



HCGAM

HWB CARBON GWYNEDD A MÔN

Fframwaith 'Hwb Carbon Gwynedd a Môn' Framework

“Supporting businesses and organisations in Gwynedd and Anglesey to make the most of the opportunities in the carbon sector for economic, environmental and community benefits to the area.”

Background

Like the rest of Wales and the World, the people and businesses of Gwynedd and Anglesey are at a critical crossroads, in terms of deciding which urgent and purposeful steps should be taken to slow down and stop the increase in the average temperature of the earth, and to try to reduce the devastating impacts of climate change on the planet.

In April 2019, the Minister for the Environment in the Welsh Government, Lesley Griffiths, announced and recognised a climate crisis. She noted that the challenges of climate change threaten Wales' health, economy, infrastructure and natural environment.

The Welsh Government has committed that the public sector will be carbon neutral by 2030 and will collaborate with others, including academia, industry and the third sector, to help other parts of the economy to move away from fossil fuels.

The requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 direct the Welsh Government to consider long-term ongoing problems such as climate change.

It is generally recognised that the efforts to decarbonise and reach net zero are everyone's responsibility.

The UK Government has also committed and legislated for all four nations to be collectively net zero by 2050.

Although some feel that what Gwynedd and Anglesey can achieve as an area is relatively insignificant compared to the impact of the activities of international industries such as aviation and energy production, there is interest and appetite among the majority of businesses and organisations in the area to understand what steps they could take towards mitigating and preventing the negative effects of climate change, through decarbonisation and carbon sequestration.

Between September 2022 and March 2023, 'Arloesi Gwynedd Wledig' commissioned Lafan Consulting Group to bring together a wide range of Gwynedd and Anglesey stakeholders to discuss and consider possible responses to the threat of farms being bought by external companies in order to plant them with trees under Glastir financial support, and then selling carbon credits from the land to be sold on the carbon market.

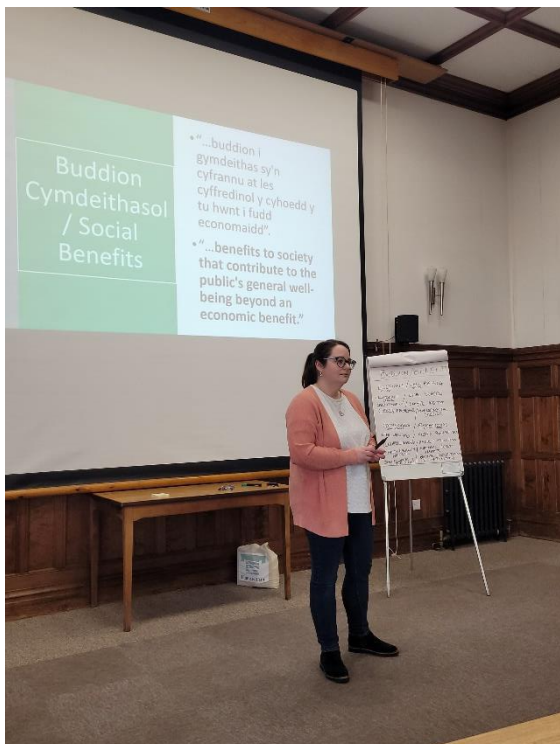
The work brief by 'Arloesi Gwynedd Wledig' was:

"Identify the best model to enable local ownership of the commercial opportunities and social benefits from planting trees to lock Carbon in Gwynedd."

In a series of 3 workshops held at Nant Gwrtheyrn and Plas Tan y Bwlch, the concept of 'Hwb Carbon Gwynedd' emerged. This was a response to the realisation by the group that many provisions and structures already exist for businesses to take advantage of opportunities in the Carbon market, and that the root of the challenge is to improve

awareness and understanding of those opportunities, and to create an independently reliable resource that can support and guide businesses and organisations that want to be part of the market and the efforts to decarbonise.

There was also recognition that the carbon challenge offers opportunities for Gwynedd and Anglesey as a rural area that has a wealth of natural resources. Many felt that it was necessary to move urgently to ensure that communities are able to take full advantage of these opportunities, while also holding on to control of the economic, environmental and social benefits that will come.



Above: Photos from the 'Arloesi Gwynedd Wledig' workshops held over winter 2022-23.

Objectives

The Hub will have 6 main objectives:

1. Monitor, analyse and interpret the performance of Gwynedd and Anglesey as an area in the context of decarbonisation and achieving net zero.
2. Provide useful resources for businesses and organisations to improve awareness and understanding of the carbon sector.
3. Provide support for businesses and organisations to decarbonise and to be able to take advantage of commercial opportunities in the sector.
4. Twinning businesses/organisations that want to reduce their carbon footprint with businesses/organisations that manage land that can be used to absorb and lock carbon under an independent accredited system.
5. Support and facilitate networking.
6. Signpost businesses, organisations and individuals to further relevant support that is available, such as life cycle analysis.

Governance

The Hub will be governed under the following principles:

- 1. Sound leadership and control**
- 2. Clearly defined roles and responsibilities**
- 3. Clear focus and direction**
- 4. Provide in Welsh and English**
- 5. Acting with integrity and objectivity**
- 6. Being open, independent and accountable**
- 7. Financially sound and prudent**

The Hub will be accountable to the Gwynedd and Anglesey Carbon Hub Board, which will include local representation from businesses and organisations, as well as the main sponsor/sponsors. Obtaining the confidence of the local communities and various stakeholders will be essential for the Hub to deliver on its objectives.

A governing document will be prepared and authorized by the Board, and this will include rules and guidelines for running the Hub. It will include:

- A description of the aim and objectives of the Hub.
- How the Hub will achieve its objectives.
- Who is responsible for the strategic overview of the Hub.
- A clear outline of the procedure for changing the aim and governance of the Hub.
- Process for closing-down the Hub if needed.

It should also include administrative details on items such as:

- Internal arrangements for Board meetings, voting and financial management.
- Hub/Cluster Membership.
- Appointment/removal process of Board members/Trustees.
- Guidelines on the relationship of Board members/Trustees with the Hub.

Depending on the exact structure of the Hub, the exact details of the governance would need to be investigated thoroughly in consultation with the beneficiaries. Further documents may be needed for the Hub such as a Constitution.

It is suggested that the Hub's Board lead on the process of drawing up a 'Carbon Strategy' for Gwynedd and Anglesey, aiming to publish it within 12 months of the Hub being established. The Strategy will guide the task and work ahead for the Hub. The Hub could be responsible for reporting back on progress with the strategy, and reviewing it after 5 years.

The vibrant community enterprises sector in the area will need to have strong voice within the Hub's structure, due to several pioneering with micro net zero initiatives, and for tapping into their local community networks on the ground.

There will be an opportunity within the strategy for the counties to set its own net zero targets if there is support for the idea. Due to the area's wealth of natural resources, some have suggested that there is an opportunity for Gwynedd and Anglesey to be at the forefront of reaching net zero, which would further support the prosperity of several industries such as tourism, agriculture, food processing, energy production and more.

Further discussion will be needed about the sustainability performance of the Hub. Naturally, it should aim to be net zero from day one.

Financially, a significant funding package will be required to set it up. Initial estimates suggest funding of £250-300k per year will be required to run it with a team of 3 full-time members of staff such as a manager, administrator and engagement officer, with money to create and provide resources.

The Hwb's medium term intention is to be partially self-sustaining, and to become mainly self-sustaining in the long term, with a percentage of the income deriving from local businesses and organisations in subscriptions and/or paying membership fees. These could vary according to the size of the body/businesses and the willingness to support the work of the Hub will reflect how valuable the outputs have been.

How will the Hub deliver

Monitor, analyse and interpret the performance of Gwynedd and Anglesey as an area in the context of decarbonisation and achieving net zero.

1. Conduct a survey and publish an annual report on the Carbon situation in Gwynedd, which will include recognised carbon indicators as well as others such as the number of jobs the sector sustains, the value of the sector to the local economy... The results will guide the activity of the Hub and will be the basis for interpreting if it succeeds or not.

Provide useful resources for businesses and organisations to improve awareness and understanding of the carbon sector.

2. Create a library of current and reliable resources for businesses and organisations to improve awareness and understanding, allowing them to be better informed when making decisions. For example, template documents, spreadsheets for financial and carbon modelling, case studies, information sheets, technical videos... mainly in digital format.
3. Piloting and trialling 2 sites across Gwynedd and Anglesey to demonstrate and share good practices and disseminate lessons learned. *(It's worth noting that offers were made by local businesses during the development of the Hub's concept, to contribute various resources and expertise towards a pilot.)*

Provide support for businesses and organisations to decarbonise and to be able to take advantage of commercial opportunities in the sector.

4. Provide a program of workshops to train organisations and businesses about different elements of Carbon such as packaging and selling carbon credits, trading carbon credits, measuring and reducing carbon footprint...
5. Being proactive to opportunities in the carbon sector that could benefit Gwynedd and Anglesey's economy, environment and communities

Support and facilitate networking.

6. Establish a 'Gwynedd and Anglesey Carbon Cluster' to provide networking opportunities for businesses and organisations active in the carbon sector.
7. Engaging with Gwynedd and Anglesey schools and colleges to highlight career and business opportunities in the carbon sector.

8. Feed comments to other relevant bodies and organisations, locally and nationally, to highlight what the situation is on the ground according to the Hub's experience. The Hub will aim to identify possible unintended negative consequences of various policies and interventions in the carbon sector, and work on possible solutions to mitigate or eradicate them.

Signpost businesses, organisations and individuals to further relevant support that is available.

9. Provide and signpost wrap-around interventions for businesses, including land owners, who are tackling their carbon challenges. This includes signposting to other projects and organisations if relevant such as The Carbon Trust, Farming Connect, Cwmpas.... providing a mentoring service, connecting together businesses that face similar barriers, holding short sessions with specialists through "Carbon Surgeries" and offer on-site visits via "Carbon Clinics."

Twinning businesses/organisations that want to reduce their carbon footprint with businesses/organisations that manage land that can be used to absorb and lock carbon under an independent accredited system.

10. Run an innovative "Carbon Twinning" service that will introduce businesses/organisations that want to reduce their carbon footprint with businesses/organisations that manage land that can be used to absorb and lock carbon under an independent accredited system. To support this ongoing task, the Hub will maintain an open directory of businesses in Gwynedd that have and want to take steps to reduce Carbon emissions, together with a live open directory of landowners who are ready to agree and commit their land to Carbon sequestering schemes.
11. Highlight opportunities to add value due to activities in the carbon sector, such as creating opportunities to create habitats and improve biodiversity, strengthening brands, provide and improve accessibility to green spaces for the public to relax, tackle flooding and soil erosion problems simultaneously, providing a community source of food, and create an attractive landscape.

Support

The following have expressed an interest in seeing the Gwynedd and Anglesey Carbon Hub concept further developed:

- A cluster of businesses from Gwynedd who are already innovating in the carbon sector and are keen to see the establishment of Hwb Carbon Gwynedd a Môn.
Including
- Community groups including...
- A number of progressive individuals who specialise and/or are interested in the carbon sector. Including...
- Cyngor Sir Gwynedd
- Cyngor Sir Ynys Môn
- Parc Cenedlaethol Eryri
- Arloesi Gwynedd Wledig / Arloesi Môn, aelodau y Grŵpiau LAG yng Ngwynedd ac Ynys Môn.
- Menter Môn
- Prifysgol Bangor
- Coleg Glynllfion (rhan o Grŵp Llandrillo Menai)
- Yr Ymddiriedolaeth Genedlaethol
- Nant Gwrtheyrn
- Undeb Amaethwyr Cymru
- NFU Cymru
- Adra