

DRAFT **CORWEN TOWN PLAN** **2012**

“Looking Forward Together”



Introduction

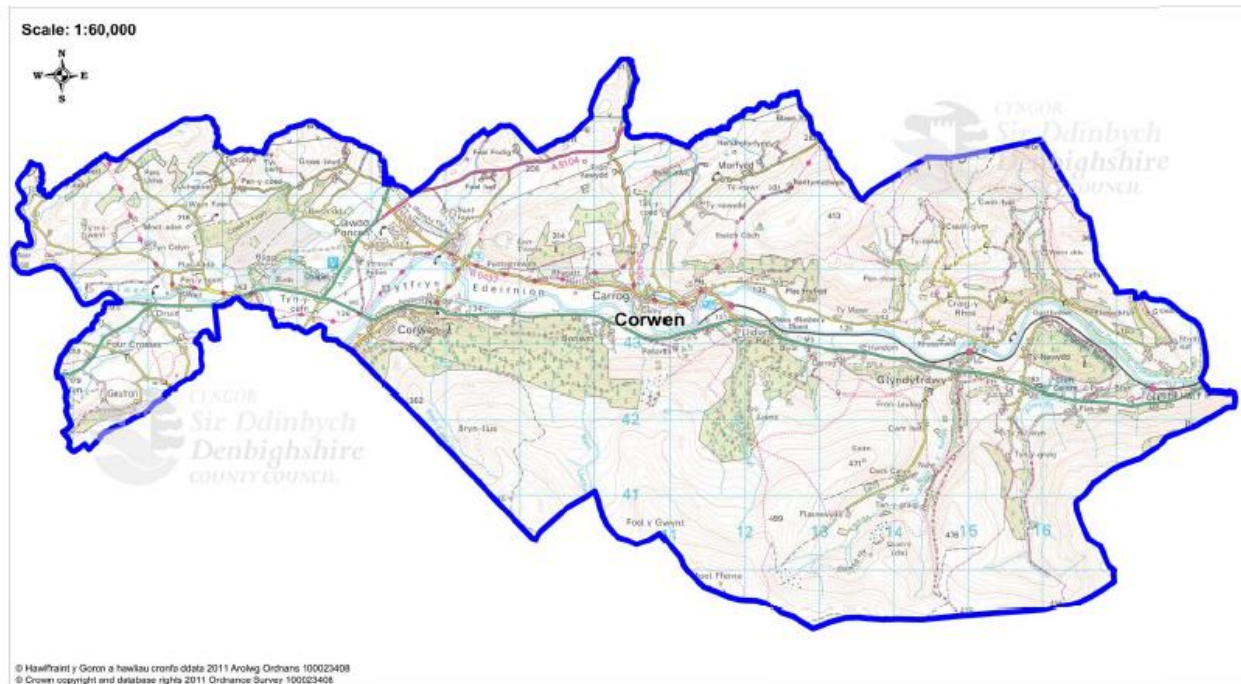
Denbighshire County Council has adopted a strategic aim of being “a high performing council closer to the community”.

To help achieve this aim, the County Council is inviting the town and community councils and the businesses, community and voluntary sectors in each of its main towns and the smaller outlying communities which relate to them to join together to develop “town plans”. These will be living documents which will be subject to regular reviews and will set out

- the current situation in the towns
- the key challenges and opportunities which they will face over the next decade
- a vision for each town which will provide it with a sustainable future, and
- realistic and achievable actions which will deliver that vision.



Map showing the ward of Corwen



Corwen sits at the foot of the Berwyn Mountains at the western end of the Dee Valley. Corwen is well known for its strong association with Owain Glyndŵr, one of Wales' most renowned heroes, with Corwen and its surrounding area being his ancestral homeland. The Owain Glyndŵr Society is a well established community group in the town.

Corwen and its surrounding area has several interesting historic buildings such as Llangar Church, Rug Chapel, the Owain Glyndŵr Hotel, the Church of Saints Mael and Sulien and Corwen Manor which was originally a workhouse.

Corwen has a leisure centre with a swimming pool, fitness suite and sauna, squash courts and all weather pitch. The town has a Sports Pavilion with pitches and there has been a major investment in play equipment in the adjacent War Memorial Park. The town has a Healthy Living Centre with co-working office space set up for different organisations to use.

Ifor Williams Trailers is a major employer in the Corwen area along with Corwen Forestry, Wholebake, Bart Spices, Ruth Lea and the agricultural sector. Rhug Estate to the west of Corwen runs a very successful organic food shop and restaurant and is also the venue for the "Cneifio Corwen Shears" lamb shearing competition which takes place each year at the end of July.

The A5 trunk road runs through Corwen town centre.

The population of the town of Corwen is 2,400.

The town also serves a number of rural villages and settlements including Cynwyd, Carrog, Gwyddelwern, Llandrillo, Bryneglwys, Betws Gwerfil Goch and Glyndyfrdwy and these communities are the home to a further 2,330 people.

Where we are now

People

Compared to the county as a whole, the Corwen ward has

- fewer people aged over 65 (and there are significantly fewer in the town of Corwen),
- a lower percentage of over 85's,
- more young people under 15,
- more households claiming housing or Council Tax benefit, and
- fewer households are overcrowded.

Community

Compared to the county as a whole, more people in the town of Corwen

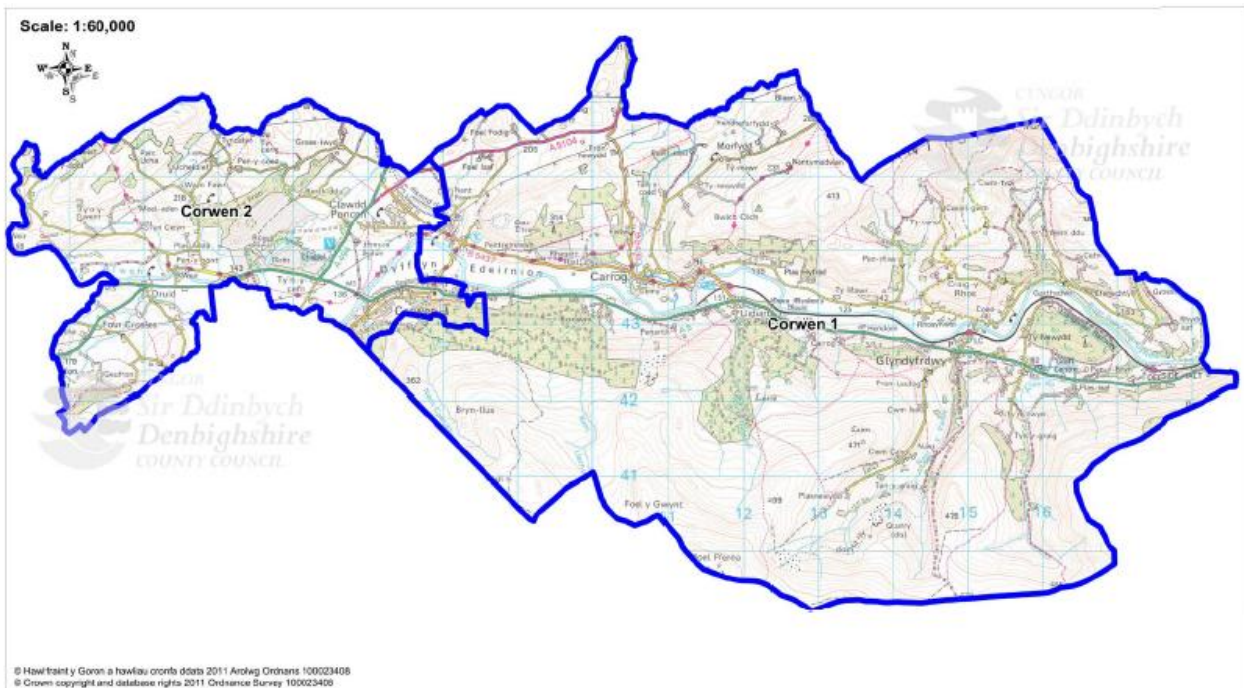
- have been born in Wales, and
- significantly more people can speak Welsh.

The crime rate in Corwen is lower than the average rate for the County, particularly for incidences of violence against the person, criminal damage and theft and handling.

The Welsh Government uses a formula to measure deprivation. Wales is split into 1896 areas which are smaller than County Council wards which are called "Lower Super Output Areas". Each of these areas is then ranked with the most deprived given a score of 1 and the least deprived as score of 1896. The scores in different years are not directly comparable because the way in which the index is calculated changes over time.

| "Lower layer super output area" | Ranking in 2005 | Ranking in 2008 | Ranking in 2011 |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Corwen 1 | 1094 | 1074 | 1161 |
| Corwen 2 | 907 | 963 | 940 |

Map showing the Lower Super Output Areas in Corwen



Jobs

Compared to the county as a whole,

- a higher percentage of people work in manufacturing
- a higher percentage of people work in agriculture
- more people commute more than 20km to work, and
- a lower percentage of people of working age claim Job Seekers' Allowance.

Average annual household incomes in Corwen are higher than the average for the County.

The place

Corwen currently has one of the highest percentages of vacant town centre retail units in the County. This figure is also higher than the national average. However, at least three of the units are subject to enquiries or are under development and once these are back in use, the vacancy rate will be much lower than either that for the County or the UK.

Vacancy rates for retail premises – Autumn 2011

| | | |
|--------|-------|--------------------------|
| Corwen | 15.6% | (7 units) |
| UK | 13.3% | (Colliers International) |

The principal visitor attraction in the Corwen area currently is the Rhug Estate, which has around 350,000 visitors a year. The railway is also expected to be very popular when it arrives in the town.

There are 44 bedspaces in graded visitor accommodation in the town and there is also a 5* "restaurant with rooms" nearby at Llandrillo.

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Future challenges and opportunities

People

Primary school provision is currently being reviewed in the area.

Community

There is a lack of community buildings in the town.

The Pavilion is in a dangerous state of repair.

There is no disabled access to the first floor in the Library/One Stop Shop.

The British Legion Clubhouse is in a poor condition but still in use.

There are thriving Beavers and Cubs groups in the town.

The civic amenity provision for the disposal of household waste is currently a very limited service.

Jobs

The construction of an extension to the Llangollen railway and a new temporary 4 car platform some 300m east of the town centre is scheduled for completion before the end of 2012. An increase in footfall of 90,000 people is expected when the railway extension is complete.

There is an aspiration amongst local organisations to develop and operate visitor facilities which would complement the extension of the railway including a new railway museum and an attraction in the adjacent former chapel.

A further extension would bring the railway closer to the town centre and this would encourage passengers to disembark and spend more time in Corwen. Including an 8 car platform and a loop in the second extension would enable trains hauled by steam locomotives to the town which would make the journey a more attractive proposition altogether.

The place

There are some strong brands associated with the area including Ifor Williams Trailers, Rhug Estate Organic Farm and the Llangollen Railway.

The Arts Council for Wales has indicated a willingness to part fund an arts trail in Corwen.

The privately owned Commerce House is a prominent building on the A5 which is in a very poor state of repair.

Possible development of an Owain Glyndŵr trail by the Owain Glyndŵr Society.

The appearance of the old fire station building needs some attention.

Large and heavy vehicles are using the narrow Green Lane route causing congestion. This could potentially be addressed by directing them to use alternative route following the improvements to the traffic light controlled junction to the west of the town.

The library and one stop shop are closed on Wednesdays and Fridays which could be busy days for the forthcoming railway.

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Vision for Corwen

We want Corwen

- to offer an enviable quality of life which is attractive to residents of all ages,
- to have the range of community facilities and transport services required to address the town's relative isolation from larger centres of population,
- to be the main centre for manufacturing in the south of the county, and
- to offer a brilliant experience for visitors to the area

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Making it happen...

| ...for people | | | |
|---|---|--|------------|
| What we want to achieve | We will achieve this by | This will be led by | Within |
| An improvement in educational attainment | Reviewing the primary education provision in the Edeyrnion area and securing Ministerial agreement to implement the proposals | County Council Modernising Education | 1 year |
| | Creating a new area school to serve the communities of Cynwyd and Llandrillo | County Council Modernising Education | 1 year |
| | Creating a Federated Governing Body for Ysgol Betws Gwerfil Goch and Ysgol Bro Elwern | Governing Bodies of Ysgol Betws Gwerfil Goch and Ysgol Bro Elwern County Council Modernising Education | 1 year |
| | Creating a Federated Governing Body for Ysgol Caer Drewyn and Ysgol Carrog | Governing Bodies of Ysgol Caer Drewyn and Ysgol Carrog County Council Modernising Education | 1 year |
| | Completing the extension and improvement works to the area school at Cynwyd | County Council Modernising Education | 1-5 years |
| | Changing the language status of Ysgol Caer Drewyn and Ysgol Carrog to become bilingual schools to increase the use of the Welsh language at these schools | County Council Modernising Education and School Improvement | 1-5 years |
| | Securing funding to minor improvements to other schools in the area | County Council Modernising Education | 5-10 years |
| The housing needs of local people of all ages are met | Looking into the provision of affordable units in any residential developments | County Council Planning, Regeneration and Regulatory Services | 5-10 years |
| | Looking into the provision of extra care units for elderly people | County Council Housing / Registered Social Landlords | 5-10 years |

Making it happen...

| ...for the community | | | |
|---|--|--|-----------|
| What we want to achieve | We will achieve this by | This will be led by | Within... |
| More and better facilities for community use | Securing funding to carry out a feasibility study to find out the needs and aspirations of the local community | South Denbighshire Community Partnership | 1 year |
| | Securing funding to implement the findings of the feasibility study | South Denbighshire Community Partnership | 1 year |
| | Identifying future funding for the South Denbighshire Community Partnership | South Denbighshire Community Partnership | 1-5 years |
| | Determining the future of the Pavilion site | County Council Leisure, Libraries & Community Development, Community Council, Corwen Partnership | 1 year |
| Easier access to facilities for the disposal of household waste | Looking into the feasibility of a better civic amenity provision | County Council Environment | 1 year |

Making it happen...

| ...for the jobs | | | |
|---|--|---|---------|
| What we want to achieve | We will achieve this by | This will be led by | By when |
| The benefits to the town from the extension of the Llangollen Railway are maximised | Producing a master plan which would set out the relationship between the temporary platform for the railway, a further extension and the complementary visitor facilities suggested for the immediate area and the link to the town centre | County Council Planning, Regeneration and Regulatory Services | 1 year |
| | Commissioning a study into the feasibility of the further extension of the railway | County Council Major Projects | 1 year |
| | Carrying out a cost benefit analysis which would be required for raising the finance needed for the investment including any grant funding which may be available | County Council Planning, Regeneration and Regulatory Services | 1 year |
| | Setting out a financing model showing the mechanisms by which the constituent elements which make up the master plan could be funded including on-going maintenance liabilities for the station buildings | County Council Planning, Regeneration and Regulatory Services | 1 year |
| New jobs in the manufacturing sector could be accommodated in the town | Proposing the retention of as yet undeveloped employment allocations at Tyn y Llidiart in the Local Development Plan for Denbighshire 2006-21 | County Council Planning, Regeneration and Regulatory Services | 1 year |

Making it happen...

| ...for the place | | | |
|---|---|---|-----------|
| What we want to achieve | We will achieve this by | This will be led by | within |
| The town will look even more attractive | Tackling untidy sites and buildings such as Commerce House and the land between Church House and the Royal Oak using enforcement action where necessary | County Council Planning, Regeneration and Regulatory Services | 1-5 years |
| | Improving the external appearance of the old fire station where the gritter is kept and looking at alternative places for parking it | County Council Highways | 1-5 years |
| Visitors will have a brilliant experience | Improving traffic flows through the introduction of new regulations on the A5 | Welsh Government | 1 year |
| | Looking into developing good links with Rhug Estate Organic Farm which already attracts large numbers of visitors | County Council Planning, Regeneration and Regulatory Services | 1-5 years |
| | Reviewing signage in the area | County Council Highways | 1-5 years |

How will we know if we are on track?

Annual reviews of progress will be undertaken by the County Council together with Corwen Community Council. More regular updates will also be provided to the County Council's Member Area Groups and to the Community Council, and also to the wider community through County Voice and through press releases made by Denbighshire County Council. The Plan will be treated as a living document in which aspirations can be added or removed according to changes in circumstances.

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Statistical Appendix

2001 census data

| Percentage of... | In the whole County Council ward for Corwen | In the town of Corwen ("Corwen 2" Lower Super Output Area) | In Carrog and Glyndyfrdwy ("Corwen 1" Lower Super Output Area) | In Denbighshire |
|---|--|---|---|------------------------|
| Young people aged 15 or under | 21.2 | 22.2 | 19.9 | 19.7 |
| All people aged 65 or over | 16.4 | 14.1 | 19.2 | 20.2 |
| People aged 85 or over | 1.9 | 1.3 | 2.6 | 2.8 |
| People claiming housing or Council Tax benefit | 9.0 | 10.4 | 7.0 | 9.9 |
| Overcrowded households | 3.6 | 4.4 | 2.7 | 4.4 |
| People born in Wales | 65.7 | 68.2 | 62.8 | 57.9 |
| People over 3 years of age who can speak, read or write Welsh | 54.4 | 53.9 | 55.0 | 29.0 |
| Working residents employed in the public sector | 21.8 | 18.6 | 25.6 | 30.0 |
| Working residents employed in manufacturing | 23.5 | 26.7 | 19.4 | 13.9 |
| Working residents employed in agriculture | 8.1 | 6.6 | 9.9 | 3.6 |
| Working residents who travel more than 20km to work | 21.6 | 20.6 | 22.3 | 18.6 |