



TYWYN COMMUNITY DESTINATION PLAN



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Contents

1. Executive Summary
2. Introduction
3. Demography and Economic Profile
4. Community Audit
5. Infrastructure and Services
6. Consultation
7. Visitor Assessment
8. Historic Built Environment Assessment
9. Key Challenges and Opportunities
10. Conclusions and Recommendations
11. Potential Sources of Funding
12. List of Appendices :

Appendix 1: List of individuals/organisations consulted

Appendix 2: Index of Multiple Deprivation/Employment by sector

Appendix 3: Strategic Context

Appendix 4: Visitor/Tourism Profile

Appendix 5: Historic Built Environment Opportunities Study

1 Executive Summary

This Community Destination Plan complements the development of the Landscape of North West Wales's World Heritage Site Nomination; it has the following two objectives:

- To increase awareness, pride and understanding of the rich heritage of the slate industry;
- To promote the social and economic regeneration of the area.

The development of this Plan has itself been informed by extensive primary and secondary research, which has included:

- A document and data review of Tywyn's demography and economic profile, strategic context, regeneration projects and visitor/ tourism profile.
- Detailed assessments of the town's infrastructure, services, community provision, visitor offer and historic built environment – some of which has included audit work from the perspective of a 'secret visitor';
- An assessment of Tywyn's key strengths and weaknesses, as well as the challenges and opportunities presented;
- Identification of potential funding sources to inform the prioritisation/ viability of projects;
- Conclusions and recommendations in which we identify themes for the development of Tywyn.

The Plan is accompanied by an Action Plan, which sets out and prioritises ongoing, proposed and potential projects, alongside requisite resources, timescales, project lead and potential partners; this document is a working document and will be updated regularly and reviewed annually by Gwynedd Council and its stakeholders. Projects, and their prioritisation, have been identified in consultation with the community and stakeholders; prioritisation is reflected in the Action Plan.

The **key findings of our secondary research** can be summarised as:

- The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation shows that Tywyn 1 compares favourably to Gwynedd and Wales in most areas, with the exception of access to services and housing; Tywyn 2 is classified as deprived (in the 30% - 50% most deprived) for the majority of indicators, with housing a particular issue (in the 20% - 30% most deprived), exceptions are access to services, community safety and the physical environment. Data gathered from the 2011 census shows that significantly higher than average proportions of the population aged 16 and over do not have qualifications and levels of economic inactivity are higher than average.
- An online survey (as part of the development of Gwynedd's Destination Management Plan) highlighted that visitor and public facilities, including quality visitor attractions; access to infrastructure and services, including parking; tourist friendly engagement; and shops/ shopping opportunities were all issues that should be addressed.
- 2016 was the most successful year to date for Gwynedd's tourism sector, with expenditure reaching over £1 billion, visitor numbers of over 7 million and an increase in spending outside the summer months.

- Visitors are attracted to Gwynedd for its landscape, countryside and beach, as well as its extensive outdoor activities. 82% of visitors were highly satisfied with their visit and 98% reported that they were likely to return to Gwynedd.

The **key findings of our primary research** can be summarized as:

- **Improve visitor facilities and infrastructure** for the benefit of visitors and the community.
- Build upon existing **interpretation, social and cultural identity projects** and encourage greater interpretation of the town's history.
- Develop **wider network of way marked footpaths and cycle routes**
- Provide new **leisure facilities** for the benefit of the community

Ensure that the town's **historic buildings are protected and its iconic buildings renovated and re-used** for tourism and community use.

2 Introduction

This Community Destination Plan has been developed to complement the development of The Slate Landscape of North West Wales World Heritage Site Nomination in order to increase awareness, pride and understanding of the rich heritage of the slate industry and to promote the social and economic regeneration of the area.

Tywyn is a seaside resort on the Cardigan Bay coast of southern Gwynedd.

The original settlement was founded by St Cadfan, a Breton saint. The Cadfan stone, a stone cross found in the church, is the earliest known example of written Welsh.

In the second half of the nineteenth century the town expanded considerably, mainly towards the sea, and its appeal as a tourist destination increased.

The railway arrived in the mid 1860s and had a significant effect on the town. The station is still open.

Slate-quarrying in the Bryn Eglwys quarry, above Abergynolwyn, led to the building in 1865 of the Talyllyn Railway, a narrow-gauge railway designed to carry slates to Tywyn. Tywyn Wharf Railway station was originally opened to enable slates to be unloaded onto a wharf adjacent to the main railway line.

For most of the 20th century the armed forces were a significant presence in Tywyn - the town was a major training ground for amphibious warfare landings in the Second World War. The links with the armed forces came to an end in 1999 when Morfa camp closed.

3 Demography and Economic Profile

The population of Tywyn is 3,264 (source: census 2011); of whom 2,228 are of working age (68.3%);

60% of the population is economically active; we provide more detail on employment sectors in the table below;

40% are classified as economically inactive; 5% of whom are unemployed and 11% is classified as long-term sick/ disabled;

32% of population (16+) have no qualifications;

66% of the population own their property; 22% live in socially rented property; and 18% live in privately rented property;

25% of households do not have a car;

73% of the population are in very good/ good health; 20% in fair health; and 8% in poor health;

With regard to social class, 24% of the population are managerial and professional; 33% are skilled; 35% are part/ unskilled; and 9% are students/ other.

Comparison with Gwynedd and Wales averages:

- The proportion of the population that is economically active is lower in Tywyn (60%) than the averages for both Gwynedd (65%) and Wales (66%); accordingly the percentage of the population in that is economically inactive (40%) is proportionately higher than the averages for Gwynedd (35%) and Wales (34%).
- Despite higher than average levels of economic inactivity the proportion of the population in Tywyn that are unemployed (5%) is lower than the averages for Gwynedd (5.5%) and Wales (6.5%).
- The proportion of the population that is long term sick/ disabled is slightly lower in Tywyn (11%) than the Gwynedd average (12.5%) and significantly lower than the Wales average (18%).
- The proportion of the population (aged 16+) that does not have qualifications (32%) is significantly higher than the average for Gwynedd (23%) and Wales (26%).
- Property ownership is commensurate with the average (66% for Gwynedd and 68% for Wales) in Tywyn (66%); a higher proportion of households (22%) than average (Gwynedd 18% and Wales 16%) rent privately in Tywyn; a lower than average proportion rents socially in Tywyn (13%) than the average for Gwynedd (16%) and Wales (16.5%).
- There is a significantly higher than average proportion (25%) of households who do not have a car than average (21% for Gwynedd and 23% for Wales);.
- Tywyn has significantly lower than average proportions of people who are in very good/ good health (73%), significantly higher than average proportions (of people who are in fair health (20%) and higher (compared to Gwynedd, but average compared to all Wales) than average proportions of people who are in poor health (8%) compared to the averages for Gwynedd (81% in very good/ good health; 14% in fair health; and 5% in poor health) and Wales (78% in very good/ good health; 15% in fair health; and 8% in poor health).
- The proportion of managerial and professional class (24%) is lower than the averages for Gwynedd and Wales (both 27%) in Tywyn; the proportion of skilled is 33%, which is commensurate with the averages (30% for both Gwynedd and Wales); the proportion of part skilled/ unskilled (35%) is significantly higher than average (26% in Gwynedd and 29% in Wales); and the proportion of students is significantly lower in Tywyn (9%) than the averages for Gwynedd (17%) and Wales (14.5%).

The main employers in the Tywyn area include:

Brighter foods (previously Halo Foods) was established in 2014 and employs over 180 people (2017 figures). Brighter Foods made a multi-million investment in new premises and a third production line in 2018 to enable the manufacture of gluten free and nut free products; it aims to employ over 200 people in 2019.

Talyllyn Railway relies heavily upon the contribution of volunteers to deliver key roles, that include station masters, track workers, steam and diesel drivers and guards. Up to 20 volunteers a day support the railway's operation and as a result there are only a few paid, full time staff in key roles, which include shop, catering and office staff.

Table 3 in Appendix 2 shows the sectors in which the economically active members of the communities are employed.

The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation

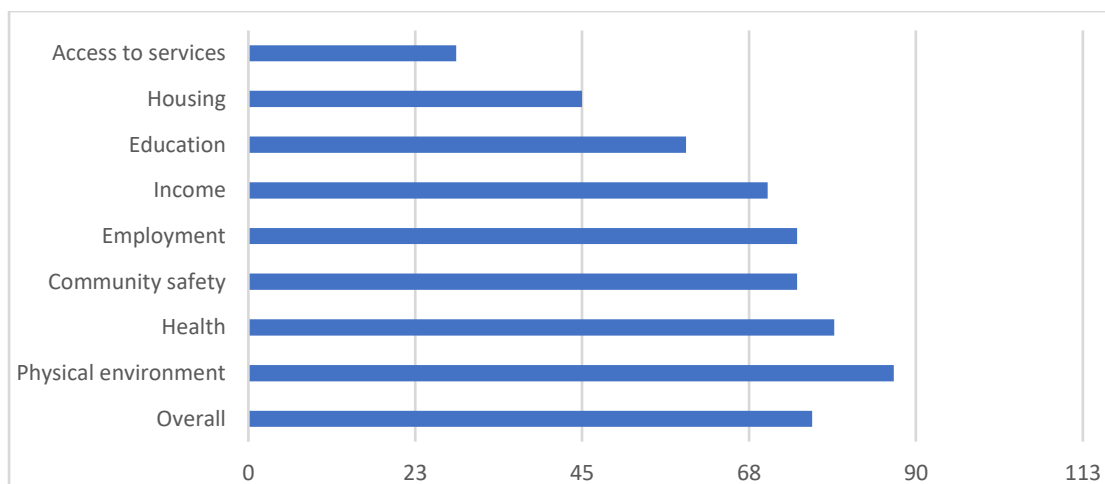
The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) 2014 is the official measure of relative deprivation for small areas in Wales; these are called Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) and have an average population of 1,600 people. Because all LSOAs have around the same population it is easier to carry out comparative analysis. The Index is presented as a set of ranks; rank 1 reflects the most deprived area and rank 1909 reflects the least deprived area, which allows us to know which areas are more (or less) deprived than others, but not by how much.

In Appendix 2 we provide data that shows how the LSOA in Tywyn compares to other areas across Wales and within Gwynedd.

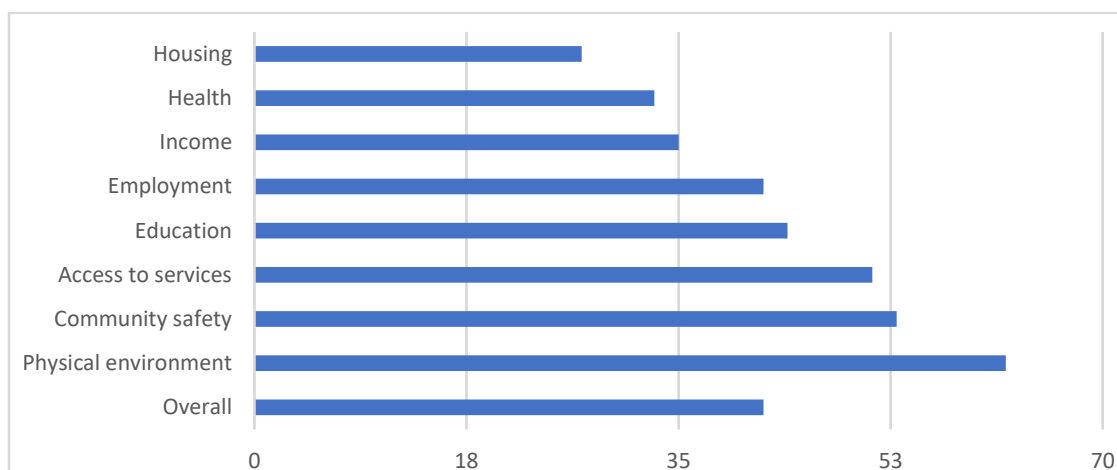
The data shows that access to services and housing are issues, or potential issues in Tywyn, but that the majority of indicators, particularly the physical environment, compare favourably to Gwynedd and the rest of Wales. Data gathered from the 2011 census shows that levels of unemployment are slightly lower than average and the proportion of the population in Tywyn that is economically active is significantly higher than average.

Ranking of LSOAs in Gwynedd

The following charts show how Tywyn ranks within Wales against individual indicators. As we set out above, the data is presented in a reverse index, i.e. the lower the score the higher the deprivation level and vice versa – the higher the score the lower the deprivation level; for example the chart below shows that Tywyn is in the 50% least deprived for all indicators other than access to services, for which it falls into the most 10% - 20%.



The chart below shows that Tywyn 2 is in the 30-50% most deprived for the majority of indicators and in the 20-30% most deprived LSOAs for housing; however, it falls into the 50% least deprived for access to services, community safety and the physical environment.



4 Community Audit

Community Representation/Activity

In this section we summarise the community facilities and organisations that operate in Tywyn in order to provide an overview as to the provision for the local community.

Tywyn Community Council - the council covers three wards: Morfa, West Tywyn and East Tywyn.

Community Venues

Tywyn has several centres which host community groups, clubs and local organisations, including Neuadd Pendre Social Centre, Magic Lantern Cinema and Tywyn Baptist Church.

There are a number of **community, cultural, sports and heritage organisations** in Tywyn:

Bro Dysynni Junior Football Club
Bro Dysynni Leisure Centre
Bro Dysynni Male Voice Choir
Cylch Meithrin Tywyn
Dysynni Hockey Club
Dysynni Paddling Club
Dysynni Squash Club
Greener Tywyn
Love Tywyn
Merched y Wawr
Narrow Gauge Railway Museum Trust
Tywyn Baptist Church
Tywyn Beach Guardians
Tywyn Chamber of Commerce and Trade
Tywyn Events
Tywyn and District History Society
Tywyn Rugby Club
Tywyn Youth Club
WI

Cultural and arts venues in the town:

- Magic Lantern Cinema – film screenings; community events;
- Neuadd Pendre – concerts and community entertainment; Wurlitzer concerts

5 Infrastructure and Services

Bus: three bus services connect Tywyn with Machynlleth and Dolgellau :

Tywyn - Dolgellau, 07.45 - 15.08, Monday - Saturday, Sunday and public holiday, 3 buses between 10.05 -18.05

Tywyn – Machynlleth via Minffordd, 8.00 – 17.10; Monday – Saturday only

Tywyn – Machynlleth, 06.50 - 17.00, Monday to Saturday

Connecting bus service from Dolgellau to Bangor; from Machynlleth to Aberystwyth.

Train: on weekdays, nine trains run to Machynlleth, connecting with Aberystwyth/Shrewsbury; three trains on Sundays; eight trains run weekdays to Porthmadog; two trains on Sundays

Parking: two free car parks – Marine Parade/Promenade, 70 spaces; Tywyn Railway Station, 20 spaces.

Cycle Routes: situated on National Cycle Route 82 from Machynlleth to Dolgellau via Tywyn; traffic free cycle path between Tywyn and Bryncrug.

Wi-fi : free public wi-fi in town library; cafes and pubs in the town centre/seafront have free wi-fi.

6 Consultation

Previous consultation

A Review of Options for Tywyn, 2010, JOP Consulting for Gwynedd Council

The report reviewed the regeneration options for Tywyn taking account of a long list of proposals which had been identified by the Tywyn Steering Committee, the local 'assets' at their disposal and the potential for financially supporting the projects.

Town Centre Improvement Scoping Study, 2013, Gwynedd Council

The aim of the study was to identify opportunities, threats, strengths and weaknesses of the town centre in its then current state in order to formulate an action plan.

A Local Survey meeting was held with representatives from local stakeholder groups: Chamber of Trade and Commerce, Town Council, Tywyn High School, Ysgol Penybryn, Tywyn Events Organisation, Inner Wheel Tywyn, Tywyn Partnership, Neuadd Pendre, elected Members Tywyn Wards, North Wales Police Authority.

In response to the SWOT analysis developed from the survey, key organisations were tasked with leading on various initiatives and a budget of £7,500 allocated for projects identified to improve the Town Centre.

Our consultation

We attended (and organised some of) the following events and activities at which we undertook community consultation:

Pop up event/Tywyn Library, April 2019: Held over two days an open session in the Library alongside a series of talks/activities organised by Cyfuno Gwynedd Fusion, a Gwynedd Council initiative. Consulted with members of the public and devised an A –Z guide to Tywyn.

Tywyn Town Council, June 2019: gave presentation to Tywyn Town Council and subsequent discussion.

Tywyn History Society's Town Trails, July 2019: attended the launch event and followed trails; consulted with general public/holidaymakers and trail walkers.

Tywyn and District History Society, July 2019: presented the Built Historic Environment Assessment report on Tywyn and consulted with members about listed buildings and other features identified.

Wurlitzer Concert/Neuadd Pendre, August 2019: attended concert; consulted with audience members

We consulted with the following **local stakeholders** :

- Dysynni Paddling Club
- Greener Tywyn
- Love Tywyn
- Magic Lantern Cinema
- Talyllyn Railway
- Tywyn History Society
- Tywyn Chamber of Commerce and Trade
- Tywyn Town Council

Projects which are currently in development and new ones identified through the consultation process for potential development to the future are listed in the accompanying Action Plan.

The findings of our consultation

Here we summarise the principal issues in terms of community development that were identified as part of our consultations.

Visitor facilities and infrastructure:

Tywyn is a long established holiday destination for families, predominantly from the Midlands. There is also a long history of railway enthusiasts spending their holidays here, volunteering on the Talyllyn Railway.

The promenade has been recently refurbished, allowing people to walk or cycle along the length of Tywyn beach, with flower planting provided by the Chamber of Trade and Commerce. The promenade has a range of facilities that include a children's playground and paddling pool, tennis courts, a putting green, crazy golf and crown green bowling. Parking is currently free although this may be reviewed in the near future by Tywyn Town Council. Easy access for wheelchair users onto the promenade, and in the town in general, was noted as a major asset.

More recently, the town and area has started to promote its outstanding natural beauty and the facilities the town offers:

- Beach/Water Sports – Tywyn beach/Cardigan Bay; Dysynni river and nearby Tallyllyn Lake. The type of events that could be encouraged to locate here are: Open Swimming; Kitesurfing; Canoeing; Paddleboarding races and events.
- Walking - the Wales Coast Path skirts the town; the Dysynni Circular Walk from Tywyn to Brynchrug was recently named amongst the top 30 best Summer Walks in Britain by the 'i' newspaper.
- Mountain biking/adventure sports - there is an emerging outdoor sports sector, due to the town's proximity to popular biking trails at Coed y Brenin and Bwlch Nant yr Arian, and as Snowdonia's hotspots become increasingly crowded, visitors are venturing further afield.

Another potential development is green tourism, with the town council having officially declared a climate emergency, and aiming to make Tywyn a plastic-free town. The Greener Tywyn Group is researching the possibility of installing a rapid electric charger point for cars in Tywyn and generally encouraging more sustainable tourism. Other initiatives include cleaning the beach, work which volunteer group, Tywyn Beach Guardians, is already undertaking; provision of more recycling points on the prom.

UNESCO Dyfi Biosphere

There is the possibility that the UNESCO Dyfi Biosphere may be extended to include Tywyn which given the developments previously noted in terms of sustainable tourism, would greatly add to Tywyn's green tourism credentials.

Also Tywyn is located within the Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau Special Conservation Area. The area in total covers 230km of coastline, made up of reefs, sandbanks and mudflats, lagoons and sea caves. The site stretches from the Llŷn Peninsula to the north and Sarnau reefs to the south, and is home to a huge variety of marine life including the bottlenose dolphin, grey seal and the European otter.

Interpretation and social and cultural identity

Tywyn and District History Society activities:

Town Walks

The Tywyn and District History Society secured a National Lottery Grant (£9,800) and £1275 from Tywyn Town Council to research and interpret the town's history through a series of walks. The first two leaflets and five display boards, located along the trails through the town and along the seafront, were launched in July.

Town History Museum

The History Society is eager to collate the various archive materials and objects held by members and residents in general in order to establish a town museum, to reflect the history of the development of the settlement from the days of St Cadfan to the present. It has identified the old mainline railway station as a preferred location, but it's not clear what are the plans for the building, which is owned by Transport for Wales.

Talyllyn Railway

The Talyllyn Railway plays a crucial role in the interpretation of the slate industry and the continuing story of its narrow gauge railway. The line was opened in 1865 to carry slate from the quarries at Bryn Eglwys to Tywyn. In 1951 it became the first railway in the world to be preserved as a heritage railway by volunteers.

The Railway continues to find new ways to relate its history through renovation of its industrial heritage buildings: the Tŷ Dwr Watering Point is an ongoing project, requiring funding; there are plans to re-use the gunpowder store as a media room; and there may be further opportunities at a new accessible shed at the Wharf to display some of the historic wagons. There is also the possibility of opening the Pendre workshops to the general public, increasing the opportunities for further interpretation of the heritage railway.

Orientation and Linkages

The new town trails and associated information panels add to easy navigation of the town for visitors.

The increasing popularity of walking holidays in the area is contributing to greater use of new footpaths and routes around the outlying area and hills. There are green lanes and old tramways which require better way-marking. There are also several walks which link up with the Talyllyn Railway line and which could be better signed.

One route however for which there is demand is a cycle route between Tywyn and Aberdyfi, following the coast path as the road is dangerous for cyclists. This would make for a much more amenable cycle route. (National Cycle Route 82 heads from Tywyn into the hills to Machynlleth)

Leisure Facilities

Skate Park – Tywyn Town Council have commissioned three designers to test concept designs for a skate park which will be located at Cambrian Road Recreation Ground Car Park. This would primarily be a community facility, free of charge.

Ynys Maengwyn Woodland Park – a small woodland area accessed via Ynys Maengwyn Caravan Park, leading onto Dysynni Walk, from Tywyn to Bryncrug and to Broad Water.

An independent trust has been recently established and it's hoped that the trust will provide a new vision for the area. Previously the caravan park and woodland was owned by Tywyn Town Council but this caused tensions in the past as regards distribution of income. The trust aims is to maintain the woodland; preserve this open space for residents; it is also hoped that new leisure opportunities such as open air events and entertainment may be developed in the walled garden area.

7 Visitor assessment

In this section we assess Tywyn's visitor offer in order to better understand the challenges and opportunities for the future development of the village.

Layout/Arrival

Tywyn is situated on the Cardigan Bay coast of Southern Gwynedd, on the A493.

The old town centre, which is about half a mile from the beach, has some fine Georgian buildings. The group of buildings around College Green/Corbett Square - Magic Lantern Cinema, previously the Assembly Rooms; St Cadfan Church and the Corbett Arms, which sadly is in dire need of renovation, is very attractive.

Heading towards the beach, the buildings are more modern. The promenade area is very attractive stretching right along the beach. The extensive free car parking areas and paved promenade make the seashore accessible to wheelchair and mobility scooters, however the general appearance is rather harsh. Some areas have been attractively planted but generally the area could benefit from having more greenery.

Visitor Information: orientation/ signage/ tourist information

There is no dedicated Tourist Information Centre in Tywyn. Tourist information leaflets are available at the town library, however opening times are limited.

The Talylyn Railway Ticket Office and shop has an extensive display of information leaflets on Tywyn and the surrounding area, again subject to shop opening hours.

In the promenade area, there are numerous display boards with local tourist information; the recently produced town trails display boards are very informative and help the visitor navigate the town's historic buildings and features.

Facilities

Public conveniences: public toilets situated near the Magic Lantern cinema in the town centre; by bowling green near the beach.

Cafes/restaurants: several cafes in the town centre; favourites are Salt Marsh Cafe/Bar; Salt Marsh Kitchen restaurant mainly serves fish and is Michelin approved, only open in the evening; Proper Gander restaurant is open for both lunch and dinner. On the seafront there are several traditional beach cafes and the Victorian Slipway pub.

Visitor Attractions and Activities

The Talylyn Railway is the world's first preserved railway and attracts around 50,000 visitors a year; the seven mile route runs through the Merioneth Mountains from Tywyn to

Nant Gwernol in the mountains above Abergynolwyn and the Quarryman's Cabin, which serves homemade refreshments. Trains run daily from 10 am; the last train leaves Tywyn Wharf at 3.45 pm and Nant Gwernol at 5.07pm. The main season runs from April until the end of October. The line opened in 1865 and the Preservation Society took it on in 1951, making it the first railway in the world to be run by volunteers.

The Narrow Gauge Railway Museum at Tywyn Wharf Station interprets 200 years of narrow gauge railway's history and displays material on almost 80 of the UK's narrow gauge railways, including locomotives, wagons, signals, nameplates from Welsh Railways, paperwork, signalling equipment and tickets as well as a recreation of Reverend W. Awdry's study, where he wrote the series of children's railway books.

Tywyn Magic Lantern Cinema screens the latest releases and streams live content on state of the art cinema equipment to over **20,000 audience members** each year. The building, which dates from 1893, was built as the town's Assembly Rooms and was used for community events and variety performances; it now offers two stages for live events and a fully stocked bar. The building's cinematic history has been charted - there is evidence of film screenings that date back to 1900 which places the Magic Lantern back to the start of cinema in the UK.

St Cadfan's Church was built in the eleventh century and is noted for its Romanesque architecture and Norman structure. This, together with the Cadfan Stone (a stone cross that dates from at least the ninth century and is inscribed with the oldest known written Welsh), attracts visitors from around the world. The church is Grade I listed.

Tywyn Leisure Park has a range of facilities that include an 18 hole putting course, 15 hole crazy golf, crown green bowls, six tennis courts, skittles, table tennis, pool table and shuffleboard.

Bro Dysynni Leisure Centre is open seven days a week and has a swimming pool, 4 badminton courts, a sports hall, two squash courts, a steam room, sauna, a fitness suite, tennis courts and a full-sized floodlit outdoor synthetic pitch.

Tywyn Events

Talylllyn Railway Events

The Railway hosts a wide range of events throughout the year, which includes the popular Race the Train event held annually in August, at which participants race against the train in four countryside routes that range from 3.5 miles to 14 miles in length in support of the Rotary Club Tywyn's chosen charities. Other events held at Tywyn Wharf or on the trains include a Land Rover Gathering, a Beer, Cider and Gin Festival, late night steams, Armed Forces Week, murder mystery events and seasonal events that include Halloween events, Santa, Mince Pies and Carolling events and Easter activities.

Tywyn Food Festival – recently established, held in early August

Tywyn Live Festival – annual live music festival on the promenade, August Bank Holiday weekend

Accommodation

The accommodation offer in the town itself is fairly limited. There are no hotels in the town, only nine guest houses, that between them offer 27 rooms; the majority of which are doubles and en suite, however there is provision for single rooms and families.

There are **fifteen caravan parks** in close proximity to the town centre, providing static caravans, chalets, touring caravans and camping pitches. Another **eight caravan parks** are predominantly owner occupied.

Self-catering accommodation is plentiful; there are 31 self-catering accommodations listed on Visit Tywyn, which together provide approximately 200 bed spaces.

Online profile

There are a number of websites that together provide a strong online profile of Tywyn. Whilst they are all well presented and maintained and provide a positive impression of Tywyn, they offer much of the same information with no correlation, which results in duplication and potential misunderstandings for visitors.

The website www.visit-tywyn.co.uk provides a comprehensive overview of Tywyn's accommodation, food and recreational offers and information on events, travel and orientation. The website is well presented and gives a positive impression of Tywyn and its facilities; it has a webcam which allows website users to view the beach throughout the day, with the aim of attracting them to Tywyn. Although the website is informative, there is no provision to leave online reviews however, this ensures that the website maintains an objective and positive overview.

The Chamber of Commerce's website www.tywynctc.co.uk offers an overview of Tywyn's accommodation, food and drink offer, entertainment, events, attractions, services and shops; it also has the webcam of the beach.

The website www.tywyntimes.co.uk which presents a series of information on Tywyn's events, food, drink and accommodation offers, shops and services; the website is not up to date, with events held in 2016 listed as current.

Tywyn Events hosts a Facebook page (**Tywyn Events Organisation** - www.facebook.com/pg/Tywyn-Events-Organisation) which promotes an up to date range of events in and around the town. Whilst it is a source of information it acts as more of a forum than an events listing page and enables people to comment on posts, upload photos and contribute to conversations. The page is well maintained and the photos and comments give a positive impression of Tywyn and the events shown.

Love Tywyn have a Facebook page www.facebook.com/LoveTywyn and has 15,000 followers.

Tywn Town Council and Tywyn Rotary Club both have an online presence and maintain their own websites with information on their own organisations and events.

Visitor reviews

There are a number of online reviews in which people remark that whilst the beach is lovely and clean it was quiet, with some describing it as empty; whilst this is interpreted as a positive aspect by many visitors, it highlights the extent to which Tywyn is under used by visitors, who are favouring other, nearby beaches instead.

Positive reviews on Tywyn have reflected on the 'nice clean beach, lovely scenery... the town is small but offers many coffee houses with great food, a couple of pubs and two supermarkets.'

The overwhelming majority of Trip Advisor reviews praise the beach and the nearby facilities, with two recent ones citing:

- "We went to various beaches around Tywyn. This one was clearly the best: sandy, shallow water, not too many other tourists, linked to a small town with a promenade. A pub and other places for eating and drinking not too far away' and
- 'One of the best beaches in the United Kingdom, superb, unspoilt beaches free of any litter, lovely sand and water.'

However, there are negative reviews on the town, its facilities and its dated veneer or 'faded glory' with visitors writing that 'there isn't much to do in Tywyn in terms of attractions to make anyone want to visit' and describing it as 'a place that time forgot, [it] may have been nice in the '70's.'

8 Buildings and Built Environment

We have carried out **Historic Built Environment Assessments**, to which the following selection criteria have been applied:

Statutory protection:

- Listed buildings (by grade, I, II*, II).
- Scheduled Monuments.
- Buildings and features within Conservation Areas.

'At risk status':

- As defined by Cadw's buildings at risk register (BAR) for each individual area. Classifications as follows:
 - At Risk
 - Vulnerable
 - Not at Risk

Based on a brief inspection from external (noting if uses are apparent whether the building or feature appears derelict or vulnerable).

Context in terms of slate industry heritage:

- Importance in the context of the slate industry heritage of the area (albeit the scope of work does not allow for heritage assessments or research on individual buildings or sites).
- Feedback from the consultation process on the perceived local significance of a building, feature or site.
- Providing a representative selection of the buildings which supported the slate industry and their communities.

Regenerative and interpretive potential:

- Potential of an individual building or site to contribute to the regeneration of the area, provide significant interpretive potential or other opportunity.

Our findings are set out in full in Appendix 5; here is a summary of prioritised built environment projects. These are not necessarily just the most significant sites, but those which balance significance (in the context of the slate industry) with the potential to provide significant community regeneration outcomes. The highest priority sites have been identified as:

1. **Corbett Arms Hotel and Outbuildings.** The primary listed building at risk in the town and also a highly prominent and significant structure which currently presents a damaging impression on Corbett Square. Its condition is deteriorating and must be addressed as soon as possible. The building has a range of outbuildings to the rear and are significant opportunities for regeneration. Discussion with the current owner is urgently required and an Options Appraisal recommended.
2. **Tallylyn Railway, Pendre Works.** One of the most significant buildings in the town strongly associated with the slate industry, the Victorian sheds and workshops retain much of their original character and provide potential to open to visitors and a wider audience.
3. **Tywyn Station.** The vacant former railway station in Tywyn is a prominent and well sited building, it has the potential to fulfil a range of functions of benefit to the town, one suggestion being a town museum and an Options Appraisal recommended.
4. **Wharf Station, Transhipment Sidings and slate loading wharf.** The transhipment sidings between the Tallylyn and standard gauge lines are highly significant and present a great opportunity for interpreting the slate industry and transportation in the town.

9 Key Challenges and Opportunities

It is evident from our consultation and research that there are some fundamental challenges facing Tywyn which must be addressed in order for the town to maximise the benefits that will arise from the World Heritage nomination; here we summarise the key challenges that we identify for the village and the opportunities that would enable the village to address these.

SWOT Analysis

The following SWOT analysis assesses Tywyn from the perspectives of both visitors and community members and summarises the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of its visitor offer and provision for its residents:

<p><u>STRENGTHS</u> <u>COMMUNITY</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older members of the community who moved here to retire enjoy the sense of community generated through the various clubs and organisations in the town • Some younger families are moving into the town, many of which have family connections having come on holiday here as children. They like its peacefulness and beach lifestyle. • In some ways its remoteness draws people together and generates a sense of uniqueness of place and community. • Various initiatives within the community focus on environmental issues and the need for the community to care for the outstanding natural beauty, 	<p><u>WEAKNESSES</u> <u>COMMUNITY</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of employment opportunities means that many young people will leave the town • Its remoteness and lack of connectivity can mean that historic entrenched views and positions can dominate the community agenda • There is some tension between different groupings as regards who sets the agenda for community development.
<p><u>TOURISM</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The beach receives overwhelmingly positive reviews for its cleanliness, sand and shallow waters. • There is a wide range of visitor attractions and amenities which provide activities for all weathers and serve a wide range of visitors and groups. • There is a plentiful supply of non-serviced accommodation, particularly in caravan and camp sites. • The area is becoming increasingly popular for walking holidays and adventure sports • The historic town centre has some notable buildings and is very attractive • There is an extensive online profile of the town with informative and well maintained websites. 	<p><u>TOURISM</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The beach may not be so widely promoted, and therefore as well known, as other similar beaches in the area. • Massive potential for development of watersports/beach based events and activities not fully realised yet. • Town needs to develop a more contemporary identity for its beach/outdoor sports offer; develop new marketing brand. • Its historic centre could be better promoted • The Corbett Arms on College Green detracts from the general appearance of the town and requires urgent attention.
<p><u>BOTH TOURISM AND COMMUNITY</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Magic Lantern Cinema is a valuable cultural, tourism and community resource. • The programme of Wurlitzer Concerts at Neuadd Pendre is a unique feature, popular with both tourists and older members of the community 	<p><u>BOTH TOURISM AND COMMUNITY</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The town centre requires some investment/upgrading, particularly around College Green • There is a gap emerging between those who wish the town to remain a retirement destination and those who wish to attract the younger water/adventure sports market

<p><u>OPPORTUNITIES</u> <u>COMMUNITY</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNESCO World Heritage Status and the potential growth of tourism may bring economic development (from increased visitor spend) and employment opportunities that should be maximised. • The new Ynys Maengwyn Trust could add value to the site and create an attractive programme of community events 	<p><u>THREATS/ CHALLENGES</u> <u>COMMUNITY</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people do not have access to skills and employment and feel alienated • Economic sustainability and general decline of towns in rural areas • Uncertain economic and political climate
<p><u>TOURISM</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNESCO World Heritage Status and Dyfi Biosphere status may bring a different type of visitor • interpretation and celebration of the town's slate heritage will need to be expanded • Green, sustainable tourism could transform the image of the town and help develop an alternative tourism sector • Increase in demand for adventure sports 	<p><u>TOURISM</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional beach, family holidays lose their appeal • Less demand for caravan park based holidays • Tywyn does not keep up with current tourism trends
<p><u>BOTH TOURISM AND COMMUNITY</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nomination for UNESCO World Heritage Site status. • By creating a new tourism market, there is potential for young people to develop skills as instructors/walking guides etc • A more environmentally friendly approach will benefit both tourist and residents 	<p><u>BOTH TOURISM AND COMMUNITY</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The potential to develop the tourist industry and for the town to benefit from the associated increased visitor spend is missed • Barrier is created between those who wish to encourage tourism and commercial opportunities and those who wish for Tywyn to remain as it is.

10 Conclusion and recommendations

Following our consultation and research, which includes our community audit and visitor assessment, we have identified the following themes as regeneration priorities for Tywyn:

Here we consider the challenges and opportunities for the town, in relation to these priorities:

- **Improve visitor facilities and infrastructure** for the benefit of visitors and the community.

- Build upon existing **interpretation, social and cultural identity projects** and encourage greater interpretation of the town's history.
- Develop **wider network of way marked footpaths and cycle routes**
- Provide new **leisure facilities** for the benefit of the community

Ensure that the town's **historic buildings are protected and its iconic buildings renovated and re-used** for tourism and community use.

Visitor Facilities and infrastructure

Tywyn currently caters for a fairly wide range of visitor from railway enthusiasts to surfers; walkers to families on a traditional beach holiday. It serves all of these relatively well but in terms of future development may need to refresh its visitor offer:

- The challenge for Tywyn is how to redefine its tourism offer in terms of its outstanding natural assets, sustainable tourism and the opportunities which adventure sports and other activities offer.
- Its tourism infrastructure is pretty resilient, but perhaps needs to address changing trends and potentially the demise of the traditional beach/caravan holiday.
- A series of new events – watersports races; adventure challenges and other opportunities could add to the tourism offer.

Interpretation, social and cultural identity

- Tywyn seems well-organised in terms of interpretation with Talylllyn Railway and the Tywyn and District History Society providing information and display materials.
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- In terms of historic context , more could be done to present the wealth of history which Tywyn holds – the Cadfan Stone and its relevance to the Welsh language should be more prominent; the wealth generated by the slate industry and industrialists such as Corbett; the buildings and development of the historic centre.

Orientation and Linkages

- With the increased interest in walking and outdoor pursuits, Tywyn is well positioned to benefit from this sector of the tourism market. There are several cycle routes and footpaths which could be properly waymarked.
- Consideration needs to be given to the creation of a new coastal cycle route

Leisure Facilities

- The provision of leisure facilities is key to keeping young people within the community

- Many young people already participate in sports activities but as provision for tourists expand there could be new opportunities for them to become activity leaders and therefore create employment opportunities.

Historic Built Environment

There are many significant buildings and built features which merit further consideration in terms of renovation, re-use and regeneration potential. More information and an initial assessment, subject to further discussion with the relevant conservation organisations and officers, can be found in the accompanying Historic Built Environment Opportunities Study (Appendix 5)

Through a review of both protected (i.e. listed or scheduled) heritage sites and those not currently afforded that protection, a number of key potential projects have emerged. These are not necessarily just the most significant sites, but those which balance significance (in the context of the slate industry) with the potential to provide significant community regeneration outcomes. These are detailed in Section 8/Historic Built Environment and in the attached Action Plan.

Community organisation

There are several community groups in Tywyn who all work for the benefit of their particular community. These positions can become quite entrenched and as several persons hold key roles in several groupings, it becomes difficult at times to know which group is being represented.

11 Potential sources of funding

We have identified the following potential sources of funding; we set these out in more detail in the accompanying funding document (alongside other, smaller funding streams), to for consideration alongside the development of the proposed projects:

- North Wales Growth Bid
- Rural Community Development Fund
- Tourism Investment Support Scheme (TISS)/ Micro Small Business Fund (MSBF)
- Development of a Visitor Giving Scheme
- Lottery Funding:
 - National Lottery Awards for All
 - People and Places (Medium and Large Grants)
 - Rural Programme Round 2
 - The Heritage Fund (previously HLF)
- Rural Development Programme/ Arloesi Gwynedd Wledig (LEADER)
- The Architectural Heritage Fund
- The Empty Homes Programme
- Vacant Homes Assistance Grants
- Welsh Government Regeneration
- Communities Facilities Programme/Welsh Government
- Foundational Economy/Welsh Government

- Arts Council Wales
- Peter Saunders Trust
- Gwynedd Community Arts Fund, Gwynedd Council

The projects have been identified in consultation with the local community and stakeholders, however their implementation and prioritisation in the accompanying Action Plan will be subject to an appropriate lead body being identified and funding secured to undertake identified tasks. The Action Plan will be reviewed annually by Gwynedd Council and key stakeholders.

Appendix 1 List of individuals/organisations consulted

- Dysynni Paddling Club
- Greener Tywyn
- Love Tywyn
- Talyllyn Railway
- Tywyn and District History Society
- Tywyn Baptist Church
- Tywyn Chamber of Commerce and Trade
- Tywyn Town Council
- Lounge Holidays
- Clocktower Books
- Mike Stevens, Gwynedd County Councillor
- Anne Lloyd Jones, Gwynedd County Councillor
- Lindsey Edwards, Gwynedd Council Regeneration Team Manager

Appendix 2: Index of Multiple Deprivation/ Employment by sector

The following tables set out the full set of data for Tywyn 1 and 2, which includes how it ranks against each indicator across Gwynedd as a whole:

Tywyn 1: Indices of Multiple Deprivation			
	Overall rank (of 1909)	Overall %	Gwynedd rank (of 73)
Overall	1447	50% LEAST	63
Income	1339	50% LEAST	47
Employment	1407	50% LEAST	47
Health	1505	50% LEAST	57
Education	1135	50% LEAST	30
Access to services	535	20%-30% MOST	43
Community safety	1411	50% LEAST	53
Physical environment	1657	50% LEAST	58
Housing	863	30%-50% MOST	56

Tywyn 2: Indices of Multiple Deprivation			
	Overall rank (of 1909)	Overall %	Gwynedd rank (of 73)
Overall	799	30-50% MOST	14
Income	659	30-50% MOST	11
Employment	805	30-50% MOST	10
Health	623	30-50% MOST	5
Education	846	30-50% MOST	11
Access to services	967	50% LEAST	58
Community safety	1011	50% LEAST	33
Physical environment	1191	50% LEAST	27
Housing	521	20%-30% MOST	42

Employment by sector

The following table (source: census data, 2011) shows the sectors in which the economically active members of the communities are employed; in the main part the proportions employed in each sector in Tywyn. Several employment sectors show significant variance to the average (for Gwynedd), namely manufacturing (which is 5.5% higher), accommodation and food services (which is 2.1% higher), public administration and defence (which is 2.6% lower), education (which is 4.2% higher) and health and social works (which is 3.2% higher).

The most notable differences are that employment in agriculture, forestry and fishing, mining, quarrying, energy and water, construction, communication, finance and property, professional, scientific and technical, administrative and support services, public administration and defence and education are lower than average in Tywyn and employment in manufacturing, wholesale and retail, transport and storage, accommodation and food services and health and social work are higher than average.

The sectors that provide the highest proportions of employment (over 10%) are health and social care, wholesale and retail, accommodation and food services and manufacturing. The lowest sectors (3% or below) are mining, quarrying, energy and water; professional, scientific and technical; agriculture, forestry and fishing. The following table sets out employment levels in each sector in Tywyn, compared to the Gwynedd average:

Industry of employment	Tywyn	Gwynedd average
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	2.8%	3.5%
Mining, Quarrying, Energy & Water	1.4%	2.6%
Manufacturing	11.3%	5.8%
Construction	8.4%	9.6%
Wholesale & Retail	15.5%	14.5%
Transport & Storage	4.2%	3.4%
Accommodation & Food Services	11.9%	9.8%
Communication, Finance & Property	3.2%	4.3%
Professional, Scientific & Technical	2.1%	3.7%
Administrative & Support Services	3.3%	3.5%
Public Administration & Defence	3.8%	6.4%
Education	8.4%	12.6%
Health & Social Work	17.9%	14.7%
Other	5.6%	5.6%

Appendix 3 : Strategic Context

The strategic context for the area is detailed in the separate *Strategic Context for the Slate Area* document; in summary, these are the policies which currently influence activities in the Tywyn area:

National:

- Wellbeing for Future Generations Act; Welsh Government
- Tourism 2020 (Partnership for Growth); Welsh Government
- The Wales way; Visit Wales
- Themed Years; Visit Wales
- Light Springs through the Dark: A Vision for Culture in Wales; Welsh Government
- Historic Environment Strategy for Wales; Cadw
- Inspire Our Strategy for Creativity and the Arts in Wales; Arts Council Wales

Regional/County:

- Gwynedd Council Plan 2018-2023; Gwynedd Council
- Gwynedd Council Improvement Plan 2018 – 2023; Gwynedd Council
- Gwynedd Council Wellbeing Statement; Gwynedd Council
- Gwynedd Council Arts Plan; Gwynedd Council
- Regional Skills and Employment Plan; North Wales Regional Skills Partnership
- Gwynedd Destination Management Plan 2013-2020; Gwynedd Council
- The Snowdonia National Park Management Plan; SNPA

Local:

- Wales Slate World Heritage Site Nomination 2016 – 2020 Economic Plan; Gwynedd Council
- Our Local Economies, Communities Building Prosperity; Building Communities Trust

Appendix 4 : Visitor/Tourism Profile

Here we provide a summary of the profile of visitors to Gwynedd in order to better understand the type of visitors Tywyn currently attracts and can hope to attract, as well as visitor motivations and expectations.

Gwynedd Destination Management Plan 2013-2020

The main aims of the Gwynedd Destination Management Plan 2013-2020 are:

- to extend the tourism season,
- to increase visitor spend,
- to improve the quality of the visitor experience,
- to improve integration of tourism with other aspects of life,
- to enhance the natural, built and cultural environment, infrastructure and amenities,
- to build and maintain quality public
- to provide well paid, year-round quality jobs and skills development.

The Destination Management Plan carried out an online survey and whilst the findings relate to Gwynedd as a whole the majority of issues raised are pertinent to Bethesda; the following can be noted as key issues to address:

- Better visitor facilities
- Better public facilities, e.g. visitor superstructure such as holiday accommodation and dedicated activities to infrastructure elements including roads and other public spaces,
- Quality visitor attractions,
- Parking provision,
- Better local services,
- More tourist friendly engagement,
- Improved shops and shopping opportunities

Any tourism developments in the Tywyn area should take the aims and issues noted above into consideration, in order to ensure that any projects at a local level feed into the strategic priorities of the Destination Management Partnership.

Wales Visitor Survey, 2013; visitor needs

A survey undertaken in 2013 on visitor needs (as part of the Wales Visitor Survey) found the following **key findings**:

- Day trip planning is minimal; 69% interviewed day visitors to Wales reported that they did not use any information to plan their trip to Wales.
- 57% of UK staying visitors used online information to plan their visits, compared to 18% that used offline sources, however many participants expressed the importance of printed material during their visit; 38% of UK staying visitors to Wales used offline sources during their trip, compared to 17% who used online sources.
- The most fundamental influences on attracting new visitors to a region are recommendations and experiences of friends / relatives / colleagues
- Local people, especially accommodation providers, play a very important role in influencing visitors where to go. Their advice is sought and trusted more than online reviews because they live there, and so many visitors use local knowledge to verify their list of planned activities, or seek new ideas.

It is clear that both online and offline marketing material/ information is important for visitors and these findings are important to consider when reviewing Tywyn's online presence and profile, as well as when planning future marketing campaigns and the development of promotional/ printed material, for example, the possibility of establishing an Ambassadors scheme could be explored, through which local people act as Ambassador's/ guides/ information sources for visitors.

Wales Visitor Survey, 2016

The 2016 Wales Visitor Survey, undertaken by Beaufort Research, reported the following **key findings on Gwynedd's visitor profile**:

- The majority of visitors to Gwynedd live in England (60%),
- higher than average proportion of staying visitors in Gwynedd and is much higher than the all Wales proportion (37%) of visitors from the rest of the UK
- approximately a third (37%) of visitors live in Wales compared to 59% of overall visitors to Wales; 3% live abroad, compared to 4% of the all Wales average
- Gwynedd attracts a higher proportion of more affluent ABC1¹ visitors (48%) compared to all Wales sites (32%).
- The survey found that over a third of visitors (35%) to Gwynedd visit with children (the majority of whom are younger children
- Just under a third of visitors (30%) are couples
- The significant majority (71%) of visitors (who were interviewed) to Gwynedd were on a day trip, which is substantially lower than the all Wales average of 88%.
- The vast majority of staying visitors lived in England (82%) and the average number of nights stayed in Gwynedd was 5.8, which compares to 6.0 across Wales

Motivations for visiting and activities undertaken:

- A greater proportion of visitors to Gwynedd (73%) cited that their reason for visiting was to enjoy the landscape/ countryside/ beach than for all Wales (56%).
- Visitors to Gwynedd were also much more likely to have come to take part in outdoor activities compared to all sites in Wales (41% compared to 25% respectively)
- The three most popular activities, each undertaken by around a third of visitors to the region, were visiting the beach (34%), general sightseeing (33%) and visiting country parks (31%).

Satisfaction with the overall experience, revisiting and recommending:

- In general, visitors to Gwynedd were highly satisfied with their visit to Wales, with over eight in ten (82%) awarding a score of 9 or 10 (out of 10) for Wales overall as a place to visit.
- Visitors' trips to/ in Wales exceeded expectations for just over a third of visitors to Gwynedd - 37% reported that their trip was better than expected
- Almost all visitors to Gwynedd reported that they were likely to return to Wales in the future (98%); 92% of whom said they would definitely visit again, while 6% said they would probably visit again.

¹ ABC1 and C2DE are approximated social grades; the six categories (A, B, C1, C2, D and E) and is a socio economic classification produced by the UK Office for National Statistics. The categories break down as follows:

AB – higher and intermediate managerial, administrative, professional occupations

C1 – supervisory, clerical, junior managerial, administrative, professional occupations

C2 – skilled manual occupations

DE – semi skilled and unskilled manual occupations, unemployed and lowest grade occupations.

Visitor numbers and the associated economic impact

The tourism sector in Gwynedd in 2016 had its most successful year to date (2016 being the most recent set of data available); tourism expenditure in the local economy reached over £1 billion. As well as increases in peak season visitor numbers, there was an increase in visitor spending outside of summer months – the period October to April showed a substantial increase in expenditure compared to previous years.

Over 7 million people visited Gwynedd in 2016, which marked an increase of 3.2% on the previous year; 3.5 m of these visitors were staying visitors (an increase of 5.5% on 2015), the remaining 3.6 m were day visitors.

In terms of economic impact, direct expenditure reached £0.75 billion in 2016 (an increase of 4.7% on the previous year), which resulted in an economic impact of just over £1 billion (a 4.5% increase on 2015). Direct employment (FTEs) through tourism was 12,725 in 2016 (an increase of 1.6% on 2015); and total employment (FTEs) reached 15,557 (an increase of 2.1% on the previous year). (Source: STEAM data).

Appendix 5: Historic Built Environment Opportunities Study

- W01 Tywyn Listed Buildings
- W02 Tywyn Other buildings and features
- W03 Buildings and Features Matrix
- W04 Map Progression
- W05 Opportunities