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Mid-term Evaluation of the LEADER programme in Gwynedd; Arloesi Gwynedd Wledig

July 2019



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Date of document: July 2019
Version: FINAL

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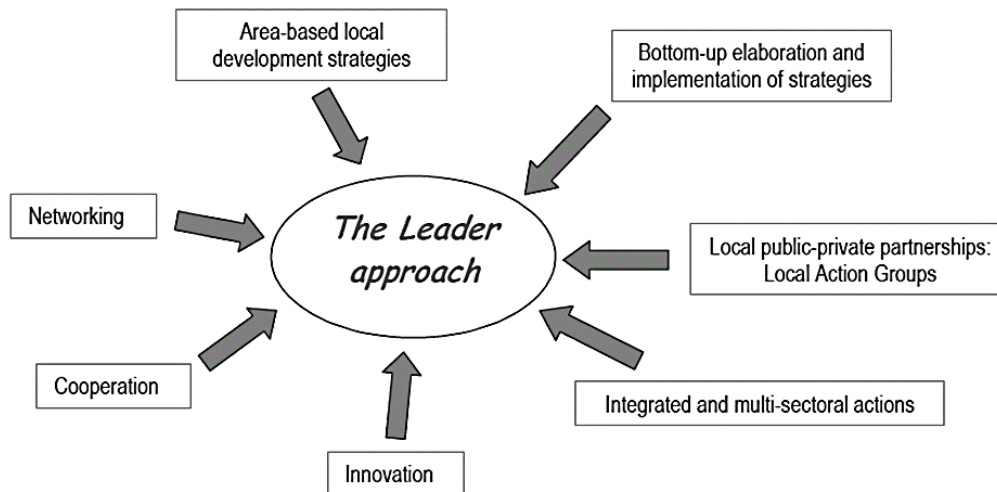
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Executive summary

Introduction

This is the mid-term report of an evaluation of the implementation of the LEADER programme in Gwynedd for the funding period 2014 to 2020, known as Arloesi Gwynedd Wledig.

LEADER is an EU funded local development method which has been used in Wales for over 20 years. As a Community Led Local Development (CLLD) initiative, LEADER is an integrated development process designed to engage, enable, resource and empower local communities in undertaking their own local development. LEADER is built on several specific characteristics often referred to as the 'LEADER approach' as illustrated by the graphic below.



This mid-term evaluation has focused on the delivery of the LEADER approach in Gwynedd to date with a view to informing the remaining lifetime of the programme. The emphasis is particularly on the extent to which the LEADER approach has been delivered in Gwynedd. The final evaluation report, scheduled for April 2021, will update this report but with a greater focus on assessing the outcomes, impact and added value of the LEADER programme in Gwynedd.

The Local Development Strategy (LDS)

The LDS is an important element of the LEADER approach described within programme guidelines issued by the European Commission as 'the roadmap for LEADER implementation with the LAG selecting and supporting projects, according to the contribution they make to the goals of the strategy'.¹

¹ Guidance produced by the European Network for Rural Development on the development and implementation of the LDS can be found here: https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/sites/enrd/files/enrd-guidance_lsd.pdf

The review of the LDS for Gwynedd finds that it is a very broad strategy reflected in the diverse range of projects that have been implemented in Gwynedd to date. There is an argument that this approach reflects the wide-ranging challenges facing Gwynedd and/or the need to cast the net widely in order to identify new and innovative projects and ideas. However, we believe that there is a stronger argument for greater prioritisation going forward to ensure that the remaining funding available is utilised as effectively as possible. The key to this issue is that the LAG needs to be clear about what their objective for the LEADER programme in Gwynedd is. If the objective is to fund good or innovative ideas, regardless of their origin, a broad approach is appropriate. If, however the objective is to be more targeted, and address specific challenges or opportunities, a narrower, more targeted, approach is probably necessary.

Recommendation 1: The LDS should be updated with the potential to introduce greater prioritisation for the remainder of the lifetime of the programme considered. This process should include a review of the projects supported to date, mapped against the objectives of the LDS and consideration of the potential need to undertake activities that follow-up or build upon activities undertaken by projects previously funded. The update should also include an update of other activities ongoing in Gwynedd as the situation has changed considerably since the LDS was originally prepared.

Projects delivered to date

At the time of the analysis for this mid-term review, the LEADER programme in Gwynedd had supported 71 projects representing an investment of just under £1.2m. The average value of the financial support provided is £16,827 per project with a high of £110,000 (for a fund targeted at community groups to enable them to trial new activities that will contribute towards their long-term sustainability and provide new services) and a low of just £768 for a project looking at different ways of recycling bulk waste which is currently collected by the Local Authority for disposal. This illustrates the range and scale of the projects/actions being supported by LEADER in Gwynedd. It is also clear that a substantial amount of activity has taken place in Gwynedd over the lifetime of the LEADER programme to date.

Our sample of project stakeholders for this report is limited *but* those consulted are very positive in respect of the project outcomes being identified and the personal benefit of involvement with projects and Arloesi Gwynedd. Their feedback is an indication of the positive outcomes that the LEADER approach can generate beyond the direct achievements and outcomes of the projects themselves.

Performance indicators

A limited number of indicators (and associated targets) are in place to monitor the performance of the LEADER programme in Gwynedd (and across Wales). Such an approach, introduced by the Welsh Government following the evaluation of the previous programme period, has benefits from an administrative perspective. However, it means that there is limited data collected on the extent to which the LDS has been delivered and the performance of the programme, especially at an outcome level (most of the indicators are outputs; i.e. activities).

Recommendation 2: Consideration should be given to the introduction of additional performance indicators for the implementation of the LDS in Gwynedd, including both generic indicators and theme/priority specific indicators.

The limited number of programme level indicators also means that the programme is dependent to a large extent on the monitoring and evaluation activities being undertaken at a project level. Project evaluation reports are completed but the review of those available to date for this report has found that there is potential to enhance the level of information being collected.

Recommendation 3: The monitoring and evaluation activities being undertaken at a project level should be reviewed to ensure that it is of as high a quality as possible. Alongside this, the potential to provide evaluation workshops or training sessions for project officers should be considered.

The Local Action Group (LAG)

The LAG is a key part of the LEADER approach designed to be a group which represents the local area and its population. It leads the development process with no interest group nor public authorities having a majority in the decision-making process.

The evaluation has found that attendance at Gwynedd LAG meetings has been good with members providing positive feedback about meetings and a strong awareness of the LEADER approach amongst the members. LAG members also identified a range of ways in which they benefited as a result of their involvement with the group including:

- Networking (the most frequently identified benefit)
- A way of “giving something back”
- Becoming aware of projects and activities – outside the individuals’ usual area of work
- Raising awareness about the organisation they represent
- Becoming more strategic in their thinking (due to awareness of other activities)

Such benefits are an important outcome of the LEADER approach and need to be considered alongside any discussion about outcomes achieved by projects funded by the programme.

Some concerns about broader awareness of the role of the LAG and the programme more generally do however need to be noted. This may be an issue that the LAG would wish to explore further at a time when future approaches to rural development in Wales are being considered in the context of the UKs withdrawal from the European Union.

Recommendation 4: The key role that LAG members in raising awareness of the LEADER programme in Gwynedd should be recognised. LAG members also have an important role in the animation of the local area. The potential to enhance the role of LAG members as ‘ambassadors’ for LEADER should be explored including representing the LAG at events or meeting, leading activities with particular sectors and so on. Members should also be encouraged to note/promote their role as LAG members within their existing networks and activities. The potential to develop a page on the Arloesi Gwynedd website which lists (and provides contact details, etc.) for LAG members and explains the important role of the LAG should be considered.

Delivering the programme and the Lead Body

Menter Môn are undertaking the administrative and delivery operations on behalf of the LAG in Gwynedd.² As well as the administration of the programme, their role includes the animation (i.e. community engagement and project development support) activities discussed later in this executive summary. LAG members were generally positive when asked to comment on the role undertaken by Menter Môn for this mid-term evaluation which is obviously a positive finding.

The different approach being taken in Gwynedd in terms of the delivery of LEADER projects is important to note with project officers within Menter Môn taking greater responsibility for the implementation of projects compared to other areas where the approach is more focused on providing financial support for external organisations to deliver projects they have developed.

The approach offers several advantages in comparison to that employed in the other areas. For example, it can be argued that the approach in Gwynedd encourages more innovative projects to be developed and implemented. However, far less of the funding available is distributed to groups in the local area because projects are delivered ‘in-house’. This also reduces the potential to use the funding to develop project delivery capacity within those external organisations. These strengths and weaknesses need to be recognised by the LAG with the approach used depending on its priorities as identified within the LDS. The fact that there is a limited resource within the Arloesi Gwynedd to manage and deliver projects also needs to be considered.

Recommendation 5: The LAG should review the approach taken to managing and delivering projects considering the strengths and weaknesses of the various approaches that it could use.

² Menter Môn is a not-for-profit company managing and delivering social and economic development programmes and projects in North West Wales; <https://www.mentermon.com/en/>

Animation

‘Animation of the territory’, or making things happen, is a key part of LEADER. This can include a range of activities including empowering or supporting local groups and organisations to develop and implement projects (in line with the LDS) or more general activities focused on the local area such as, for example, enhancing the awareness of local heritage and associated opportunities.

A range of relevant activities have taken place in Gwynedd. The evaluation however found potential for LAG members to engage more fully in the direction of animation activities being undertaken by the LEADER team on their behalf; the LAG should take greater responsibility for the animation activities being undertaken.

Recommendation 6: Considering the updates to the LDS, there should be a greater focus on discussing, directing and monitoring of animation activities at a LAG level.

Innovation

Innovation is a cross-cutting priority of the LEADER programme. The focus on innovation is based on the argument that doing "more of the same" is unlikely to enable an area to reach its full potential and that new solutions to existing problems should be sought. The objective is to encourage and support new, forward looking and entrepreneurial approaches and solutions to local issues and to share and transfer that experience.

Projects in Gwynedd compare well to those being delivered in other parts of Wales via the LEADER programme in respects of the level of ‘innovation’ involved. There is however an argument that there is the potential to encourage a greater degree of ‘disruptive innovation’ into the programme during its latter stages. The importance of completing the ‘innovation cycle’ for projects also needs to be emphasised which should include a comprehensive analysis of lessons learnt, etc. as well as the effective dissemination and sharing of that information.

Recommendation 7: Options for increasing the level of innovation within the programme in Gwynedd should be explored including a review of approaches for supporting innovation as promoted by organisations such as Nesta.

Recommendation 8: Some pilot projects warrant a second attempt or further development. Alongside the development of new project ideas, the LAG should, on an ongoing basis, review project evaluation forms with a view to considering whether existing or previous pilot projects should be evolved into new of phase 2 pilots.

Recommendation 9: A key element of any pilot project is the capturing *and* then sharing of any learning. Consideration should be given to the production of more detailed and comprehensive project evaluation reports for all the projects that have been funded by LEADER in Gwynedd. Those reports should then be drawn upon to share and disseminate the findings and lessons learnt from each project. The method for effectively sharing those documents with stakeholders (local and from further afield) should also be considered; for example, the potential for conferences or workshops to share and discuss findings as well as the use of online platforms.

Networking and Cooperation

Networking among actors inside the LAGs area, among LAGs and other public-private partnerships, in order to establish a stronger foundation for the transfer of knowledge, and exchange of experiences is also key part of LEADER. Another is cooperation, with LAGs across Europe offering a wealth of LEADER local development experience, knowledge and human capital. Cooperation offers a means of capitalising on this resource.

The evaluation has found that there have been limited networking and cooperation activities in Gwynedd to date although there are examples of cooperative projects. Those activities therefore need to be given more attention over the next phase of the programme we would argue.

Recommendation 10: Opportunities and options for the following should be explored:

- a) Increasing networking, exchanging of experiences and cooperation at a project level within Gwynedd; such activities could potentially be focused on sharing the lessons learnt and findings of LEADER projects undertaken (see above).
- b) Increasing LAG members awareness of LEADER projects being delivered in other parts of Wales (and across the EU); if possible, information about projects developed and delivered in previous programme periods (within and outside Gwynedd) should also be shared.
- c) Developing further cooperative projects, especially with LAGs outside Wales and across the EU; those should be explored as soon as possible as to allow enough time for those projects to be developed and implemented.

1 Introduction

LEADER is a local development method which has been used for over 20 years to engage local people and organisations in the design and delivery of strategies, decision-making and resource allocation for the development of rural areas. This is the second of three reports that are being produced by an evaluation of the implementation of the LEADER programme in Gwynedd for the funding period 2014 to 2020³, known as Arloesi Gwynedd Wledig.

The first report focused on introducing the LEADER approach, its delivery in Gwynedd and setting out how the evaluation will be undertaken. This mid-term report assesses the delivery of the programme in Gwynedd to date with a view to informing the remaining lifetime of the programme. The emphasis is particularly on the extent to which the LEADER approach has been delivered in Gwynedd. The final evaluation report, scheduled for April 2021, will update this report but with a greater focus on assessing the outcomes, impact and added value of the LEADER programme within the county.

This report draws upon monitoring and evaluation data that has been collected during the delivery of the programme to date. Primary research undertaken for this report included telephone interviews with 11 members of the Local Action Group (the LAG) as well as five members of staff from the team delivering the programme. In addition, the lead researcher for the evaluation attended a LAG meeting on the 5th June 2019 to present and discuss emerging findings of the evaluation. An online questionnaire was distributed by the Arloesi Gwynedd Wledig team to individuals involved in projects with a view to ascertaining their view of the projects and how, if at all, they had benefited as a result of their involvement with it. Sixteen responses, representing 28 projects, were received. Whilst the number of responses is lower than we would have wished, the information collected provides a valuable insight into the views of stakeholders.

The report is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2 provides a brief overview of the LEADER approach and its implementation in Gwynedd;
- Chapter 3 reviews the Local Development Strategy as well as the programme expenditure, outputs and outcomes to date;
- Chapter 4 considers the implementation of the LEADER approach in Gwynedd to date; and
- Finally, Chapter 5 sets out the conclusion and recommendations of this mid-term evaluation report.

Additional information has been provided within the report appendices including, in Appendix 2, brief case studies for projects that have been supported by Arloesi Gwynedd Wledig.

³ Delivery of the programme is likely to run until the end of 2021.

2 A brief overview of the LEADER approach and its implementation in Gwynedd

Key points

- LEADER is implemented by applying ‘community-led local development’ and is built on several specific characteristics often referred to as the LEADER approach.
- Arloesi Gwynedd Wledig is the LAG for Gwynedd with Menter Môn administrating and delivering the programme on their behalf.
- The total value of the LEADER programme in Gwynedd is £5.1 million with over 80 per cent being allocated to funding for projects.
- The programme is scheduled to run until the end of 2021 having started in early 2015.

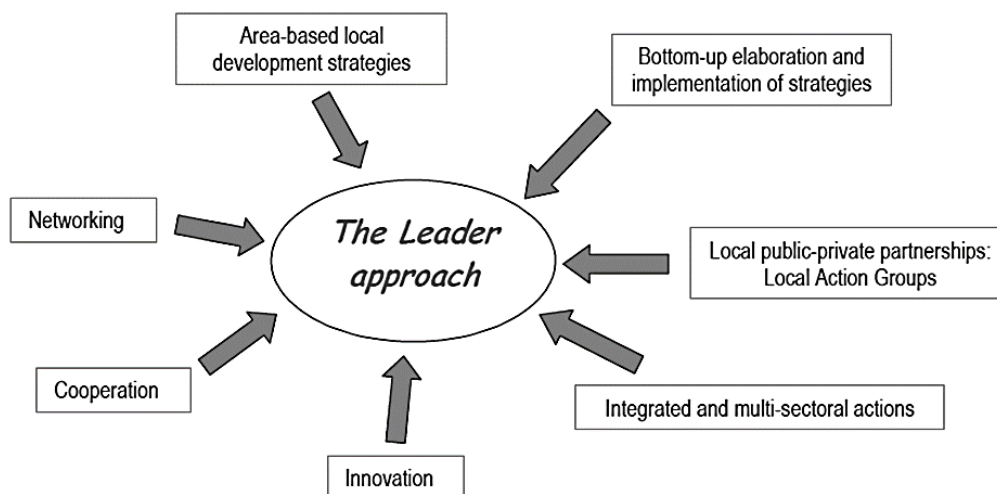
2.1 Introduction

For ease of reference, and to provide context for the discussion that follows, this chapter provides a brief overview of the LEADER approach and its implementation in Gwynedd. For a more detailed description of the approach, please refer to Report 1.

2.2 Overview of the LEADER approach

LEADER is a local development method which has been used for over 20 years to engage local actors in the design and delivery of strategies, decision-making and resource allocation for the development of their rural areas.

Figure 2.1: The LEADER approach



As a Community Led Local Development (CLLD) initiative, LEADER is an integrated development process designed to engage, enable, resource and empower local communities in undertaking their own local development. LEADER is built on several specific characteristics often referred to as the 'LEADER approach' as illustrated in figure 2.1 above.

LEADER is implemented by **Local Action Group (LAG)** activities, delivering a **Local Development Strategy (LDS)** that they have developed and animation/capacity building activities within the local community.

Animation is a key feature of LEADER (specifically the 'bottom up' element of the programme) and can include a range of activities, such as:

- Working to 'empower' local people and/or organisations and their willingness to face local challenges or opportunities through the development and implementation of projects (linked to the LDS); and
- (Not directly linked with the LDS or a specific project) Working more generally in the local area and with the local population to, for example, enhance the awareness of local heritage.

Innovation is one of the original and fundamental strategic principles in LEADER. The focus on innovation is based on the argument that doing "more of the same" is unlikely to enable an area to reach its full potential and that new solutions to existing problems should be sought. The objective is to encourage and support new, forward looking and entrepreneurial approaches and solutions to local issues and to share and transfer that experience.

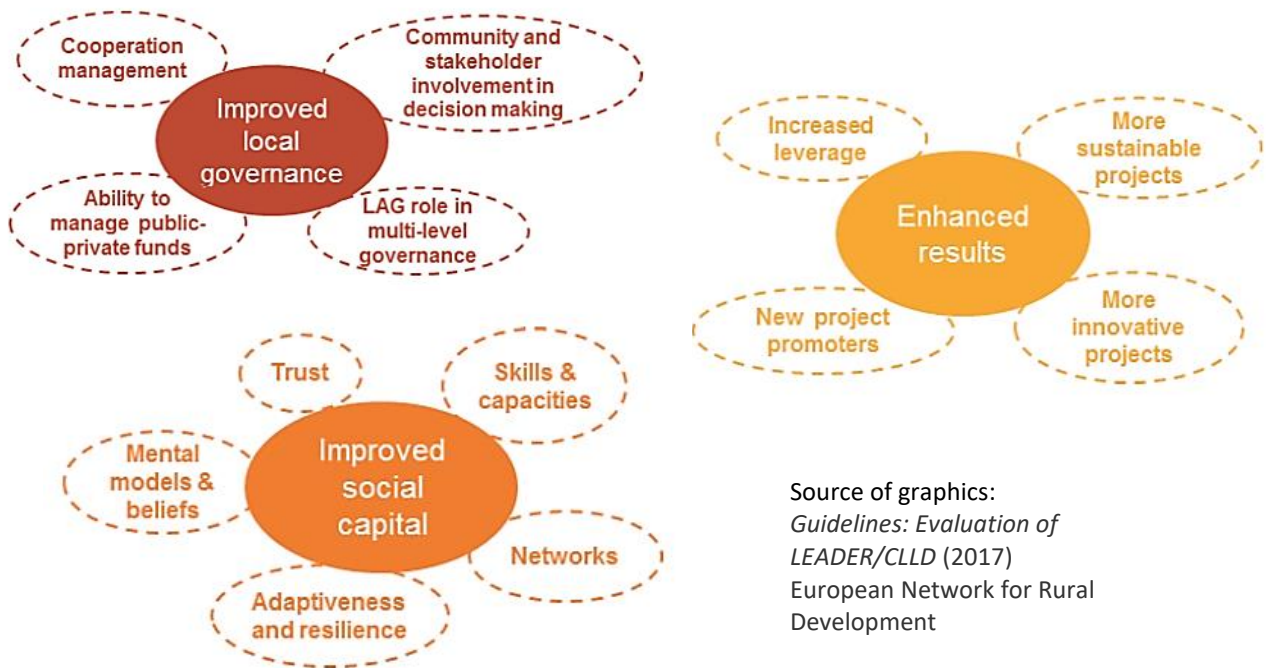
Cooperation is also a core LEADER feature. With LAGs across Europe the wealth of LEADER local development experience, knowledge and human capital is potentially substantial, and cooperation offers a means of capitalising on this resource. LAGs can make use of or contribute to this network to develop the group, to undertake joint projects or initiatives, to innovate, or to share or transfer knowledge and experience.

2.2.1 Expected added value of the approach

The LEADER approach is expected to add-value at a local level through:

- (1) **The implementation of the LDS** (i.e. its operationalisation in the form of projects and the results and impacts they produce);
- (2) **The LAG delivery mechanism** (i.e. the set of rules, procedures and administrative arrangements, which ensure that strategy objectives become concrete actions on the ground); and
- (3) **Capacity building support/animation**: The support provided to encourage and enable the beneficiaries (i.e. activities aiming to raise the awareness, readiness, cooperation and networking capabilities of local people to contribute to developing their area).

If correctly applied, the implementation of the LEADER method is anticipated to lead to three groups of outcomes, as illustrated by the graphics below:



Source of graphics:
Guidelines: Evaluation of LEADER/CLLD (2017)
European Network for Rural Development

2.3 The approach in Gwynedd

In Gwynedd, LEADER is being implemented by the Arloesi Gwynedd Wledig LAG with Menter Môn undertaking the administrative and delivery operations on their behalf⁴. The team delivering the programme are employed by Menter Môn. Their role includes the administration of the programme as well as the delivery of the animation (i.e. community engagement and project development support) activities. The structure of the Arloesi Gwynedd team is set out in Table 2.1.

The total value of the LEADER programme in Gwynedd is £5.2m with over 80 per cent being allocated to funding for projects (Table 2.2).

⁴ Menter Môn is a not-for-profit company managing and delivering social and economic development programmes and projects in North West Wales; <https://www.mentermon.com/en/>

Table 2.1: Arloesi Gwynedd Wledig team

Position (all full time)	Responsibility
Manager	Overall responsibility for the programme including finances, match funding, outputs and staff delivery
Thematic Officers x 3	Focused on implementing projects on behalf of the LAG
Marketing and Communications Officer	Delivering PR activities for both the projects individually, as well as an overall capacity to promote AGW and LEADER
Administrative Officers x 2	Admin 1: Technical support / Invoice processing and reporting / evaluation / GDPR Admin 2: LAG coordination and support, general enquiries, project updates to WG etc.

Source: Menter Môn

Table 2.2: LEADER programme financial allocations in Gwynedd (as at June 2018)

Funding pot	Start date	End date	Programme funding	% of programme funding	Match funding requirement
Animation	01/02/2015	31/12/2021	£650,250	100%	£0
Running Costs	01/02/2015	31/12/2021	£433,500	100%	£0
Implementation	01/02/2015	31/12/2021	£3,664,063	80%	£732,813
Cooperation	01/02/2015	31/12/2021	£400,000	80%	£80,000

Source: Menter Môn

This video (produced by Arloesi Gwynedd) provides an excellent introduction to the LEADER programme in Gwynedd. An infographic that has also been produced is shown on the following page.

In English⁵:




In Welsh⁶:



⁵ Alternative link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R2_NF5g2OGs

⁶ Alternative link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=efoDfJfevqg>



LEADER Gwynedd

Arloesedd Gwledig
Rural Innovation

Mae angen

Pencampwyr Lleol

gyda brwdfrydedd, angerdd dros Wunedd a sgiliau amrywiol i arwain cynllun LEADER

Wanted


Local Champions

with enthusiasm, a passion for Gwynedd and a range of skills to lead the LEADER Programme


Beth yw LEADER?

Cynllun sydd yn ceisio cynnig atebion newydd i heriadau a manteisio ar gyfleoedd yng Ngwynedd.


er enghraifft....




Dirywiad y Stryd Fawr
Decline of the High Street




Diboblogi ymysg pobl ifanc
Outmigration among young people




Gwasanaethau digidol i ymwelwyr
Digital services for tourists



Darparu gwasanaethau lleol
Providing local services



Cyfle economaidd y Gymraeg
Economic opportunities of the Welsh language




Dahongli hunaniaeth a threftadaeth
Intpreting heritage and identity

What is LEADER?

A programme that seeks new responses to challenges or harness opportunities in Gwynedd

for example....


Cliciwch ar y linc Vimeo i weld ffilm fer ar y cynllun LEADER yng Ngwynedd




Flick on the Vimeo link to see a short film on the LEADER programme in Gwynedd

Cliciwch ar linc "Gwynedd Leader Recriwtio" am ragor o wybodaeth a ffurflen gofrestru

neu cysylltwch yn uniongyrchol....






Click on the "Gwynedd Leader Recriwtio" link for more information and an application form

or contact us directly.....


01766 514057
zoe@llwyddo.org


neu dewch i'r swyddfa am sgwrs dros banad!





or call into the office for a chat and a panad


146 Stryd Fawr
Porthmadog
Gwynedd














3 Review of the Local Development Strategy & Expenditure, Outputs and Outcomes to date

Key points

- The Gwynedd LDS is a very broad strategy which identifies 29 'specific objectives' for the area. There is little prioritisation of challenges or opportunities within the strategy; whether this is an effective approach to strategy is debatable.
- A substantial amount of activity has taken place in Gwynedd with 71 projects supported to date representing a very wide range of activities reflecting the broadness of the LDS.
- Whilst the supporting/piloting of a wide range of activities can be a positive thing, there is also a concern that this can also mean that the potential for the investment being made to achieve a substantial impact (i.e. to address the opportunities and challenges being identified) is limited.
- The key to this issue is that the LAG needs to be clear about what their objective for the LEADER programme in Gwynedd is. If the objective is to fund good or innovative ideas, regardless of their origin, a broad approach is appropriate. If, however the objective is to be more targeted, and address specific challenges or opportunities, a narrower, more targeted, approach is more appropriate going forward.
- The programme and individual projects have a significant online presence. This is clearly a very positive thing although there is no data available on the impact of that online presence.
- The programme level performance indicators being collected to monitor the implementation of the LEADER programme in Gwynedd provide little if any evidence of what the programme is achieving. A range of additional indicators could potentially be collected that would provide a fuller picture of what is being achieved.
- 'Project evaluation forms' completed at the end of every project provide a useful summary of activities undertaken and some lessons learnt. The amount of information they provide, especially in relation to the outcome of the projects, is however limited.
- Our sample of project stakeholders for this report is limited but very positive in respect of the project outcomes being identified and the personal benefit of involvement with projects and Arloesi Gwynedd. Their feedback is an indication of the positive outcomes that the LEADER approach can generate beyond the direct achievements and outcomes of the projects themselves.

3.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the LDS for Gwynedd and its implementation to date. It is important to note that it does not consider the way in which the LDS was developed which is outside the remit of the evaluation. Rather, the focus is on the coherence of the LDS as a strategy for guiding the implementation of the programme in Gwynedd and the extent to which it has been delivered via the projects supported to date.

The chapter then moves on to review the figures for expenditure to date and the range of projects that have been supported. The performance indicators recorded are discussed before finally we consider the evidence of the outcomes of the projects to date. That discussion draws upon data that is contained within the project evaluation forms that have been produced by the Arloesi Gwynedd team as well as the responses to the online survey of project stakeholders.

3.2 Review of the Strategy

The LDS is an important element of the LEADER approach described within programme guidelines issued by the European Commission as ‘the roadmap for LEADER implementation with the LAG selecting and supporting projects, according to the contribution they make to the goals of the strategy’.⁷

The policy and strategy review within the LDS are comprehensive as is the analysis of the key statistical information about the county although both sections require updating on an ongoing basis (the statistical data has been updated as part of Report 1 of the evaluation). It is important to note that the policy context has changed considerably since the LDS was originally written (the most obvious development being Brexit) which needs to be reflected within an updated LDS.

The LDSs identifies four ‘Headline Objectives’ as show below with 29 ‘Specific Objectives’ (split into the five programme level themes for LEADER in Wales) sitting beneath them⁸.

- 1) *By 2020, Gwynedd realises new economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for its people provided by harnessing economic intelligence, pre-developing small enterprises, new jobs and an improved skills base.*
- 2) *By 2020, people living and working in Gwynedd are better connected physically, digitally and socially and are able to access the amenities and services they need.*
- 3) *By 2020 Gwynedd’s people better capitalise on the area’s cultural, historical, recreational and natural assets to improve the visitor experience, visitor numbers & spend and local skills & employment in tourism.*

⁷ Guidance produced by the European Network for Rural Development on the development and implementation of the LDS can be found here: https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/sites/enrd/files/enrd-guidance_lsd.pdf

⁸ These objectives have been allocated into the programme level themes as set out in Appendix 1.

- 4) *By 2020, Ynys Môn and Gwynedd will have established three inter-territorial cooperation projects and one transnational cooperation project that, through innovation, networking and knowledge exchange, contribute to meeting the objectives of the LDS themes and associated priorities.*

These four headline objectives are clearly very ambitious, and the role of LEADER can only realistically be to contribute to achieving them or developing pilot and innovative approaches to addressing those ambitions. This is however not unusual, with the evaluation team's experience being that LDSs frequently present a broad strategy for an area.

Twenty-nine specific objectives are nevertheless clearly a very large number to identify. As can be seen in Appendix 1, the objectives are also very specific in terms of the issues they propose to seek to address and have been identified to directly relate the LDS to needs and opportunities identified in the consultation and the SWOT exercise. To an extent, this has already been acknowledged with the creation of a list of 10 questions based on those objectives which has been used in materials to promote the LEADER programme in Gwynedd. The 'broadness' of the strategy however remains, which potentially raises questions about its effectiveness.

The fact that the strategy was prepared at a time when the nature of the LEADER funding (including what it could and could not support) was unclear needs to be acknowledged; this encouraged those preparing the LDS to propose a very broad and wide-ranging strategy with an emphasis on ensuring that nothing you may want to do at a later time was excluded. Its usefulness as a 'strategy' which prioritises the challenges and opportunities that LEADER should focus upon and making the best possible use of the limited funding available is however inevitably limited by such an approach.

There is also no prioritisation within the SWOT analysis set out within the LDS although specific elements of the analysis are identified within the appended 'intervention logic table' and linked to a specific objective. For example, it is not clear which of the weaknesses or opportunities identified are considered the most pressing or highest priority in respects of the delivery of the LEADER programme. From a strategy perspective, this is important as prioritising the issues being identified would allow a clearer analysis of which of the objectives and potential actions being identified are the most urgent.

3.2.1 The views of interviewees

There was a recognition amongst interviewees that the strategy set out within the LDS is very broad although there was also an understanding that it was designed as such in order to allow as broad a range of activities as possible to be implemented over the lifetime of the programme. There was also a recognition that whilst there was reference to the priorities of the LDS during discussions about projects and applications for support, the level of guidance it provides to discussions and decisions was limited. Interviewees also recognised the risk that a more focused or restricted LDS could be problematic, emphasising the role that LEADER plays in respects of supporting a 'grass roots' or 'community led' approach to rural development. The importance of supporting 'innovation' and 'good ideas' from wherever they came was frequently noted during discussions.

The key to this debate is that the LAG needs to be clear about what their objective for the LEADER programme in Gwynedd is. If the objective is to fund good or innovative ideas, regardless of their origin a broad approach is appropriate; the primary strategy is to support 'good ideas' as opposed to address any specific challenge or opportunity. If, however the objective is to be more targeted at addressing specific challenges or opportunities in Gwynedd, a more focused, more targeted, approach is necessary.

3.3 The range of projects supported to date

At the time of the analysis for this mid-term review, the LEADER programme in Gwynedd had supported 71 projects representing an investment of just under £1.2m. The average value of the financial support provided is £16,827 per project⁹ with a high of £110,000 (for a fund targeted at community groups to enable them to trial new activities that will contribute towards their long-term sustainability and provide new services) and a low of just £768 for a project looking at different ways of recycling bulk waste which is currently collected by the local authority for disposal). This illustrates the range and scale of the projects/actions being supported by LEADER in Gwynedd.

The Arloesi Gwynedd website provides a substantial amount of information about the projects that have been supported¹⁰, categorising projects into the following categories: agriculture, business, collaborative, community, culture, young people, technology, tourism and renewable energy. This includes short descriptions of the projects, copies of reports produced (where appropriate) and videos about the activity supported.

⁹ It is important to bear in mind that project officers within Arolesi Gwynedd/Menter Môn deliver many of the projects that have been supported which is not considered within the project costings.

¹⁰ <https://www.arloesigwyneddwledig.cymru/en/prosiectau/>

The programme also has a substantial presence on social media platforms Twitter¹¹ and Facebook¹² which means that the programme and individual projects has a significant online presence.

As an example, this video produced for a project trialling crowdfunding approaches to raise money for community energy projects¹³. Further examples of projects can also be focused in Appendix 2; those examples draw on information recorded within 'project closure forms' (discussed further below) which are completed when projects are completed.



What is clear from the review is that a substantial amount of activity has taken place in Gwynedd over the lifetime of the LEADER programme to date.

¹¹ <https://twitter.com/arloesigwynedd?lang=en>

¹² <https://www.facebook.com/ArloesiGwyneddWledig>

¹³ <https://www.arloesigwyneddwledig.cymru/en/prosiectau/cyllid-torfol-ynni-cymunedol/>

Figure 3.1: Example of Arloesi Gwynedd Wledig’s social media output; relating to the Unique Streets Project

arloesigwynedd Caernarfon

ArloesiGwyneddWledig @ArloesiGwynedd · 31 May
Yda chi wedi gweld yr ymbarelau amryliw yng Nghaernarfon? 🌈🌈🌈
Gwylwch y fideo i ddarganfod mwy am eu pwrpas!
Have you spotted the colourful umbrellas in #Caernarfon? 🌈🌈🌈
Watch the video to discover their purpose!

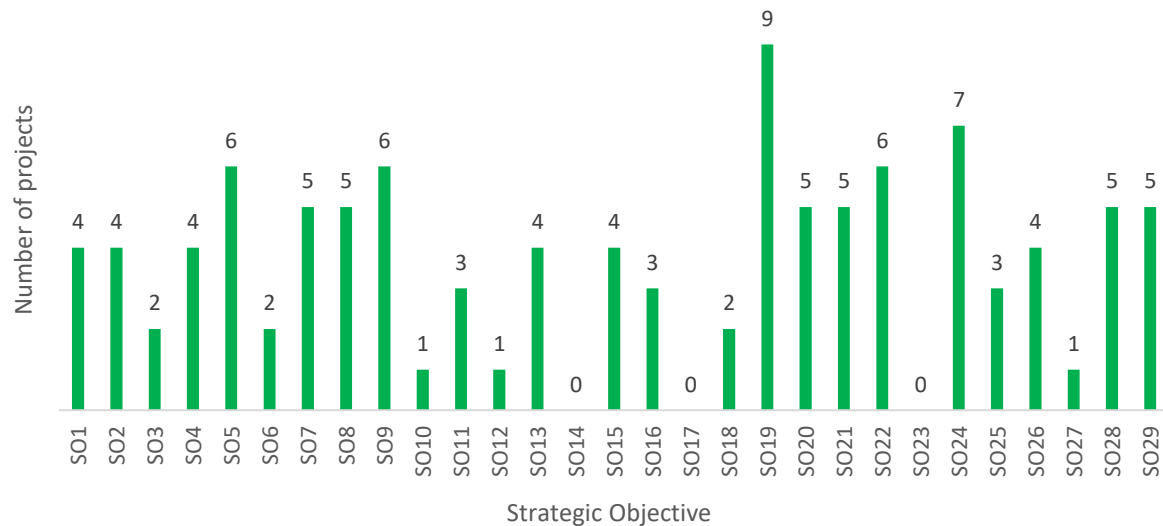
Arloesi Gwynedd Wledig
Published by Eileth Peate (?) · 29 May at 15:03
Gwych gweld yr ymbarelau i fyny ar Stryd y Plas Caernarfon fel rhan o'n prosiect Strydoedd Unigryw! Cawn weld os yw gosod darn o waith celf fel hyn yn helpu i ddenu pobl i'r ardal ac eu hannog i gefnogi busnesau lleoli!
It's great to see the umbrellas up at Palace Street Caernarfon as part of our Unique Streets project! We're excited to see if placing a piece of art like this will help attract more people to the area and then encourage them to support local businesses!
Lluniau gan/Photos by Iolo Penri

ArloesiGwyneddWledig @ArloesiGwynedd · 29 May
Great to see the umbrellas up at Palace Street #Caernarfon as part of our Unique Streets project! Exciting to see if placing a piece of art like this will help attract more people to the area and encourage them to support local businesses
#pilot #learn #share
Photos by Iolo Penri

3.3.1 Distribution of projects per LDS strategic objective

A review of the projects as they relate to the specific objectives (SOs) identified within the LDS finds that action has been supported against most of the specific objectives although there are instances where there has been no activity against an objective.

Figure 3.2: Distribution of projects supported per LDS specific objective



Source: Menter Môn

Note that the number of projects shown in the graph above is more than the total number of projects supported with some projects being recorded as addressing multiple strategic objectives.

The three objectives against which there had been no activity to date were:

- SO14: Co-ordinate local businesses consortiums to access assistance and engage more successfully with formal procurement procedures
- SO17: Exploit the City of Learning deeper into its diaspora in Gwynedd
- SO23: Extend mainstream provisions into deep rural and areas through proactive programming. Emphasis on land-based businesses

The specific objective where there has been most activity is SO9, increase the opportunities for start-up entrepreneurship and added value local supply and processing dynamics in the food sector (nine projects).

It is important to stress that the focus of the review at this stage (when most projects are still active) has been on project activities as opposed to outcomes. Whilst there has been some focus (as shown in the graph above), it is apparent that activity has been relatively disperse, reflecting the broad nature of the LDS. The positive interpretation of this review is that activities have been undertaken against most priorities identified within the LDS and that a wide range of activities and ideas have been piloted.

However, although the review to date has been based on what the projects are doing as opposed to what the projects have achieved, the concern would be that the resource available is being spread very thinly meaning that the potential for the investment being made to achieve a substantial impact (i.e. to address the opportunities and challenges being identified) is limited. In fact, the range of issues that are identified as objectives under each priority cannot possibly all be addressed by the range of projects being funded. Again however, the fact that LEADER is focused on piloting new and innovative approaches (as opposed to necessarily addressing the challenges or opportunities identified) to rural development should also be noted.

3.3.2 The views of interviewees

Interviewees were generally very positive when asked to comment on the range of projects supported to date. There was however in some instances a view that more ‘ambition’ was needed and, for some, that larger scale projects could/should be developed.

There was also some concern that the number of projects being presented was reducing and that things are slowing down although this would not be unexpected given the volume of projects ongoing and the limitations that places on capacity to continue to develop and deliver more projects. The need to ensure that resources remain available to keep the programme ‘live’ over its lifetime also needs to be considered with several years of further activity still possible (the programme runs to at least the end of 2021).

The restrictions that the state aid rules and the need for match funding place on the implementation of the LEADER programme at a local level need to be noted when considering the range of projects supported and the type of work undertaken. Funding from the LEADER programme in Wales cannot be used to provide aid or other assistance that would constitute state aid¹⁴ in respect of a ‘business’, ‘enterprise’, ‘undertaking’ or ‘economic operator’ receiving such support. This means that LAGs cannot provide any kind of assistance that would reduce normal day-to-day operational running costs; subsidising staff salaries or giving financial support (directly or indirectly) towards rent, rates, energy costs, promotion, publicity, advertising and/or any other running costs or overheads. Further, LEADER in Wales cannot be used to provide capital or revenue grants or other forms of direct or indirect assistance to commercial businesses.

¹⁴ State aid is any advantage granted by public authorities through state resources on a selective basis to any organisations that could potentially distort competition and trade in the European Union. For further information, see: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/state-aid>

3.4 Expenditure to date

The table below sets out the latest expenditure figures for the programme at the time of writing this report.

Table 3.1: Projects budget and commitment for Arloesi Gwynedd as at the end of May 2019¹⁵

	Total	As a percentage of the budget
Budget	£2,527,241	-
Committed	£1,209,693	48%

Source: Menter Môn

Just under 50 per cent of the projects budget is committed at the mid-point in the lifetime of the programme. This is a relatively healthy position for the programme to be in at this stage with money still available to commit to funding projects going forward as well as good progress in terms of the amount committed. We would however anticipate that remaining funding would need to be allocated relatively soon to ensure that it is fully utilised by the end of 2021.

3.5 Programme level performance indicators

The table below shows the data on the performance of the LEADER programme in Gwynedd against the targets agreed with the Welsh Government and other funders.

Table 3.2: Performance indicators for the LEADER programme in Gwynedd (overall), as of the end of May 2019*

Performance Indicator¹⁶ ↓	Target	Claimed	% of predicted claimed
Number of feasibility studies	12	16	133%
Number of networks established	24	12	50%
Number of pilot activities undertaken/supported	85	37	44%
Number of community hubs	20	4	20%
No of jobs safeguarded	9	3.5	39%
Number of information dissemination actions/promotion	163	294	180%
Number of stakeholders engaged	269	243	90%
Number of participants supported	243	4,526	1,863%
Number of jobs created (NDA indicator)	30	14	47%

Source: Menter Môn | Definitions for the indicators are in Appendix 3

*excludes the outputs of cooperative project.

¹⁵ Includes the budget allocated to fund cooperative projects.

¹⁶ Definitions for the indicators can be found in Appendix 3.

The indicators suggest that the programme is performing well with achievements outstripping spend (48 per cent) in all but two instances; those are ‘the number of community hubs’ and ‘the number of jobs safeguarded’. In several instances, the programme has already overachieved against the target, in some instances, very dramatically, the most obvious being the number of participants supported. The level of overachievement against those targets, given that the programme is still some way from completion, suggests either that those indicators were dramatically underestimated or that there has been a significant change in the activities being undertaken. Most likely, it is a combination of those two reasons. The high number of participants supported also demonstrates a high level of interest in the programme in Gwynedd to date.

It is important to note here that the range and level of targets set are not substantial for a £5m programme. This is in line with the Welsh Government’s change of approach for the current LEADER programme in response to criticisms of the previous programme which included a far longer list of performance indicators, leading to a very complex monitoring process. The much more limited number of indicators (most of which are outputs¹⁷) does however mean that the data available to judge the success of the programme, based on these performance indicators alone, is limited. This increases the reliance of the evaluation on the data collected by the individual projects, as discussed later in this chapter.

It is also relevant to note that the performance indicators discussed above are reported to the Welsh Government for the programme for Gwynedd as a whole. The performance indicators are not reported per LDS objective meaning that they cannot be used to assess progress against those specific objectives.

A review of the targets shows limited correlation between the performance indicators (which should be anticipating the achievements of the programme) and the objectives set out within the LDS. Specifically, the achievements anticipated in the performance indicators would not allow the objectives, as set out in the LDS, to be achieved. Their usefulness as performance indicators for the LDS is therefore, again, limited. The information that the project can provide is therefore, again, very important.

3.5.1 Potential additional performance indicators

As noted earlier in this chapter, the KPIs in place for the LEADER programme (as set by the Welsh Government) are output (activity) focused and relatively narrow. The evaluation has therefore considered the potential to introduce additional indicators to provide further data on the performance of the programme in Gwynedd.

¹⁷ Illustrating the level of activity undertaken as opposed to results or outcomes of activities.

LAG members and staff were asked during interviews and a workshop with the LAG to comment on how the success of the LEADER programme in Gwynedd should be measured. The same question has been asked in other areas where Wavehill are evaluating the LEADER programme and the suggestions made, included:

- The full utilisation of the funding available
- The stimulation of new and innovative ideas
- Capacity building 'soft' outcomes such as confidence and a willingness to take-action
- The sustainability of projects supported by LEADER (their existence beyond the end of LEADER funding)
- The sharing of ideas/concepts developed via LEADER and their repetition in other projects/activities

As previously noted, a key challenge to the evaluation of a programme such as LEADER is that the projects and activities funded can vary substantially. This makes it challenging to develop a set of common indicators that can be used across all projects, especially in respects of capturing the outcomes of activities. Potential generic indicators that could potentially be used however include:

- The number of organisations applying for funding to deliver a project for the first time
- The number of those new organisations developing other or follow up project proposals (i.e. continuing their involvement in regeneration)
- The number (or percentage) of participants/stakeholders reporting that they have benefited as a result of their involvement in the project funded by LEADER
- The number (or percentage) of participants/stakeholders reporting that they are more likely to get involved or continue to be involved in actions within their local community as a result of their involvement with the LEADER programme

The main weakness of these indicators is that they tell you nothing about the nature of the benefit, only that there has been one. It may however be that such an indication is enough with more detailed data and analysis being provided at a project level.

The most common theme in discussions with LAG members on this issue was the legacy of projects, whether they continue or evolve once the funding that has been provided by the LEADER programme has come to an end. This was considered by many to be perhaps the key indicator of the success of LEADER and is obviously consistent with the core objective of LEADER as a mechanism for piloting new and innovative approaches to rural development.

Whilst accepting that not all projects will succeed is important (a key part of any intervention in support of new and innovative activities), the logic of indicators relating to legacy for a LEADER programme is clear. Potential indicators include:

- The number of projects still active 12 months post the end of the LEADER funding
- The amount of additional or funding drawn into the area by the project

Sharing of learning is also a key element of the LEADER programme. It may therefore be valuable to capture indicators of activities relating to that process as part of any set of 'legacy' indicators. For example:

- The number of case studies produced and the number of times they have been downloaded from the programme website
- Participants in activities to share learning from the LEADER programme (individuals and/or organisations)

As discussed in Report 1, Common Evaluation Questions (CEQs) are an important element of the EU Common Monitoring and Evaluation System of which the LEADER programme forms part and it is appropriate to consider them here. LAGs are required to report against the CEQs which are relevant to the Focus Areas their activities are aligned to. In Wales, all LAGs should address the CEQ related to Focus Area 6B: *'To what extent has the RDP intervention contributed to fostering local development in rural areas?'* The judgement criteria specified for this question are set out in the table below.

Table 3.3: Judgement criteria and indicators for Focus Area 6B: fostering local development in rural areas

Judgement criteria	Indicators
1. Services and local infrastructure in rural areas has improved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of rural population covered by local development strategies • Jobs created in supported projects • % of rural population benefiting from improved services/infrastructures <p><i>Additional information:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of projects/initiatives supported by the Local Development Strategy • % of RDP expenditure in LEADER measures with respect to total RDP expenditure
2. Access to services and local infrastructure has increased in rural areas	
3. Rural people have participated in local actions	
4. Rural people have benefited from local actions	
5. Employment opportunities have been created via local development strategies	
6. Rural territory and population covered by LAGs has increased	

The indicators specified for Focus Area 6B are of relatively limited value at a local level in terms of assessing the outcomes of the programme. Many of the indicators suggested above are however relevant to the judgement criteria specified further supporting their potential introduction. The constraints created by the state aid restriction on the programme in Wales on the potential to achieve the 'jobs created' result does however need to be noted again here.

It is also important to consider the Well-being of Future Generations Act when considering programme level performance indicators for schemes in Wales. The Act puts in place legislation requiring public bodies in Wales to put long-term sustainability at the forefront of their thinking, and work with each other along with other relevant organisations (such as third sector groups) and the public to prevent and tackle problems¹⁸. Seven 'well-being goals' are set and a series of 46 'national indicators' have been put in place to allow progress towards those goals to be measured.

The list is too long to include here¹⁹ but several of the indicators are potentially relevant to the LEADER programme. These indicators are however (as one would expect from national level indicators) very high level and long-term. Attributing any changes in these indicators to the LEADER programme will therefore be challenging to say the least. Being aware of these high-level indicators and considering them within the revision of the LDS will however be important.

Based on the review in this section, we would propose that the introduction of at least the indicators noted below be considered:

- a) The number of organisations applying for funding to deliver a regeneration project for the first time
- b) The number of those new organisations developing other or follow up project proposals (i.e. continuing their involvement in regeneration)
- c) The number (or percentage) of participants/stakeholders reporting that they are more likely to get involved or continue to be involved in actions within their local community as a result of their involvement with the LEADER programme
- d) The number of projects still active 12 months post the end of the LEADER funding
- e) The amount of additional or funding drawn into Gwynedd by the project
- f) Participants in activities to share learning from the LEADER programme (individuals and/or organisations)

These indicators are generic and not specific to any of the priorities identified within the LDS. Based on the review of the LDS previously discussed, the potential to introduce additional priority specific indicators should also be considered.

¹⁸ More information about the Act is available here: <https://futuregenerations.wales/about-us/future-generations-act/>

¹⁹ The full list can be found within this document: <https://gov.wales/docs/desh/publications/160316-national-indicators-to-be-laid-before-nafw-en.pdf>

3.6 Project level outcomes to date

3.6.1 Project evaluation forms

An evaluation form is completed by each project when it is closed. These forms ask for a range of information including:

- What did the project demonstrate and were the achievements consistent with the aims of the project?
- What worked well and what didn't work well?
- Outputs achieved
- Details of any project evaluations undertaken

Sixteen project evaluation forms were available for review at the time of this report. The key points within a number of those forms are summarised as mini case studies for projects which can be found in Appendix 2. The key themes identified by our review can however be summarised as follows:

- The diverse and, in many cases, innovative nature of projects supported by Arloesi Gwynedd is clear.
- Sustainability (in both its senses) appears to have been a major theme for the LAG; not only did Arloesi Gwynedd look at projects which sought to make the most of existing natural features (such as the Dark Sky Project) but also at ways of generating capital for community projects (Cyllid Torfol, Rhodd Eryri).
- Whilst the reports suggest that majority of the projects successfully delivered on their aims, it is difficult to establish how far these projects progressed or developed following the pilot phase supported by LEADER.
- Projects such as Wi-fi Aberdaron have provided very successful solutions to challenges facing their areas and it is a testament to these projects and the LEADER approach that their solutions have been replicated on a wider scale across the county.
- Whilst many of the projects piloted or made use of innovative technologies, there was not always enough demand for these to transition into longer term use. For example, the simultaneous translation app developed for the O Glust i Glust project was highly innovative but encouraging people to use the app independently proved difficult and the app no longer appears on the Google Play store.
- Other projects appear to have garnered significant media interest, such as Prosiect 15, however they did not progress beyond their pilot stage (the Prosiect 15 website no longer exists) although the reasons for that are not always clear.
- Some projects reported that relations between themselves and Gwynedd Council were at times a challenge to project delivery. Both Bach a Sych and Gwastraff Swmpus felt that they were unable to progress their ideas due to differing priorities such as a perception that the Council had no wish to outsource services or provide relevant information relating to them.

- Some projects appear not to have progressed further but have created outputs which can be utilised to further benefit their communities, for example the purchase of equipment such as binoculars for the Dark Sky project or the directory of growth businesses created as part of Byw a Bod Digidol. Others that have not progressed leave a legacy in terms of business creation or employment outcomes.

The project closure forms provide a useful summary of the projects in question. The amount of information they provide on the outcome of the projects in question and lessons learnt in their development and delivery is however relatively limited, although the small-scale nature of the projects for which forms have been completed to date does obviously need to be considered; there is a limit to the amount of information that it is reasonable to expect small-scale projects to provide.

However, given that monitoring data will provide very little evidence in relation to what the programme has achieved, it is important to make sure that, where possible, high quality information is provided for projects via the closure forms. As innovative and pilot projects, there should also be a clear emphasis on analysing the lessons learnt during the management and delivery of the projects which is a matter discussed further later in this report.

3.6.2 Feedback from project stakeholders

As noted in the introduction, the online survey of project stakeholders produced 16 responses from individuals representing 28 different Arloesi Gwynedd projects. Whilst this sample is smaller than we would wish, it provides a useful insight into the views of those involved in projects from outside of the Arloesi Gwynedd team.

As one would expect, responses varied when stakeholders were asked to describe the achievements of the project (or projects in several cases) they had been involved with due to the wide range of projects involved. In many instances, respondents also described activities that had been undertaken (for example, the number of events) as opposed to outcomes, although this is not unexpected given that many of the projects were ongoing.

Where outcomes were being identified there was a focus on the benefits to their communities and local resident. There was reference to projects having impacted on residents' mental health and wellbeing, farming and agriculture in the local area, promoted the environment and has raised an awareness of many social issues. Examples of the achievements being identified include:

- *"Awareness of issues and challenges has been raised. It has prompted thought and debate about issues investigated and its inspired local people to get involved in various subjects."*
- *"Good background research and pilot work."*
- *"It has raised awareness of dementia and educated individuals of all ages about the condition, it was an opportunity to share best practice and promote the services out there to individuals and careers."*
- *"It has provided a useful facility for electric vehicle drivers in rural mid Wales. It draws a few extra visitors to our business who might otherwise not have bothered. Hopefully it gives drivers the confidence to venture into the area with their electric car."*

- *“It’s brought in some additional tourism,”*
- *“The Solar System has just been finished and each planet can be visited in its public location across Snowdonia. Leaflets have been produced and some publicity has been going on throughout. I know there is about to be a big publicity push so expect to see awareness of both the project and the Dark Skies status to start increasing now. I think the work with the schools and businesses and in each town or village community that has participated has already created a level of interest, and the response that I have personally had from all parts of the public has been incredibly positive. I hope it will lead to more interest in space science, STEM subjects at schools and universities and in the dark skies status that I believe is important environmentally, for health and wellbeing, for communities, business and tourism. Hopefully the solar system artworks specifically will add another attraction to the possibilities for visitors to the area.”*

It is interesting to note that most respondents to this question said that the project(s) they were involved with were performing better than they had anticipated.

Previous involvement in rural development

Whilst our sample is small and may therefore not be representative of all the stakeholders involved in Arloesi Gwynedd projects, it is interesting to note that 10 of the 16 respondents to this question reported that they had not been involved in any other projects being delivered in rural Gwynedd previously.

This would suggest that the programme has been able to engage with a group of stakeholders not previously involved with rural projects in the area. The sample is however small, and more data will need to be collected to confirm whether this is reflected more widely. This would however be a positive outcome of the LEADER process in Gwynedd with ‘fostering local economic development’ a key objective for the LEADER approach and the animation element of the programme, discussed further in the following chapter.

Personal learning and development

Stakeholders were asked to describe what, if anything, they (as an individual) had learnt as a result of their involvement with the project(s) and Arloesi Gwynedd. Personal learning identified included:

- *“That it’s very much worth trying to get new ideas off the ground.”*
- *“That there is a need for investment and innovation even when permanent funding is scarce.”*
- *“Good networking of like-minded communities. Depth of knowledge and talent in Gwynedd.”*
- *“Good things come with receiving resources and support to experiment, to be creative and to try new things. Many of the ideas have also emanated from communities and it is good that there is a source of information, support and money for them to turn ideas into reality.”*

- *“Arloesi Gwynedd Wledig have excellent staff, especially Rhian, who dedicates so much time on her projects, she is involved from the beginning to end, she provided so much support, the project wouldn't have gone ahead without Rhian.”*
- *“Oh loads! It has been a great experience. I have learned a lot about farming and the potential uses of IoT (internet of Things) - and where IoT falls short.”*
- *“I have commented on some individual learning i.e. gaining confidence in my spoken welsh, but other learning points have revolved around working on such a big project, with some lessons learnt about realistically assessing time and workload. The project took longer than we all thought. I have also had to lean and stretch my actual creative practice in all sorts of ways including working with groups, knowledge and techniques of lots of different materials etc.”*
- *“That working with Local Government and organisations like Arloesi involves a much longer timescale than a similar project being run by a commercial organisation would require.”*
- *“I have become more knowledgeable in promotion through the medium of Google and social media.”*

These are important outcomes of the LEADER approach and demonstrate how an involvement with the management and delivery of projects can have a beneficial outcome for the individuals concerned.

Stakeholders were also asked to comment on whether their experience of working with Arloesi Gwynedd had influenced their thinking about rural development in Gwynedd. In most cases, a positive influence was identified. Comments made included:

- *“Brilliant, I can't commend the service enough.”*
- *“I am really encouraged - I think the team at AGW are brilliant, and they have a very good working relationship with Gwynedd Council.”*
- *“I've come to appreciate that there are unique needs and challenges as well as opportunities in rural areas that are worthwhile in their own right, but that many of the projects in such areas can bring fresh perspective on ideas that are relevant elsewhere too.”*
- *“Project has definitely underlined the importance of rural development in Gwynedd. But I think it needs to go further and work in longer term ways and with greater investment to achieve higher standards, otherwise there is a danger that projects come and go and their effect is like a drop in the ocean. However it is equally important that it is not overly institutionalised, I like the way that the typical Arloesi Gwynedd project is on a human, community scale that ordinary people can get involved in not just some abstract policy in a council office. I do think serious effort needs to be made to conduct these projects as professionally as possible with high quality outcomes.”*
- *“Realise there is a good connection of communities of interest.”*
- *“Things will happen, but slowly!”*
- *“My understanding has increased.”*
- *“Made me realise that innovation can and will succeed locally, as long as there is support and little funding.”*

Again, these comments are an indication of the positive outcomes that the LEADER approach can generate beyond the direct achievements and outcomes of the projects themselves.

All respondents said that they were likely to continue to be involved in projects in rural Gwynedd going forward (11 of the 16 saying that it was 'very' likely). Twelve of the 16 said that their involvement with projects supported by Arloesi Gwynedd had a positive influence on their intention to continue to be involved (nine identifying the positive impact as being substantial). The following are examples of the comments made:

- *"I'm now heavily involved in many rural projects. Many of which AGW have had a hand in or helped off the ground."*
- *"It's inspired me to see more innovation locally, and to make the most of the resources and skills we have in Gwynedd."*
- *"I feel as though we worked well together and so I hope to continue that in future projects. Also, they have introduced me to the council and other local individuals, which has led to other work."*
- *"I had no idea that such help was available."*
- *"I feel very strongly about supporting rural communities. This is in a very general way for health, wellbeing, social and economic reasons, but also more specifically because of my own profession I am passionate about the role of the arts in reaching out and facilitating projects of all kinds in communities, and I would like to be able to contribute in this way."*

Eight of the 16 respondents said that they had met and/or were working with different people for the first time as a result of their involvement with Arloesi Gwynedd (eight said 'a lot' of new people) which is again a positive outcome. Comments included:

- *"Farmers, young people, local businesses, college students. A lot!"*
- *"Having collaborated with local businesses, which is not the norm (with the exception of businesses that I buy services from on a daily basis). Have been an opportunity to see intersectoral collaboration."*
- *"I have widened my network tremendously."*
- *"Working with the team has opened up a great many doors to me and has expanded my connections network."*
- *"I have worked with over 200 young people, teachers and business people in lots of different communities across Gwynedd (only one school/business was in my local area and there I did already know some of those people). Also the Arloesi Gwynedd team themselves, who I very much enjoyed working with."*

3.7 Conclusion

The review of the LDS for Gwynedd has found that the strategy it presents is very broad seeking to tackle a very wide range of objectives. This has led to a very wide range of projects being supported to date with a substantial amount of activity taking place and excellent visibility for that activity online via the programme website and social media platforms. However, whilst the supporting/piloting of a wide range of activities can be a positive thing, there is also a concern that the potential for the investment being made to achieve a substantial impact (i.e. to address the opportunities and challenges being identified) is limited due to the approach. The key to this issue is that the LAG needs to be clear about what their objective for the LEADER programme in Gwynedd is. If the objective is to fund good or innovative ideas, regardless of their sector, etc., a broad approach is appropriate. If, however the objective is to be more targeted, and address specific challenges or opportunities, a narrower, more targeted, approach is probably appropriate going forward.

The programme level performance indicators being collected to monitor the implementation of the LEADER programme in Gwynedd provide little if any evidence of what the programme is achieving. A range of additional indicators could potentially be collected that would provide a fuller picture of what is being achieved but the 'project evaluation forms' will have a crucial role in terms of demonstrating what has been achieved, as well as capturing lessons learnt at a project level. Whilst some useful information can be gathered from the forms completed to date, there is the potential to improve the quality of that data.

Our sample of project stakeholders for this report is limited *but* those consulted are very positive in respect of the project outcomes being identified and the personal benefit of involvement with projects and Arloesi Gwynedd. Their feedback is an indication of the positive outcomes that the LEADER approach can generate beyond the direct achievements and outcomes of the projects themselves. It will therefore be very important to gather a more robust sample for the next phase of the evaluation.

4 Review of the implementation of the LEADER approach to date

Key points

- Attendance at LAG meetings has been good and views of interviewees on the performance of the LAG were very positive.
- There was a concern that awareness of the LAG and what they did (as well as LEADER more generally) beyond those directly involved was probably limited. This could mean that the value of the group and the role it plays is poorly understood.
- LAG members identified a range of ways in which they benefited as a result of their involvement with the group; this is an important outcome of the LEADER approach.
- LAG members were very positive when asked to comment on the role undertaken by Menter Môn in their capacity as the Lead Body for the LAG.
- The project implementation approach in Gwynedd is different to that employed in most other areas in Wales where LEADER is delivered with projects effectively being delivered 'in-house'. This approach has several advantages, especially in respects of the level of innovation within projects undertaken. But there are also disadvantages with less funding distributed to external organisations and, therefore, less 'capacity-building' benefits for such organisations.
- Projects in Gwynedd compare well to those being delivered in other parts of Wales via the LEADER programme in respects of the level of 'innovation' involved. There is however an argument that there is the potential to introduce a greater degree of 'disruptive innovation' into the programme during its latter stages.
- The importance of completing the 'innovation cycle' for projects needs to be emphasised which should include a comprehensive analysis of lessons learnt, etc. as well as the effective dissemination and sharing of that information.
- Linked to the above, there have been limited networking and cooperation activities to date, both of which are key features of the LEADER approach.

4.1 Introduction

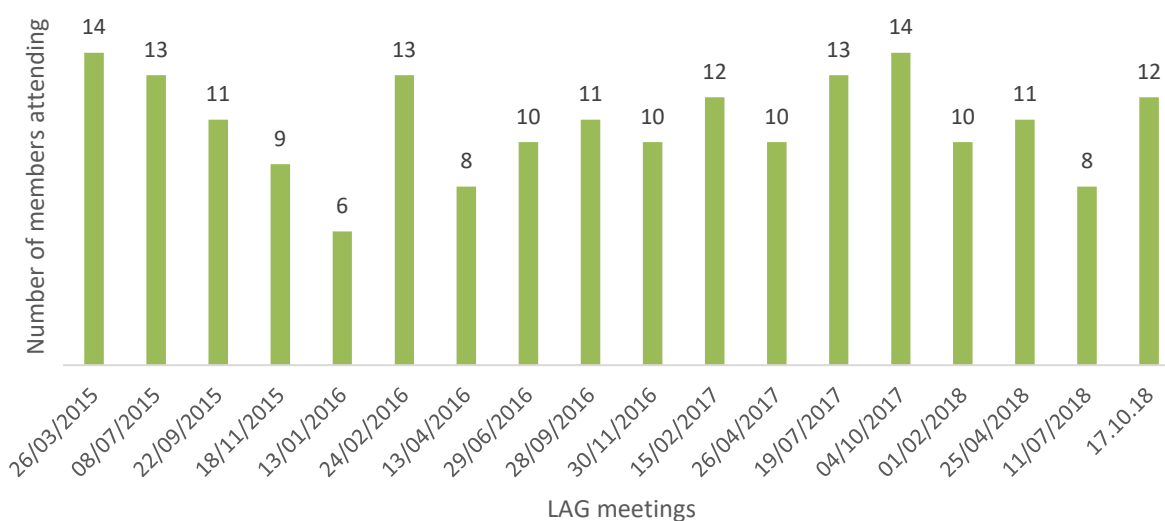
This chapter reviews the implementation of the LEADER approach in Gwynedd to date as part of the Arloesi Gwynedd programme, other than the LDS which has already been discussed in the previous chapter. The discussion draws on data for activities undertaken to date, and discussions with LAG members and the Arloesi Gwynedd team.

4.2 The Local Action Group

The LAG is a key part of the LEADER approach designed to be a group which represents the local area and its population. It leads the development process with no interest group nor public authorities having a majority in the decision-making process.

4.2.1 Number of meetings and attendance

Figure 4.1: LAG meetings and attendance (up to the end of 2018)



Source: Analysis of data provided by Menter Môn

The table above shows the number of LAG members attending meetings between March 2015 and December 2018 of which there were 16 (a meeting every three months on average). The average attendance has been 11 with a high of 14 in March 2015 (the first meeting) and October 2017 and a low of six in January 2016. That is however one in only four instances out of 16 where attendance has been less than 10 members; this is a strong level of attendance.

Twenty members are reported as having attended at least one meeting of the LAG over the period in question with the average number of meetings attended by those individuals being nine of the 16 meetings. Whilst only one member has attended all meetings, 11 members have attended more than 10 of the 16 meetings, suggesting a good level of continuity of attendees which is, again, positive.

4.2.2 Views on the performance of the LAG

The views of interviewees on the performance of the LAG were overwhelmingly positive with LAG members clearly aware and comfortable with their responsibilities as members and the specifics of the LEADER approach. The relative complexity of the LEADER programme (compared to a more standard grants scheme) was however, recognised during the interviews with staff and LAG members with the need for effective briefing if, and when, new members are recruited to the LAG emphasised.

There was some concern amongst interviewees when discussing the understanding of the role of the LAG (and indeed the LEADER programme more generally) amongst those not directly involved and the public more generally. Most respondents believed that there was a core group of individuals and organisations that were aware of the programme and its objectives but that awareness beyond that group was probably limited which was of concern to some. A few LAG members identified an increase in the publicity given to the LAG and its role within the programme as something that could be prioritised over the next phase of the programme. The need to build and sustain relationships with communities was also noted.

Views on the LAG meetings were positive with no significant issues being identified. The LAG members were happy with the amount of information that was provided to them regarding projects, expenditure and so on and generally complemented the way in which meetings were administered by the Arloesi Gwynedd team.

The important role played by the two sub-groups to the main LAG meeting was noted with the importance of their role as an opportunity to review and discuss projects and ideas in detail being emphasised.

Interviewees did not identify any clear gaps in terms of the membership of the LAG although there was some discussion of the potential to engage with some groups without necessarily asking them to become 'full members' of the LAG. For example, representatives from certain sectors or individuals with particular skills could be invited to attend meetings where a specific issue or project idea was being discussed.

4.2.3 Perceived benefits of being a LAG member

A range of benefits were identified when LAG members were asked to describe how, if at all, they benefited from being a member of the LAG. They included:

- Networking (the most frequently identified benefit)
- A way of "giving something back"
- Becoming aware of projects and activities – outside the individuals' usual area of work
- Raising awareness about the organisation they represent
- Becoming more strategic in their thinking (due to awareness of other activities)

Such benefits are an important outcome of the LEADER approach and need to be considered alongside any discussion about outcomes achieved by projects funded by the programme.

4.2.4 Net Promoter Score

Net Promoter Score (NPS) is a management tool used to gauge the overall satisfaction of an organisation's customers, in this case Arloesi Gwynedd. The score is calculated based on responses to a single question: *How likely is it that you would recommend [company/product/service] to a friend or colleague?* Responses are given on a scale of 0 (zero likelihood) to 10 (very likely) with the NPS ranging from minus 100 (very bad) to plus 100 (very good). As part of their interviews, LAG members were asked the NPS question about their membership of the LAG; would they recommend being a member of the LAG to a friend or colleague? The response was 100% positive achieving the best score possible, an NPS of +100. This demonstrates the positive views of LAG members about the group.

4.3 The role of the Lead Body

4.3.1 Programme administration

LAG members were overwhelmingly positive when asked to comment on the role undertaken by Menter Môn in their capacity as the Lead Body for the LAG highlighting the effective way in which the role was being undertaken and the benefit of being able to draw upon the extensive experience of delivering LEADER within the organisation.

4.3.2 The approach to delivering projects

The 'project delivery' approach in Gwynedd is different to that employed in most other areas where LEADER is delivered in Wales with the project officers having a far more prominent role developing and then delivering projects on behalf of the LAG; effectively projects are mostly delivered 'internally' by the Arloesi Gwynedd team although there are also examples where the delivery of projects (or some aspects of them), is undertaken by contractors procured by the Arloesi Gwynedd team.²⁰ In other parts of Wales, the approach is generally focused on the more traditional approach of providing financial support for external organisations to deliver projects they have developed and applied for support to deliver although other LAGs do also procure the delivery of some projects.

²⁰ In other areas, the approach is more traditional with external organisations developing projects, submitting applications for financial support to the LAG and, if approved, delivering those projects.

This approach has several advantages, but also some disadvantages, which are important to recognise. Advantages include the fact that the projects developed and implemented are (arguably) more innovative; it is certainly possible to argue that LEADER projects being implemented in Gwynedd are more innovative than those to be found in other parts of Wales (although it is important to acknowledge that the author has by no means reviewed LEADER projects across Wales). This is because projects are generally developed by the LAG meaning that the approach is less re-active compared to other areas; in other words, the LAG is not reliant on 'applicants' to develop the innovative ideas that they fund.²¹ The approach also reduces the risk that there are problems in the delivery of projects as delivery is mostly undertaken 'in-house' and can therefore be controlled.

A down-side of the approach is however that less funding is distributed to external organisations via the model; delivery funding is mostly utilised within the Arloesi Gwynedd team. This reduces the extent to which funding is circulated within the local economy which is obviously a process which generates some benefits. This also reduces the potential for 'capacity building' benefits within local organisations as a result of their management and delivery of a LEADER funded project; benefits which the evaluation of LEADER programmes in other parts of Wales are identifying.

The above does not mean that the alternative approach being employed in other areas is better or worse than that being used in Gwynedd; both approaches have pros and cons. The key is to recognise that and choose an approach which best fits the objectives of the LAG in any given area.

4.4 Animation, engaging with the local community and providing support

The LEADER approach includes the 'animation' of the local area to engage with the local community. That can include a range of activities including empowering or supporting local groups and organisations to develop and implement projects (in line with the LDS) or more general activities focused on the local area such as, for example, enhancing the awareness of local heritage and associated opportunities.

²¹ It is more difficult for other areas to take the same approach as is being used in Gwynedd due to the need for projects to generate match funding. In Gwynedd, most of the required match-funding is provided at a programme level which means that the LAG can be much more pro-active in its approach.

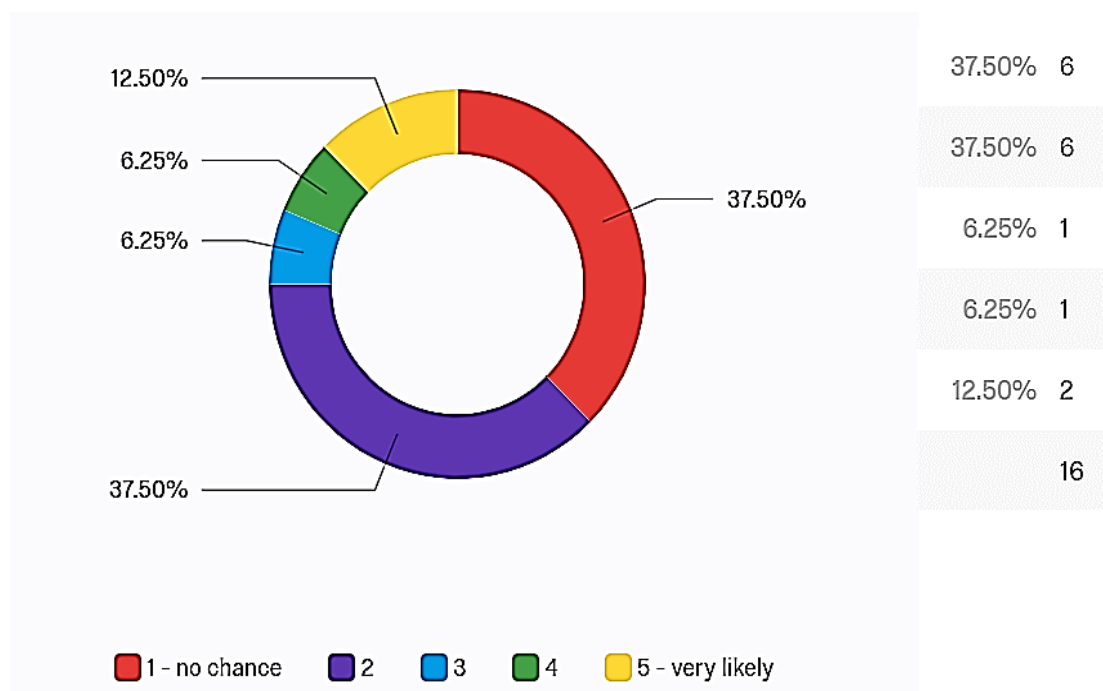
4.4.1 The views of LAG members

In general, LAG members made limited comments on the implementation of animation activities in Gwynedd. This seems at least partly due to a lack of awareness and understanding of that terminology which is used sparingly by the Arloesi Gwynedd team who are more likely to use terms such as ‘community engagement’ or ‘project development’ to describe the activity. But, even when taking this into account, it would also seem clear that animation is seen by LAG members as something that is largely left to the Arloesi Gwynedd team to manage and deliver on their behalf with only limited guidance or oversight; the focus of the LAG would very much seem to have been on projects as opposed to any of the other aspects of the LEADER approach.

4.4.2 The views of project stakeholders

A key objective of the animation elements of the LEADER approach is ‘to make things happen’. Project stakeholders were therefore asked to comment on whether they believed the project(s) they had been involved in would have happened regardless of the support that had been provided. As Figure 4.1 shows, most respondents said that there was little or no chance that the project would have happened without support although there were instances where it was reported that it was likely that the project would indeed have happened anyway.

Figure 4.1: Project stakeholder response to the question – would the project have happened anyway?



Source: Online survey of project stakeholders

This is a typical example of a comment made by a respondent reporting that there was little if any chance of the project happening anyway:

“The support that AGW have given to those involved in their projects has really made them happen. Some might have without their support, but many really would not have got off the ground without them.”

Project stakeholders responding to the online survey were also asked to comment on the support they had received from the Arloesi Gwynedd team and, whilst the limited number of responses should be acknowledged, most of the comments made were very positive, the following examples being typical:

“AGW have been exceptionally easy to work with, always open to collaborative working and very enthusiastic about the genuine needs and development opportunities in the area. Their willingness to be open to new ideas and bravery to take on imaginative projects is commendable.”

“The support from [the officer] was exceptional, she is passionate about what she does, she is enthusiastic and ensures that every aspect of the projects are conducted professionally and well captured within the community, she is an asset to Arloesi.”

Some negative comments were however also made which are seemingly focused on the way in which LEADER projects are delivered in Gwynedd as discussed above; this underlines the need to consider the pros and cons of the approach.

“A huge opportunity has been lost because of how LEADER has been delivered in Gwynedd in comparison with other areas. Colleagues based in other areas of Wales have been able to achieve far more via LEADER where it is delivered as a grant.”

“It appeared that using Arloesi was “part of the deal” and it was never really clear to our group who Arloesi was and why we should be using them.”

“It would have been nice if they would have been a bit clearer about where they got the idea.”

“It is tainted by a subjectivity related to who has brought the project forward. There is definitely favourite projects and if you don't get certain members of Menter Môn on board you will not get funding via the LAG.”

“I wasn't clear what the needs they wanted to meet. More information about the fund's aims and objectives may have helped to identify further possibilities.”

Again, the NPS question was asked to gauge the overall satisfaction of stakeholders with Arloesi Gwynedd. Based on the responses of 16 project stakeholders, the NPS for Arloesi Gwynedd was a very positive +50 indicating high level of satisfaction although the sample size again of course needs to be considered.

4.5 Innovation

Innovation is a cross-cutting priority of the LEADER programme. The focus on innovation is based on the argument that doing "more of the same" is unlikely to enable an area to reach its full potential and that new solutions to existing problems should be sought. The objective is to encourage and support new, forward looking and entrepreneurial approaches and solutions to local issues and to share and transfer that experience.

There are 68 references to 'innovation' within the Gwynedd LDS including:

- *The LDS has been set up to be the laboratory of **innovation** operating beneath what we expect to be mainstream EU programmes over the next five years. (page 9); and*
- *Experience has informed us that LEADER animation is far more effective when working with willing, committed and informed individuals who are challenged to change a particular status quo through **innovation**. (page 26)*

Section 3.3 of the LDS is a 'description of innovation' (a requirement of the template) and states:

The Gwynedd LDS acknowledges that there needs to be a shift in emphasis so that practitioner communities in Gwynedd have a genuine opportunity to steer innovation in their respective sectors.

The Gwynedd LDS will secure innovation by the following means:

- a) The **LEADER PROCESS is fully and meaningfully implemented to a high standard of quality** – assured by the consistent application of LEADER methodology by experienced staff setting challenges, guiding trajectories and securing deliverable targets.*
- b) The **LAG are knowledgeable and actively engaged representatives of socio economic and community-based interest** in the county. It is essential that LAG members are intelligent, empathetic, non-partisan and with a capable perspective on the purpose and specific objectives of the LDS.*
- c) **Actions are devised to respond to the specific objectives within each of the five themes**. Actions are NEW methods and/or NEW undertakings tackling difficult socio-economic challenges or forging paths to harnessing agreed socio-economic opportunities. Actions are deliverable within the LDS timescale in order to proof their innovative quality, are managed effectively so that they produce outputs and an informed judgement on sustainability and viability, have progression routes to roll out and are disseminated appropriately.*

These extracts demonstrate the commitment to innovation within the LDS and hence plans for LEADER in Gwynedd. It can be argued that those commitment have been implemented with the exception possibly of the last sentence in the last bullet point (although it is fair to say that it is still relatively early in the lifetime of the programme to deliver this commitment), which is an issue discussed further below.

LAG members and staff were clearly aware of the emphasis on innovation within the LEADER programme and described how the level of innovation within applications is always discussed which is clearly positive. LAG members were also generally satisfied with the level of innovation within the projects supported by the programme in Gwynedd although a minority also hoped to see greater levels of innovation in the projects being supported from this point onwards.

The generally accepted definition of 'innovation' within LEADER in Wales is to pilot or test an activity, service or way of working that had not been seen or tried in the area/sector previously. Whilst this definition is not incorrect, there is an argument that the definition is very broad, especially given that the focus on innovation within the programme is based on the premise that doing "more of the same" isn't enough and that new solutions to existing problems should be sought. Having a great focus on more 'genuinely' innovative ideas in at least part of the programme going forward may therefore be appropriate.

Having said that, whilst there is no measure that can be used to compare how innovative LEADER projects across Wales are, in the authors experience, it can certainly be argued that projects being implemented in Gwynedd are more innovative than those supported in other parts of Wales, although that judgement is not base on a comprehensive review of all projects across Wales; projects in Gwynedd are certainly no less innovative than those being delivered in other parts of Wales. Nevertheless, there is also an argument that there is scope for further reconsidering the level of innovation within projects supported, especially given the very clear emphasis on its importance within the LDS which may require a discussion on the definition of the term.

The OECD defines innovation as follows:

Innovation is production or adoption, assimilation, and exploitation of a value-added novelty in economic and social spheres; renewal and enlargement of products, services, and markets; development of new methods of production; and the establishment of new management systems. It is both a process and an outcome.

They also identify four types of innovation²²:

- **Product innovation:** A good or service that is new or significantly improved. This includes significant improvements in technical specifications, components and materials, software in the product, user friendliness or other functional characteristics.
- **Process innovation:** A new or significantly improved production or delivery method. This includes significant changes in techniques, equipment and/or software.
- **Marketing innovation:** A new marketing method involving significant changes in product design or packaging, product placement, product promotion or pricing.
- **Organisational innovation:** A new organisational method in business practices, workplace organisation or external relations.

There is also value in being aware of the differences between disruptive and incremental innovation **Disruptive innovation** when a new product, service or process is introduced to a market or area, designed to make a significant impact by completely replacing existing technologies and methods. By contrast, **incremental innovation** is usually focused on improving an existing product or service's efficiency, productivity and/or competitive differentiation. It is the latter that is seen in LEADER often and the argument of some LAG members is that a more disruptive approach may be needed.

Various innovation toolkits and guides are available via the Nesta website²³. The potential to explore the potential to cooperate with other programmes and schemes in Wales designed to promote innovation should also be explored²⁴.

The need to complete what could be described as the innovation cycle or process also needs to be emphasised. There are many versions of this cycle or process all of which generally conclude with a review of the innovation that has been introduced after which it is either 'mainstreamed', modified for a further pilot or, discarded as not something worth introducing more widely. This final 'review' process is an essential component. To date, there would seem to have been limited emphasis on this within LEADER in Gwynedd (which may not be surprising given that the programme is still at its mid-way point). It is however very important that it takes place.

The 'project evaluation forms' are the mechanism for this review to take place and there is some review of lessons learnt within the forms that have been completed to date. That review is however relatively weak and could be further enhanced.

²² <https://www.oecd.org/site/innovationstrategy/defininginnovation.htm>

²³ Nesta (<https://www.nesta.org.uk/>) is an innovation foundation. The organisation acts through a combination of programmes, investment, policy and research, and the formation of partnerships to promote innovation across a broad range of sectors.

²⁴ See: <https://businesswales.gov.wales/innovation/>

4.6 Networking and Cooperation

Networking among actors inside the LAGs area, among LAGs and other public-private partnerships, in order to establish a stronger foundation for the transfer of knowledge, and exchange of experiences is also a key part of LEADER. Networking includes the exchange of achievements, experiences and know-how between LEADER groups, rural areas, administrations and organisations involved in rural development within the EU, whether or not they are direct LEADER beneficiaries. Networking is a means of transferring good practice, of disseminating innovation and of building on the lessons learned from local rural development.

Cooperation is also a core feature of LEADER. With LAGs across Europe the wealth of LEADER local development experience, knowledge and human capital is potentially substantial, and cooperation offers a means of capitalising on this resource. LAGs can make use of or contribute to this network to develop the group, to undertake joint projects or initiatives, to innovate, or to share or transfer knowledge and experience.

Interviewees highlighted that the LAG itself provided a networking opportunity for members and indeed identified networking as one of the benefits of membership of the group. LAG members have also attended a hand-full of networking events related to LEADER but highlighted time as a major restriction of their ability to participate in such activity, even when they were particularly keen to do so. The Arloesi Gwynedd team had also participated in such events including international events which were considered to have been of some benefit. The challenges of building a cooperative project following such activities were however noted with time, again, being identified as the main constraint.

Little networking was reported as having taken place to date at a 'project level' although the potential value of such networking was recognised as being somewhat limited at a relatively early stage in the lifetime of the programme. The value of networking at a project level would however increase as projects moved further into their delivery stages and completed. The extensive amount of promotional material that is being produced relating to projects that have been delivered in Gwynedd also lends itself to networking activities.

Looking outside Gwynedd, interviewees reported that some networking was taking place at an officer level with other LAGs especially those working in Anglesey as a result of the fact that Menter Môn was also the Lead Body for the LAG in that area. Regional officer meetings are also taking place.

It seems clear from interviews that LAG members have limited awareness of activities and projects being undertaken by LAGs in other parts in Wales. This is despite the existence of the Wales Rural Network (WRN) which shares information about projects being supported by LAGs on its website²⁵. This is of some concern as an awareness of what projects and ideas are being piloted in other areas could be of substantial benefit; for example, it may stimulate the development of ideas for new projects in Gwynedd. It also means that an opportunity to learn from the experience in other areas is being lost.

Interviewees were however generally happy with the level of cooperation being undertaken highlighting the number of cooperative projects that were being funded/implemented with LAGs from other parts of Wales, particularly with neighbouring counties. No cooperative projects have however been developed with any LAGs outside of Wales to date which is potentially a significant missed opportunity to work with/learn from LAGs in other parts of the EU.

Staff members however highlighted the fact that constraints/pressure on their time limited the amount of attention they could pay to developing cooperative projects (which tend to be resource intensive) highlighting that, when work has to be prioritised, and development and delivery of 'local' projects had been prioritised above cooperative projects.

4.7 Conclusion

The LAG plays a key role in LEADER and it is positive to note that attendance at LAG meetings has been good with positive feedback on meetings. LAG members also report that they benefit from attending meetings which is clearly also positive.

The approach in Gwynedd is different to that seen in most other parts of Wales with projects effectively being delivered 'in-house'. The approach has several advantages, especially in respects of the level of innovation within projects undertaken. But it's disadvantages also needs to be recognised with less funding distributed to external organisations and, therefore, less 'capacity-building' benefits for such organisations. Neither approach is better than the other with the most appropriate depending on the priorities of the LAG.

Projects in Gwynedd compare well to those being delivered in other parts of Wales via the LEADER programme in respects of the level of 'innovation' involved. There is however an argument that there is the potential to introduce a greater degree of 'disruptive innovation' into the programme during its latter stages. The importance of completing the 'innovation cycle' for projects also needs to be emphasised which should include a comprehensive analysis of lessons learnt, etc. as well as the effective dissemination and sharing of that information. Linked to this, there have been limited networking and cooperation activities to date, both of which are key features of the LEADER approach. Those activities need to be given more attention over the next phase of the programme we would argue.

²⁵ The Wales Rural Network is a forum to promote the exchange of expertise in rural development delivered by the Welsh Government funded by the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020. See: <https://businesswales.gov.wales/walesruralnetwork/local-action-groups-and-projects>

5 Conclusion and recommendations

The findings of this mid-term, and therefore interim, evaluation of the implementation of the LEADER programme in Gwynedd are positive as summarised below. Several recommendations are however being made for consideration by the LAG.

The LDS

The review of the LDS finds that it is a very broad strategy reflected in the diverse range of projects that have been implemented to date. There is an argument that this approach reflects the wide-ranging challenges facing Gwynedd and/or the need to cast the net widely in order to identify new and innovative projects and ideas. However, we believe that there is a stronger argument for greater prioritisation going forward to ensure that the remaining funding available is utilised as effectively as possible. The key to this issue is that the LAG needs to be clear about what their objective for the LEADER programme in Gwynedd is. If the objective is to fund good or innovative ideas, regardless of their origin, a broad approach is appropriate. If, however the objective is to be more targeted, and address specific challenges or opportunities, a narrower, more targeted, approach is probably necessary.

Recommendation 1: The LDS should be updated with the potential to introduce greater prioritisation for the remainder of the lifetime of the programme considered. This process should include a review of the projects supported to date, mapped against the objectives of the LDS and consideration of the potential need to undertake activities that follow-up or build upon activities undertaken by projects previously funded. The update should also include an update of other activities ongoing in Gwynedd as the situation has changed considerably since the LDS was originally prepared.

A limited number of indicators (and associated targets) are in place to monitor the performance of the LEADER programme in Gwynedd. Such an approach has benefits from an administrative perspective. However, it means that there is limited data collected on the extent to which the LDS has been delivered and the performance of the programme, especially at an outcome level (most of the indicators are outputs; i.e. activities).

Recommendation 2: Consideration should be given to the introduction of additional performance indicators for the implementation of the LDS in Gwynedd including both generic indicators and theme/priority specific indicators.

The limited number of programme level indicators also means that the programme is dependent to a large extent on the monitoring and evaluation activities being undertaken at a project level. Project evaluation reports are completed but the review of those available to date for this report has found that there is potential to enhance the level of information being collected.

Recommendation 3: The monitoring and evaluation activities being undertaken at a project level should be reviewed to ensure that it is of as high a quality as possible. Alongside this, the potential to provide evaluation workshops or training sessions for project officers should be considered.

In terms of the outcomes of the programme, the evidence gathered to date, although limited is positive. Project evaluation forms completed as projects close suggest that projects have achieved positive outcomes and the feedback from the small sample of project stakeholders is positive. LAG members are also reporting that they benefit as a result of being members of the group and these are important outcomes of the LEADER approach that should not be overlooked. The evidence base for assessing outcomes will continue to grow as the evaluation work continues providing a better basis upon which to judge the outcomes of the programme in Gwynedd within the final evaluation report (due in April in 2021).

Turning our attention to the implementation of the other aspects of the LEADER approach, we have found that the understanding of the LEADER approach at a LAG level seems is high with very positive feedback from members. Some concerns about broader awareness of the role of the LAG and the programme more generally do however need to be noted. This may be an issue that the LAG would wish to explore further at a time when future approaches to rural development in Wales are being considered in the context of the UK's withdrawal from the European Union.

Recommendation 4: The key role that LAG members in raising awareness of the LEADER programme in Gwynedd should be recognised. LAG members also have an important role in the animation of the local area. The potential to enhance the role of LAG members as 'ambassadors' for LEADER should be explored including representing the LAG at events or meetings, leading activities with particular sectors and so on. Members should also be encouraged to note/promote their role as LAG members within their existing networks and activities. The potential to develop a page on the Arloesi Gwynedd website which lists (and provides contact details, etc.) for LAG members and explains the important role of the LAG should be considered.

LAG members were generally positive when asked to comment on the role undertaken by Menter Môn in their capacity as the Lead Body for the LAG. This is obviously a positive finding.

The different approach being taken in Gwynedd in terms of the delivery of LEADER projects is important to note with project officers within Arloesi Gwynedd taking greater responsibility for the implementation of projects compared to other areas where the approach is focused on providing financial support for external organisations to deliver projects they have developed. The approach offers several advantageous in comparison to that employed in the other areas. For example, it can be argued that the approach in Gwynedd encourages more innovative projects to be developed and implemented. However, far less of the funding available is distributed to groups in the local area because projects are delivered 'in-house'. This also reduces the potential to use the funding to develop project delivery capacity within those external organisations. These strengths and weaknesses need to be recognised by the LAG with the approach used depending on its priorities as identified within the LDS. The fact that there is a limited resource within the Arloesi Gwynedd to manage and deliver projects also needs to be considered.

Recommendation 5: The LAG should review the approach taken to managing and delivering projects considering the strengths and weaknesses of the various approaches that it could use.

'Amination of the territory' is a key part of LEADER and the evaluation has found potential for LAG members to engage more fully in the direction of activities being undertaken by the LEADER team on their behalf; the LAG should take greater responsibility for the animation activities being undertaken.

Recommendation 6: Animation is a key element of the LEADER approach. Considering the updates to the LDS, there should be a greater focus on discussing, directing and monitoring of animation activities at a LAG level.

Projects in Gwynedd compare well to those being delivered in other parts of Wales via the LEADER programme in respects of the level of 'innovation' involved. There is however an argument that there is the potential to encourage a greater degree of 'disruptive innovation' into the programme during its latter stages. The importance of completing the 'innovation cycle' for projects also needs to be emphasised which should include a comprehensive analysis of lessons learnt, etc. as well as the effective dissemination and sharing of that information.

Linked to the above, there have been limited networking and cooperation activities to date, both of which are key features of the LEADER approach. Those activities need to be given more attention over the next phase of the programme we would argue.

Recommendation 7: Options for increasing the level of innovation within the programme in Gwynedd should be explored including a review of approaches for supporting innovation as promoted by organisations such as Nesta.

Recommendation 8: Some pilot projects warrant a second attempt or further development. Alongside the development of new project ideas, the LAG should, on an ongoing basis, review project evaluation forms with a view to considering whether existing or previous pilot projects should be evolved into new of phase 2 pilots.

Recommendation 9: A key element of any pilot project is the capturing *and* then sharing of any learning. Consideration should be given to the production of more detailed and comprehensive project evaluation reports for all the projects that have been funded by LEADER in Gwynedd. Those reports should then be drawn upon to share and disseminate the findings and lessons learnt from each project. The method for effectively sharing those documents with stakeholders (local and from further afield) should also be considered; for example, the potential for conferences or workshops to share and discuss findings as well as the use of online platforms.

Recommendation 10: Networking and cooperation are also key features of LEADER. Opportunities and options for the following should therefore be explored:

- d) Increasing networking, exchanging of experiences and cooperation at a project level within Gwynedd; such activities could potentially be focused on sharing the lessons learnt and findings of LEADER projects undertaken (see above).
- e) Increasing LAG members awareness of LEADER projects being delivered in other parts of Wales (and across the EU); if possible, information about projects developed and delivered in previous programme periods (within and outside Gwynedd) should also be shared.
- f) Developing further cooperative projects, especially with LAGs outside Wales and across the EU; those should be explored as soon as possible as to allow enough time for those projects to be developed and implemented.

Appendix 1: An overview of the Gwynedd LDS priorities and objectives

Headline Objectives

- 1) By 2020, Gwynedd realises new economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for its people provided by harnessing economic intelligence, pre-developing small enterprises, new jobs and an improved skills base.
- 2) By 2020, people living and working in Gwynedd are better connected physically, digitally and socially and are able to access the amenities and services they need.
- 3) By 2020 Gwynedd's people better capitalise on the area's cultural, historical, recreational and natural assets to improve the visitor experience, visitor numbers and spend and local skills and employment in tourism.
- 4) By 2020, Ynys Môn and Gwynedd will have established three inter-territorial cooperation projects and one transnational cooperation project that, through innovation, networking and knowledge exchange, contribute to meeting the objectives of the LDS themes and associated priorities.

Strategic objectives

NEED / OPPORTUNITY Drawn from the LDS SWOT	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE
<p><i>The need to extend the value and economic benefit of the Gwynedd coastline</i></p> <p><i>The opportunity to add value to the Gwynedd Coastal Path and its associated settlements</i></p>	<p>SO1 Secure greater local economic value for local operators from the Gwynedd Coastal Path</p> <p>SO2 Develop new and more employment and business opportunities for local people through the diversification and integration of coastal economy factors</p>

NEED / OPPORTUNITY Drawn from the LDS SWOT	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE
<p><i>To add economic value to the tourism potential of deeper rural (upland and lowland) Gwynedd</i></p> <p><i>Opportunities for creative responses to off season and poor weather weaknesses</i></p>	<p>S03 Engender greater participation and exploitation of new and existing heritage and tourism markets in upland areas of the county</p> <p>S04 Generate greater participation and exploitation of off-season tourism markets by new and existing businesses working in conjunction with communities of interest</p> <p>S05 Increase engagement with, participation and benefit to tourism businesses by adding value to existing digital application provisions</p> <p>S06 Increase the number of businesses utilising the Sense of Place toolkit in the county</p>
<p><i>Opportunities to use the Welsh language as an economic resource, a contributor to diversity and identity, an attractant to new markets</i></p> <p><i>A need to combat inertia amongst young people towards the Welsh language at secondary school levels</i></p>	<p>S07 To elevate the harnessing of Welsh as an USP rooted in the region – to set the language in its European, Celtic and local context by deepening appreciation and knowledge of its wider significance in European heritage and Celtic persistence</p> <p>S08 To ensure the Welsh language is heard in the community and in the workplace as well as seen</p>

NEED / OPPORTUNITY Drawn from the LDS SWOT	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE
<p><i>A need for supply chain processing capacity in the food sector</i></p> <p><i>The opportunity for food as an elevator of economic development retains a strong opportunity set in Gwynedd</i></p>	<p>SO9 Increase the opportunities for start-up entrepreneurship and added value local supply and processing dynamics in the food sector</p> <p>SO10 Drive up the artisan food agenda in Gwynedd, linking particularly to adding value to primary produce and speciality foods</p>
<p><i>A pressing need to increase the number, volume and extent of products from Gwynedd with enterprise and employment potential</i></p> <p><i>An urgent need to provide young people from Gwynedd with opportunities for career development in the county economy</i></p> <p><i>An urgent need to raise the aspirations of disaffected young people and help young people into worthwhile activity</i></p>	<p>SO11 Drive forth the development of products which add value to Gwynedd's economy, diversify its product range and provide reach into extended markets</p> <p>SO12 Provide employment opportunities for high achieving young people in their home county</p> <p>SO13 Provide an opportunity for young people to have access to support and equipment which facilitates creativity and entrepreneurship</p>
<p><i>A need to expand and extend the narrow market reach of local businesses, and improve their capacity to compete at higher value levels and markets</i></p> <p><i>Opportunities, in relevant sectors where economies of scale are barriers to advancement, business partnerships can be engines for innovation</i></p> <p><i>University spin outs present an important opportunity for Gwynedd. There is a pressing need to be proactive in harnessing the potential of these in rural Gwynedd</i></p>	<p>SO14 Co-ordinate local businesses consortiums to access assistance and engage more successfully with formal procurement procedures</p> <p>SO15 Facilitate new or innovative community and/or business partnerships that create new product development opportunities</p> <p>SO16 Exploit growth in the digital sector as a cross cutting driver of economic growth</p> <p>SO17</p>

	Exploit the City of Learning deeper into its diaspora in Gwynedd
NEED / OPPORTUNITY Drawn from the LDS SWOT	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE
<p><i>Rural transport innovations based on market town linkages/coast to inland links – improve the capacity of people in need to access markets and services</i></p> <p><i>A need to address poor access to personal development services for inhabitants living in deeper rural settlements</i></p>	<p>SO18 To implement a community based rural transport initiative</p> <p>SO19 The need to pilot and develop new community-based models of service delivery using time limited methodologies with a view to roll out</p> <p>SO20 Improve the use of community hubs as service delivery mechanisms</p>
<p><i>Service transfer opportunities from local authority to third sector</i></p>	<p>SO21 Mitigate the effects of service cutbacks through intelligent transfer piloting</p>
<p><i>Embracing the future of energy supply and demand at community level for the benefit of communities</i></p> <p><i>Opportunities to utilise renewable resources to secure energy and income benefits for businesses and communities</i></p>	<p>SO22 Make substantial inroads into inhabitants understanding of the Carbon agenda, their role and participation in it, and the incremental development of their ownership of it</p> <p>SO23 Exploit kiln dried timber added value options</p> <p>SO24 Promote renewable energy for local use in Gwynedd businesses.</p>
<p><i>A need to target digital exclusion. There is considerable inequitable access to services in rural areas. Without intervention, polarisation of service access and quality of delivery for people living in rural areas will continue</i></p>	<p>SO25 Pilot does not spot solutions</p> <p>SO26 Trial the head on tackling of digital exclusion by targeting those hardest to reach</p>

NEED / OPPORTUNITY Drawn from the LDS SWOT	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE
<p><i>Opportunities to turn the affinity of young people for digital technology into economic benefit for seed enterprise</i></p> <p><i>Opportunities to take full advantage of superfast broadband exploitation, for both businesses and communities</i></p> <p><i>Develop use and promotion of the Welsh language as an attractant and economic resource in digital technology</i></p>	<p>SO27 Create a digital academy mindset in Gwynedd with the most able young people in order to develop digital entrepreneurs</p> <p>SO28 Extend mainstream provisions into deep rural and areas through proactive programming. Emphasis on land-based businesses</p> <p>SO29 To bring Gwynedd to the forefront of Welsh medium digital developments</p>

Appendix 2: project case studies, drawn from project closure forms completed to date

Bach a Sych (Small and Dry)

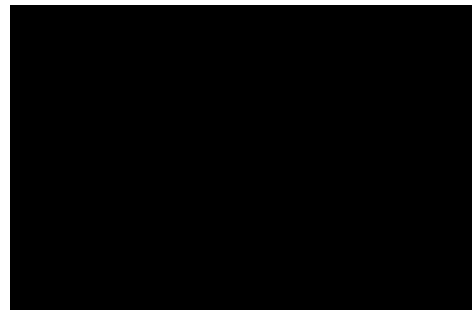
Following the identification of fertilizer contamination of water networks by Snowdonia National Park, a feasibility study was launched to examine the feasibility of reducing waste and producing useful by-products by using Dry Anaerobic Digesters.

To try and gain a greater understanding of stock levels and the cost of different technologies available, the study held site visits at three farms. Ultimately, the conclusion of the study was that high costs proved challenging to developing anaerobic digesters on small farms, however there is one existing technology that is appropriate and could prove innovative in future trials. Despite their findings, the project was not expected to progress further as it was felt there was no wish to outsource this service from the County Council.

Total project cost: £768

Time to Venture Scheme

The Time to Venture scheme was designed to help encourage full time employees to successfully work on their business ideas by giving them time to do so. The project aimed to imitate the '20 per cent concept' used by some large companies in the private sector, such as Google and 3M. The intention was to make use of this concept by enabling staff to spend one fifth of their time developing projects outside their normal work programme, which has led to innovations such as Gmail and the 'Post it Note'.



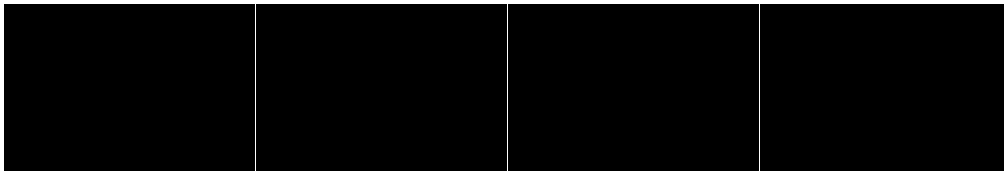
The programme supported four participants for six months to develop their business ideas and repaying their salary costs for one day a week. Of the four participants, three worked for Gwynedd County Council whilst one was aged 15. Mentoring support and training, including branding and finance, was provided.

Although one participant had to drop out, the other three participants have successfully launched their businesses. A quick Google search (21/05/2019) confirmed that at least two of these businesses are successfully still in operation.

The support provided was praised by participants although they suggested that they may benefit from coming together more on the scheme and having some support following exit from the project.

Whilst there is no indication of whether this scheme continued post LEADER, there is a clear legacy from the project in the businesses that were successfully launched.

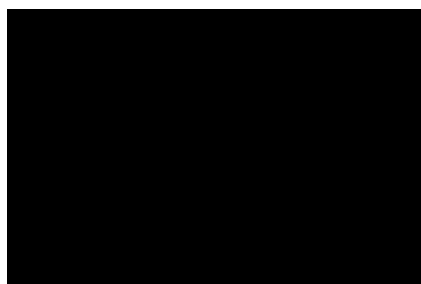
The following are case studies prepared as part of the project:



Hoppa Harlech

The purpose of the pilot to provide better visitor access to the town of Harlech during the peak visitor season and to determine whether a financially sustainable model for running the service could be established from a combination of user revenues and contributions from the visitor attractions, traders and Community Council.

Throughout the summer, it was felt that the shuttle performed well from an operational perspective as all timetabled services ran and departed on time. It was felt that the branding created for the service had been strong and feedback from passengers highly rated the quality, ease of use, reliability, friendliness of drivers and value for money.



3,756 passengers used the service during its operation which, although commendable, is lower than levels for a comparable service that operated in the summer of 2014 which carried a total of 8,020 passengers. Organisers speculated whether cost or lack of encouragement was behind the lower levels of use.

On reflection it was felt that an improved parking strategy around the town would help encourage use of the service.

The community were keen to continue the service and Arloesi were in discussions with Communities Transport Wales (CTA) to discuss the possibility of them supporting the group to cover their revenue gap of c. £11,000 for the following year. It was advised that they apply for the Awards for All Fund and that CTA would support their application.

Total project cost: £21,246

O Glust i Glust



O Glust i Glust is a simultaneous translation app that uses mobile phones as simultaneous translation equipment and provides real-time translations of Welsh events or tours to listeners. It works by having at least one person translating the content into the app and others making use of it.

The app became available for download for free on Android platforms in May 2015 and was tested at the National Eisteddfod, Montgomery in 2015 where it received a positive review²⁶ and press coverage from a range of newspapers and websites. Despite this there was still some technical issues with the app including a 1-minute delay on the listener's end and a lack of convenience which made it unsuitable for informal/unexpected meetings where volunteers translate. It was felt that for the project to progress the technology needed to be demonstrated more widely, potentially through guided walks and tours. It was also suggested that the app could be piloted further with Cymen and Gwynedd Council to get further feedback.

The cost of the equipment e.g. mobile phones/headphones to be purchased to trial the app was just under £1,000, funded through LEADER. Menter Môn also received £15,000 funding from the Welsh Government through the Digital Technology Fund to support the development of O Glust i Glust software.

Dark skies

This project provided training to 14 tourism businesses and held workshops to educate them on 'astro-tourism'. Funding was also used to purchase equipment that tourism businesses could use such as binoculars – this equipment is still available for businesses.

Fifty-five businesses attended a 'Stars Watch Event' for tourism businesses at Llyn Gwynant Camp and four of the businesses involved in the project held their own star viewing events following their participation in the project. Following the project, Snowdonia National Park began looking at options to be able to employ a Dark Sky Officer. However, it was felt that further work was needed to develop the project; some businesses did not feel confident enough to explain star viewing or Snowdonia Dark Sky Status with their guests and would require further training.

It was recommended that a Phase II project should be launched with a greater spread of tourism providers and businesses in Gwynedd and that local expertise in astronomy and astro-tourism could also be identified and applied to these activities. A working group was also suggested to collaborate with Snowdonia National Park, Visit Wales, local tourism boards and business circles to promote the night sky heritage and provide an opportunity framework.

Total project cost: £13,593

²⁶ <https://cymraeg.gov.wales/Mwy/index/o-glust-i-glust?lang=en>

Indycube

This pilot project was a trial to replicate a successful co-working model from South Wales in Gwynedd. As part of this, Hwb Arloesi was created which offered hot desking facilities which could be hired for a daily fee in a co-working space.

Hwb Arloesi was initially housed at the old library in Porthmadog offering 10 desk spaces, however during the lifetime of the project Gwynedd Council sold the building which meant the Hwb relocated to a smaller venue offering just 5 desk spaces at Y Ganolfan in Porthmadog.

In total, 51 people used the hot desking service and 75 people attended a series of tech talk events put on by the Hwb. Twenty-two digital workshops were also run by Coleg Meirion Dwyfor using the resource.

Gofod cydweithio newydd ar AGOR ym Mhorthmadog!
New co-working space OPEN in Porthmadog!

hwb ARLOESI

gofod desg-poeth
hot desk space

Croeso i Hwb Arloesi, gofod cydweithio newydd gyda chyfleusterau 'desg-poeth' sydd bellach wedi agor yn yr Hen Lyfrgeil ym Mhorthmadog.

Welcome to Hwb Arloesi, a new co-working space with hot-desking facilities which has now opened in the Old Library in Porthmadog.

- Llogwch ddesg am £12 ++tax y ddiwrnod, talu wrth fynd
- Oriau Agor 9yb-5yp Llun-Gwener
- Rhyngwyd cyflym iawn
- Tê a choffi am ddim
- Ystafell cyfarfod ar gael

Rent a desk from £12 ++tax a day, pay as you go

- Opening hours 9am-5pm Mon-Friday
- High speed internet
- Free tea and coffee
- Meeting room available

Am ragor o wybodaeth / For more information...
www.arloesigwyneddwledig.com

Archebwch ddesg / Book a desk... www.indycube.cymru

Logos: Arloesi Gwynedd Wledig, Indycube, NDA, and other partners.

Although the Hwb received positive feedback from users, the level of demand prompted questions about the sustainability of the service. It was suggested that the service could potentially be offered either in house or as an add on service for an existing business which would not require large overhead costs.

Total project cost: £26,050

Gwastraff Swmpus

Gwastraff Swmpus was a project that aimed to identify alternative models/ways of providing non-statutory services such as the disposal of bulky waste. Staff from Seren Cyf. and Antur Waunfawr (both social enterprises) were commissioned to travel on Gwynedd Council's bulky waste lorries in order to collect data on the goods being handled such as whether they would be suitable for reuse or recycling. A total of 6 days was spent shadowing Gwynedd Council with some research being recorded.

This research was expected to provide evidence of ways that bulky waste could be reused and what processes social enterprises needed to put in place to achieve this. However, the project was unable to progress with identifying an alternative model for the service.

Utilising an underspend on the first phase of the project, the development of a diagnostic tool was commissioned which could be used to identify costs associated with the service. This element of the project was however terminated due to a lack of financial information from Gwynedd Council and a lack of interest from the social enterprises concerned. Because it was felt that Gwynedd Council had no plans to outsource this service, no future actions were identified.

Total project cost: £768

Cyd Ynni

Cyd Ynni is an energy scheme that is delivered by a consortium of six local energy groups. The aim of this project was to develop a business plan for the scheme for the consortium to realise their vision of energy efficient production and use. Consultants with experience of working with community energy groups were appointed to write the plan and the six energy groups were given the opportunity to provide input and feedback on its content. The business plan presented an overview of opportunities available to Cyd Ynni and set out an action programme and demonstrated how they could move forward to apply for alternative funding sources. As of 2019, the scheme appears to have successfully established itself and is [still running](#).

Total project cost: £10,000

Cyllid Torfol

Given the current climate where less public money and grants are available, the Cyllid Torfol project aimed to demonstrate that it was possible to find new ways of raising money through mass funding. The project focused on promoting fundraising campaigns through mass finance for two community energy companies looking to develop hydro systems. Cyllid Torfol worked closely with both companies and placed a strong emphasis on the effective use of social media to raise awareness of the funding campaigns. Both companies were successful in meeting their fundraising targets. In the future the project would like to focus on developing fundraising campaigns for different sectors such as community redevelopment and possibility eventually for the private sector.

Total project cost: £748

Ysgol Ynni

The Ysgol Ynni Plant project aimed to trial an energy summer school to encourage children aged between eight and 12 years old to develop their interest in and understanding of renewable energy. Information was sent out to parents at local schools who could then register their children onto the sessions which cost £5 each. The sessions included a range of activities such as industrial tours and designing and using various technological equipment. The sessions were supported by nine volunteers, most of whom were ex-engineers. The feedback from participants was that the sessions were diverse, and the children learned new skills in the field. On average, each child marked the sessions as nine out of ten.

At the end of the project, it was felt that there was scope to develop the brand further by expanding into different areas of Gwynedd and having a presence at the National Eisteddfod in Anglesey.

Total project cost: £7,350

Ceir Trydan

The Ceir Trydan (Electric Cars) project aimed to raise awareness of the economic benefits of setting up car charging points in Gwynedd by establishing five charging points at locations in Meirionnydd, in the south of the county.

Before setting up the charging points, training was provided to the five businesses involved which included a background on climate change and renewable energy, types of electric cars and types of charging point, and the practical background of charging cars. This training was intended to give businesses the confidence to discuss the pilot scheme, encourage visitors to take an interest in electric cars and be able to offer a service to visitors who wanted to use the charging point.



The charging points appear to have been successful in attracting visitors; 77 per cent of users who filled in a feedback form scored the importance of the location of the charging point when planning a trip as five/five. The points were also hailed as an important resource for communities as, due to the shortage of local points, the ports have been used by local people to charge their own cars.

An important learning point was that, although the four-hour charge time provided a good opportunity to encourage visitors to spend time and money in the area, it was felt that some of the points were too remote which made walking to nearby attractions difficult whilst the car was being charged.

The project's ability to share their learning attracted queries from Gwynedd Council and Carmarthen LEADER who were both considering the installation of charging points. Apropos of this, the project planned to create a toolkit to be able to provide people with relevant information to be able to install their own car charging point. The possibility of installing more charging points as part of the Community Electricity Cars project was also raised.

Total project cost: £2,694

Prosiect 15

Prosiect 15 aimed to deliver 'TED style talks' with inspirational figures through the medium of Welsh. As part of the pilot five diverse speakers were recruited to speak at an event held at Bangor University's Innovation Centre on the 8th June 2016. Following initial approaches to assist with marketing, BBC Wales expressed an interest in broadcasting the talks at later dates on their prescheduled programmes. As part of this agreement, it was decided that Betsan Powys, editor at the BBC, would host the event and they proved popular with 90 of the 110 tickets available being sold. Each conversation was also filmed and hosted on Prosiect 15's website.

Collaborating with the BBC, and general PR and marketing were seen as strong points of the project, as well as the variety of talks and their relevance to current affairs. Despite the success of the evening there was some problem collating individual email addresses which meant that a feedback form for the event could only be sent to 37 attendees. Communication was also highlighted as an occasional issue with some messages becoming lost in emails/being inconsistent on social media.

For future events it was felt that the issues of speaker fees needed to be addressed. Moving forward, for any future project to be more cost effective it would need to pay less for speakers as the brand developed, creating a model where the speaker would see it as an honour to be asked to take part.

Rhodd Eryri

The [Rhodd Eryri](#) project piloted a visitor giving scheme in Gwynedd to assess its potential in the area, as well as investigating the most effective methods of delivering such a scheme.



From their work with several businesses who took part in the project, it was found that businesses who had an 'opt-out' option on their website fund raised more effectively than those with donation boxes or envelopes. 'Like and Share' competitions run by the businesses also helped to increase followers on social media.

Following the project, a detailed report was produced by CELyn with input by Gwynedd Council and Snowdonia National Park.

Wi-Fi Aberdaron

The purpose of the project was to pilot a public access WI-FI connection in the village of Aberdaron.

Prior to the project there was no mobile data connectivity or phone signal in the village meaning that visitors to the village could not make phone calls or access their online data.

It was important for the project to first establish the feasibility of creating a space with a constant digital connection in the centre of the village, and to use systems that would not require support from participating community members. It was also important that the system would not be abused by users. In order to make the cost of the service sustainable, charges for a premium service were introduced.



The technology for the wi-fi zone was installed by PC-Q and HB Digital. A website administered solution allowed remote monitoring and control of the system. On its busiest day, the network had 500 users and over the lifetime of the pilot the premium service generated an income of just over £150.

As this income was not enough to sustain the cost of the service, businesses in the area installed in community WI-FI at their own expense. Rather than paying a monthly cost to BT, they pay the community group for the use of the WI-FI in order to support the cost of the FTTP (Fibre To The Premises).

Following on from the project, Gwynedd Council received funding from the Rural Community Development Fund to install community WI-FI in 12 villages across Gwynedd.

Total project cost: £ 12,139.06

Byw a Bod Perfformio

This was a joint project between the Gwynedd and Anglesey LEADER LAGs which built on a previous project submitted to Arloesi Gwynedd Wledig in 2016.

The project aimed to work with young people to introduce language and culture to visitors to Anglesey and Gwynedd through pop-up theatre.



Eleven young people were recruited (seven from Gwynedd and six from Anglesey) for the summer and theatre company Fran Wen was appointed to manage, train and mentor the young people.

Working with Fran Wen, the young people created three different performances which were performed at 15 different locations throughout the summer. As a result of the project, four part time positions were created for four of the young people for fourteen weeks with the Anglesey Youth Theatre Company.

Whilst the project generated media attention (an S4C programme came to film one of the performances), it was felt that the project suffered from a lack of advertising from the venues.

A series of possibilities were discussed to extend the project further including extending into Conwy and seeking funding from the Creative Europe Fund to work with another country in Europe. Menter Môn were intending to bid for lottery funding from the Arts Council to continue the project.

Total Cost: £44,070

Byw a Bod Digidol

Byw a Bod Digidol also received funding from both Gwynedd and Anglesey LAGs and was designed to match local talent to employers and simultaneously help people to realise that they do not need to move out of the region to achieve high-quality employment and a high-quality standard of living.

Seven 'growth businesses' were recruited and matched with nine 'high calibre' STEM students. Together they took part in a three-day bootcamp designed to help them get to know each other, life experience activities to show the attractiveness of the local area such as paddle boarding and farming, and work experience. As part of the work experience students worked with employers to identify recruitment opportunities but also gain a chance to learn what skills and other qualities employers were looking for.

Students also took part in group work with a mentor to plan for a closing event around the following question:

"ICT Companies in Gwynedd and on Anglesey are finding it hard recruiting local skills, Young people with ITC qualifications claim that there are little or no opportunities in Gwynedd and Anglesey. How can both be better aware of each other?"

This event took place in Bangor University and was facilitated by the students who shared their experiences and was well attended with 60 registering.

As a result of the project, two full time positions were created, however one student had secured an apprenticeship with a different company and so the second job was recruited externally. Generally, through the programme students have broadened their networks and a directory of growth businesses was created which could be shared with universities, schools, colleges and the wider public.

Reflecting on the project, it was felt that there was too much focus on the ICT sector. It was suggested that there was potential to look at doing something similar for the Food and Drink sector.

Total cost: £40,000 (50-50 Gwynedd and Anglesey LAGs)

Appendix 3: Performance indicators definitions

Indicator	Definition
Number of feasibility studies	Number of specific feasibility studies commissioned or undertaken through the programme to provide the background research for a specific problem or issue and the production of a comprehensive written appraisal of the issues, the alternative solutions, the financial costings, a detailed risk analysis and recommendations for the next steps
Number of networks established	Number of formal networks that have been created as a direct result of the LEADER programme and were not in existence prior to programme involvement. (Each network can be scored only once over the life of the approved programme)
Number of jobs safeguarded through supported projects	Jobs safeguarded are where jobs are known to be at risk over the next 12 months. Jobs should be scored as FTE and permanent (a seasonal job may be scored provided the job is expected to recur indefinitely; the proportion of the year worked should also be recorded). The job itself should be scored, not an estimate of how many people may occupy the job. If the job is not full time, then the hours per week will need to be divided by 30 to find the proportion of what FTE represents (e.g. 18 hours per week would be 0.6 FTE)
Number of pilot activities undertaken/supported	Number of pilot activities undertaken/supported through the capacity building activities, broken down as: new approaches, new products, new processes, new services
Number of community hubs	The number of new community hubs that were formed as a direct result of the LEADER programme
Number of information dissemination actions/ promotional and/or marketing activities to raise awareness of the LDS and/or it's projects	<p>The number of actions undertaken by the Local Action Group to raise awareness and explain the aim objectives and activities undertaken via the Local Development Strategy to the rural population.</p> <p>The number of planned and targeted activities undertaken by the Local Action Group that promote the Local Development Strategy and its projects or the production and distribution of materials aimed at marketing and promoting the Local Development Strategy and its projects</p>

Indicator	Definition
Number of stakeholders engaged	<p>Stakeholder: Any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the project objectives. These can be people, groups or entities that have a role and interest in the objectives and implementation of a project. They include the community whose situation the project or programme seeks to change.</p> <p>Engagement: Stakeholders who become actively involved in the project's implementation at any stage</p>
Number of participants supported	<p>Participants: number of people who attend an event to disseminate information, etc. Please note that the number on receipt of any kind of mailshot associated with the dissemination of information (e.g. the distribution of a report summary) cannot be counted as participants</p>

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