

Public Document Pack

Meeting via
Teams

Meeting Date
Thursday, 9 May 2024

Meeting Time
2.00 pm



For further information please contact
Nicola Williams
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Issue Date
02-05-2024

AGENDA

1.	WELCOME
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Chairperson – Councillor James Gibson-Watt

2.	APOLOGIES
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To receive apologies for the Mid Wales CJC Formal Meeting.

Apologies received and noted -
Emma Palmer, CEO
Diane Reynolds, Director

3.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
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To receive Declarations of Interest from Members relating to items to be considered on the agenda.

4.	MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 29TH JANUARY 2024
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The Chair shall propose that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 29th January 2024 are a true record.

(Pages 3 - 12)

5.	REGIONAL TRANSPORT PLANNING SUB COMMITTEE UPDATE
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To receive the report on the update of the Regional Transport Planning Sub Committee, together with the associated appendices presented by Ann Elias.

(Pages 13 - 40)

6.	STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING SUB COMMITTEE UPDATE (VERBAL)
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To receive a verbal update report on the Strategic Development Planning Sub Committee from Sarah Groves Phillips.

7.	ECONOMIC WELLBEING SUB COMMITTEE UPDATE
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To receive the report on the update of the Economic Well Being Sub Committee, together with the associated appendix presented by Carwyn Jones-Evans.

(Pages 41 - 98)

8.	ANY OTHER BUSINESS
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9.	DATES OF NEXT CJC MEETINGS
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New dates for the CJC Meetings 2024 are being sought to accommodate the RTP Draft and Final Report to Welsh Government deadlines



**MINUTES OF THE
 MID WALES CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEE
 HELD ON MONDAY, 29TH JANUARY 2024
 9.30 am to 11 am via Zoom Webinar**

PRESENT

Powys County Council

County Councillor James Gibson-Watt, Leader / Chair of the Mid Wales CJC
 Diane Reynolds, Interim Director, Economy & Community Services (DR)
 Clive Pinney, Head of Legal and Democratic Services / CJC Monitoring Officer
 Nicola Williams, Strategic Programme Delivery Manager (NW)
 Julie Williams, CJC Programme Support Officer (*taking notes*)

In attendance:

Paul Griffiths, Consultant (PG)
 Jason Blewitt, Audit Wales (JB)

Ceredigion County Council

County Councillor Bryan Davies, Leader / Vice Chair of Mid Wales CJC
 Barry Rees, Corporate Director (BR)
 Duncan Hall, Section 151 Officer and Corporate Lead Officer: Finance and Procurement (DH)
 Elin Prysor, Corporate Lead Officer-Legal & Governance Services (& Monitoring Officer) (EP)

In attendance:

Sarah Groves-Phillips, Planning Policy Manager, Economy & Regeneration (SGP)
 Rhidian Jones, Translator
 Llinos Williams, Translator

Bannau Brycheiniog

County Councillor Gareth Ratcliffe, Vice Chair of BBNPA (GR)
 Gareth Jones, Director of Planning and Place (GJ)

1.	WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS
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The Chair welcomed everyone to the Mid Wales Corporate Joint Committee Formal Meeting.

2.	APOLOGIES
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Apologies received -

Powys County Council
Emma Palmer, Chief Executive

Ceredigion County Council
Eifion Evans, Chief Executive (due to joining/technical issues)
Ann Elias, Regional Transport Lead (due to joining/technical issues)

3.	DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST
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There were no disclosures of interests to declare relating to matters to be considered on the agenda.

4.	MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING
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To approve the minutes of the last Mid Wales CJC & AGM Meeting held on Thursday, 12th October 2023.

County Councillor Bryan Davies proposed that the minutes of the CJC meeting held on 12th October 2023 be signed as a true record and seconded by County Councillor Gareth Ratcliffe.

5.	CJC FINANCE OUTTURN ON THE ANNUAL RETURN FOR 2022/23
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To approve the Mid Wales Corporate Joint Committee Finance Outturn Report on the Annual Return for 2022-23 presented by Duncan Hall, Justin Davies and Auditors.

- Annual Return for the financial year ending 31st March 2023.
- Outturn position for 2022-23 in the October meeting total expenditure of just over £76,000 split between General and Strategic Development Planning.
- Showing an underspend, allowing a carry forward into reserves total just over £83,000.
- That outturn position is reflected in the annual return which is in Appendix 2.

- Appendix 1 - Audit Wales, there are no adjustments, fully unqualified opinion which means a clean bill of health in terms of the annual return. A recommendation on the report is to approve the annual return as stated.
- Jason Blewitt, Audit Wales, confirms a positive report received and completed on a reasonable basis with no underlying issues. Auditor General to sign off on 7th February 2024.
- Thanks to the Ceredigion Finance team for assistance during the Audit.

RECOMMENDATIONS

County Councillor Bryan Davies proposed that the Annual Return is agreed and approved for 2022/23 and seconded by County Councillor Gareth Ratcliffe.

6.	AUDIT WALES – CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEE
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The CJC is asked to consider how it may take forward the recommendations made in the final Summary Report from Audit Wales.

- The Audit Report is for information as it has been discussed at a CJC meeting and now received in final format, so today that CJC are asked to accept the report and five recommendations for taking forward and reporting back periodically to the CJC.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **As set out on page 14 of the Audit Wales Report –**
 - 1) **Governance arrangements**
 - 2) **Delivering the Strategic Planning functions**
 - 3) **Meeting Public Sector duties**
 - 4) **Partnership working and involving the National Park Authorities**
 - 5) **Meeting duties under the Well-being of Future Generations Act**

County Councillor Gareth Ratcliffe proposed that the Audit Wales Report and the five recommendations are accepted and this was seconded by County Councillor Bryan Davies.

7.	CJC BUDGET 2024-25
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To receive a report from Duncan Hall, Section 151 Officer on the proposed budget for the Mid Wales CJC 2024-25.

- The CJC has a legal duty to set the budget by the 31st January preceding the next financial year.

- Budget proposed £317,000 for next financial year split into three components
 - - General Budget
 - Regional Transport Plan Budget
 - Strategic Development Planning Budget
- There are seven recommendations in total, four which cover the general budget and the RTP which Ceredigion and Powys members to vote on.
- Three recommendations covering the Strategic Development Planning budget which is for all three Authorities to vote on.
- Appendix 1 has the detail of the proposed budget –
 - General Budget - £144,000 proposed as a budget requirement, split 50/50 between Powys and Ceredigion County Councils mainly made up of a small number of employee costs and overhead costs of running the CJC, be that audit fees, insurance, translation and democratic support, legal input and finance support.
 - Regional Transport Plan (RTP) bringing a grant received and accepted from the Welsh Government for 23/24 £125,000 and then for next financial year a grant of £100,000 to progress the work on the RTP.
 - RTP is 100% grant funded and no need for anyone to contribute towards that.
 - Strategic Development Planning (SDP) has a small number of employee costs and small number of overheads, Audit Wales insurance, etc.
 - That budget of nearly £73,000 is proposed to be funded by Bannau Brycheiniog in terms of 11.45% which is the historic population share, agreed previously, still based on 2018 population.
 - 11.45% for Bannau Brycheiniog and then balance split 50/50 between Powys and Ceredigion County Councils.
 - A small number of reserves have been brought in to balance off that budget.
 - Key to remember on the SDP budget is there will be a much greater requirement once the delivery agreements are advanced, budget will need to be revised once clearer on direction of travel for the 25/26 budget, may need to be an in-year revision.

Summary –

Total budget of overall £317,000 split as above which means -

- Ceredigion CC - £100,000 contribution
- Powys CC - £100,000 contribution
- Bannau Brycheiniog - £17,193 contribution to the SDP element.



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RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 It is recommended that Ceredigion and Powys Council MWCJC Members approve the following regarding the General Budget:

- (a) To approve the General Expenditure Budget for the MWCJC for 2024/25 of £144,370 and £100,000 for the Regional Transport Plan Budget as outlined in Appendix A.
- (b) To approve if by the end of 2024/25 there is an underspend against the General Budget that the underspend will be held in an earmarked reserve specifically ring fenced for future years General Budget expenditure.
- (c) To approve a levy chargeable against Powys and Ceredigion County Councils of £72,185 each in respect of the General Expenditure Budget for the MWCJC for 2024/25.
- (d) To approve an increase in the budget for 2023/24 of £125,000 expenditure in relation to the Regional Transport Plan which will be funded by a grant received from Welsh Government.

RECOMMENDATION

Proposals 10.1 agreed and accepted by Councillor Bryan Davies and seconded by Councillor James Gibson Watt.

10.2 It is recommended that all MWCJC Members approve the following regarding the Strategic Planning Budget:

- (e) To approve the Strategic Planning Expenditure Budget for the MWCJC for 2024/25 of £72,823 as outlined in Appendix A.
- (f) To approve if by the end of 2024/25 there is an underspend against the Strategic Planning Budget that the underspend will be held in an earmarked reserve specifically ring fenced for future years Strategic Planning expenditure.
- (g) To approve a levy chargeable against Powys and Ceredigion County Councils of £27,815 each and a levy of £7,193 chargeable against the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority in respect of the Strategic Planning Expenditure Budget for the MWCJC for 2024/25.

RECOMMENDATION

Proposals 10.2 are agreed and accepted by Councillor Bryan Davies and seconded by Councillor Gareth Ratcliffe.

8.	DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN CONSULTATION UPDATE
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To consider and approve the Draft Corporate Plan following the consultation period presented by Paul Griffiths, Consultant.

- Last Autumn, approval to go out to consultation on the draft CJC Corporate Plan after a scheduled workshop in the Summer.
- Attached to the report is an appendices list of organisations and bodies that were consulted.
- Responses are attached as Appendix 2.
- Two documents being asked for approval today –
 - 1) CJC Corporate Strategies
 - 2) Corporate Impact Assessment Plan
- Over the next year more clarity received from Welsh Government on expectations from the CJC and expectation that the document will emerge as a strategy and be reviewed and revised on at least an annual basis.
- Welcome any questions or comments and subject to approval and the document is finalised, publication on the website for wider public information.

RECOMMENDATION for the CJC Corporate Plan on Appendix 3 and the Corporate Impact Assessment Plan in Appendix 4 be agreed and accepted.

Councillor Bryan Davies proposed that the Draft CJC Corporate Plan/Appendix 3 and the Corporate Impact Assessment Plan in Appendix 4 is agreed and accepted and seconded by County Councillor Gareth Ratcliffe.

9.	REPORT FROM THE REGIONAL TRANSPORT PLANNING SUB COMMITTEE
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To receive the report on the update of the Regional Transport Planning Sub Committee, together with the associated appendices presented by Ann Elias.

- Report will be summarised by Carwyn Jones-Evans as Ann Elias unable to join today due to technical difficulties.
- There are three decisions to be considered today –
 - 1) To note the contents of the report
 - 2) To note the Terms of Reference of the Regional Transport Planning Sub Committee
 - 3) To note acceptance of funding and next steps.
- Officers and Elected Members conversations have been taking place since last Autumn 2023. During the last CJC before Christmas it was to effectively submit an implementation plan and request funding to deliver.

- Funding approved and received from Welsh Government to deliver the Regional Transport Plan.
- In terms of the Terms of Reference, having had Tracc previously the TOR have been updated to acknowledge the withdrawal from Tracc and to remove any references to the word Tracc. See Appendix 1.
- The Implementation Plan was submitted to Welsh Government by the deadline of 31st October 2023 and received confirmation just after Christmas and this has been reflected in the Grants Award in the Budget also.
- The principal amount of the funding is to obtain Consultancy support to develop and deliver the plan for the region. The tender exercise is currently out and deadline is 5th February 2024 and hopefully appoint by the 1st March 2024.
- The funding has been received late in the financial year and challenging to meet original deadlines. We are unlikely to meet some of the early deadlines but the requirement is to deliver a Regional Transport Plan by 31st March 2025.

RECOMMENDATION

- **To ratify the amended Terms of Reference being proposed by the Sub Committee in Appendix 1.**

County Councillor Bryan Davies proposes acceptance of the amended Terms of Reference in Appendix 1 and seconded by County Councillor James Gibson Watt.

10.	REPORT ON THE PROGRESS IN RELATION TO ESTABLISHING THE ECONOMIC WELLBEING SUB COMMITTEE
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To receive a report on the progress in relation to establishing the Economic Wellbeing Sub Committee presented by Carwyn Jones-Evans.

- The Sub Committee has been established but is not yet operational.
- This is a narrative update of progress re developing the scope and purpose of the Economic Wellbeing Sub Committee.
- Building on previous reports that the CJC have received in July and October last year.
 - 1) In relation to the first item, the refresh of the vision of Growing Mid Wales which is largely completed but not in time for this CJC meeting., this will be brought back to a future meeting.
 - 2) OECD Workshop held in October 2023 and draft Action Plan received just after Christmas.
 - 3) Conversations need to be had around the Growing Mid Wales and what additional functions need to be looked at but any implications and operationally of delivering those functions.
 - 4) Work in progress on existing governance and membership of the sub committee.

- In terms of the Forward Work Plan bringing all that together is we need to have a conversation on the scope and function of the Economic Well Being Sub Committee. OEC Report will need to be considered.
- This needs to be mapped out with the existing functions of the Mid Wales Growth Deal, looking to take place around February/March this year.

RECOMMENDATION

County Councillor Bryan Davies proposes to accept the recommendation that further conversations need to take place on the scope and functions of the Economic Well Being Sub Committee considering the OECD Report and this was seconded by County Councillor James Gibson Watt.

11.	REPORT FROM STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING SUB COMMITTEE
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To receive a report from the Strategic Development Planning (SDP) Sub Committee presented by Sarah Groves-Phillips.

- SDP Sub Committee met several times and decision taken to dedicate some resource to 0.5 full time equivalent to undertake preparatory work until March 2024.
- As shown in Budget earlier position agreed going forward to 2024/25.
- No formal decision can be made on a delivery agreement until decisions have been made regionally of how best to progress the SDP.
- SDP Workshop scheduled for 29th February 2024.
- Powys seeking Monitoring Officer advice re how to move forward re replacement plan preparation, then decided to seek formal legal advice.
- Further discussions to take place in upcoming SDP Workshop, a paper will be presented at next CJC in May 2024.
- In terms of BBNPA, decisions to be made in Spring 2024 and presented at a CJC meeting appropriately.
- The Ceredigion replacement LDP still remains on formal pause due to phosphates issues and the impending Marine sac data release with County wide implications.
- On a more National update, attention drawn to paragraph number 7 in the report regarding a meeting attended by SGP “The Planning Officer Society for Wales” (POSW).



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- Further to the report, setting up Working Groups and a draft budget report has been undertaken, not presented today as need SDP Workshop to discuss and understand requirements to progress.

- Skills mapping is slightly on hold as need to understand areas of specialism across the planning policy and development teams across the region.
- Ceredigion have undertaken the mapping; Powys have been busy on LDP 2 replacement and BBNPA have not had capacity to undertake.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) **For Members to note the progress and narrative update on the actions undertaken to date.**
- 2) **For Members to consider and comment on the proposed Forward Work Plan set out in paragraph 10 and that the Members support the proposal.**

County Councillor Bryan Davies would welcome some more information on ‘skills mapping’ and SGP clarified further.

County Councillor Bryan Davies also queried the possibility of more funding from the Welsh Government. SGP explained that WG are not providing any resource support to the SDP unlike the Regional Transport Planning (RTP) where there is a grant available.

The expectation is that the CJC will provide the budget for the SDP work, SGP clarified further.

County Councillor Bryan Davies proposed that recommendations 1) and 2) above are agreed and accepted and the motion was carried unanimously.

12.	REPORT ON THE WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS FOR THE MID WALES CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEE
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To receive a report on the Compliance of the Mid Wales CJC with the Welsh Language Standards.

- The purpose of the Report is to update the Mid Wales CJC Members and Officers with a proposed way forward for the draft Compliance Notice, which is being served by the Welsh Language Commissioner, currently out for consultation.
- NW gave a brief background of the meetings that have been held with the Commissioners Office and the Mid Wales CJC.
- The Commissioners Office served a compliance notice on the Mid Wales CJC to adopt the Ceredigion Welsh Language Standards which are considerably higher than Powys CC standards. If Powys would have to comply it would mean a huge financial burden.
- Meeting with Commissioners Office on 14th December 2023 to propose way forward and NW needs to respond to the consultation where Mid Wales CJC has been given an extension so that the recommendations could be considered and approved.

- Recommendations to ensure the MWCJC satisfies with the requirements of the Welsh Language Commission and is compliant with the Welsh Language Requirements 2021.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) The MWCJC adopts Powys County Council's Welsh Language standards as a baseline for compliance with the Welsh Language Regulations 2021.
- 2) The MWCJC will work to progress to improve on its adopted Welsh Language standards.
- 3) The annual reporting requirements for the MWCJC will be in line with the existing arrangements for the two Local Authorities. The first report will be due by the end of June 2025.
- 4) The extent to which the MWCJC's promotional activities could be incorporated into the existing strategies of the relevant local authorities when they are next up for review.

County Councillor Bryan Davies proposes to agree and accept the above recommendations 1) to 4) and this was seconded by County Councillor James Gibson Watt.

13.	ANY OTHER BUSINESS
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To receive any other business.

- County Councillor Bryan Davies raised concerns with the ICT issues encountered today and previously. The Monitoring Officer confirms he has contacted Powys ICT to set up a priority meeting with Ceredigion ICT to resolve these issues.

14.	DATES OF NEXT MID WALES CJC MEETINGS
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Thursday, 9th May 2024 at 2 pm to 3 pm

(AGM) Thursday, 18th July 2024 at 10 am to 11.30 am

Tuesday, 22nd October 2024 at 2 pm to 3.30 pm

January 2025 to be arranged



MID WALES CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting – 9th May 2024

REPORT OF THE CJC Transport Sub Committee

Purpose of Report	To provide the CJC with an update on the progress of the work of the Regional Transport Sub-Committee
Decision Sought:	<p>A) To note the content of the report and tasks undertaken to deliver the development of a Regional Transport Plan for the Mid Wales CJC.</p> <p>B) To grant a delegated power for the RTP Case for Change to be approved by the Regional Transport Sub-Committee on the 16th May 2024</p>
Report Author	Ann Elias, Regional Transport Lead, Ceredigion Council (on behalf of the CJC)
Finance Officer	Duncan Hall, Section 151 Officer
Legal Officer	Clive Pinney – Monitoring Officer

Introduction:

1. The Regional Transport Sub Committee is being requested to advise the CJC on the development and delivery of the Regional Transport Plan as required by the regulations and subsequent guidance set by Welsh Government.

Background:

2. Since your last Committee on the 29th January 2024 there has been no further Transport Sub Committee meetings, because officers have been engaged in the process of procuring a delivery partner to work the Corporate Joint Committee to deliver the Regional Transport Plan.
3. As part of the joint working arrangements to support the committee Ceredigion County Council have appointed WSP to work with the team to take forward the development of the plan in line with Welsh Government guidance.

4. The programme of delivery has an extremely tight timeline, and the next deliverable for the RTP programme is the requirement to submit the “Case for Change” and the Engagement Plan. The next Transport Sub Committee meeting is the 16th May which follows this meeting therefore on this occasion we are seeking delegation for the Transport Sub Committee to endorse the two documents on your behalf and agree the programme of dates for the committees of the CJC to conclude the process of completion of the Regional Transport Plan.

Proposed dates for processing Mid Wales CJC Regional Transport Plan

1	RTP sub committee meeting Tue 30 th July 9am to 10am	Indorse draft RTP to be sent to WG for comments
2	CJC board meeting – between w/c 30 th July	draft RTP sent to WG - for information
3	CJC Scrutiny Committee Meeting w/c 5th Aug (end of week)	endorsement of document sent to WG
4	RTP sub committee meeting w/c 16 th Sept	Indorse draft RTP for consultaion
5	CJC board meeting needed w/c 16 th Sept 2024	draft RTP that went to consultation for information
6	CJC Scrutiny Committee Meeting W/c18th Nov 2024	to go through consultation responses
7	RTP sub committee meeting w/c 9th Dec 2024	agree final draft RTP and send to WG (to invite CJC Board members as observers for presentation)
8	CJC board meeting w/c 16th Dec 2024	Approve final draft RTP to send to WG
9	RTP sub committee meeting w/c 3 rd March 2025	agree final RTP and environment documents (to invite CJC Board members as observers for presentation)
10	Arrange a CJC board meeting w/c 10 th March 2025	Approve final RTP and environmental documents
11	CJC Scrutiny Committee Meeting 14th April 2025	final RTP sent to WG

5. Attached is a copy of the delivery programme for the Regional Transport Plan (Appendix 1)

Decisions Sought:

- A) To note the content of the report and next steps in relation to the development of a Regional Transport Plan for the Mid Wales CJC.
- B) To agree to the Regional Transport Sub Committee approving the Regional Transport Plan Case for Change and Engagement Plan before sending these to Welsh Government at their meeting on the 16th May 2024.

Financial Impacts:

Funding has been made available from Welsh Government to assist with the process of delivery of the Regional Transport Plan and Strategic Development Plan as per grant award letter dated 10th January 2024

Appendix 2. Welsh Government grant award letter.

Integrated Impact Assessment:

6. The CJC is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, and must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Acts.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socio-economic disadvantage.
 - Consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language.
 - Treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English.
 - Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
7. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental, and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the 'well-being goals.
8. The allocation of resources for the RTP would support the CJC in exercising its functions listed under the legislation above. The allocation of resources and the commencement of the Implementation Plan to deliver the RTP does not in itself require an integrated impact assessment as it is not forming policy, however later stages of RTP development will require an IIA.

Workforce Impacts:

9. The work on the RTP has a workforce impact across the 2 constituent authorities with a requirement for officers to join workstreams and engage with stakeholder forms and consultations. Currently there is no provision for re-charging their time to this CJC work.
10. There has not been any assessment of the cost associated with Annual Monitoring report requirements which will be an output of the RTP process and until these requirements are established costs cannot be assessed by their will be an impact on existing local authorities.

11. The cost estimated for the officer time to deliver the RTP are currently being seconded from Ceredigion County Council on the bases of two full time posts.

Legal Impacts:

12. None recognised at this time.

Risk Management Impacts:

13. The current risk the delivery of the RTP is whether the Welsh Government is able to undertake their review and assessment of the draft Regional Transport Plan during August as identified within the programme.

Consultation:

14. There is no requirement for consultation in respect of this report.

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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

The Chief Executive
Mid Wales Corporate Joint Committee
c/o Ceredigion County Council
Penmorfa
Aberaeron
Ceredigion
SA46 0PA

Attention: Mr Eifion Evans

10 January 2024

Dear Mid Wales Corporate Joint Committee

Award of Funding in relation to Mid Wales Corporate Joint Committee to develop Regional Transport Plan – Financial Year 2023-24 & 2024-25

1. Award of Funding

- (a) We are pleased to inform you that you have been successful and funding in **Financial Year 2023-24** of up to **£125,000** (*one hundred and twenty five thousand pounds*) & **Financial Year 2024-25** of up to **£100,000** (*one hundred thousand pounds*) (the “**Funding**”) is awarded to you for the Purposes (as defined in Condition 4(a)).
- (b) The Funding relates to the period 1st December 2023 to 31st March 2024 and must be claimed in full by 30th April 2024 for FY2023-24 & by 30th April 2025 for FY2024-25 otherwise any unclaimed part of the Funding will cease to be available to you.
- (c) This letter shall become effective on the date of signature evidencing acceptance by you as set out in the acceptance page below.
- (d) If you have any queries in relation to this award of Funding or the Conditions please contact the Welsh Government Official who will be happy to assist you.

2. Statutory authority and Subsidy Control

- (a) This award of Funding is made on and subject to the Conditions and under the authority of the First Minister acting pursuant to sections 70 and 71(1) of the Government of Wales Act 2006 and the Minister and Deputy Minister for Climate Change, two of the Welsh Ministers, acting pursuant to functions transferred under section 58A of the Government of Wales Act 2006, section 31 of the Local Government Act 2007, section 6 of the Transport for (Wales) Act 2006 and Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013.
- (b) You must ensure that the use of the Funding is compatible with the Subsidy Control Act 2022 and the applicable agreements contained in the World Trade Organisation rules, UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement and any Free Trade Agreement involving the UK and the Northern Ireland Protocol.

3. Interpreting the Conditions

Any reference in the Conditions to:

'Account' is to the bank account opened and maintained by you with a UK clearing bank, in your own name and in respect of which you have sole signing rights with account name **Mid Wales Corporate Joint Committee, account number 030842363 and sort code 20-18-74** as notified and approved by us (at our absolute discretion) from time to time or such other account as we may approve for the purpose of the Conditions and at our discretion from time to time;

'Application' is to your application dated October 2023;

'Business Day' is to a day other than a Saturday, Sunday, Christmas Day, Good Friday or a bank holiday in Wales under the Banking and Financial Dealings Act 1971;

'Conditions' is to the terms and conditions set out in this letter and the Schedules;

'Costs Incurred' is to the cost of goods and/or services you have received regardless of whether you have paid for them by the date of your claim;

'Costs Incurred and Paid' is to the invoiced cost of goods and/or services you have received and which have been paid for by you in cleared funds by the date of your claim;

'Notification Event' is to any of the events listed in Schedule 3;

'Indicative Payment Profile' is to the indicative payment profile set out in Schedule 4;

'Personnel' is to your management/employees and suppliers or any other person appointed or engaged by you in relation to the Purposes;

'Project Manager' is to your project manager who is responsible for the day to day management of this award of Funding:

Mid Wales Corporate Joint Committee – c/o Ceredigion County Council

Ann Elias
Mid Wales Corporate Joint Committee
Penmorfa
Aberaeron
Ceredigion
SA46 0PA

Tel: 01970 633539 – 07779 318607

Email: ann.elias@ceredigion.gov.uk

'Schedule' is to the schedules attached to this letter;

'we', 'us', 'our' is to the Welsh Ministers;

'Welsh Government Official' is to

Matthew Jones
Transport – Strategy & Policy
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

Tel: 0300 025 6616 – 07712 765506

Email: transportplanning@gov.wales

or such other Welsh Government official as we may notify you;

'you', 'your' is to Mid Wales Corporate Joint Committee, c/o Ceredigion County Council, Penmorfa, Aberaeron, Ceredigion, SA46 0PA

any reference to any legislation whether domestic or international law will include all amendments to and substitutions and re-enactments of that legislation in force from time to time.

4. Use of the Funding

- (a) You must use the Funding solely for the purposes set out in Schedule 1 (the **"Purposes"**)

- (b) You must achieve the targets and outcomes set out in Schedule 2 (the “**Targets**”).
- (c) Any change to the Indicative Payment Profile, Purposes or Targets will require our written consent which must be obtained from us in advance of implementing any change. Please note that we are not obliged to give our consent but we will consider all reasonable written requests.
- (d) You must not use any part of the Funding for any kind of activity which in our opinion could bring us into disrepute, including but not limited to (1) party political purposes, (2) the promotion of particular secular, religious or political views; (3) gambling, (4) pornography, (5) offering sexual services, or (6) any kind of illegal activities.
- (e) You must not use any part of the Funding for: (1) purchasing capital equipment (other than as specified in the Purposes), (2) your legal fees in relation to this letter, (3) Costs Incurred or Costs Incurred and Paid by you in the delivery of the Purposes prior to the period referred to in Condition 1 (b).

5. Funding pre-conditions

- (a) We will not pay any of the Funding to you until you have provided us with the following information and documentation:
 - i) this letter signed by you;
 - ii) documentary evidence that you have put in place all staff and other resources detailed in the Application as required to commence and complete the Purposes;
 - iii) record of signatories to be completed and returned to Welsh Government using the enclosed register of signatories form;
 - iv) any other information, document, opinion or assurance which we consider to be necessary or desirable (if we have notified you accordingly) in connection with this award of Funding or the Purposes or in connection with the entry into and performance of this award of Funding or its validity and enforceability.
- (b) Where you are required to provide any information and/or documentation to us as evidence that you have satisfied a particular pre-condition, Condition or otherwise in support of a claim, the information and/or documentation must be in form and substance acceptable to us. We reserve the right to reject any information and documentation which is for any reason not acceptable to us, and/or request any further or additional information and/or documentation in support of the request for Funding.

6. How to claim the Funding

- (a) You may claim the Funding quarterly in arrears based on Costs Incurred by you in the delivery of the Purposes as detailed in the Indicative Payment Profile.
- (b) You must claim the Funding in accordance with the dates set out in the Indicative Payment Profile. You must claim the Funding promptly. We reserve the right to withdraw any part of the Funding that you do not claim promptly.
- (c) You must submit your claims for payment of Funding to the Welsh Government Official.
- (d) You must use our claim pro-forma (which is available from the Welsh Government Official) and set out in the Guidance Note and attach the information and documentation specified in the Indicative Payment Profile together with:
 - i) Confirmation that you are operating in all respects in accordance with your constitution; and
- (e) Evidence in form and substance satisfactory to us that you have appropriate systems in place to ensure that ongoing due diligence is undertaken in respect of any part of the Funding being utilised by you to provide a grant and/or to procure any goods or services from a third party;
- (f) You must provide us with any other information, document, opinion or assurance which we consider to be necessary or desirable (if we have notified you accordingly) in connection with your claim for the Funding.
- (g) We will aim to pay all valid claims as soon as possible and typically within 20 Business Days of receipt of a valid claim being made in accordance with the provisions of this letter, and provided always that the Funding pre-conditions set out in Condition 5 above have been satisfied and that on both the date of the claim and the date the Funding is to be paid to you:
 - i) the declarations made in Condition 8 below are true and correct and will be true and correct immediately after the relevant Funding has been paid to you; and
 - ii) no Notification Event is continuing or might result from the proposed Funding.
- (h) Any payments of the Funding will be made to the Account and will not be paid to any other bank account.

7. Your general obligations to us

You must:

- (a) safeguard the Funding against fraud generally and, in particular, fraud on the part of your Personnel and notify us immediately if you have reason to suspect that any fraud within your organisation has occurred or is occurring or is likely to occur whether or not it relates to the Funding. You must also participate in such fraud prevention initiatives as we may require from time to time;
- (b) maintain appropriate procedures for dealing with any conflicts of interest in relation to the Funding whether actual, potential or perceived;
- (c) comply with all applicable domestic or international laws or regulations or official directives;
- (d) maintain adequate insurances to cover against the risks which may arise in connection with any property or any activity undertaken in delivery of the Purposes. We reserve the right to require you to provide proof of your insurance;
- (e) maintain appropriate financial, risk and control systems when utilising any part of the Funding for any purpose;
- (f) maintain appropriate financial, risk and due diligence systems when utilising any part of the Funding to provide a grant and/or to procure any goods or services from a third party;
- (g) co-operate fully with the Welsh Government Official and with any other employee of the Welsh Government or consultant appointed by us to monitor your use of the Funding and your compliance with the Conditions;
- (h) inform us immediately if any of the declarations made in Condition 8 is incorrect in any respect or, if repeated at any time with reference to the facts and circumstances then existing, would be incorrect;
- (i) notify us of any funding received by you from any source which is procured or utilised in conjunction with the Funding to directly support the Purposes including but not limited to your insurance provider (cancellation/business disruption insurance), the UK Government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and/or any Welsh Government fund/scheme and any other funders. The intention of this Condition is to avoid any duplication of funding in respect of the Purposes.

8. Declarations

You declare that:

- (a) you have the power to enter into and to perform the obligations set out in the Conditions and you have taken all necessary action to authorise the entry into and performance of the obligations under the Conditions;
- (b) no limit on your powers will be exceeded as a result of claiming the Funding, or the grant of any security contemplated by the Conditions;
- (c) the entry into and performance by you of any of the transactions contemplated by this letter do not, and will not, contravene or conflict with:
 - i) your constitutional documents;
 - ii) any agreement or instrument binding on you or your assets or constitute a default or termination event (however described) under any such agreement or instrument; or
 - iii) any law or regulation or judicial or official order, applicable to you;
- (d) no Notification Event is continuing or might reasonably be expected to result from the provision of the Funding and no other event or circumstance is outstanding which constitutes (or, with the expiry of a grace period, the giving of notice, the making of any determination or any combination thereof, would constitute) a default or termination event (howsoever described) under any other agreement or instrument which is binding on you or to which any of your assets is subject;
- (e) no litigation or arbitration or administrative proceeding is current or pending or, so far as you are aware, threatened, which has or could have an adverse effect on your ability to perform and comply with any of the Conditions;
- (f) you have disclosed to us all material facts or circumstances which need to be disclosed to enable us to obtain a true and correct view of your business and affairs (both current and prospective) or which ought to be provided to any person who is considering providing funding to you;
- (g) any information, in written or electronic format, supplied by you to us in connection with the Funding was, at the time it was supplied or at the date it was stated to be given (as the case may be):
 - i) if it was factual information, complete, true and accurate in all material respects;

- ii) if it was a financial projection or forecast, prepared on the basis of recent historical information and on the basis of reasonable assumptions and was arrived at after careful consideration;
- iii) if it was an opinion or intention, made after careful consideration and was fair and made on reasonable grounds; and
- iv) not misleading in any material respect, nor rendered misleading by a failure to disclose other information,

except to the extent that it was amended, superseded or updated by more recent information supplied by you to us.

- (h) you have discussed and agreed the Targets with us and you are confident that they are realistic and achievable;
- (i) there are no conflicts of interest in relation to the Funding whether actual, potential or perceived;
- (j) acceptance of this award of Funding will not result in duplicate funding in respect of the activities required to deliver the Purposes. This includes but is not limited to any payments received by you in relation to the effects of the spread of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) from your insurance provider (cancellation/business disruption insurance), the UK Government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and/or any Welsh Government fund/scheme and any funders.
- (k) You will be deemed to repeat the declarations in this Condition 8 on:
 - i) each date on which you submit a claim for payment of Funding pursuant to the Conditions; and
 - ii) each date on which you may have any liability to us under or in relation to the Conditions or the award of Funding,and in each case by reference to the facts and circumstances existing on each such date.

9. Notification Events and their consequences

- (a) You must notify us immediately if a Notification Event has occurred or is likely to occur but we also reserve the right to notify you where we believe a Notification Event has occurred or is likely to occur.
- (b) We will either:
 - i) notify you that we, at our absolute discretion, consider the Notification Event is not capable of remedy; or

- ii) if we consider, at our absolute discretion, that the Notification Event is capable of being remedied, seek to discuss the Notification Event with you with a view to agreeing a course of action to be taken to address the Notification Event.
- (c) We will be entitled to take any of the actions listed in Condition 9(d) if:
- i) despite our efforts we have been unable to discuss the Notification Event with you; or
 - ii) we notify you that the Notification Event is not, in our opinion, capable of remedy; or
 - iii) a course of action to address and/or remedy the Notification Event is not agreed with you; or
 - iv) a course of action to address and/or remedy the Notification Event is agreed with you but you fail to follow it, or any conditions attached to it are not met (including without limitation the timescale for such course of action) to our satisfaction; or
 - v) the course of action fails to remedy the Notification Event to our satisfaction.
- (d) If any of the circumstances set out in Condition 9(c) occurs we may, at our absolute discretion, by notice to you:
- i) withdraw the award of Funding; and/or
 - ii) require you to repay all or part of the Funding; and/or
 - iii) suspend or cease all further payment of Funding; and/or
 - iv) make all further payments of Funding subject to such conditions as we may specify; and/or
 - v) deduct all amounts owed to us under the Conditions from any other funding that we have awarded or may award to you; and/or
 - vi) exercise any other rights against you which we may have in respect of the Funding.
- (e) All repayments of Funding must be made to us within 20 Business Days of the date of our demand.

10. Monitoring requirements

You must:

- (a) provide us with such documents, information and reports which we may reasonably require from time to time in order for us to monitor your compliance with the Conditions including:
 - i) as set out in the guidance note to follow by separate email.

- (b) meet with the Welsh Government Official and such other of our representatives as we may from time to time reasonably require including:
 - i) as set out in the guidance note to follow by separate email.
- (c) ensure that the Project Manager (or such other person as we may agree) together with any other person we may require attends all meetings with the Welsh Government Official.

11. Audit Requirements

- (a) You must:
 - i) maintain complete, accurate and valid accounting records identifying all income and expenditure in relation to the Purposes;
 - ii) without charge, permit any officer or officers of the Welsh Government, Audit Wales or any UK subsidy enforcement body at any reasonable time and on reasonable notice (in exceptional circumstances, such as the prevention or detection of fraud, it may not be practicable to provide you with reasonable notice) being given to you to visit your premises and/or to inspect any of your activities and/or to examine and take copies of your books of account and such other documents or records howsoever stored as in such officer's reasonable view may relate in any way to your use of the Funding. This undertaking is without prejudice and subject to any other statutory rights and powers exercisable by the Welsh Government, Audit Wales or any UK subsidy enforcement body or any officer, servant or agent of any of the above;
 - iii) retain this letter and all original documents relating to the Funding for ten years from the date of the last payment of the Funding;
- (b) Under paragraph 17 of Schedule 8 to the Government of Wales Act 2006 the Auditor General for Wales has extensive rights of access to documents and information relating to monies provided by the Welsh Government. They and their officials have the power to require relevant persons who control or hold documents to give any assistance, information and explanation that they may require; and to require those persons to attend before them for such a purpose. The Auditor General and their staff may exercise this right at all reasonable times.

12. Third party obligations

- (a) Nothing in the Conditions imposes any liability on us in respect of any liability incurred by you to any third party (including, without limit, your employees and contractors).
- (b) You must indemnify us against any liabilities, claims, proceedings, demands, losses, costs and expenses suffered or incurred by us directly or indirectly arising as a result of or in connection with any failure by you to perform fully or in part any obligation you may have to a third party from time to time.

13. Intellectual property rights and publicity

- (a) Nothing in the Conditions transfers to us any rights in any intellectual property created by you as a result of the Purposes.
- (b) You must acknowledge our support in relation to the Purposes. Such acknowledgement(s) must be in a form approved by us and must comply with the Welsh Government's branding guidelines.
- (c) You must provide the Welsh Government Official with details of all the acknowledgement(s) referred to in Condition 14(b) for our approval before any such acknowledgements are used and you may not use such acknowledgments without our prior written approval. We will endeavour to respond to all written requests for approval within 10 Business Days.
- (d) You agree that from the date of this letter until 5 years from the date of the final payment of Funding we may include details about your organisation and business, the Funding and the Purposes in Welsh Government promotional materials and you further agree to cooperate with our reasonable requests to achieve the production of such materials.

14. Information

- (a) You acknowledge that we are subject to the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the "FOIA"), the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (the "EIR"), the Data Protection Act 2018 (the "DPA") and the retained EU law version of the General Data Protection Regulation ((EU) 2016/679) (the "UK GDPR").
- (b) You acknowledge that we are responsible for determining in our absolute discretion whether:
 - i) to disclose any information which we have obtained under or in connection with the Funding to the extent that we are required to disclose such information to a person making a disclosure request under the FOIA or the EIR; and/or

- ii) any information is exempt from disclosure under the FOIA or the EIR.
- (c) You acknowledge that we may share any data you provide to us with fraud prevention agencies and third parties for the purposes of preventing and detecting fraud. Any personal data we collect will be managed in accordance with our Privacy Notice which is available to view here [Privacy notice: Welsh Government grants](#)

15. Buying goods and services

- (a) If you decide to buy any goods and/or services to deliver the Purposes, they must be purchased in a competitive and sustainable way so as to demonstrate that you have (i) achieved best value in the use of public funds, and (ii) complied with your conflict of interest policy at the relevant time.
- (b) We may from time to time request evidence from you to demonstrate your compliance with this Condition 15. Such evidence may take the form of evidence of your:
 - i) compliance with any procurement regulations, legislation or guidance in place from time to time to which you, or any person carrying out a business or function of the same or similar nature to you, is subject; or
 - ii) compliance with your procurement policy in place at the relevant time; or
 - iii) obtaining a minimum of three written quotations for the relevant goods and/or services.

You must supply such evidence to us promptly following our written request for such evidence.

16. Giving notice

- (a) Where notice is required to be given under the Conditions it must be in writing (this does not include email but may include a PDF copy of a letter attached to an email) and must prominently display the following heading:

“Notice in relation to Mid Wales Corporate Joint Committee – Development of the Regional Transport Plan – Financial Year’s 2023-24 & 2024-25”.

- (b) The address and contact details for the purposes of serving notice under the Conditions are as follows

You: the Project Manager at the address stated in Condition 3.

Us: the Welsh Government Official at the address stated in Condition 3.

- (c) A notice will be deemed to have been properly given as follows:-
- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Prepaid first class post: | on the second Business Day after the date of posting. |
| By hand: | upon delivery to the address or the next Business Day if after 4pm or on a weekend or public holiday. |
| By email attachment: | upon transmission or the next Business Day if after 4pm or on a weekend or public holiday. |

17. Equality

You must have in place and apply equality policies covering employment, use of volunteers and provision of services, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

18. Welsh language

- a) The Welsh Government is committed to supporting the Welsh language and culture and The Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers Welsh language strategy (Cymraeg 2050) provides a vision for the growth and further development of the Welsh language.
- b) Where the Purposes include or relate to the provision of services in Wales, they must be provided in Welsh and English unless it would be unreasonable or disproportionate to do so. They must be provided in such a way as to not treat the Welsh language less favourably than English, in accordance with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.
- c) Where the provision of services forms part of the Purposes, you must act in accordance with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and the aims of Cymraeg 2050. In practice, this will include the following:
 - i) Ensure that any written material produced, including digital material, is bilingual.
 - ii) Ensure that any signage is bilingual.
 - iii) Ensure that any training or public events are held bilingually.

iv) Actively promote and facilitate the Welsh language (including providing services and increasing opportunities to use the Welsh language) within funded activities.

d) For general advice on providing services bilingually and for information on which organisations are able to support you, please contact the Welsh language advice service “Helo Blod” on 03000 258888 or e-mail heloblod@gov.wales with your query.

19. Sustainable development

Your use of the Funding must contribute to the achievement of the Welsh Government’s well-being objectives contained in the Welsh Government’s Programme for Government. You must work in a sustainable way (sustainable development principle) in delivering the Purposes so as to ensure you are working in a preventative, integrated, long-term and collaborative way that involves people that reflect the diversity of Wales. Please refer to Schedule 1 for further information.

20. Welsh Ministers’ functions

You acknowledge that the Welsh Ministers have a range of functions which will continue to accrue and be amended and that decisions in relation to each such function are obliged to be taken in the light of all relevant and to the exclusion of all irrelevant considerations. You agree that nothing contained or implied in, or arising under or in connection with, the Conditions will in any way prejudice, fetter or affect the functions of the Welsh Ministers or any of them nor oblige the Welsh Ministers or any of them to exercise, or refrain from exercising, any of their functions in any particular way.

21. General


- (a) If at any time any of the Conditions are deemed to be or become invalid, illegal or unenforceable in any respect under any law, the validity, legality and enforceability of the remaining provisions will not in any way be affected or impaired.
- (b) No failure or delay on our part to exercise any power, right or remedy under the Conditions will operate as a waiver of any such power, right or remedy or preclude its further exercise or the exercise of any other power, right or remedy. The powers, rights or remedies hereby provided are cumulative and not exclusive of any powers, rights or remedies provided by law.
- (c) Any amendment or variation to the Conditions must be in writing and signed by us and you in the same manner as this letter (or as otherwise agreed by us in writing from time to time).
- (d) You may not assign or otherwise dispose of in any way your rights, benefits, obligations or duties under the Conditions.

- (e) Conditions 7, 9, 11, 13, 14, and 21(e) and such other Conditions which by implication need to continue in force beyond the final payment of Funding will so continue in full force and effect.
- (f) The award of the Funding is to you alone and no one else is entitled to make any claim in respect of the Funding or seek to rely on or enforce any of the Conditions.
- (g) In circumstances where you comprise two or more persons or bodies, the liabilities of such persons or bodies shall be joint and several and the default of one of such persons or bodies shall be deemed to be the default of all.
- (h) The Conditions and any disputes or claim (including any non-contractual disputes or claims) arising out of or in connection with it its formation or its subject matter are to be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of Wales and England as applied in Wales and the parties hereto submit to the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of Wales and England.

22. How to accept this award of Funding

- (a) To accept this award of Funding you must sign and return a copy of this letter to the Welsh Government Official. None of the Funding will be paid to you until we have received your signed letter.
- (b) We must receive your signed letter within 14 days of the date of this letter, or this award of Funding will automatically be withdrawn.

Yours faithfully



Signed by:

Print name: Christopher Warner

Job title: Deputy Director

Department: Transport – Strategy & Policy

under authority of the Minister and Deputy Minister for Climate change

SCHEDULE 1
The Purposes

To develop the Regional Transport Plan in line with the Regional Transport Plan Guidance and submit to Welsh Government by date to be agreed with Welsh Government Official.

SCHEDULE 2 The Targets

Welsh Government and Transport for Wales Comments on the Mid Wales Regional Transport Plan Implementation Plan

Comment Number	Comment
1	Commissioning of services to assist the CJC in delivery of the RTP should not be contingent on any additional funding award by Welsh Government. The CJsCs have a statutory duty to produce the RTP. Whilst WG may provide additional specific funding, if not the activity should be covered through existing funding streams.
2	Risks are noted on the new WeITAG Guidance and Rural Pathway. The final new WeITAG will not significantly alter from the long published draft. The Rural Pathway document will merely seek to provide ideas and case studies to assist in the development of the RTP. Progression of the RTP should not be delayed pending either of these documents.
3	Identify RTP Vision – Please be mindful that the RTP vision (and objectives etc) may need to be significantly different to the current LTP Vision or Growing Mid Wales Vision, due to significant changes in national policy and the need for the RTP to specifically deliver the Wales Transport Strategy on a regional basis. (We see the points noted to consider in the new Vision align with this).
4	Points noted for consideration in developing objectives are well aligned with national policies.
5	Approach to identifying high level interventions and policies is excellent, and well aligned to national policies.
6	Intention to seek support from WG/TfW on method for prioritising schemes noted and will be provided.
7	Programme risks are noted throughout. The CJC should strive to have an approved RTP in place as soon as possible, ideally of course before the start of the 2025-2030 implementation period, or failing that before the FY25/26. If an approved Plan is not in place before the start of the implementation period this will of course impact delivery, as would the later the plan is approved in respect of the start of the FY25/26. Activities to produce the Plan are recommended to be proportionate to the, relatively short, delivery period of 5 years to assist in securing an approved plan as soon as possible. We see this is recognised in Section 5 (risk identification).
8	Risk noted of staffing drop in events. WG/TfW can help support these events.
9	Estimation in Implementation Plan of funding required noted. Noted that the covering letter requests this funding be covered by WG. This is being considered but please note that WG is not required to provide any additional funding specifically for this.
10	There is currently little or no mention of how the RTP development will interface transport departments with land planning and economic

	<p>regeneration equivalents. RTP Guidance requires that CJsCs must take into account these interfaces.</p> <p>Collaboration with these departments may well offer significant opportunity to achieve transport (and shared) objectives by influencing their decision making.</p> <p>The CJC must consider how to interface these 3 departments in the development of the RTP.</p>
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SCHEDULE 3 Notification Events

The Notification Events referred to in Condition 9 are listed below:

1. repayment of any part of the Funding is required in accordance with any relevant legislation;
2. you fail to comply with any of the Conditions;
3. the Funding, in full or in part, is not being used for the Purposes;
4. you fail to achieve any or all of the Targets;
5. there is unsatisfactory progress towards completing the Purposes, including meeting the Targets;
6. you fail to provide information about the Purposes requested by us or any UK subsidy enforcement body or any of its auditors, agents or representatives;
7. we have reason to believe that you and/or any of your Personnel are involved in fraudulent activity or have been involved in fraudulent activity whether or not it relates to or is any way connected to the Funding;
8. we have made an overpayment of Funding to you;
9. there is a duplication of funding in respect of any part of the Purposes. This includes but is not limited to any payments received by you in relation to the effects of the spread of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) from your insurance provider (cancellation/business disruption insurance), the UK Government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and/or any Welsh Government fund/scheme;
10. any declaration made in Condition 8 is, or proves to be, incomplete untrue or misleading, incorrect in any respect or, if repeated at any time with reference to the facts and circumstances then existing, would be incorrect;
11. there has been a modification (qualification, adverse or disclaimer) to the auditor's opinion on your financial statements;
12. an event or circumstance has occurred and is outstanding which constitutes (or, with the expiry of a grace period, the giving of notice, the making of any determination or any combination thereof, would constitute) a default or termination event (howsoever described) under any other agreement or instrument which is binding on you or to which any of your assets is subject;

13. a moratorium in respect of all or any of your debts or assets or a composition or an agreement with your creditors is agreed, applied for, ordered or declared;
14. you stop or suspend payment of any debts or are unable, or admit in writing your inability, to pay your debts as they fall due;
15. the value of your assets is less than your liabilities (taking into account contingent and prospective liabilities);
16. you commence negotiations, or enter into any composition, compromise, assignment or arrangement, with one or more of your creditors with a view to rescheduling any of your indebtedness (because of actual or anticipated financial difficulties).
17. any action, proceedings, procedure or step is taken in relation to you in relation to:
 - (a) the suspension of payments, a moratorium in respect of any indebtedness, winding up, dissolution, administration or reorganisation (using a voluntary arrangement, scheme of arrangement or otherwise); or
 - (b) a composition, compromise, assignment or arrangement with any of your creditors; or
 - (c) the appointment of a liquidator, receiver, administrative receiver, administrator, compulsory manager or other similar officer in respect of you or any of your assets.
18. a statutory demand is issued against you;
19. you cease, or threaten to suspend or cease, to carry on all or a material part of your business;
20. there is a change in your constitution, status, control or ownership and/or your external auditors resign;
21. you fail to comply with any statutory reporting obligations which are applicable to you (including, but not limited to, filing requirements at Companies House, the Charity Commission, the Financial Conduct Authority);
22. there is any change, whether permanent or temporary, in your shareholders, directors, trustees or partners and/or Personnel which may affect your ability to deliver the Purposes;
23. any event occurs or circumstances arise which in our opinion gives reasonable grounds for believing that providing the Funding and/or the

continuation of the arrangements contemplated by this letter could bring us into disrepute;

24. any event occurs or circumstances arise which in our opinion gives reasonable grounds for believing that you may not, or may be unable, to perform or comply with any of your obligations under the Conditions.

SCHEDULE 4
Indicative Payment Profile

Maximum amount that can be claimed in FY 2023-24	
Development of Regional Transport Plan	£125,000
Total	£125,000

Maximum amount that can be claimed in FY 2024-25	
Development of Regional Transport Plan	£100,000
Total	£100,000

Quarter	Claim Period	Claim to be submitted no later than
4	01 January 2024 to 31 March 2024	30 April 2024

Quarter	Claim Period	Claim to be submitted no later than
1	01 April 2024 to 30 June 2024	15 July 2024
2	01 July 2024 to 30 September 2024	15 October 2024
3	01 October 2024 to 31 December 2024	15 January 2025
4	01 January 2025 to 31 March 2025	30 April 2025

The Following Documents which must accompany each claim as detailed in the attached guidance note	
Annex A	Performance Report
Annex B	Financial Report
Annex C	Claim Form
Annex E	Schedule of Eligible Expenditure
	Nil returns shall be made as appropriate

To Note:

- Electronic reports, claims and supporting information will only be accepted from the email addresses of those officers included in the Register of Signatories that is submitted by the authority when accepting this Award Letter.
- All of the completed template forms shall be signed as follows:
 - Corporate Joint Committee – Project Manager
- Annex D – Final Claim Form shall be signed by the Chief Finance Officer.
- **All signed completed template forms shall be emailed to:**
Transportplanning@gov.wales / CynllunioTrafnidiaeth@llyw.cymru

TWO SIGNATORIES ARE REQUIRED

We declare we are duly authorised to accept the award of Funding for **Mid Wales Corporate Joint Committee** and the Conditions relating to the Funding.

_____ Signature
An authorised signatory of **Mid Wales Corporate Joint Committee**

_____ Name

_____ Job Title

_____ Signature
An authorised signatory of **Mid Wales Corporate Joint Committee**

_____ Name

_____ Job Title

Effective date:

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MID WALES CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting – Thursday, 9th May 2024

REPORT TO ESTABLISH THE ECONOMIC WELLBEING SUB-COMMITTEE

Purpose of Report	To note the progress and narrative update on actions undertaken to date, and to recommend the formal establishment of the Economic Wellbeing Sub-Committee and agree a high-level work plan.
Recommendations:	<p>A) To resolve that the Economic Wellbeing Sub-Committee is formally established so that the next scheduled meeting on 26/07/24 becomes the sub-committee formally.</p> <p>B) For continuity, that the name “GMW Board” is retained for the sub-committee.</p> <p>C) That the two Constituent Councils review and confirm their proposed Membership, in time to establish to sub-committee as per the recommendations above.</p>
Report Author	Carwyn Jones-Evans Strategic Lead (Joint), Growing Mid Wales / Corporate Manager: Strategic Economic Investment, Ceredigion County Council
Finance Officer	Duncan Hall, Section 151 Officer
Legal Officer	Clive Pinney – Monitoring Officer

Introduction and Background:

- Members of the CJC have previously received and considered three reports on the progress of proposals for the Economic Wellbeing Sub-Committee (31/07/23; 12/10/23; 29/01/24). The content of these reports was guided by the Member workshop held 23 June 2023 and a workshop with the OECD on 27th October 2023.
- The agreed direction of travel from these meetings is take a strategic approach to the evolution of the economic wellbeing committee. Focusing initially on the current regional governance arrangements that are in place between the two local authorities.
- This report provides an update on the progress against agreed actions to date, and to make a series of recommendations for Members to consider formally establishing the sub-committee and a forward work plan.

Progress on Previously Agreed Actions:

4. The following table provides an update on the Work Plan (as discussed and agreed by members in previous CJC Meetings):

Action	Timeframe	Progress
<p>Vision – to take the updated vision for Growing Mid Wales to the next Sub-Committee meeting for consideration and adoption.</p>	<p>For the next sub-committee meeting.</p>	<p>Not completed Sub-committee not yet established.</p>
<p>Function – further work is needed to start developing the role and remit of the sub-committee (beyond the existing Growth Deal and Skills functions).</p> <p>A draft of the OECD report has been received and being reviewed by officers for accuracy.</p> <p>It is proposed that a further Officer and Member workshop is organised for February/March to consider the OECD report and draw out direction of travel for the committee beyond the Vision and delivery of Growth Deal.</p>	<p>February-March 2024.</p>	<p>Not completed Sub-committee not yet established and wider matters relating to the RTP and SDP development have taken priority.</p>
<p>Forward Plan/Objectives for the Economic Wellbeing function long term.</p> <p>As a result of the workshop above, it is anticipated we can take a paper to the April sub-committee on the long-term aspirations for the committee.</p>	<p>For the meeting 19th April 2024.</p>	<p>Partial This paper sets out a more comprehensive plan to establish the sub-committee and proposing a forward work plan for it.</p>

Governance – establishing the Economic Wellbeing Sub-Committee

5. The constitution of the Mid Wales CJC provides as follows (extract):

Economic Well Being – Regional Economic Development (Mid Wales Growth Deal) Sub-Committee

5.11 The CJC may appoint a sub-committee (known as the Economic Well Being – Regional Economic Development (Mid Wales Growth Deal) Sub-Committee) to:

5.11.1 make recommendations to the CJC in relation to promoting and improving the economic well-being of the area (the “Economic Well-being Function”);

5.11.2 make recommendations to the CJC in relation to the Growth Deal/Growth vision;

5.11.3 oversee and review investments and projects in relation to the Growth Deal/Growth vision

5.11.4 exercise such other functions as the CJC may specify.

5.12 The Terms of Reference of the Economic Well Being – Regional Economic Development (Mid Wales Growth Deal) Sub-Committee are set out in Appendix 1 and those terms of reference may be amended by the CJC from time to time.

6. The constitution is clear in its wording and the appointment of the existing Growing Mid Wales Board **does not** constitute a “lift and shift” of the existing Growth Deal arrangements. The financial and management arrangements would be retained under the existing legal agreement (IAA3).
7. It is possible therefore to continue with the existing governance of the Growth Deal through continuing the existing GMW Board meetings – and for it also to serve the broader CJC remit on the agenda.
8. This would avoid any duplication of meetings and additional resource costs and would negate the need for any changes to the constitution at this stage.
9. Meetings are already diarised for GMW Board on a quarterly basis for 2024:
19th April 2024; 26th July 2024; 25th October 2024
10. The membership of the committee would need to be reviewed by both Constituent Councils, to ensure the proposed membership is still valid and up to date.

RECOMMENDATION (A): To resolve that the Economic Wellbeing Sub-Committee is formally established so that the next scheduled meeting on 26/07/24 becomes the sub-committee formally.

RECOMMENDATION (B): For continuity, that the name “GMW Board” is retained for the sub-committee.

RECOMMENDATION (C): That the two Constituent Councils review and confirm their proposed Membership, in time to establish to sub-committee as per the recommendations above.

Current Position – Defining the role of the Economic Wellbeing Sub-Committee

11. The ongoing governance and role of the GMW Board is clearly set out in being the senior political decision-making body in respect of the Mid Wales Growth Deal and also the Regional Skills Partnership. This is our “business as usual” in respect of the Economic Wellbeing function of the Mid Wales CJC.
12. In respect of the wider remit of economic wellbeing – Members have previously expressed a desire to adopt a strategic approach initially, carefully considering the benefits/implications and resourcing needs of any additional activity.

Vision for Growing Mid Wales

13. The CJC has previously resolved to look to adopt the Vision for Growing Mid Wales as its Strategy document, that sets the strategic context and direction for all of our current work via Growing Mid Wales.
14. An updated draft document is provided in Appendix 1.
15. This updated version was circulated in late 2023 and obtained support from wider stakeholders and partners via the GMW Partnership.
16. There remains however, some gaps in the Strategy in relation to social and community enterprise; arts, culture and heritage; and cultural tourism.
17. Both Local Authorities have progressed a number of workstreams via UK Shared Prosperity Funding, and new partnerships have emerged supporting a number of aligned economic interests. There would also be further updated evidence as the work on the Regional Transport Plan evolves, and also the Strategic Development Plan.
18. Should the CJC agree to the establishment of the sub-committee (as per recommendations A-C in this paper), it would be prudent that the committee also commissions the newly established sub-committee to review and refresh the updated Strategy, for formal adoption at a later point in the year.

RECOMMENDATION (D): That the Mid Wales CJC commissions the Economic Well-being Committee to adopt the Vision for Growing Mid Wales as the Economic Strategy for Mid Wales, and commits to an update later in the year.

Future Funding and wider role of the CJC

19. A significant proportion of funding to Local Government to undertake economic development activity at present comes either from the UK Government “levelling up” or via Welsh Government in the form of town centre regeneration funding.
20. The funding landscape beyond 2025 is largely unknown and will only be known after

the next UK General Election – which is known to happen in the 2nd half of 2024.

21. There has been a significant body of work underway by the Welsh Government with local and regional stakeholders on the future regional investment landscape. This includes a significant body of work undertaken by the OECD¹ on multi-tier governance in Wales.

22. April 2024 saw the second report from the OECD published, and was announced by the Welsh Government's Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Welsh Language's in a Written Statement:

23. [Written Statement: OECD report: Regional Governance and Public Investment in Wales, Moving Forward Together \(16 April 2024\) | GOV.WALES](#)

24. The report and its recommendations will require further consideration, alongside the draft action plan that has been developed for Mid Wales following our workshop at the end of 2023.

25. There is a significant body of work to be undertaken in defining the scope, role and function of the CJC in respect of Economic Wellbeing, beyond the current strategic approach in Mid Wales.

26. This will require careful consideration around aspects such as:

- An honest conversation between Local Government and the Welsh Government on the role and function of the CJC.
- Where the CJC can add value, above and beyond existing structures.
- Resourcing – both the funding to deliver the activity and the capacity to deliver.
- Strategic alignment – both of role and function of the CJC alongside UK Government and Welsh Government policy/funding post 2025.

27. Once the above is clarified in terms of the scope and remit of the function, significant planning work will then be required to understand timescales, resources etc.

28. If established, the Economic Wellbeing Sub-Committee will have oversight and involvement in these discussions as they evolve.

Financial Impacts:

29. None identified at this time. Provision is made via the CJC budget setting process for the running of the CJC governance. No resource requirements have been identified

¹ [About the OECD - OECD](#)

for the sub-committee as of yet.

30. The delivery of the Mid Wales Growth Deal will continue within its existing governance arrangements in place and the finance/legal and agreements that have been previously agreed with UK and Welsh Governments and the two Local Authorities.

Workforce Impacts:

31. None identified at this time.

Legal Impacts:

32. None identified at this time. Legal advice was sought from the Monitoring Officer in relation to the constitution and the provisions for this sub-committee.

Risk Management Impacts:

33. None identified at this time.

Consultation:

34. There is no requirement for consultation in respect of this report.



A VISION FOR GROWING MID WALES


Strategic Economic Plan Update - 2023

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FOREWORD

New foreword to be completed upon agreement of revised document

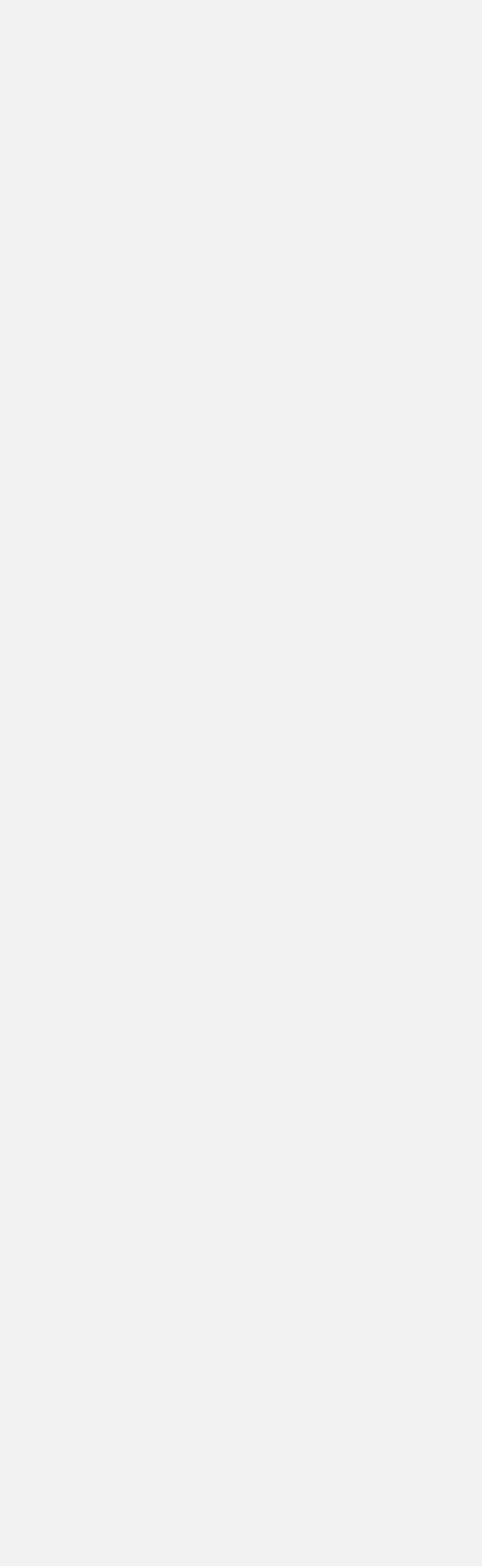
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

New executive summary to be drafted upon agreement of revised document

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Home to over 205,900 people and over 12,700 VAT-registered businesses supporting 91,800 jobs, Mid Wales has significant sectoral strengths in agriculture, food, tourism, manufacturing and defence; with the economy on the whole contributing around £3.6bn GVA to the UK economy.



1 The Case for Investment

This update to the Growing Mid Wales Strategic Economic Plan highlights our collective ambition and the economic potential for Mid Wales. It sets out the future that we want to build together to achieve sustainable and relevant economic growth, where our people and businesses have parity of opportunity to grow their ideas and have their potential nurtured. We have identified opportunities for direct public intervention in public infrastructure and our workforce alongside private investment opportunities in key regional assets. We are confident that this combined approach will deliver strong results as part of a team approach.

The region is well-known as a predominantly rural area, accounting for 39% of the land mass of Wales¹; but is less well-known as a place where there is a wealth of opportunity waiting to be unlocked.

The region has significant opportunities both to strengthen existing economic sectors and stimulate economic drivers that will create growth and investment in regional businesses and the labour market. At a time when there is considerable economic uncertainty due to a range of externalities, it is crucial that all parts of Wales and the UK play their part in strengthening the economic resilience and productivity of their regional economies.

There is significant opportunity to take advantage of existing private sector ambition to develop assets of regional importance with tangible and significant economic impact; from our strengths in our research capability, natural landscapes, skilled workforce and industry.

The region's economy however has its challenges. Market failure is prevalent following decades of under-investment and structural decline. Whilst there have been encouraging signs of employment and business growth in key sectors across the region (construction, tourism, food & manufacturing), there remains a significant productivity challenge owing to the underlying structural weaknesses of the economy (comparatively narrow economic base, poor transport links, changing population demographic) that could continue to reinforce a cycle of decline unless addressed.

1.1 Context

Since the first Growing Mid Wales Vision Document was agreed in early 2020, there have been a number of major events which have caused the economic context to fundamentally change. It was important to update the document to take into account this changed context, and the greater challenges they pose in developing the regional economy of Mid Wales;

Coronavirus Pandemic

The economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic on Mid Wales cannot be understated. The business demography of the region, made up of predominantly SMEs, meant that many small businesses struggled to survive, with some businesses actively opting to cease trading. The tourism sector – one of the largest employers in the region – was also disproportionately affected. Now in recovery mode, the historically low levels of unemployment in the region have increased, reflecting a rise in the long-term sick which may be partly attributable to the pandemic.

Economic Downturn and Cost of Living Crisis

The cost of living crisis is fundamentally caused by higher inflation, and low wage growth leaving many households worse off in real terms – paying more for their food, energy and fuel. The crisis has been exacerbated by short-term factors, such as the Ukraine war, but the pressure on living standards has long-term trends, such as low productivity growth and increased market power of firms. Britain leaving the EU has also resulted in much change for Mid Wales businesses. In addition to supply chain issues and increased costs for exporters

due to changes with customs and border tariffs, sectors such as hospitality and agriculture report significant issues with labour supply due to the loss of migrant workers from the EU.

Climate change

The need to consider our impacts on the environment and targets set both nationally and locally will be an important consideration in all that we do, including how we continue to support the growth and development of the Mid Wales economy whilst moving towards Net Zero. Both Welsh and UK Government's have released several strategies to set out plans and priorities for meeting our climate change targets.

Energy

Energy prices and our current dependency on importing energy into the UK are issues that have recently come sharply into focus as a result on the war in Ukraine. These issues relate strongly to the climate change agenda and the need for greater amounts of our energy to come from renewable energy sources.

Funding

EU Transition has seen fundamental changes to the way regional investment funding is allocated and delivered, resulting in a more complex funding and delivery landscape. Local Authorities in Wales have had to adapt quickly to take advantage of opportunities arising from the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund, Community Renewal Fund and the Shared Prosperity Fund. The region will continue to monitor funding announcements to ensure we are well placed to take advantage of future opportunities to secure investment.

Delivery Landscape

As a result of the changes to the funding landscape, the delivery landscape has become more fragmented and harder to navigate. Key backbone operations that were delivered on a pan-Wales basis under EU funding have ceased to operate, leaving strategic gaps. Some of these gaps have been filled by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, but there are other gaps that need addressing. Of particular concern is funding for R&I activities.

Regional Working

The emphasis on a regional approach to economic development in Wales has developed considerably over the past decade, with City and Growth Deals acting as a catalyst, encouraging a regional approach on a number of fronts – including regeneration and skills. The latest step in this evolution of regional working is the introduction of Corporate Joint Committees, with strategic powers in respect of Transport, Planning and Economic Wellbeing.

1.2 Purpose

This Strategic Economic Plan plays a key role in outlining a clear vision of how we want to see Mid Wales' economy develop for the next 15 years. It sets out clear regionally-agreed priorities that will establish the strategic context for future investment, based on detailed evidence and understanding of the needs of our businesses and residents. **It also takes into consideration events of the last few years which have had a significant impact on how we work.**

Delivering our ambitions and meeting our economic potential will mean significant investment in growing the size and productivity of our economy – funded through a mix of programmes and projects.

1.3 Evidence and engagement

This updated document has been drawn together iteratively from content and ideas derived from extensive evidence gathering and engagement with a wide range of organisations and

individuals across Mid Wales:

- [Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership Employment and Skills Plan \(2022\)](#)
- [Mid Wales Regional Tourism Study \(2022\)](#)
- [Applies Research and Innovation Study \(2021\)](#)
- [Mid Wales Hydrogen Study \(2021\)](#)
- [Mid Wales Energy Strategy \(2020\) and Action Plan](#)
- [Programme Business Case evidence for the Mid Wales Growth Deal Sites and Premises and Digital programmes](#)
- [Marches and Mid Wales Freight Strategy \(2018\)](#)
- [Strategic Economic Priorities for the Mid Wales Region \(AECOM, February 2019\)](#)
- [Economic Baseline Report \(AECOM, February 2019\)](#)
- [Growth Deal Workshops \(Spring/Summer 2019\)](#)
- Various 1:1 discussions and engagement across both LAs and with key stakeholders.

Detailed work has been undertaken to refresh regional priorities to better align and take account of evolving Welsh and UK Government policies, further develop proposals, and build additional industry support.

A significant number of stakeholders have been engaged to collectively shape and identify priorities that reflect our regional strengths, but are also attuned to the challenges and realities of our economy. A full list of stakeholders engaged throughout the process can be found in Appendix 1.

Building this document has been an iterative process – but it is important to recognise that engagement is a continual process. Our priorities as a region will change over time. How we will need to respond to our economic needs and challenges today will differ from our responses in the future.

Therein lies the strength of our approach. In establishing robust, effective and democratically accountable governance structures regionally alongside a strong case for change – this document articulates how we can ensure a continuing strong and collective regional voice to help shape and deliver our priorities. By Mid Wales, for Mid Wales.

1.4 Strategic Fit

Strong consideration has been given throughout this document to ensure full alignment with both the UK and Welsh Government's ambitions in what is an evolving policy landscape. It demonstrates a clear offer around how we will work together regionally to capitalise on our strength of assets and opportunities to make a significant and impactful contribution to the Welsh and UK economy.

UK Government

There is recognition that whilst the UK economy has significant strengths; opportunities and growth remain unevenly distributed across the country. [The Levelling Up White Paper of 2022 sets out a plan to level up the UK, which will require: boosting productivity, pay, jobs and living standards; spreading opportunities and improving public services; restoring a sense of community, local pride and belonging and empowering local leaders and communities.](#)

Supporting this key policy initiative is the UK Industrial Strategy which outlines the five foundations of productivity: ideas, people, infrastructure, business environment and places and four Grand Challenges, responding to global changes: Artificial Intelligence and data;

ageing society; clean growth; & future of mobility. The Build Back Better Plan of 2021 builds on the Industrial Strategy and targets infrastructure, skills and innovation to: Level up the UK; Support the transition to net zero; and Support the vision for Global Britain.

³¹ <https://www.pwc.co.uk/economic-services/ukey/ukey-november-2019-full-report.pdf>

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There is a clear recognised role for Local Authorities, working individually and in partnership across sectors and Government to drive regional economic growth and productivity enhancements. Collaboration to address shared challenges is a central theme. **As well as delivering the Mid Wales Growth Deal, Local Authorities in Mid Wales are also actively delivering the Shared Prosperity Fund and Levelling Up Fund projects.**

Welsh Government

The Welsh Government's long-term aim is to build a Wales that is prosperous and secure, healthy and active, ambitious and learning, and united and connected. It recognises four key themes as part of its national strategy "Prosperity for All" - Prosperous and Secure; Healthy and Active; Ambitious and Learning; United and Connected.

It outlines key priority areas that articulate a national policy ambition aligned to the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act that is focused on the integration and collaboration between services to enable early intervention and prevention – delivering better outcomes for the long-term.

Prosperity for All: Low Carbon Wales is also a key policy document – Growing Mid Wales' economic vision cannot sit in isolation to environmental and climate change concerns, but embraces Decarbonisation and a Low Carbon economy at its heart.

The Economic Action Plan specifically outlines the Welsh Government's ambition to grow the economy and reduce inequality. It represents a significant policy shift to acknowledge the importance of partnership working to build resilience and future proof the Welsh economy. It outlines a new Economic Contract between Government and business; Calls to Action; Support for Thematic Sectors and the Foundational Economy, alongside a new approach to supporting regional economic development.

Regional partners also worked closely with Welsh Government to develop the Regional Economic Framework for Mid Wales. This was through collaboration and co-production with stakeholders from across the region, and supports a more regionally-focused model of economic development, in accordance with the Welsh Government's Programme for Government and a commitment to progress the Economic Resilience and Reconstruction Mission for Wales that was devised post-Covid 19.

Local Priorities

The ongoing development and activity of Growing Mid Wales builds on the work that Local Authorities, Universities and partner organisations already do, continuing to support the Mid Wales economy.

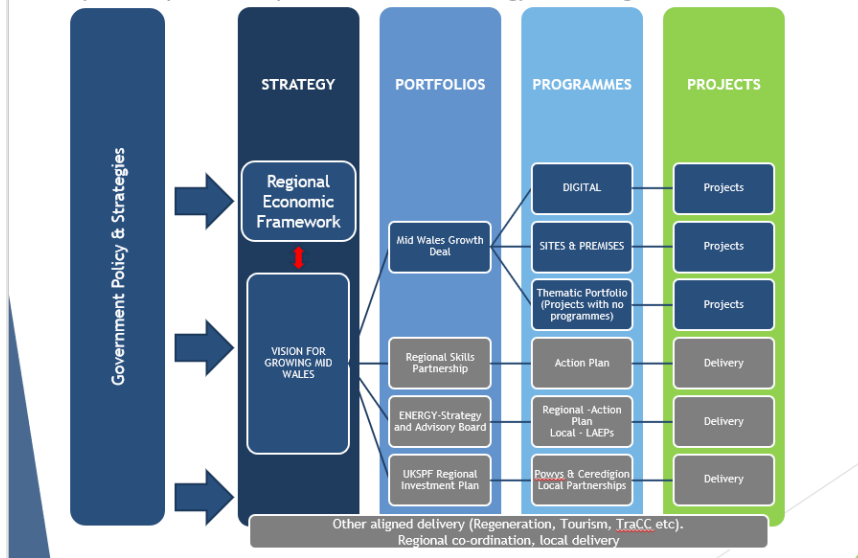
Collaborating regionally to support the Mid Wales economy does not detract from, or replace what local organisations will continue to do to support local economic growth and support our local communities. It is clear that addressing the challenges and unlocking the opportunities of the Mid Wales economy requires significant, sustained efforts at local, regional and national levels – all working in tandem and for the long-term.

1.5 An Integrated Approach

In order to maximise impact and value for money across the whole range of strategic activity and coordination undertaken by Growing Mid Wales and its partners, it is vital to plan for an integrated approach to activity, taking into consideration activity in the wider landscape. This approach is guided by the strategic priorities as set out in this vision document, and operationalised by regional capacity.

Strategic Context

- ▶ Scoped and planned as part of a broader Strategy & Funding mix from the outset:



Growing Mid Wales has teams in place to ensure the development and delivery of the Vision for Growing Mid Wales, including the Mid Wales Growth Deal.

While each team undertakes a specific function they all work closely together to ensure alignment and integration of work across the region.

The Mid Wales Skills Partnership

The Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership (RSP) sits under the wider Growing Mid Wales banner. Primarily a business-led partnership, it works with business leaders and stakeholders across the region to understand the skills provision and labour market needs in order to drive investment that meets the requirements of both employers and workforce.

The RSP supports the Welsh Government's key strategies and policy areas by providing a regional perspective. This includes baseline data for further education planning using employer led intelligence and labour market information (LMI) data. The RSP bridges the gap between education and regeneration in the hope of creating a strong and vibrant economy underpinned by innovation, growth and a capable workforce. The RSP Board, established by the Local Authorities of Ceredigion and Powys, looks at key areas to drive economic growth and investment in the right skills

The Mid Wales Portfolio Management Office

The Mid Wales Portfolio Management Office (PoMO) was established to deliver the Mid Wales Growth Deal, a long-term investment providing capital funding to support regionally significant economic infrastructure that drives private sector investment and stimulates growth. It is supported by a commitment of £110m from UK and Welsh Governments and aims to create long term jobs, increase productivity and play a key role in catalysing economic recovery and growth across the region.

Set within the broader Vision for Growing Mid Wales, the Growth Deal will contribute

alongside a range of other strategies and investments from the public and private sector as part of a holistic approach to bring prosperity to the communities and businesses of the region. It is expected to run for several years and is being managed as a 'Portfolio' with an initial shortlisted set of programme and projects being developed that cover a range of investment proposals which align to the eight priority growth areas identified in the 'Vision'

Mid Wales UK Shared Prosperity Fund Team

The Mid Wales UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) Team is one of four lead Local Authority teams across Wales set up to ensure the sound and effective management of UK SPF funding in the Mid Wales region. They work closely with the decision-making Local Partnerships facilitated by the constituent Local Authorities to ensure delivery of funding and activity.

1.6 Partnership Working

Partnership working is key to achieving the vision for Growing Mid Wales. It is only by working collaboratively with partners on a long term basis to target our resources to meet the economic needs of Mid Wales will we truly make a fundamental change. This approach will become increasingly important in the current strained financial context. It is here where the Vision for Mid Wales sets the context and direction for action.

The blockages to development, capital investment and by extension economic growth, are so many and so varied that they cannot be tackled by organisations operating in isolation. The scale of this challenge calls for thriving partnerships between the public and private sector. By joining forces, these partnerships can take the lead in stimulating development activity and economic growth.

Given the interest and role both Welsh and UK Government have in economic development, it is natural that Growing Mid Wales works closely with both administrations to deliver on their policies for sustainable growth. Both governments are also responsible for the design and overseeing delivery of key backbone support initiatives that will help deliver against the objectives listed in this vision document. It is vital we continue to work closely with both governments in order to understand the dynamic policy, funding and delivery landscape and target regional resources where most change can be made.

In addition to working relationships, Growing Mid Wales facilitates two formal partnership arrangements to ensure strategic engagement from all sectors and key partners. The Growing Mid Wales Partnership acts as the strategic economic advisory forum for the region, and is made up of representatives from the public, private and third sector. The Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership is an advisory partnership consisting of partners who have an interest in skills and employability in Mid Wales, and is chaired by the private sector. The Partnership works with business leaders and stakeholders across the region to understand the skills provision and labour market needs in order to drive investment that meets the requirements for both employers and workforce.

The Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act is focused on the principles of sustainable development and places a duty on Public Bodies to work in new ways to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing across Wales. The Act promotes five ways of working – Long Term, Prevention, Integration, Collaboration and Involvement towards seven wellbeing goals. The ways of working and seven wellbeing goals are at the heart of all Growing Mid Wales activity.



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¹ StatsWales, 2020

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2 Our Economy

The Mid Wales economy is often characterised as a large and predominantly rural region, comprising 39% of the land mass of Wales². It is known for its natural beauty, strong cultural identities and heritage.

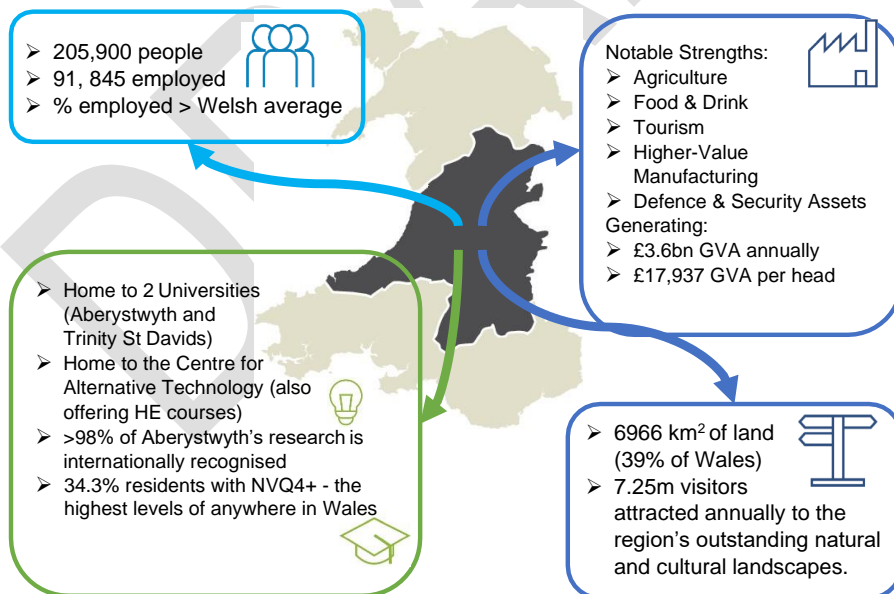
It is less well-known as a land of untapped economic opportunity - where business survival rates outclass the Welsh average; where our natural and academic assets offer an obvious choice for cutting-edge research providing strong opportunities to create new industrial clusters; where there is a strong yet diverse labour market – with strategic commuter links within and outside the region to other parts of Wales and cross-border into England.

The geography of the Mid Wales economy is a critical component in driving and supporting intra-regional growth across Wales and the UK, where the sum total of its economic impact is larger than the sum of its individual parts. The region borders north and south Wales as well as the English Counties of Shropshire and Herefordshire. The impact of other regions on the Mid Wales economy is critical and plans need to reflect this interdependence.

The region's economy has its challenges in addressing the structural weaknesses that are currently hindering the potential of our residents and businesses to flourish. Poor connectivity, low GVA per head, limited skills infrastructure, grid constraints and lack of supporting business infrastructure all play their part in limiting the region's potential to take advantage of our opportunities.

However, whilst the challenges we face are not unique – the opportunities we have are indeed distinctive and rooted within our region.

2.5 At a glance...



² StatsWales, 2020.

2.6 Our People

The demographic profile of the region presents both challenges and opportunities. At an overall population of 205,900, Mid Wales is characterised by an ageing population and a net out-migration of young people. Since 2014, the region has seen an overall decline in its population of around 1%.

The working age population is less than the Welsh and UK average and is predominantly characterised by higher proportions of 50-64 and 65+ year olds. There is a relatively small share of working age people due to the higher proportions of 50-64 and 65+ year olds. Comparatively, Mid Wales has proportionally fewer people below the working age – though the figures are partly skewed due to the student population in key locations in Ceredigion.

Population projections for Mid Wales currently estimate a 16% decline in the working age population and 37% increase in the 65+ age group to 2039. Unless addressed this predicted trend is likely to reduce the region's workforce over the next 15 years.

Labour Market

There are some 96,100 people in employment in Mid Wales, with economic activity rates (76%) in line with Welsh (76%) and UK (78%) averages, driven by high levels of self-employment (21% of the regional population)¹. Levels of unemployment in the region are comparatively high at 4.3% at end March 2023², - a whole percentage point higher than the Welsh average - with a marked rise in the unemployment rate since 2020, which could be partially attributed to the pandemic..

Due to the rural nature of the economy underemployment, low earnings and seasonal employment remain key challenges. Average full-time weekly earnings for example were 89% of the UK average in 2022 and 96 % of the Wales average⁴.

Over the five years up to 2022, employment in Mid Wales has decreased by around 6%⁵.

Learning & Skills

Mid Wales performs well in educational attainment with levels of achievement at GCSE level exceeding the Welsh average. 92% of the working population in Mid Wales holds a level 2 qualification or above – the highest rate in Wales – compared to the Welsh average of 87%.³ The proportion of young people Not in Employment, Education and Training is low while the qualifications profile of Mid Wales performs better than the Welsh average – but with lower rates of older people upskilling.

Despite these strengths, skills gaps and recruitment difficulties are commonplace amongst Mid Wales employers. Apprenticeships and further education delivery are challenged by the rural nature of the region. Employer investment in training is currently relatively low, possibly reflecting the high proportion of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs).

Attracting more young people to live, work and study in Mid Wales is vital for inclusive and sustainable economic growth. For the region to thrive it must reduce the existing trend of

³ StatsWales, January 2020

⁴ ONS, Average Weekly Wage Data, October 2019

⁵ StatsWales, Workplace Employment Data, 2014-2018

¹ StatsWales, Economic Activity Rate, Year Ending March 2023

² StatsWales ILO Employment Rates, Year Ending March 2023

³ StatsWales data, end Dec 2022
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young people leaving the area for education and jobs and must be able to retain and attract talent by creating new high value employment opportunities.

Deprivation

The Mid Wales region has a comparatively low level of deprivation when measured with the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD), with Powys being the second least deprived Local Authority area in Wales. **Statistical measures do not tend to capture the true nature of rural disadvantage however, and it is useful to look at the WIMD subindicators to uncover issues. For example, most of Mid Wales is much worse than average for access to services on foot or by public/private transport, with 61.6% of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Mid Wales among the worst 20% of LSOAs for Access to Services in Wales in 2014 Housing is also an issue, with nearly a fifth (19.2%) of LSOAs in Mid Wales among the worst 20% of LSOAs for Housing in Wales in 2014.** ⁴

Poverty in Mid Wales is variable and often hidden due to the rurality and demographics of the region – therefore not resulting in demonstrable concentrations of poverty in datasets (except from pockets identified in some of our larger towns). This often masks issues of rural deprivation in terms of access to services, isolation and fuel poverty across the region.

2.7 Our Businesses

Mid Wales contains 12,705 VAT registered businesses as of 2022. The business base has a very high proportion (>90%) of micro businesses (<10 employees). Just 1.5% of businesses across Mid Wales are classed as medium or large (50+ employees). Since 2010, growth in the number of businesses in the region has remained relatively static at 2% and has lagged significantly behind Wales (21%) and the UK (32%).

Survival rates for new businesses after 5 years are however significantly better in Mid Wales (52%) than for England (38%) & Wales(60%) ⁶.

The large proportion of micro businesses across Mid Wales is in part driven by the high number of farms and agricultural enterprises, which represent 36% of all businesses. Medium sized enterprises are seen predominantly in the health and manufacturing sectors, representing 2% and 4% of the total business stock respectively. The large geographic area and rural nature of Mid Wales means that business density is also significantly lower than in Wales and the UK.

Construction, Accommodation and Food Services, Professional, Scientific and Technical Services, and Business Administration Services are other significant sectors in terms of business counts. In terms of growing sectors, Ceredigion has seen jobs in Science, Engineering And Technology Associate Profs, roles increasing 117% between July 2021 and July 2022, reflecting the presence of Aberystwyth University, Aberystwyth Innovation and associated activity. Another significant sector for the region is Information and Communication, with the total number of jobs increasing from 1,100 to 1,750 between 2020 and 2021.

Reflecting the sectoral composition of businesses, employment is heavily based in agriculture, with accommodation and food services also being significant, illustrating the importance of the tourism industry to the region. Education and health also contribute significantly to employment in Mid Wales demonstrating the key role of the public sector as a source of jobs in the region, with military bases in other areas offering significant local employment.

Sectoral Strengths

High Value Manufacturing – over 8,800 people are employed in the production sector in Mid

4 Mid Wales Regional Regeneration Plan, 2018

6 StatsWales, 2023

Wales. The region has niche areas of manufacturing expertise such as automation, motion engineering and life sciences.

Agriculture, Food & Drink – of paramount importance to the regional economy, employing over 13,100 people and instrumental in the region’s culture and communities⁷. The sector faces potential challenges and uncertainty in responding to Brexit. Opportunities exist to diversify and add value to the agricultural and food sectors; the processing of agricultural produce; and exploiting R&D & food industry strengths and taking account of soil, terrain and weather – such as livestock, in particular Welsh lamb.

Defence and Security – Mid Wales is an important location for UK defence operations, capitalising on the region’s geography and secure sites. Home to pioneering activity, with segregated airspace for Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) off the coast of West Wales and an inland exclusion zone of nearly 500 square miles towards the Epynt. It also has research strengths that provide opportunities to secure Mid Wales’ place as a centre of the defence and security industry (e.g. Aberporth, Brecon, Derin Lines & Sennybridge).

Tourism – In Mid Wales 13.2% of employment was in a Tourism industry in 2020, the largest proportion of the four economic regions. The tourism sector employs over 18,500 people in Mid Wales Major opportunity lies in the regions’ natural, cultural and heritage assets to add value to the region’s tourism sector and subsequently increase the contribution to the Welsh economy, addressing Spread, Seasonality and Spend. This includes the strong cultural connections developed as part of Ireland-Wales projects, and our natural assets: Brecon Beacons National Park, our Coastal Path and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs).

Productivity

In 2021, Mid Wales contributed £3.6bn in annual Gross Value Added (GVA) to the UK economy (equating to £17,937 per head)⁵. In terms of subregional productivity, Mid Wales is the lowest performing city region in the UK.

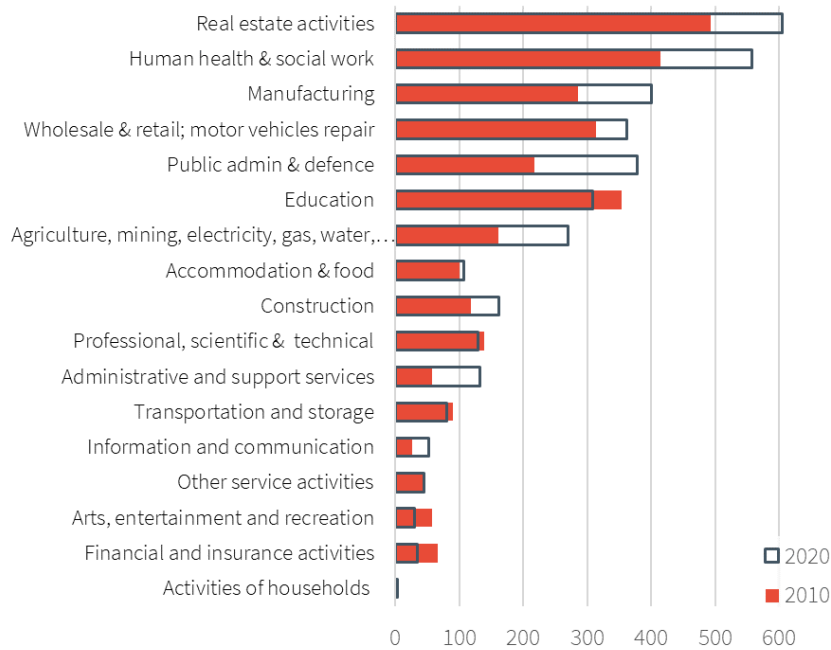
This is amongst the lowest in the UK and compares to £69.5 billion (£22,380 per head) for Wales; with Mid Wales contributing approximately 5.3% of the Gross Value Added (GVA) generated by the Welsh economy, a proportion that has remained constant over almost the last twenty years. Powys records the second lowest performance for GVA per hour worked of all areas across the UK⁶, lagging significantly behind the rest of Wales and the UK.

The drivers of these trends are complex and mainly due to employment structure including seasonal employment and the presence of low value-added sectors across the region. The largest contributors by sector to the region’s GVA are manufacturing, real estate and wholesale and retail. This contrasts markedly with the employment breakdown in the region which shows the dominance of agriculture which is high in employment terms but delivers low GVA to the Mid Wales economy.

⁵ StatsWales, GVA data, 2021

⁶ ONS, Subregional productivity indices, June 2023 release
www.growingmid.wales

GVA (£million by sector), Mid Wales



Source: ONS, Regional gross value added (balanced) by industry

Employment Sites & Premises

Ensuring the right supply and location of employment land and premises to meet business needs is a vital component of supporting the competitiveness of the economy. The employment sites and premises market in Mid Wales differs from adjacent regions, where most of the demand is from businesses already established in the region. There is a recognised lack of availability and investment in modern and technical employment premises with low levels of speculative development and issues of commercial viability in provision. Recent research has amplified this issue, highlighting a strong suppressed demand for new floorspace (a 78% demand/supply 'gap' in Ceredigion and 31% in Powys over the past 10 years, with pressures likely to increase further in coming years). Market rents have also risen pan-region by c.68% in the same period. This challenges the ability of our new and growing businesses to remain in region, increasing the risk that they may have to relocate, thereby reducing regional economic productivity and our ability to retain a young, educated labour force.

Energy

Mid Wales is well placed to deliver on Wales' ambition to capture the opportunities associated with the low carbon economy and clean growth. The region now generates more electricity from local renewable sources than it consumes (102%), making it a net exporter of renewable energy. This electricity is predominantly supplied by onshore wind (280 MW), hydropower (68 MW) and solar PV (61 MW)¹¹. Onshore wind, hydropower and solar PV generate 66%, 16% and 14% of the total amount of renewable electricity generated in the region respectively^{11b}.
www.growingmid.wales

The Mid Wales Energy Strategy states that the region must generate ~200% of its electricity demand by 2035 which will require an additional ~600 MW of capacity to be built^{12a}.

Overall the region accounts for 6% of Welsh total energy consumption and has seen a 11% reduction in total energy consumption between 2005 and 2020. The resulting emissions from energy consumption have reduced by around 35% since 2005 and nearly 40% since 1990¹⁰.

Grid capacity in Mid Wales is a significant constraint to future growth. Access to the energy network is restricted whilst the significant cost associated with grid reinforcements has held back further investment. As the scale of investment to resolve this problem is well understood by the region, the focus is on local energy generation, particularly of a low carbon nature. Examples of how investment within the region can make best use of alternative energy sources is described in section 6.4. Currently the region's annual electricity demand is 0.89 Twh over 55% of which is consumed by the commercial and industrial sector. Only 12% of commercial and industrial demand is met by gas, reflecting the off-gas nature of the region. Industrial energy and electricity demand has decreased by 6% and 14% respectively since 2005 and emissions have decreased by 39%, in large due to the decarbonisation of the UK's electricity grid¹².

Mid Wales has the highest proportion of off-gas grid properties in Wales at 62%. Domestic energy efficiency is relatively poor and 18% of households in the region live in fuel poverty. However, according to the Welsh Government's latest estimates, up to 45% of all households in Wales were in fuel poverty, following the price cap increase of April 2022^{12c}. Retrofitting the region's housing stock is an essential way to improve the health and wellbeing of local inhabitants as well as meet net-zero targets.

2.8 Our Connections

Digital connectivity

Levels of digital connectivity in Mid Wales currently lag significantly behind other parts of Wales and the UK. Approximately 89% of premises in Mid Wales have the capability to connect to Superfast Broadband (30Mbps+), lower than that for Wales (97%) and the UK (98%). Only 39% of the region currently has access to Ultrafast Broadband (100Mbps+) compared to Wales (63%) and the UK (76%), while 7% of premises in Mid Wales can only access a broadband connection of 10Mbps compared to 1.6% for Wales and 1.7% for the UK¹³. The region is estimated to have over 20,000 'white premises' which are currently unable to receive superfast broadband (30Mbps) or where there are no plans to provide such service in the next 3 years (21% of the Welsh total).

Mobile coverage in Mid Wales continues to lag behind the Wales and UK average with topography and the lower density of population posing particular challenges in improving mobile coverage in the region. 9.5% of premises have no 4G services across the region while only 53.6% of premises have 4G services from all four operators compared to Wales (60%) and the UK (84%)¹⁴.

⁸ StatsWales, Workplace Employment, October 2019

⁹ StatsWales, December 2019

¹⁰ Welsh Government (2019) Energy Generation in Wales 2018

¹¹ BEIS total final energy consumption (2019)

¹² BEIS sub-national emissions, Wales NAEI Greenhouse Gas Inventory

¹³ Think Broadband – accessed May 2023

¹⁴ OFCOM, Connected Nations 2021 – Wales Report

Digital connectivity is vital to the Mid Wales economy and its competitiveness to support productivity gains, innovation and improved access to services and markets. Investment in digital infrastructure needs to be prioritised if Mid Wales is to compete with other regions and capitalise on new economic opportunities.

Transport

Transport connectivity both inside and outside of Mid Wales is crucial to economic flows and future growth. The region has 945 km (587 miles) of Trunk and A roads connecting the region with North and South Wales and east to the West Midlands. There are also two railway corridors (Cambrian Main line/Coast and the Heart of Wales line) which run north-south and east-west. Rail links in Mid Wales are characterised by low service frequency, slow line speeds and limited direct services to major UK cities with the only regular principal service being the two-hourly Aberystwyth to Birmingham International through services.

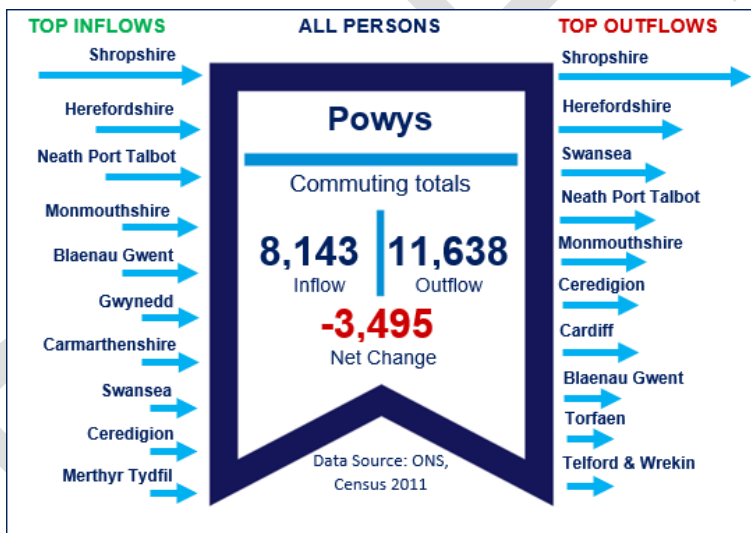
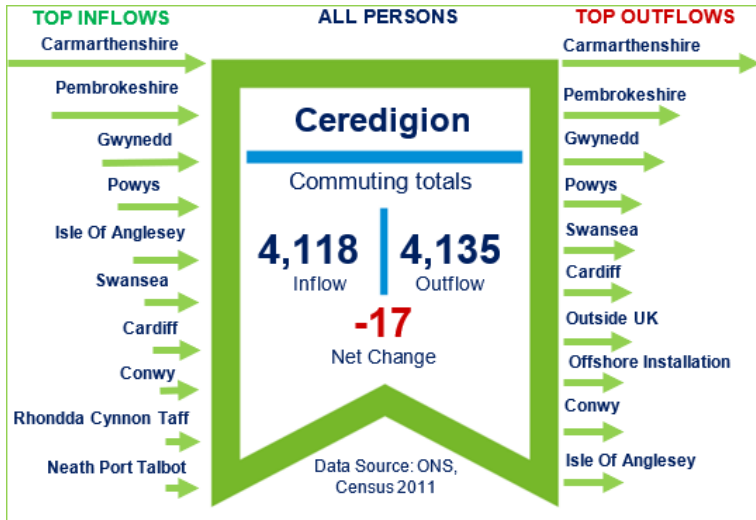
There is a need to improve journey time reliability and capacity, by improving the safety and resilience of the network to support and grow the transition to a low carbon economy. Investment in key routes such as the A483/A489 Newtown Bypass and the A487 Dyfi Bridge north of Machynlleth have provided resilience to the Mid Wales' road network. Continued investment is required to secure these strategic corridors of labour and goods mobility to the future – especially in relation to the A483, A458 cross-border routes and the A44 across the region.

Due to its rurality, Mid Wales has a high dependence on the private car for transport and less than 1% of road miles are driven by buses. The region also has below average take up of electric vehicles with limited charging points compared to the UK average.

Friends and Neighbours

Mid Wales is centrally located with strong economic and social links to our friends and neighbours to the North, South and East across into England. Continued close co-operation with our neighbours will be essential if we are to achieve our mutual aspirations for the continued growth of our economies. We will work closely with all partners bordering the region and in particular the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership, so that we can each add value to our respective Growth Deals.

Mid Wales has a number of key strategic transport corridors upon which people and supply chains across Wales and England rely on daily. Within Wales, a number of our residents commute to work to areas of North and South Wales daily along key road and rail networks – with significant commuting and freights links across into England and the Marches. These cross border challenges have already been captured in the Marches and Mid Wales Freight Strategy, developed and agreed in a cross border partnership.



The importance of this cross-border link is vital to the continuing prosperity of Mid Wales and also the Marches, and a strong continued partnership exists between institutions and Government on both sides of the border.

The realisation of our Vision for Mid Wales will require a strong element of co-operation across Local Authority and Government borders – and a number of options will exist to realise these for the benefit of all parts of our Region and broader economic geography.

Housing

Experience shows that in order to bring about sustainable economic growth in an economy such as Mid Wales, measures intended to improve skills and ensure business are more competitive need to be underpinned. This is achieved by a strategy which seeks to create the conditions for growth aligned with a housing strategy that seeks to ensure appropriate and conveniently located housing for working families and young people.

Whilst Mid Wales has strong commuting flows with its neighbouring authorities, the containment rate within the Mid Wales labour market is high - with many people living and working locally.

Historically, house building in the region has not kept pace with demand and historical allocations – with challenges in the supply and delivery of housing in the region. Regional housebuilding is fairly static at present, with 77 completions in Powys in the last year, and a further 47 completions in Ceredigion¹⁵.

Given the ambition of growth outlined in this Strategic Economic Plan, the region will need to work with relevant policy and delivery stakeholders carefully to ensure that once proposals develop – the region can respond proactively with policy and delivery interventions. The production of the Mid Wales Spatial Development Plan will be a key development in this regard.

¹⁵ Welsh Government Statistical Release (2023) New House Building in Wales, 2022-23

¹⁶ BE Group, Hatch, Per Consulting (2020) Mid Wales Employment Sites and Premises Needs Assessment and Action Plan

3 Our Opportunity

Mid Wales has strong heritage and provenance in key industries and sectors including Tourism, Applied Manufacturing, Agriculture, Food & Drink, Defence & Security. There are also significant developments in regional anchor assets providing significant opportunity to generate new growth. The importance and significant growth potential of the region's foundational economy will also provide a key opportunity to support distributed and inclusive growth.

3.5 Current Key Drivers and Assets

- The **wealth of outstanding natural assets**; from the region's harbours and waterways, mountains and designated landscapes, events and experiences, attractions and destinations, national parks and dark skies - all of which contribute to a World Class tourism offer that could increase visitor numbers and expenditure/income throughout the season.
- Catapulting growth potential of **existing industrial clusters within the advanced manufacturing sector**. Niche areas of expertise such as automation, motion engineering and biotechnology/life sciences offer high value employment and productivity growth potential.
- Enabling opportunities from sustainable and low carbon **academic and visitor potential, such as the Centre for Alternative Technology** to support the wider economy and spur further economic growth and skills development.
- **Maximising the potential of regional specialisms in high value and research intensive sectors that have the potential to attract talent and investment – such as emerging strengths in Radio Spectrum, and Veterinary Sciences and Animal Health and world leading strengths in Agriculture and Biosciences.**
- AberInnovation with its world-class facilities in bio- tech, agri-tech, food & drink translates into rapid, high-value economic growth.
- Capitalise on the development of the **Global Centre of Rail Excellence in Ystradgynlais**. This will see the only rail testing facilities of its kind in the UK, and will be the hub of research and development activity across Europe – offering the potential for significant economic growth potential amongst the local and regional supply chain.
- Building on the strengths of the **food and drink cluster across Mid Wales**, in support of the Welsh Government's Food and Drink Action Plan and adding value to agricultural produce and supporting on-farm diversification. Existing strengths in Food Centre Wales and the provenance and identity of food are showcased as part of the Royal Welsh Show.
- The economic growth potential of Mid Wales **leading the UK on energy generation and decarbonisation** interventions that can offer the strengthening of a regional cluster offering strong employment and productivity contributions.
- **The potential of Mid Wales as a potential digital innovation testbed – Mid Wales is home to the most extensive LoRaWAN network in Wales, making it an ideal place to trial new applications for Internet of Things (IoT) technology)**
- Capitalise on and further develop the region's educational assets, including the region's two universities - Aberystwyth University and University of Wales Trinity Saint David.

3.6 Ways of Working

There are also many opportunities with regards to ways of working and the wider strategic landscape;

- [The significant opportunities of shaping business support and aligning infrastructure](http://www.growingmid.wales)

www.growingmid.wales

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availability (digital, physical, land and premises) to better support businesses across Mid Wales. There are significant opportunities to demonstrate positive improvements to service delivery across the public sector and align support to grow our smaller businesses into medium enterprises. The alignment of skills provision with key job opportunities in the region, and the establishment of learning pathways. As well as strengthening labour supply for key sectors, young people will be encouraged to remain in the region by the visibility of job and progression opportunities

- The potential of working with other regions, both in and outside Wales, on shared strategic matters to promote opportunities and leverage funding and investment.
- To align activity and delivery with other strategic regional activity in Mid Wales, such as the forthcoming Mid Wales Regional Transport Plan and Mid Wales Strategic Development Plan. There is also the opportunity to align both capital and revenue activity with strategic investments funded by regional investment programmes.

4 The Challenges to Overcome

Since the establishment of the Growing Mid Wales Partnership in 2015, partners have seen a strengthening of support for, and focus on growing the Mid Wales economy. While much has been achieved to ensure a strong focus on pursuing regional economic growth, more needs to be done. It will require much stronger working and recognition of the Mid Wales economy across sectors and institutions – with the full support of both Governments to not only support growth opportunities, but also to invest in our underlying economic and social infrastructure.

4.5 Economic performance

Despite a number of opportunities and positive improvements in the regional economy, Mid Wales continues to lag behind other Welsh and UK regions on a number of key issues:

LOW & LAGGING PRODUCTIVITY: Mid Wales continues to lag behind other Welsh and UK regions in real and per head terms due to the seasonality and structure of its employment base.

A DECLINING, AGEING POPULATION: Rural depopulation, especially of young people, and a changing demographic - demonstrating the 'pinched middle' of a relatively high older population and a proportionately low working age population, and the resulting effect this can have on Welsh language strongholds

NARROW AND VULNERABLE ECONOMIC BASE: Leading to employment and productivity imbalances. The largest GVA contributors are manufacturing, real estate and wholesale and retail – whilst agriculture employs the most, it contributes comparatively less GVA. Employment seasonality also adds vulnerability.

PROJECTED EMPLOYMENT DECLINE: forecasts show the Welsh economy growing by 1.7% during the period 20 (+ 24,000 jobs) while the Mid Wales economy is forecasted to decline 3.45% (reduction of 3,352 jobs) – whilst the UK looks set to grow by 7.4% over the same period.

STATIC AND WEAKENING LABOUR MARKET: gaps in skills provision and infrastructure to adequately meet industry demands are exacerbated by a lack of focus on the issue in Mid Wales. Weaknesses in regional skills infrastructure exacerbates the lack of employment and educational opportunities – leading to a reducing equality of opportunity and labour mobility whilst reinforcing out-migration. Powys' commuting outflows of -3,495 especially highlight the need to improve employment opportunities.

MARKET FAILURE: Underlying structural economic weaknesses aligned with decades of

under-investment by the public sector has exacerbated market failure. Market failure is prevalent throughout the economy and can be clearly evidenced through weak and relatively static commercial and residential build rates, declining and narrowing business base and the inadequate state of our digital, road and energygrid infrastructure – which is in critical need of public sector intervention.

THE HIDDEN NATURE OF A RURAL ECONOMY: relatively strong employment and low unemployment data masks low pay and underemployment. The high self-employment and home working data combined with low incomes is masking rural poverty which is a real cause for concern amongst local authorities and policy makers.

There is also a new economic context to consider. Since the drafting of the first GMW Vision document in 2020, the macro-economic context has greatly changed. As well as continuing to recover from the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic, Mid Wales businesses and residents have had to navigate new legislation and arrangements arising out of EU transition, as well as the economic downturn partially triggered by the Russia-Ukraine war and the resulting cost of living crisis. Long standing issues will become even tougher to address, and will require more focused and concentrated effort in order to make a step change to the Mid Wales economy.

Addressing these issues will require a step change in the way we collectively work, and will require a significant set of interventions to both address these trends by providing the basis for new higher value economic growth and attract a new, economically mobile population. Tackling these issues won't be easy, or inexpensive. However we are collectively clear that as a region if we are to see the regional economy perform as it should; and if we are to take advantage of the opportunities available to us – then it has to be the joint focus of regional partners and both Governments to address.

5 Our Ambition

Our ambition is for Mid Wales to take full advantage of the opportunities available to create and support economic and social growth by overcoming its challenges to become a fairer, smarter region that contributes to its full potential to address its productivity challenge.

5.5 Our Vision for Mid Wales in 2035

By 2035, Mid Wales will be:

*“An enterprising and distinctive region delivering **sustainable economic growth for future generations** driven by **innovation, skills, connectivity and more productive jobs supporting prosperous and bilingual communities**”*

Through collaborative and integrated working, we will build on our unique assets to ensure that the region's economy is recognised by the following characteristics:



ENTERPRISING – open for business, new and old. A place to start and grow enterprise to enhance regional productivity with a good quality of life.



SKILLED – a skilled and flexible labour market supported by academic and vocational learning that responds to industry demands that reverses current population trends.



INNOVATIVE – a test bed for innovation, developing new products and processes capitalising on existing research and industry strengths and creating new/strengthening existing industrial clusters.



CONNECTED – a fully connected region, unlocking its economic potential driving business growth and innovation and improving social and labour mobility.



PRODUCTIVE – a strong, productive economy providing the right conditions for business to generate better quality, higher paid jobs alongside better employment opportunity.



PROSPEROUS – a regional economy that is rooted in fairness and equality of opportunity with accessible training and employment pathways.



DISTINCTIVE – a region with a unique natural and cultural landscape & heritage, offering an exceptional quality of life and potential to lead UK decarbonisation and clean growth.

6 Our Strategic Growth Priorities

The economy of Mid Wales exists in fine balance, with a number of industries and sectors inter-dependent on each other due to the current structural make-up of its natural and economic geography.

Growing the Mid Wales economy will require a robust, focused and sustained approach to realising meaningful economic growth. However, such growth must be sensitive to its social and natural environment through pursuing a balanced approach. A balanced approach that does not solely invest in opportunity, but one that also addresses fundamental structural weaknesses alongside growth opportunities – raising ambition alongside reducing inequality.



6.5 Agriculture, Food & Drink

A strong and vibrant agricultural sector generating significant employment and produce to a nationally and internationally recognised standard, coupled with industrial and innovation strengths offers the opportunity to grow the economic base significantly and lead on new high-value food development.

Mid Wales is home to 935¹⁷ food-related enterprises, with concentrations in Welshpool, Newtown, Llanymynech, Knighton, Aberystwyth and Felinfach. This is bolstered regionally by the presence of Food Centre Wales, a dedicated food technology centre offering advice, technical services and training to business start-ups, SME's and existing food manufacturers to develop short supply chains, add value to products, encourage product innovation and ensure a focus on quality. It forms part of the Food Innovation Wales collaboration of food centres that provide technical knowledge transfer support across the whole of Wales.

The sector is further supported in the region through the presence of key strategic support organisations head quartered within its boundaries, including Menter a Busnes, Hybu Cig Cymru, Lantra, Cambrian Training as well as the two main farming unions (FUW and NFU). The Royal Welsh Agricultural Society's presence in the region is also a key driver for the economy and the sector – from its showcase of regional agriculture, and food and drink. The addition of the Aberystwyth Innovation and Enterprise Campus (AberInnovation) this year will further add to the resources available to help the sector grow, looking at future food production.

Whilst all these facilities are there to support the industry across Wales, there is an opportunity to maximise the benefit of their presence in mid Wales to drive growth in the sector, adding value to the food and farming businesses – and associated industries such as forestry - that are already important economically to the region, but could grow further with targeted support and intervention.

Economic Growth Potential

There are 10,275 people employed in the food industry in Mid Wales. As a proportion of total employment, Mid Wales (13.6%) exceeds the Wales (13.0%) and UK (11.7%) averages. This is despite the fact that the number of food businesses in relation to the total business stock is lower in Mid Wales (7.4%) than in Wales (10.2%) and the UK (8.0%).

Mid Wales generates significant employment in food and drink wholesaling (6.6%) compared with the 6.2% registered in Wales and 5.8% across the UK. The proportion of employment in food and drink manufacturing and retailing in Mid Wales also exceeds both the Wales and UK averages. Between 2010 and 2017, food-related employment in Mid Wales increased by 11.5%, higher than the 9.9% growth registered in Wales and 11.3% in the UK

Mid Wales already has a strong and dynamic food and drink processing sector, supporting a strong traditional farming sector. Mid Wales is also home to a varied range of support organisations. Yet there is a strong belief and evidence to show that the sector's contribution to the food and drink economy of Wales and the UK could be further strengthened by a set of targeted investments to tackle some of the key challenges and unlock the potential for growth.

The current profile of the food and drink industry in Mid Wales shows that the industry demonstrates a high rate of inclusivity in that business owners and employees come from a broad range of demographic groups¹⁸. Further growth opportunities, particularly for start-up businesses, provide inclusive opportunities for sustainable career developments in a sector that can capture market opportunities that come from a growing interest in food and drink provenance as a means of achieving better environmental sustainability.

²⁴ AECOM (2019) Evidence Based Programmes of Interventions Baseline Report
www.growingmid.wales

What We Want To Achieve

OBJECTIVE	WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN
Enabling and Supporting Market Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced support for new/existing business to identify and access new market opportunities domestically and internationally. Targeted support and investment in initiatives that develop market opportunities for local produce in the hospitality sector. Supply chain development and review – exploring new routes to market to inform wider targeted investments (linking small producers to markets locally, regionally and nationally)
Fostering Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building on regional innovation strengths and assets to develop & scale new business opportunities (e.g. Controlled Environment Agriculture, Vertical Farming, Pharmaceuticals from Agriculture, Manufacturing and product development, and trialling new processes and methods responding to automation/AI through Agri- tech). Opportunity to invest in facilities across the region through publically-owned farms. Co-invest in specialist liquid processing innovation capacity in the region – this will capture specific opportunities identified by private sector partners to establish a unique innovation facility that will add value to the dairy industry, as well as the soft drinks, beer and wine sectors.
Developing the Right Business Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure there are sufficient opportunities for start-up and growth businesses through an adequate supply of food-grade piloting and manufacturing facilities across Mid Wales in key strategic locations. Ensure the right provision of business development support and information across Mid Wales by considering outreach/satellite facilities. Ensuring water, energy and waste infrastructure investments are recognised by providers and Government to enable the sector to grow.
Labour Market Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of training and career pathways and experiences to raise awareness and take-up of opportunities across the sector, with a focus on higher-value jobs. Ensure strong alignment across industry and providers by strengthening industry input and aligning skills & employment provision appropriately – with a view to strengthening regional take up of support.

6.6 Applied Research & Innovation

Commented [CM1]: Same info but restructured

Mid Wales is home to internationally-significant industries and internationally-recognised research & development assets and expertise that offer opportunities to catapult regional productivity growth.

Capitalising on our existing strengths, harnessing emerging specialisms, alongside strengthened industry engagement and development – could lead to a wealth of untapped opportunity in the region.

Research shows that the region has genuine existing research strengths in **Agri-tech, Food and Bioscience**. We have leading research and development expertise in the agri-tech and bioscience sectors and are home to world leading research centres such as the Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences (IBERS). Aberystwyth Enterprise and Innovation Campus (AberInnovation) also offers world-leading facilities and expertise within the biotechnology, agri-tech, and food and drink sectors and capacity to commercialise innovations – but further investment opportunity lies in scale up/grow on space co-located with the R&D cluster and new rail links via Bow Street station.

There are also growth opportunities to build on the regional asset base and existing strengths. Mid Wales has an emerging cluster in **Veterinary Science and Bovine TB** consisting of the Wales Veterinary Science Centre, the £4.2m VetHub1 development aligned to a research Centre of Excellence in Bovine TB and the new Aberystwyth School of Veterinary Science delivering veterinary training in conjunction with the Royal Veterinary College from 2020. Further investment in veterinary science is needed and Mid Wales is ideally placed to become a leader in providing services to the agricultural sector and training the next generation of vets, addressing a UK wide challenge of recruiting and retaining vets.

Another growth opportunity is present in **Radio Spectrum**: Mid Wales is an important location for UK defence operations, offering segregated airspace for Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) off the coast of West Wales. A National Spectrum Centre offers the potential to promote innovation, develop new products and applications, supporting resilience, integrity and security to place Mid Wales at the centre of UK Government's Spectrum Strategy. The potential applications of Spectrum technology into Mid Wales' key sectors are wide ranging. They include the defence and security sector, the use of robotics, drones and smart machinery in agriculture. This is currently being investigated more fully under a separate funding agreement by Welsh Government.

There are also specialised opportunities available in the Advanced Manufacturing sector. Mid Wales is home to a significant number of advanced manufacturing industries supporting the employment of 6,625 people (8% of regional employment) across a number of sub-sectors (fabricated metal products-31.7%; machinery and equipment-22.3%; basic metals-12.4%)¹⁹ with niche areas of expertise such as power electronics and automotives. Overall manufacturing employment here has increased by 8.2% from 2010 levels, representing a positive trend to build on as we seek to improve productivity and generate economic growth²⁰.

There are also opportunities present with the emerging **Global Rail Centre of Excellence**: Early progress is being made to establish a testing complex with 2 electrified oval tracks, which will allow for testing speeds of up to 110mph with the option for a tunnel section and a full track. This would be a world class train testing facility in the UK, and would be a significant attraction to investors and provide a vital service to UK and overseas based train manufacturers, the wider industry and the supply chain. This is a Joint Venture between Welsh Government, Powys County Council and Neath and Port Talbot County Council and the private sector.

¹⁹ ONS Business Register and Employment Survey 2017; ONS UK Business Counts

Mid Wales is also home to research assets with the potential to make a significant contribution in the field of climate change and renewable energy, **The Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT)**: We are home to CAT, an educational charity dedicated to researching and communicating positive solutions for environmental change. It is currently a significant academic and tourism driver – with plans to grow. Given the demand for more innovative approaches to sustainable energy supply and reduced CO2 emissions it could provide a wide range of economic and environmental benefits.

Economic Growth Potential

The strengths of the region's research and industrial base offers significant opportunity to drive transformational change with the right investment in the right places that both respond to the research opportunity and drive industrial growth.

There are well-known challenges in industry in terms of skills challenges linked to automation and AI, changing product demand and market opportunities, all requiring strong academic/industrial collaboration and cross-fertilisation if the sector is to remain competitive.

With the right investment, the opportunity exists to strengthen existing clusters alongside encouraging new clusters from existing assets and strengths that will drive increased investment levels, boost regional business confidence, strengthen skilled labour supply and help businesses to adapt and capitalise on new opportunities to drive higher value growth.

There is evidence that take up of research and development knowledge and innovation is lower than average here – with opportunity to address R&D tax credits²¹, and partly as a result of this, productivity remains stubbornly low compared to the UK on average.

The proposed investments below aim to address these weakness by addressing gaps and and developing a strong applied research and innovation ecosystem for all sectors in Mid Wales.

What We Want To Achieve

OBJECTIVE	WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN
Investment in Regional Infrastructure and Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building on research strengths to develop the appropriate facilities and infrastructure to support the growth and expansion of start-up, spin-out and early stage innovative firms • Targeted investment in strategic opportunities to strengthen academic/industrial clustering.

<p>Strengthening Networks and Ways of Working</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a regional innovation partnership consisting of academia, the business & investment community and the public sector to drive innovation and investment activity in Mid Wales • Enable R&D bodies in the region to participate in knowledge transfer activities with businesses within the region, and enabling businesses in the region to access knowledge transfer activities from R&D bodies outside the region. • Encourage regional networking and collaboration in order to add cluster development
<p>Labour Market Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career pathway development in tech-based innovation and industries supporting higher-value jobs – including entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship. • Alignment of HE and FE courses to the needs of tech-intensive and innovative firms • Establish a regional innovation mentoring scheme to encourage collaboration and cross-transfer of innovation management skills

6.7 Strengthened Tourism Offer

Mid Wales is a distinct region with a rich heritage, culture and outstanding natural assets that underpin a vibrant tourism sector – offering a strong platform to drive new growth.

During 2014-2016 Mid Wales accounted for 18% of overnight domestic (GB) trips, 10% of international visits, and 12% of day visits to Wales.

Tourism has an important economic role in Mid Wales. It represents almost 20% of employment – significantly higher than any other economic region of Wales – and was worth an estimated £1.4 billion in 2019⁷.

The tourism economy of the region is intrinsically linked with agriculture and food production which are vitally important to the identity, culture, and economy of the region; and has often featured in a number of well-known film and TV productions – a notable example being the Hinterland TV series²⁴.

The region includes the Brecon Beacons National Park and renowned areas of natural beauty such the Cambrian Mountains, whilst its unspoilt coastline offers five blue flag beaches, and access to a wide variety of marine wildlife. Mid Wales has a network of local and national recreational routes, and a rich cultural heritage that offers opportunities for accessing and exploring the regions natural beauty

Tourism trade is further bolstered by a diverse range of annual events including internationally recognised brands such as Green Man Festival, the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show, Wales Rally GB, and Hay Festival.

Mid Wales towns and villages are attractive assets in their own right, and are bustling hubs for independent businesses and enterprises, all of which support both the foundation economies and act as gateways to the region's stunning natural environment. The regions' coastlines are home to networks of harbour facilities, providing distinct visual identities, supporting tourism and commerce with a canal network inland – offering significant development potential.

Economic Growth Potential

When compared to other regions of the UK, Mid Wales has a lower occupancy rate in tourism accommodation, being around 6% lower than Scotland and 10 % lower than England. In addition, productivity and wages in the Mid Wales tourism sector remain lower than the overall average for the economy in Wales. This results in reduced revenue for the sector in Mid Wales, and in order for the industry to capitalise on its potential, it is vital that Mid Wales is able to strengthen the shoulder season occupancy and maximise visitor spend. **However, this must be done in a sustainable manner, protecting the regions' natural assets and sense of place and taking into consideration the infrastructure of a rural region.**

Throughout the region, the tourism offer needs investment to generate higher value returns for the economy that is delivered in partnership and aligned with Government and key stakeholders to develop Mid Wales' distinctive offer through addressing seasonality, spend and spread. **However, this must be done in a way which is so sustainable and considerate of the rural communities which make up Mid Wales.**

²² StatsWales, Workplace Employment, October 2019

⁷ Mid Wales Regional Tourism Study, 2023
www.growingmid.wales

²³ AECOM (2019) Strategic Economic Priorities for the Mid Wales Region.

²⁴ <https://www.visitwales.com/things-to-do/attractions/tv-film-locations/hinterland-inside-guide-tv-shows-secret-locations>

Our strength of nature, culture and heritage provides a strong platform for us to play our part in raising the game of the Welsh and UK visitor market. Given the distinctive geography of Mid Wales, a significant opportunity exists to utilise our natural assets and resources to develop a unique selling point that strengthens tourism in the region. Under the ambition of strengthening tourism for the region, high quality, year-round experiences that are beneficial to both visitors and host communities will be invested in. **The culture and language of the region is also an asset to be capitalised upon.**

Mid Wales has higher levels of sustainable practice built on the strengths of our natural and institutional assets – offering the opportunity for the region to excel in tourism focused on sustainability, the circular economy, in addition to supporting health and wellbeing actions. The focus must be on quality and value, not volume.

Capitalising on opportunities to strengthen our tourism offer will also spur wider economic growth potential. As stronger focus will be given to showcasing what Mid Wales has to offer, this will in turn provide a boost for the food and drink sector and help home-grown businesses to flourish. This will change perceptions of Mid Wales and will attract new business to the region, give indigenous businesses and people the confidence to invest, strengthen career pathways and enable longer-term assurances for investment and support.

What We Want To Achieve

OBJECTIVE	WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN
Investment in Strategic Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of flagship cultural offers and provision of support for local museums, cultural and arts organisations • Develop outdoors and water-based tourism activities • Invest in interpretation and infrastructure at outdoor facilities to enable year round visiting • Develop the eco-tourism offer in Mid Wales • Develop and diversify the events calendar • Support for town centres to enable vibrancy and increase footfall in line with the Transforming Towns agenda
Investment in Supporting Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment in basic supporting facilities, such as parking provision, public conveniences and coastal facilities • Encourage inclusive and accessible tourism • Enhance the network of walking and cycling paths and trails • Increase the provision of EV charging points • Improve public transport links to facilitate visitor dispersal throughout the region
Labour Market Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure opportunities for quality tourism employment and training opportunities such as apprenticeships to enable the recruitment of more staff into the industry and overcome challenges of staff shortages • Dedicated training for tourism SMEs in marketing, finance, and management.

<p>Strengthened Marketing and Awareness of the Mid Wales Offer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trails to disperse tourism and benefit region's key businesses e.g food and drink sector• Explore potential for unified approach to marketing, branding and identity for tourism in Mid Wales• Create a Made in Mid Wales brand and certification• Explore the potential of using Welsh language and culture to create an identity for Mid Wales
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6.8 Energy

Mid Wales is extremely well-placed to lead Welsh and UK efforts in developing and generating solutions to address the challenges of a future energy system.

In 2019, the Welsh Government declared a climate emergency and set the net zero target. The natural resources of Mid Wales provide ample opportunity to produce renewable energy. By 2050, the ambition is to be generating 200% of the region's electricity consumption, paving the way for Mid Wales to be significant net exporter of renewable electricity.

Supporting businesses and communities to develop and utilise renewable energy will create and add value to supply chains, and circular economy networks across the region. Nurturing and creating a strong skills base and network, linking innovation with academic institutions and businesses will create inward investment opportunities. Maximising these opportunities will provide economic development and value-added opportunities for the region's businesses and communities, whilst demonstrating the regions' ability to lead on energy production and storage at the UK level.

Economic Growth Potential

Grid capacity constraints are a significant barrier to growth in Mid Wales. The development of the Local Area Energy Plans in both Powys and Ceredigion should identify areas of the region where strategic grid investment could be made to alleviate these barriers. With the recent changes to electricity connection charges, Mid Wales should see an increase in the financial viability of new renewable energy projects going forward. However, UK wide delays in grid upgrades are likely to delay projects from reaching completion.

The UK's energy crisis will have undoubtedly worsened fuel poverty in Mid Wales. Even before the energy crisis, 21% of households in Ceredigion and 17% in Powys were living in fuel poverty. Fuel poverty rates are typically higher in this region due to lower-than-average wages, a high proportion of homes not connected to the gas grid, and an energy inefficient housing stock.

The Mid Wales Hydrogen Study Feasibility Report was published in 2021 which concluded that Mid Wales should plan to follow a "first procure, later produce" approach. In other words, in the short-term Mid Wales should strategically align itself to procure hydrogen from outside the region, for example from North and South Wales who, due to their proximity to industrial clusters, have a higher demand for hydrogen production.

Mid Wales is currently in the process of developing its Local Area Energy Plans (LAEPs) for both Ceredigion and Powys which will be published in early 2024. Growing Mid Wales is involved in overseeing the formulation and implementation of these plans to ensure the local and regional energy planning are aligned. This work will tie into Mid Wales Regional Energy Strategy action plan and task register to ensure delivery against decarbonisation targets.

What We Want To Achieve

OBJECTIVE	WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN
Addressing Network Capacity & Grid Constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Mid Wales Grid Capacity Programme, linked to strategic employment sites and premises, composed of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (a) working with power companies to identify strategic investment in the grid ahead of need • (b) exploring innovative tech/models of delivery such as micro-grids, batteries and hydrogen
Decarbonisation of our Energy Supply & Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public sector investment in renewable generation and decarbonising assets (e.g. buildings, fleet vehicles). • Mid Wales Battery Storage Innovation Programme: linked to industry, agriculture & skills. Demonstrator technologies to produce renewable energy and store on site to supplement the grid in peak hours or to link to the circular economy such as provide Hydrogen for automotive. • Strategic electric vehicle charging network roll out.
Harnessing Regional Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid Wales Battery Storage Innovation Programme: linked to industry, agriculture & skills. Demonstrator technologies to produce renewable energy and store on site to supplement the grid in peak hours or to link to the circular economy such as provide Hydrogen for automotive. • Investment in key strategic opportunities to test/trial new farming methods/techniques aligned to opportunities for energy generation (e.g. energy from waste, electrification of agriculture trials, anaerobic digestion, grass bio-refining and battery storage). • Explore potential for clustering of industrial development in key strategic sites in the region.
Reducing Fuel poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy Efficiency retrofit targeted at energy poor dwellings. • Exploration of local private sector driven District Heating Networks.

6.9 Supporting Enterprise

Our vision is for a strong, resilient and diverse Mid Wales economy that enables enterprises to start, grow and prosper with the right support and infrastructure.

We will achieve this by creating the conditions to drive enterprise growth, investment and competitiveness which will raise regional productivity. We want to ensure enterprises are supported to be dynamic and entrepreneurial, to identify and target market opportunities, exploit innovation, automation, training and digitalisation as key drivers of growth - creating higher value employment opportunities in the process. We also want to ensure both established and growing businesses have the right infrastructure in order to achieve their goals, **and can use the Welsh language and culture to grow and support their businesses.**

Strong, capable and resourceful social enterprises are also vital for economic growth and the sustainability of communities in Mid Wales. They generate economic activity, have an important social impact and are key to attracting new talent to the area. Our ambition for the social enterprise sector is to be strong and confident, addressing market opportunities and social need, supporting fair work practices and building resilience.

Economic Growth Potential

The Mid Wales business base contains 12,700 VAT registered businesses – a broadly static number since 2017⁸ Micro and small businesses are the backbone of Welsh economy, even more so in Mid, with 96% of businesses micro (<10 employees) (Wales 89.2%, UK 89.4%) while just 1.5% of businesses are Medium or Large-sized (having 50+ employees) (Wales 1.6%, UK 1.9%)⁹ – proportions that have broadly remained unchanged for 15 years. To raise productivity in Mid Wales, it will be vital to support SMEs to grow and expand and fill this 'missing middle'

The large proportion of micro-businesses across Mid Wales is likely driven by the high number of agricultural enterprises, representing ~37% of all businesses across the region, with high self-employment levels. Medium sized enterprises are seen predominantly in the health and manufacturing sectors, representing 6.2% and 4.9% of the total business stock respectively. Notable sectors generating employment include accommodation and food services (12.2%) and retail (10.6%). These reflect the importance of the foundation economy to Mid Wales.

Since 2010, there has been a reduction in retail – falling from 920 to 785 (-14.7%). Conversely there's been a rise in professional, scientific & technical from 755 in 2010 to 880 (+16.6%) in 2017 and a significant rise in the number of public administration and defence enterprises from 15 in 2010 to 85 in 2017 (+466.7%). The five year survival rate for businesses start-ups in 2011 was higher in Mid Wales (48.1%) than both Wales (43.2%) and the UK (44.1%).

Mid Wales faces several distinct challenges in supporting its businesses, including a dispersed settlement pattern that can make traditional views of sectoral clusters difficult. The region's narrow economic base makes it particularly vulnerable to economic shocks - with agriculture a key sector likely to face changes in the future.

It is widely acknowledged there is a lack of good quality employment sites and premises to meet business requirements and expectations. There is minimal activity in terms of speculative building of such sites by the private sector due to market failure. An ageing stock of premises exists that require significant investment to become an attractive proposition.

In order to improve the productivity of Mid Wales and narrow the gap with the rest of the UK, it is vital to deliver targeted and transformational support to businesses, be that through infrastructure, finance or wider business support, **including support to encourage the use of**

⁸ ONS – UK Businesses; activity, size and location – 2017-2022

⁹ Statswales, Business structure in Wales by size band and measure, 2022 data
www.growingmid.wales

Welsh in entrepreneurship and economic development, such as the Arfor scheme. In this regard, reports by the Development Bank of Wales noted the importance of interventions to encourage productivity growth and innovation irrespective of firm size.

What We Want To Achieve

OBJECTIVE	WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN
Enabling Business Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Employment Sites: invest in a small number of high- quality employment sites and centres of excellence in target sectors (eg. agri-tech, high value manufacturing, food innovation & low carbon). • Mid Wales Business Growth Incubation Network: build on existing provision to deliver high quality shared business accommodation targeting start-ups and micro enterprises providing business support, professional services, networking, training, gigabit digital connectivity, flexible terms, co-location etc. • Develop and implement a Mid Wales Employment Sites & Premises Action Plan that would deliver the following outputs; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A regional portfolio of good quality business units for start-up and micro enterprises ○ An advanced build programme of good quality commercial property for SMEs ○ Servicing of next generation employment sites ○ Commercial property refurbishment / energy efficiency renewable energy financial incentive scheme ○ Creation of an Infrastructure Investment Fund or other appropriate funding mechanism
Strengthening the Support Offer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work to understand business support landscape in Wales and highlight with governments • Work with business support & finance providers to ensure accessible financing options to support business growth that is relevant to the market demands and opportunities of Mid Wales. • Work with relevant providers to strengthen and tailor the support offer for enterprises in Mid Wales by working with and adding value to existing/planned investments as part of a multi-agency approach. • Strengthen the support offer to develop social enterprise in the region by working with existing providers and mapping future demand. • Explore the potential for a regional Clean Growth Programme to support businesses in transitioning to a low carbon future and take advantage of low carbon technologies. • Strengthening Inward Investment – providing a single point of contact and gateway for inquiries, business support and marketing. • Support the development of higher-level business skills and ensure access to high-quality professional services and training, including digital skills for businesses • Enable and support Higher Education commercialisation of R&D and knowledge transfer programmes for technical and business solutions. • Develop a comprehensive and informed regional careers advice service to compliment regional skills activity
Procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore a Mid Wales regional procurement programme focusing on ‘anchor’ institutions such as local authorities, health boards, colleges, universities that will support regional business through purchasing. Provide support for businesses to tender and identify collaborative opportunities, alongside development of local supply chains.

Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Business rates and rate relief – highlight the impact of business rates on rural businesses in town and village centres.• Explore the potential for streamlined planning processes in identified regional enterprise sites.
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6.10 Digital

Digital connectivity is an essential part of modern life, influencing how individuals work, communicate and access services. In Mid Wales, it is even more vital we capitalise on the economic opportunities that can be unlocked by investing in our digital infrastructure.

Having good quality, reliable digital connectivity is essential for residents, businesses and visitors to support a thriving Mid Wales economy. It is now recognised as a fourth utility, a critical component to support modern life. Co-ordinated investment in digital infrastructure will act as a catalyst for high quality business growth, innovation within our targeted sectors and provide communities with enhanced access to employment, education and services.

Economic Growth Potential

While Mid Wales has seen improvements in digital infrastructure coverage over recent years, deployment of high speed broadband, fibre to premises provision and mobile coverage in most parts of the region still lags significantly behind that of Wales and the UK. The remote rural nature of the region, its geography, commercial viability and the nature of technologies means that 'not spots' are prevalent particularly in hard to reach locations.

Enhanced, good quality digital connectivity and accelerating its deployment is fundamental to transforming the Mid Wales economy and enabling growth. Confidence in digital infrastructure will be vital to support future business investment in the region. Digital technologies are transforming communications, services, learning and business opportunities at an ever-increasing pace. New digital technology like 5G plus the Internet of Things, Artificial Intelligence and data analytics have the potential to open up new businesses and improve the lives of communities.

Despite there being other programmes and initiatives being implemented across Mid Wales, through both UK Government and suppliers, there still remains a gap in provision and a need for GMW to intervene. Several of these propose interventions may not take place for several years and will initially focus on the more densely populated areas where it could be argued already receive sufficient connectivity. This resulting in the already well-connected areas receiving improved speeds and improved provision, whereas due to a poor return on investment the more sparsely populated and currently poorly connected areas will continue to experience poor provision.

Ensuring access to good quality digital connectivity and supporting digital skills will help bridge the 'digital divide' and give people the freedom to live and work more flexibly while making the region a more attractive place to live. It will also remove constraints on business growth.

The GMW Digital Programme priorities reflect the broader national and regional aims of the UK and Welsh Governments, but they are ultimately driven by our own local needs. Digital Infrastructure is recognised as a critical enabler of strategic outcomes at all levels of Government.

The importance of the role of digital infrastructure in supporting socio-economic outcomes is described clearly through a number of related and mutually reinforcing UK and Welsh strategies, through to the local vision of our Mid Wales Growth Deal and our individual Council objectives. This helps to achieve a high degree of national and local economic and digital infrastructure strategy alignment. UK and Welsh Government and GMW therefore share common objectives which are mutually reinforcing, with both their stated aims seemingly dependent on the availability and affordability of quality digital infrastructure.

OBJECTIVE	WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN
Broadband	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore opportunities to connect Hard to Reach Properties, where no improvements to broadband provision are expected by either UK or Welsh Government within the forthcoming years. • Develop means to attract more 'alternative network providers' to the Region to create greater choice for both businesses and residents. • Assist where appropriate the implementation of UK and Welsh Government programmes, such as Project Gigabit.
Mobile technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of public sector land and buildings and assets to help facilitate deployment of digital infrastructure such as small cells by MNO's. • Establish where 'not spots' will remain following programmes such as the Shared Rural Network and develop interventions to maximise 4G coverage across the Region. • Implementation of relevant policy ensuring that sufficient infrastructure is deployed by MNO's to ensure mobile networks across the Region has capacity to maintain services during peak times.
Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural test bed and application of new technology / research and development e.g. 5G, RWAS, internet of things, Spectrum. • Utilise the Long-Range Wide Area Network (LoRaWAN) that has been deployed for sending and receiving low power signals from digital sensors across the region. This will enable business, public sector, educational, organisations and individuals to explore, trial and implement Internet of Things (IoT) technology and aspire to have complete coverage in region and exploitation in e.g. transportation, agriculture, tourism, environmental management, social care and housing.
Business Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen capacity in Mid Wales to provide additional resources to help unlock digital connectivity issues on the ground. • Drive uptake & provide support and training for the exploitation of digital services and technology by businesses.

6.11 Transport

To drive economic growth and attract new investment we need to improve connectivity both to and within the region. We will build on our existing linkages to help deliver the transport network required to help grow the economy and raise productivity.

Reliable, resilient, sustainable and connected transport networks are fundamentally important to economic growth and communities in Mid Wales. Good quality infrastructure is vital in linking people up with opportunities, companies with markets and labour supply – and improving our approach in Wales to how we enable and invest in infrastructure is widely recognised²⁷. Enhanced transport connectivity will play a critical role in supporting economic flows, improving accessibility, attracting investment and enabling development.

Economic Growth Potential

The size, remoteness and the dispersed pattern of settlements in Mid Wales presents challenges in both the transport of goods and people. The network of strategic road and rail corridors in the region is large because of the vast area covered and constrained by the geography of the region. Roads are predominantly single carriageway, causing poor average speeds, long journey times and poor reliability.

The resilience of the transport network is vitally important to the regional economy. Investment is needed to address fundamental transport issues that constrain movement around the region. The Marches and Mid-Wales Freight Strategy, for example, highlights a number of issues for business that will require a combination of interventions that support and improve the network, making Mid Wales better connected. The promotion of sustainable travel modes and the decarbonisation of transport are also significant ambitions for the region.

Our aim is for an integrated and affordable regional transport system that facilitates economic growth, ensures access for all to services and opportunities, sustains and improves the quality of communities, and supports the transition to a low carbon future.

This will look to:

- Improve journey time confidence, reduce transport costs and increase reliability, to ensure freight, travel to work and public transport movements can make a step change
- Enable business growth / investment / development
- Support a modal shift to sustainable travel and the transition to a zero-carbon economy
- Improve the safety of the transport network

²⁵ FSB Wales (September 2019) "Are we there yet?" A Roadmap to Better Infrastructure for Wales

What We Want To Achieve

OBJECTIVE	WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN
Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve connectivity of the region addressing cross-border strategic routes and onward connectivity through the Strategic Roads Network into other parts of Wales and into England. • Improvement measures to strategic road corridors for the trunk / county road network including pinch point programme and linkages to key markets. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Cross Border Corridors into England (e.g. A458, A44 and A483) and other Welsh regions (A487, A489 & A486). ◦ A44 West of Llangurig. ◦ Key arterial routes within the region (A470, A483 and A487/A486)
Public Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic rail corridor improvements such as line speed enhancements on the Cambrian Line; encouraging lightweight freight being carried on passenger services on Cambrian Coast / Cambrian Main Line; and the development of strategic hub interchanges at key rail stations. • Service connectivity interventions such as a full hourly service on the Cambrian Line to Birmingham International; Connectivity to London including extension of the Heart of Wales Line and selected Cambrian Main Line services to Crewe for connectivity to HS2 / Manchester Airport; and TrawsCymru strategic route development and long distance bus strategic hubs / interchanges with Integrated responsive transport.
Behaviour change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active travel packages of support to encourage walking and cycling • Dissemination of information using digital information networks & education to seek behavioural change
Decarbonisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting modal shift to public transport. • Strategic Electric Vehicle charging network: potential to follow tourist and commercial routes & key strategic sites. • Train/Bus Hub Electric Vehicle charging points • Public Sector Ultra Low/No Emission Fleets: regional approach to reduce costs and scale.
Integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural connectivity measures such as smart highways, road and rail hubs and integrated ticketing and integrated responsive transport.

6.12 Skills & Employment

An effective, functioning labour market is essential for Mid Wales economy to grow and prosper. Ensuring the appropriate supply of skills and a capable workforce to meet business and industry demands and needs will be fundamental to our future success.

We have significant strengths regionally in our workforce – but we have structural weaknesses in the skills infrastructure that currently inhibit the regional labour market.

It is imperative that our skills institutions work effectively together to drive regional productivity and growth, underpinning the future success of our employment centres. There is a need to improve the quality and relevance of provision to become industry-led, and responsive to the opportunities regionally to support high-value and productive jobs. This will mean changes to the way we collectively work in the region, from educational provision to career pathways and industry engagement to enabling our residents to access opportunities, regardless of their location in Mid Wales.

Economic Growth Potential

Mid Wales has a highly qualified and skilled workforce. School-age attainment in Mid Wales exceeds the Welsh average. A higher proportion of the working age population are qualified to degree level compared to the national average. These strengths provide Mid Wales with the right foundations for enabling growth.

Mid Wales also faces challenge related to the uniqueness of the region. The region has a declining workforce, emphasising the need to both retain and attract economically active people to Mid Wales and upskill the existing workforce. The region's universities provide a pipeline of talented and skilled young people but there are opportunities to increase the number of graduates finding employment in Mid Wales. Local young people who move away to study find it difficult to find local employment that would enable them to return to the region, leading to a brain drain from Mid Wales.

The scale of Mid Wales and its dispersed population challenge the delivery of education provision. There is a need to develop a skills pipeline in construction, ICT and business skills. Skills and recruitment challenges exist in the following sector-based areas²⁸:

Advanced materials and Manufacturing: recruitment difficulties focused on key occupations such as engineers, welders, CAD/drawing office roles and electro- technical.

Agriculture and Food: Potential impact of Brexit, combined with the seasonality of agricultural employment could lead to skills shortages. Also known shortages of vets, dairy technicians, scientists and micro-biologists.

Tourism and Leisure: Recruitment difficulties for chefs and catering roles, cleaning and housekeeping and maintenance roles have been exacerbated by the impact of EU transition.

Health and Social Care: Staff retention is a key issue, whilst recruitment is a continuing problem for care support workers, nurses, domiciliary care staff and kitchen/cleaning staff.

Energy and Net Zero: As businesses and homes seek to save energy and reduce their carbon footprint, there is an increased demand for specialist skills such as retrofitting and hot water pump installation.

As our changing demographics regionally progress towards an ageing population, this will bring its own challenges to skills & employment:

Ageing workforce: due to increases in state pension age.

Multi-skilled workforce: as people remain in work longer, there will need to be a number of opportunities for life-long learning to ensure individuals remain employable and skilled.

Digital Skills and Industry 4.0 – As businesses adapt and change for the future, taking advantage of new technologies, there will be a need for workers to appropriately upskill.

Mid Wales’ businesses are less likely to arrange training for their workforce and are more likely to report hard to fill vacancies compared to employers in other Welsh regions.²⁹ Over half of local employers also report that young entrants to the labour market are not considered ready for work.. The nature of work and demand for skills is changing and will continue to do so over the next 15 years. One in three jobs in Wales³⁰ is at risk from automation by early 2030 with lower skilled jobs being most at risk. At the same time as automation, digital technology and more flexible ways of working generate opportunities for growth in areas that offer high quality of life such as Mid Wales.

What We Want To Achieve

The first and foremost requirement for Mid Wales is to ensure a dedicated, evidence based skills system that can put the necessary focus by education providers across the spectrum to better respond to industry demands and maximise future opportunities for both young people and the existing economically active population. **The establishment of the Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership ensures a dedicated function to drive forward this work. Both Local Authorities are also undertaking a review of Post 16 provision in order to help inform the landscape and plan for the future.**

Gaps currently exist in our existing skills and employment provision that is putting the future viability of our young people at risk. This has to change.

OBJECTIVE	WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN
Deliver responsive demand led provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with employers in key sectors to further understand their needs and provide strengthened intelligence on skills and training demands to inform academic/vocational provision. • Strengthened FE & HE presence across the whole region. Recognising the role of wider institutions (e.g. CAT) and exploring opportunities to strengthen provision. • Identification of future demands/trends, key opportunities and up-to-date labour market intelligence for Mid Wales • Promoting apprenticeships and developing new apprenticeships that are driven by local business intelligence for future workforce strategies, including opportunities to increase the use of Welsh language in apprenticeships

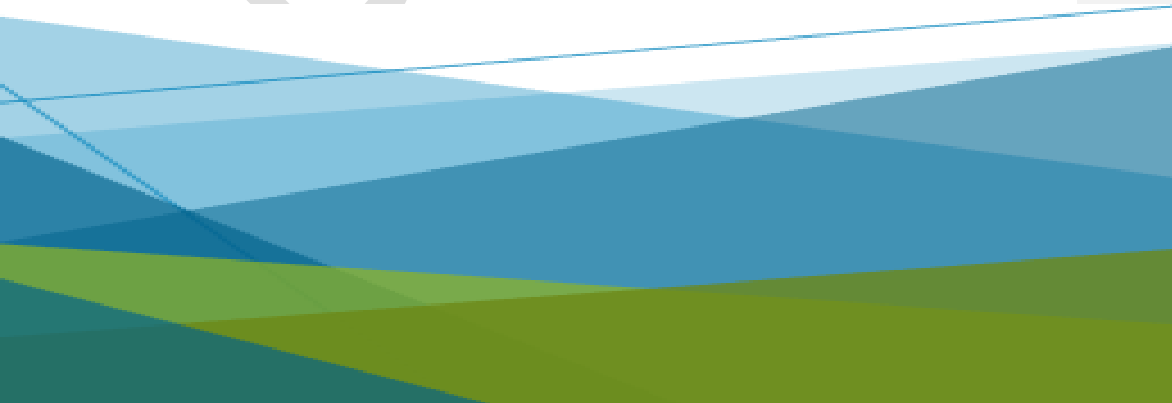
Tailoring regional skills & employment support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of career pathways and guidance to drive growth in key regional economic sectors. • Strengthened careers information, advice and guidance across the region • Flexible and responsive skills programmes to support the supply of labour, including upskilling the existing workforce, aligned to our key strategic sectors and projects. • Development of a skills and employment pipeline of activity to support wider strategic regional activity, such as the Mid Wales Growth Deal
Capital Investment in Skills Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment in training centres and specialist facilities across Mid Wales
Tackling Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Piloting new, place-based approaches to barriers that prevent people from accessing employment e.g. transport, childcare • Supporting opportunities for young people to participate in digital and STEM activities

²⁹ UK Commission's Employer Skills Survey (UKCESS) 2015

³⁰ The Impact of AI in UK Constituencies: Where will automation hit hardest? Future Advocacy, 20

APPENDICES

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APPENDIX 1 – List of Stakeholders Engaged

Stakeholders were consulted iteratively throughout the development of this document, or previously as part of wider published work & engagements, on which this document is based.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aber Instruments • Aberystwyth University • AEIC • Agroceuticals Ltd. • Antur Teifi • BIC Innovation • Black Mountains College • Boys and Boden • Brecon Beacons National Park Authority • Business Wales • BVG Airflo Group • Cadno Comms • Cambrian Training • Carbon Trust • CastAlum • CAVO • Celtic Energy Group • Centre for Alternative Technology • Chemostrat • Coleg Ceredigion • Compact Orbital Gears • Cyngor Sir Gwynedd • Dawson Shanahan • Development Bank of Wales • Defence Science and Technology Laboratory • Dulas Ltd • Dunbia • Dwr Cymru • Dyfodol Cambrian Futures • Ecodyfi • Environment Systems • Evabuild • Forest Holidays • Freedom Green Energy • Fre-energy • Federation of Small Businesses • Farmers Union of Wales • G Jones Construction Ltd • Germinal • Going Green for a Living Community Land Trust • Green Man Festival • Growing Mid Wales Partnership • Heritage Hub for Mid Wales • HSBC • Ingram Networks • Innogy Renewables UK Ltd • Invertex Drives • Lantra • Lanyon Bowdler • Larkhill Consulting • Leonardo Company • Local Partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makefast • Marches LEP • Marine Group • Menter a Busnes • Mid Wales Chamber of Commerce • Mid Wales Joint Health Committee • Mid Wales Manufacturing Group • Mid Wales Tourism • Montgomery Canal Partnership • Motif Creative • Natural Resources Wales • Newmor • National Farmers Union • Northern Industrial Battery Services (NiBS) • NPTC Group • Paramgan Hutchinson • PAVO • PCI Pharma • Potters Waste Management • Princes Foundation • Qinetiq • Rachel's Dairy • Radnor Hills • Randall Parker Foods • Rebo UK • Res Group • Riversimple • Royal Welsh Agricultural Society • Rural Health and Care Wales • Scottish Power Energy Networks • Severn Trent Water / Hafren Dyfrdwy • Severn Wye Energy Agency • Snowdonia National Park Authority • South West and Mid Wales Regional Learning and Skills Partnership • Stagecraft • Strata Florida Trust • Tastetraders • Thales • The Green Valleys CIC • Trax JH • Tregroes Waffles • TSR Surveyors • University of South Wales • University of Wales Trinity Saint David • Visit Wales • Volac International • Welsh Government • Welsh Sausage Company • Western Power • Westflight • WLGA • Wynnstay Plc
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