioned Williams

Contact Number: 01286 679547

Subject: CHALLENGE PERFORMANCE REPORT - CABINET MEMBERS FOR ECONOMY AND COMMUNITY

THE DECISION SOUGHT

To accept and note the information in the report.

THE REASONS WHY A DECISION IS NEEDED

In order to ensure effective performance management

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update our fellow members on developments in the fields within our remit as Cabinet Members for Economy and Community. This will include outlining the latest developments against pledges within the 2023-28 Cyngor Gwynedd Plan; the progress of performance measures; and the latest on the savings and cuts plans.

2. PROJECTS OF THE CYNGOR GWYNEDD PLAN 2023-2028 (Improvement Priorities)

2.1 The table in APPENDIX 1 gives an update on the progress of the three priority projects in the Cyngor Gwynedd Plan 2023-28 under the section **A Prosperous Gwynedd - Strengthening the economy and supporting the people of Gwynedd to earn a worthy wage:**

- **Regenerating communities and town centres**
- **Creating the best possible circumstances in Gwynedd for businesses and community enterprises to thrive, and support the people of Gwynedd into work**
- **Promoting our culture and a sustainable visitor economy**

2.2 From this information, you will note that the Department has made good progress against the main milestones of the three projects in the first year of the Plan, 2023/24.

2.3 We would like to draw attention in particular to the grants that Cyngor Gwynedd has offered businesses across Gwynedd which are referred to in the second project. Through the ARFOR Programme (the Enterprising Communities scheme), the Welsh Government's Transforming

Town Centres Fund and the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF), a package of different funds was established to help businesses recover, develop and improve town centre properties. There was a significant response to the opportunity with 220 applications being submitted in recent months. The applications were worth £13.26 million but only £3.46 million was available in the budget. The small business grants had to be closed earlier than expected due to the response and the Property Improvement Fund and Large Business Grants applications had to be assessed to identify the strongest applications. The result is that 83 businesses have received the offer of a grant to date, worth £3.22 million. The remaining £154 thousand will be committed in the coming weeks.

- 2.4 We will contact those businesses that were unsuccessful to offer feedback and further advice. We will also aim to direct any underspend over the coming months to the fund in order to be able to support more businesses.
- 2.5 There was a report to the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee on 26 January on the progress and the obvious risks to the project which are listed in Appendix 1 were discussed. Along with the high demand, the unreasonably short time-frame to implement the funding programmes is preventing efforts to support areas and sectors that are unable to respond immediately. There is also significant uncertainty about the size and administration of any funds after March 2025, which hinders our ability to plan for the future.

3. PERFORMANCE OF DEPARTMENT SERVICES

- 3.1 The Department's Performance Dashboard is reviewed regularly. There was an opportunity to scrutinise the performance of the various services at a special meeting on 24 January 2024 and we would like to draw the attention of Cabinet Members to the following matters:

Leisure Resources Service - Byw'n Iach, Padarn and Glynllifon Country Parks

- 3.2 It was reported last time on the recovery of Cwmni Byw'n Iach in providing services. We are pleased to report that the recovery continues with the total cumulative visits up to the end of December 2023/24 at 707,136, which is an improvement of 95,474 on 2022/23, although 154,224 lower than 2019/20 (pre-COVID). For the first time since re-opening following the COVID period, monthly visits for December 2023 are higher than the number of visits for December 2019. The company ran new campaigns which may have contributed to the increase in numbers and will continue with campaigns throughout January 2024.
- 3.3 We continue to see the numbers attending swimming and fitness lessons increasing with the numbers attending swimming lessons performing better than pre-COVID:
- The total cumulative swimming lessons up to the end of December 2023/24 was 29,214. This is an improvement of 2,268 on 2022/23 which is an improvement of 3,940 on 2019/20 (pre-COVID).
 - Fitness Direct Debit was up to 3,319 up to the end of December 2023 which is 576 higher than November 2022/23 but 171 lower than November 2019/20 (pre-COVID).
- 3.4 Despite this increase, the school visits' cumulative income to the end of December 2023/24 was 11.7% less compared to the income for 2019/20 (pre-COVID). This reduction in school visits generates concern that some children in Gwynedd will not reach an adequate standard of

swimming. Cwmni Byw'n Iach has collaborated with the Education Department to find out what the obstacles are and it appears that the cost of transport to the centres is the biggest obstacle.

- 3.5 Over recent months, the architects have been preparing to submit planning applications for developments at Parc Padarn as part of the Llewyrch o'r Llechi Levelling Up Fund (LUF) application. The improvements include a new toilet block, restoration work on the Hafod Owen building, the A incline, Vivian Quarry structures and the Fire Queen shed. Plans are also being drawn up to redesign the car park.
- 3.6 There was an incredibly busy weekend at the Glynllifon Christmas fair in November, but it will be necessary to discuss better parking arrangements for the future with the organiser so as to avoid the repetition of traffic problems.

Maritime Services, Hafan Pwllheli and Victoria Dock, Caernarfon.

Maritime - Beaches

- 3.7 It is worth noting that 90% of the respondents to the Gwynedd beaches customer satisfaction survey considered their experience of our beaches to be 'Very Good' (65%) or 'Good' (25%); an increase of 15% compared to the previous quarter. Many said the beaches were beautiful, clean and safe, but concerns were recorded about overnight parking on beaches or in nearby car parks. The Service is receiving legal advice on the options available and hopes to learn from the Arosfan pilot scheme to see whether there is an opportunity to take advantage of the situation.
- 3.8 We would like to update the Cabinet on the work of upgrading the car park at Dinas Dinlle beach. You may recall that the plan secured a grant of £300k from the Welsh Government's Brilliant Basics Fund. The main aim of the plan is to upgrade the condition and environmental quality of the car park and the associated facilities and introduce new management arrangements. The plan includes resurfacing the car park with an appropriate material (grasscrete) which will include specific parking spaces, building a bus shelter, improving picnic areas and seating areas, repairing peripheral walls, renovating railings and landscaping. The work has started since November 2023 and it is anticipated that all the work will be completed on schedule by the end of March 2024.

Maritime - Harbours

- 3.9 A 4% increase was seen in the number of customers with a mooring agreement in our harbours this year compared to the previous year, and the outlook for 2024 is very encouraging with a number of enquiries received over recent months from new customers who want to moor their boats in the harbours of Gwynedd. The work of inspecting and renovating the main mooring chains in Porthmadog harbour has started since December 2023 and new ladders have recently been installed along the quay wall to improve accessibility for customers. We have also appointed a local company to install a CCTV system and a modern weather station in Barmouth harbour, which will be of great benefit to our officers and customers. The significant work by Network Rail of renovating the viaduct over the river Mawddach has been completed since December, and the Maritime Unit played an integral part by moving moorings and repositioning customers' boats to enable the contractors to gain unhindered access on the water.

Hafan Pwllheli and Victoria Dock

- 3.10 There has been a reduction in the number of customers at Hafan Pwllheli over the last quarter - down from 100% to 98%; losing 10 customers. Many of those who have cancelled reported that the increase in the cost of living is the reason and that they are giving up sailing altogether. Although the waiting list is strong at the moment, many have been getting in touch to remove their names from the list. This situation will need to be monitored.
- 3.11 Despite this, there has been an increase over recent months in the number of customers taking moorings in Pwllheli Outer Harbour (94% full - five new customers) considering that a large part of the Outer Harbour's customers are local people.
- 3.12 Victoria Dock is currently full with a waiting list for annual moorings. The work of adding a shower site and separate toilets for women is progressing, with the work programme to be completed before the end of March.

Archives

- 3.13 On average during the period from October to December, 90% of users were very satisfied with the service, 3% of users were satisfied, 3% of users stated that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 4% were not satisfied. Most of the comments received were positive, such as: "All staff are friendly and ready to help", "Excellent service". However, from the point of view of those who were not satisfied, comments were received about the number of days the Record Offices are open.

Museums and Arts

- 3.14 The community arts team runs a programme of activities that support people and children to access, enjoy and experience the arts, especially in the field of health, well-being, education and tackling loneliness. Arts grants are allocated to community and voluntary groups to conduct activities in order to support arts opportunities for all; Night Out grants; SPF culture fund grants. The work that is currently underway includes 'Sgwrs a Chân' (chat and song) to support older people with Cynefin Housing Association in Porthmadog, Bala and Tremadog; 'Llwybrau Celf' (art pathways) for children in Aberdyfi, Llanbedrog and Bangor; Craft for Well-being for adults; art workshops for children in Porthi Dre. Work is ongoing with several partners, e.g. Youth Service, Galeri, Cwmni William Mathias, Theatr Derek Williams. Exhibitions are also held at Ysbyty Gwynedd Gallery.
- 3.15 Contributions are made to the Storiell Fusion scheme funded by a Welsh Government grant to support communities in need. Thus far, there are nine partners, approximately 18 activities, with around 634 having taken part, with children's packs for Porthi Dre and creative packs which the Libraries Service distributed.
- 3.16 There is an increasing demand for arts grants from our communities. Thirty-five organisations have been offered a grant from the Community Grants fund in the last quarter and 13 from the Night Out grant.
- 3.17 Work to upgrade the Lloyd George Museum has been commissioned. £360,000 will be invested on an SPF grant project before the end of December 2024.

- 3.18 Two of the three hire spaces in Storiell have now re-opened and are available for promotion and use. The number visiting and engaging digitally with Storiell has increased. It was seen that the total for December 2023 had increased by around 300 compared to 2022. By March 2024, projects such as Transforming Towns at Storiell to improve its presence and visibility in the city will bear fruit and contribute to attracting more users and visitors.

Libraries

- 3.19 Satisfaction surveys are carried out regularly by sampling in various libraries. A full Survey of all sites was carried out in November eliciting 656 responses. 97% reported that they were completely satisfied with the service and very positive comments were received from users showing how important the Library is to the people of Gwynedd. However, 15 complaints were received that the lift was out of order at Bangor Library. 'The lift has been out of action for years reducing access to disabled users' and 'I cannot get down with pram to children's area'. We are pleased to report that this work has now been scheduled.
- 3.20 This year's April-December lending performance is higher than last year's figures with 218,924 book loans compared to 218,262 in 2022/23. There is also an increase in active users figures, i.e. 52,568 borrowers over the last nine months compared to 48,518 during the corresponding period in 2022/23. In addition, e-newspaper usage figures are seen to be increasing again since changing from PressReader to ePress as well as bringing financial savings by changing supplier.
- 3.21 We are extremely proud that 'Boardmaker' Picture Communication Symbols, which is a resource for the families of children who cannot communicate verbally, is now available in three libraries in Gwynedd.
- 3.22 The service continues to distribute SIM cards to support internet access for those who need them. Through collaboration with the Council's Inclusion and Tackling Poverty Unit and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, SIM cards were distributed to clients through the Patient Experiences Officer, who said - '...that is absolutely fantastic. I really cannot thank you enough, it will make such a difference to our patients. A couple more have already been identified by our OTs who will benefit as they have been unable to engage so far due to lack of internet access!'
- 3.23 The Service is in the process of restarting the Petha (Library of Things) scheme in Bethesda and Penygroes Libraries, and receives the support of Benthylg Cymru and Cyngor Gwynedd.

Neuadd Dwyfor

- 3.24 The satisfaction rate remains quite high, with the rate for the last three months October-December at 97%, 98% and 94%. The majority of comments praise the staff, the improvements to the building and the programme. The service does, however, try to respond to less favourable comments and is aware that a number of issues need to be completed, e.g. installing signs and exterior notice boards to advertise films. We are waiting for Property to complete the work and for the Phase 1 project organisation to come to an end.

Economy and Regeneration Services

3.25 The Economic Development, Tourism, Regeneration and Community Support services have focused their efforts over recent months on implementing the priority projects that have been outlined in Appendix 1. The performance of these services has therefore been reported there.

4. FINANCIAL POSITION

4.1 The Department has a plan which was supposed to generate savings of £100,000 in 2022/23 - 2024/25, namely the Neuadd Dwyfor remodelling scheme. The COVID-19 crisis led to a delay in realising the development work in the Neuadd, but this has now been completed. It is clear that the crisis and increase in living costs, along with other factors such as the new form of watching films, with a large number of people awaiting the release of films on the internet/television, raises concern about our ability to fully implement the savings. It is difficult at present to envisage the long-term impact on the numbers visiting the Neuadd.

4.2 One savings plan continues from previous years (a total of £45,000), which is subject to permission to increase parking fees on the site. During 2023/24, a financial package was secured for making improvements to the site and the work is expected to be completed in spring 2024. Concerns have been voiced locally about the introduction of parking fees, and local discussions will continue regarding future management arrangements for the site, including the introduction of fees.

4.3 Excluding savings from historical plans set out in 4.1 and 4.2, there are current plans of £242,180 for 2023/24 and £41,130 for 2024/25 that have been scheduled, and all have been realised or are on track to be completed on time.

4.4 The Department's new savings plans are presented in a separate item to this meeting of the Cabinet, with final approval of these in the Full Council on 7 March 2024. The developments of these plans will be reported in due course.

4.5 The Department's financial performance was reported upon to the Cabinet on 23 January 2024, with forecasts that the Department would overspend by the end of the 2023/24 financial year. The overspend is mainly due to a lack of income in Neuadd Dwyfor and Storiell, due to the reasons stated in 4.1, together with the higher costs of running Byw'n Iach properties. We will continue to review the areas closely in the new financial year, in the hope of identifying opportunities to implement savings where possible. The combination of underspend on other headings as well as use of reserves reduces the overspend reported to £59k.

5. NEXT STEPS AND TIMETABLE

5.1 We will continue to monitor the performance of the various services on a monthly basis and a special meeting of the Department's Management Team has been arranged for this purpose on 19 March 2024, where representatives from the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee will be in attendance.

STATUTORY OFFICERS' VIEWS

Monitoring Officer:

No observations to add in relation to propriety.

Head of Finance Department:

"I am satisfied that the report is a fair reflection of the financial situation of the Economy and Community Department".

ECONOMY AND COMMUNITY DEPARTMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT	
Improvement Priority:	A Prosperous Gwynedd
Project:	Regenerating Communities and Town Centres
Project leader's Report:	Llyr B Jones
Date:	25 January 2024
The Project's Aim:	We will establish a Regeneration Framework by developing Local Regeneration Plans for 13 catchment areas across the County and will ensure cross-departmental arrangements within the Council to ensure that work programmes intertwine and share information with communities by continuing with the engagement work. Town/City Centre action plans will be prepared for individual towns.

1. What has been achieved since the previous meeting?

- Draft Local Regeneration Plans have been prepared for 13 catchment areas and have been circulated to the relevant Council departments.
- The first meeting of the regeneration Framework Cross-Departmental Group has taken place, and terms of reference have been agreed.
- A £1.8m SPF Funding grant proposal letter was accepted for the Improvement of the Gwynedd Town Centres Experience Project
- A Group to Improve the Town Centres Experience has been established comprising officers from relevant Departments to coordinate and implement the project.
- The Bangor and Caernarfon Town Centres Schemes have been completed, and the Porthmadog Town Centre Scheme commissioned (with a Welsh Government Transforming Towns grant).
- A grant has been secured for the preparation of town centre plans for Pwllheli, Bala and Dolgellau.
- A meeting of the Council's Vacant Property Group has been held which reviews the priority list of vacant properties.

2. The next steps

- Departments will be invited to submit comments / information on the Local Regeneration Plans by 8 February.
- We will prepare presentations to the Area Forums to brief Local Members.
- We will organise a series of workshops in the local communities to discuss the Local Regeneration Plans and arrangements for coordination and monitoring.

- We will proceed to implement and complete the Project to Improve the Town Centre Experience during 2024/25.
- We will commission Town Centre Plans for Pwllheli, Bala and Dolgellau.
- We will submit an update by the Council's Vacant Property Group to the Leadership Team.

3. Risks

- It is anticipated that the coordination and monitoring of Local Regeneration Plans will vary from area to area, with some areas requiring more support from the Council.
- The timetable for implementation of Town Centre Improvement Experience Project – needs to be completed by December 2024 in accordance with SPF funding requirements.
- Town Transformation grants need to be claimed by the end of March 2024
- Uncertainty about Welsh Government Transforming Towns revenue grants to prepare town centre plans in 2024/25

4. Timetable

- We will be offering updates on the Regeneration Framework (and draft Local Regeneration Plans) to local Members through Area Forums
 - Bangor / Ogwen Forum: 28/02/24
 - Gwyrfai Area Forum: 29/02/24
 - Meirionnydd Area Forum: 05/03/24
 - Dwyfor Area Committee: 11/03/24
- We will be holding meetings with local organisations in all 13 areas to discuss the draft plans, and arrangements for collaboration during March / April 2024
- It is intended to publish the revised versions of the Local Regeneration Plans in April / May 2024.

ECONOMY AND COMMUNITY DEPARTMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT	
Improvement Priority:	A Prosperous Gwynedd
Project:	Creating the best possible circumstances in Gwynedd for businesses and community enterprises to thrive, and support the people of Gwynedd into work.
Project leader's Report:	Sioned Williams/Dylan Griffiths
Date:	25 January 2024
The Project's Aim:	We will support businesses and community enterprises in Gwynedd to thrive in many ways such as product development and accessing new markets, helping enterprises to save money by reducing waste and using technology more effectively, supporting businesses in Gwynedd to trade together and prioritise helping enterprises that commit to paying a 'real living wage' to their employees. We will encourage businesses to make the most of the Welsh language, develop more work units for letting, and strive to ensure that the North Wales Growth Deal projects benefit the people of Gwynedd. In addition, we will help the people of Gwynedd to fulfil their potential and support those who are excluded from the labour market to return to employment and will work with employers to assist them to secure sufficient workers.

1. What has been achieved since the previous meeting?

Supporting Business and Enterprise

- 20 businesses have received financial offers totalling £916k through the [Cymunedau Mentrus](#) (Enterprising Communities - ARFOR) scheme. It is anticipated that the investment will lead to the creation of over 50 jobs.
- The [Cronfa Her ARFOR](#) - ARFOR Challenge Fund offers support to research and pilot innovative solutions to local and regional challenges while learning about the link between the economy and the language. 146 expressions of interest have been received across the ARFOR region, with 59 of these from Gwynedd. 54 organisations from Gwynedd have attended the Challenge Workshops that are part of the project and 8 organisations from Gwynedd have submitted applications to the Fund, a value of £668k.
- 24 businesses have received a total of £340k through 'small grants' from the [Business Development Funds](#) launched in August. The number of applications for a small grant was so large the application system had to be closed 4 weeks after it opened. An additional £150k of funding has been secured to support some of the 22 businesses on a waiting list.

- The award process for 'major grants' (over £25k) from the [Business Development Funds](#) has been completed. Businesses had to compete for a major grant and received 57 applications asking for £5.09M of assistance before the mid-September deadline. In response to the strong demand, additional funding was targeted and as a result we have been able to offer £989k to 10 businesses.
- All businesses that receive money must commit to pay their staff a real living wage and to review their use of the Welsh language. As a result, 79 Gwynedd businesses have completed the Welsh Language Commissioner's language assessment – with 12 having gone on to receive the Commissioner's 'Cynnig Cymraeg' accreditation.
- It should be noted that the Department has also secured an additional £930k of support in the period to improve 28 buildings in Gwynedd town centres, which – in turn – will benefit local businesses.
- The [Ailwefru](#) scheme has been commissioned by the Council to help local businesses review their activity and prepare for the future. 32 businesses have already signed up to receive support from the scheme.
- The Department has jointly funded the Community Catalysts scheme with the Adults Department to encourage local people to start small businesses in home care provision. 16 local people have already signed up and are currently working towards setting up a care initiative.
- The Department has commissioned the scheme to provide support and advice for local businesses to make better use of technology to reduce their costs and/or increase their sales. More than 100 local businesses will benefit from the scheme by March 2025. A planning permission to erect new work units by the Council in Minffordd has been confirmed.
- Detailed designs and tender documentation have been prepared, and the appointment procedure is about to begin. The Welsh Government has convinced them to become a partner in the scheme and share the cost.
- We have supported the North Wales Growth Bid schemes, giving particular attention to the projects that offer Gwynedd the greatest benefit in the Digital Programme, Energy Programme and the Agri-Food & Tourism Programme. Since the last meeting we have supported Grŵp Llandrillo Menai with their plans for the development of a Food Hub in Glynllifon and Zip World has received an outline offer for funding from the Growth Bid.
- The Cabinet Members' programme of visits to businesses continues, with a total of 5 visits to prominent businesses in Gwynedd scheduled for Cabinet Members and 5 have already taken place in 2023/24.
- A programme of drop-ins for local businesses within communities has been organised and 3 have been held since the last meeting, along with a joint funding clinic with the Development Bank of Wales.

Supporting the people of Gwynedd to return to work and achieve their potential.

- The [Llwyddo'n Lleol](#) programme is now fully operational targeting young people aged 11-35 to increase awareness of the available job opportunities in the ARFOR region; enterprise and opportunities to return to their native community.
- 101 local residents who were inactive have secured a job following the support of the Gwaith Gwynedd team during the year – an increase of 49.
- 180 more Gwynedd residents signed up to receive Gwaith Gwynedd support in the period. (238 in total in the financial year)
- Seven job fairs have been scheduled throughout the county for February to April 2024. 55 employers have registered to attend.
- A new activity to support residents to increase their skills – and thereby their earnings – has started and 28 have already signed up for support.
- A new programme of work – in collaboration with the Education Department and the Adults Department to improve skills and prevent inactivity – is underway using £700k of SPF funding.

2. The next steps

The main activity for the next phase will be:

- Implementing the management system for grant offers, claims and monitoring during January 2024
- Hold a promotional campaign for the new support schemes between January and March 2024 focusing on areas that do not normally benefit.
- Working jointly with other partners who have received SPF funding to support businesses to encourage them to pay attention to businesses and areas in Gwynedd that don't normally benefit.
- Establishment of Gwynedd's new service promotion campaign during Q3 2023/24
- Appoint a builder for the new Council work units at Minffordd during Q1 2024/25

3. Risks

- The response of Gwynedd businesses and enterprises to the SPF and ARFOR funds significantly exceeded the funding available. With applications in excess of £11M and only £2M available, it is therefore inevitable that most businesses are going to be let down. Good applications will have to be rejected as there is not enough money available to meet demand.
- The funds have highlighted the diversity in the capacity of businesses within certain sectors and areas to respond to funding opportunities.
- Along with the high demand, the unreasonably short timeframe to implement the funding programmes is preventing efforts to support areas and sectors that are unable to respond immediately.

- The short timeframe for implementing the financial programmes means that the Department must recruit many temporary posts.
- With all the programmes ending simultaneously in March 2025, 12 posts will be under threat within the Department. The number will be much larger across the county's organisations.
- There is significant uncertainty about the size and administration of any funds after March 2025, which hinders our ability to plan for the future.
- The squeeze on public budgets is wider and this increases the pressure. The Welsh Government is already cutting back on the funding they provide to Local Authorities within areas such as support for the unemployed.
- There are significant investments in the county, including the Growth Deal projects, that are subject to additional risk from any change in the long-term policies and commitments of the Welsh Government and the UK Government.

4. Timetable

See above.

ECONOMY AND COMMUNITY DEPARTMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT	
Improvement Priority:	A Prosperous Gwynedd
Project:	Promoting our Culture and a Sustainable Visitor Economy
Project leader's Report:	Roland Evans
Date:	25 January 2024
The Project's Aim:	<p>We will take a series of measures to promote our culture and create a sustainable visitor economy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ The Gwynedd and Eryri Sustainable Visitor Economy Plan, formed jointly with the Eryri National Park Authority, will be launched in spring 2023. The principal partners and stakeholders will collaborate to deliver the Plan by establishing a Gwynedd and Eryri Sustainable Visitor Economy Partnership. ➔ We will ensure prosperity from the Northwest Wales Slate Landscape World Heritage Site designation and secure resources to fulfil the World Heritage Site Action Plan. ➔ We will control Motor Homes visiting Gwynedd by piloting the development of up to six designated sites for motor homes to stay overnight. ➔ Hosting the 2023 National Eisteddfod in Gwynedd will be a platform to celebrate our culture and language, arts and sports and ensure that the Eisteddfod leaves a positive legacy for Gwynedd communities.

1. Progress since the previous meeting, September 2023:

Sustainable Visitor Economy Plan

- Meetings have been held with the National Park to agree on a functional model to ensure ownership and to operate effectively.
- Draft measurements are in place.
- Draft structure discussed and needs to be simplified / modified before implementation – particularly in light of proposed savings to the Tourism Service.
- Draft action plan is in place.

Benefits of the Slate Landscape World Heritage Site Designation

- Operational arrangements established for the Llewyrch o'r Llechi - Levelling-up project
- Llechi Cymru's hybrid Annual Meeting was held at Cell B, Blaenau Ffestiniog on 16 November 2023 with several local attendees and speakers.

- Developmental work on LleCHI 2's application to the Heritage Lottery Fund continues and a positive meeting was held with the Fund on 14 December 2023 with approval given to proceed with the submission of the Round 2 application.
- Northwest Wales World Heritage Sites Coordinator is operational.

Motorhomes

- Cricieth site is operational – but vandalism issues have arisen and disrupted any significant attention being given to the site.
- There has been a solution in terms utilities and work is now underway at the other 3 sites – Caernarfon, Pwllheli and Llanberis, but there may be increased costs at Pwllheli due to the distance to connect to the water supply.

The legacy of the Eisteddfod

- SPF funds have been successful in attracting applications.
- Many of the projects require claims in more than one section during the project so arrangements are being worked out to facilitate this.
- Round 1 events have reached the payment stage - worth £31,500.
- £30,476.79 worth of Round 2 Events bids have also reached the payment stage.

2. The next steps

Sustainable Visitor Economy Plan

- Establish the implementation structure, to include a voice for partners, by February 2024.
- Implement the Plan immediately.
- Implement SPF funded plans and activities by 31 December 2024.

Benefits of the Slate Landscape World Heritage Site Designation

- Secure match funding from key partners before the end of March 2024 for the Heritage Lottery application.
- Submit a Round 2 application by the end of February 2024.
- Manage and implement Levelling Up projects by March 2025.
- Manage and implement Shared Prosperity Fund projects by December 2024.
- Continue to engage with the Area's communities and businesses.
- Publish the Annual Report by 31 March 2024.

Motorhomes

- Completion of the installation of the 3 new motorhome sites in Llanberis, Caernarfon and Pwllheli to launch the 4 sites before Easter 2024.
- Ensure that the Gwynedd Parking App accepts payments for the Motorhome sites before Easter 2024.
- Enforcement elements as part of the complete package need to be implemented by Easter 2024.

The legacy of the Eisteddfod

- Commence the work of reviewing the need for a culture plan for Gwynedd depending on the publication of a Welsh Government plan by March 2024.
- Hosting an event to celebrate Gwynedd's culture and arts through Gwynedd Creadigol in February 2024.
- Consider opening any further financial rounds for SPF or the Strategic Grants for the Arts fund when the budget is known by April 2024.

1. Risks

Sustainable Visitor Economy Plan

- Concern from some about a lack of progress in implementation is a risk to ownership and operation.
- Developing a sprawling or complex structure creates unsustainable administrative work.

Benefits of the Slate Landscape World Heritage Site Designation

- Not securing match funding from partners.
- Failure in the Round 2 stage due to increased operating costs.
- Some significant developments can pose a risk to the designation – but sound planning arrangements are in place.

Motorhomes

- Unable to deliver by the start of the 2024 season.
- Need to spend Welsh Government money within a tight time frame (end March 2024).
- Learn lessons from vandalism or anti-social attitudes locally.

The legacy of the Eisteddfod

- The failure of some projects to implement their activity within the tight SPF schedule (End of September 2024).
- The need to develop a Culture for Gwynedd Plan – but a risk of failing to act in light of the extremely challenging financial climate.

2. Timetable

- Act in line with funders' tight timetables during 2024 and 2025 and the next steps as seen in 2.