
NORTH WALES CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEE

19 September, 2025

TITLE: Flintshire And Wrexham Investment Zone

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1. Further to the report submitted to the 18th July, 2025 CJC meeting, this report provides an update on Gateway 4 and 5 and seeks approval to the core principles of the proposed Inter-Authority Agreement and Terms of Reference for the Advisory Board to oversee the delivery of the Flintshire and Wrexham Investment Zone.
- 1.2. This report should be viewed in the context of a separate report to this meeting of the CJC to request approval to delegate accountable body responsibilities to the CJC's Economic Well-being Sub-Committee.

2. DECISION SOUGHT

- 2.1. Accept the update report and note the work between the Investment Zone team, Welsh Government and UK Government to determine an acceptable allocation from within the £160m for the cost of tax reliefs associated with the occupation and development of Investment Zone Tax Sites.
- 2.2. Approve the key principles to be set out in an Inter-Authority Agreement (IAA) prepared by Geldards LLP for agreement between the CJC, Flintshire County Council and Wrexham County Borough Council.
- 2.3. Approve the Terms of Reference for the Investment Zone Advisory Board.
- 2.4. Approve the nominated members for the Investment Zone Advisory Board and nominate a Council Member of the CJC to be appointed to the Board in accordance with the Terms of Reference.

3. REASON FOR THE DECISION

Progress Update

- 3.1. Gateway 4 was agreed with UK Government and Welsh Government on the 26th August, 2025 subject to a series of clarifications and some additional information. This information was provided on the 1st of September. Gateway 5 (the Delivery Gateway) which included a programme risk register, key milestones, and programme was signed and submitted for consideration on the 3rd of September. Early indications are positive and UK Government,

Welsh Government and local partners are confident that the information required to complete the Gateways either has been provided or can be swiftly provided to allow a full approval to come forward.

- 3.2. Following agreement to Gateway 5, the Annual Delivery Plan Template will be shared along with a complete Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The CJC decided, in July 2025, to delegate the final consideration and approval of the MOU to the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer of the CJC, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the CJC to agree and complete the final document. The Annual Delivery Plan will likely cover the first 2 years of the Investment Zone programme (the current financial year and 2026-27). Approval of the Annual Delivery Plan will be taken by the Investment Zone Working Group (the representatives of Flintshire and Wrexham Councils) in a meeting to be arranged – ideally in October.

Inter-Authority Agreement

- 3.3. The IAA is a partnership agreement between the CJC and Flintshire and Wrexham Councils. It will form the basis for the partnership for delivering the Investment Zone, the agreed governance arrangements. In addition, it will set out some of the terms for delivery as well as some of the revenue and capital allocations for spend by Flintshire and Wrexham Councils. The IAA will aim to enable as much Year 1 delivery by the two Councils as possible as set out in the Year 1 (2025/26) Annual Delivery Plan.

- 3.4. The key terms of the IAA will include:

1. Parties
2. Project Description
3. Head Funding Agreement – MOU and Government Funding Letters
4. Duration of the Agreement
5. Principles of collaboration
6. North Wales Corporate Joint Committee's Responsibilities
7. Responsibilities of the Councils
8. Joint Planning Unit
9. Decision Making and Governance Structures
10. Administration Costs
11. Representatives
12. Advisory Groups
13. Changes to the Investment Zone Programme
14. Indemnities
15. Welsh Language and Equality
16. Dispute Resolution
17. Freedom of Information and Confidentiality

- 3.5. The IAA will pass on the relevant obligations as agreed in the Investment Zone MOU between UK Government, Welsh Government and the CJC. The key components of the programme, as set out in the IAA (and subject to onward assurance where appropriate) are as follows:

i. Investment Zone Programme Delivery

- CJC agrees to claim / spend £200,000 per annum of revenue, from 2025/26 to 2034/35
- Flintshire County Council agrees to claim / spend £220,000 of revenue from 2025/26 to 2034/35

- Wrexham County Borough Council agrees to claim / spend 220,000 of revenue from 2025/26 to 2034/35
 - CJC will lead on programme communications, reporting to WG/CLG and programme evaluation
 - Both Councils agree to develop NDR Investment Plans and invest in projects aligned to the Investment Zone Interventions and make suitable provision for devolved occupier benefits (NDRR and LTT Relief).
- ii. **Planning Unit**
- Flintshire County Council agrees to claim / spend £100,000 of revenue from 2025/26 to 2029/30
 - Wrexham County Borough Council agrees to claim / spend £100,000 of revenue from 2025/26 to 2029/30
 - CJC agrees to allocate £1m of revenue to technical studies and project feasibility in support of the IZ from 2025/26 to 2029/30
- iii. **Bus Transformation**
- All parties agree that Transport for Wales will undertake a business case, which will be assured by the CJC
 - The approved procurements will be individually undertaken by each Council (or otherwise agreed)
 - IZ feasibility funds may be applied to the business case
 - £20m is agreed as allocated for revenue support from 2026/27 to 2034/35
 - £4.5m of capital is allocated for capital support for bus infrastructure / real time information systems
- iv. **Skills Programme**
- The CJC and the two Councils agree that the RSP will establish a sub-group 'The Investment Zone Skills Sub-Group' to jointly develop and agree projects for onward assurance by the CJC under a simplified project application structure. Skills projects will be approved by the RSP prior to consideration by the CJC
 - LEAs, Coleg Cambria and Wrexham University are invited to submit projects for early funding
- v. **Business Support Programme**
- The CJC and the two Councils agree that each Council will deliver the business advice and grants programme, unless they request assurance and decision by the CJC
 - Current allocation is £950,000 per annum for advice and growth grants to business from 2025/26 to 2033/34 (total of £8.1m)
 - Current allocation is c£950,000 per annum for R&D grants to business from 2025/26 to 2034/35 (total of £7,909,550)
 - C£100,000 per annum for micro-grants from 2026/27 - 2034/35 (total of £950,000)
- vi. **Project Investments**
- The Knauf Business Case will be assured by the CJC and funded by the IZ and Growth Deal on a 50/50 basis (£7.2m of capital from each fund)
 - A business case for £3.6m is welcomed from Pochin Goodman for infrastructure works at Deeside Gateway
 - A business case for £5m is welcomed for Wrexham Gateway / Active travel
 - A business case for £2m is welcomed for Padeswood Sidings

- An allocation of £5m is available for infrastructure projects at Wrexham Industrial Estate
- A business case for c£17m is welcomed from Airbus / CC for an Industry Transformation Project
- An allocation of £5m is available for an innovation project with AMRC at WIE

vii. Research and development

- A research project into data connectivity from Bangor University is welcomed - budget. £1.08m

Investment Zone Advisory Board

- 3.6. Approval is sought to the following nominations for the Investment Zone Advisory Board:

Joanna Knight, Chair
 Member of the CJC
 Leader, Wrexham County Borough Council
 Leader, Flintshire County Council
 Becky Gittins, MP
 Llyr Gruffydd, MS
 Prof Joe Yates, Wrexham University
 Bryn Jones, North Wales Business Council
 Andy Silcox, AMRC
 Helen Swift, Airbus
 Craig Weeks, JCB
 David Roberts, RSP

- 3.7. Representatives of manufacturing SMEs will be sought. The meeting will be supported by officers from the CJC, RSP and partner Councils. UKG and Welsh Government representatives are expected to attend in an observer role.
- 3.8. Approval is also requested to the Terms of Reference for the Advisory Board. The 'interim' Advisory Board agreed to the submission of these Terms of Reference in a meeting on the 30th of July, 2025.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. The financial implications of the MOU relate to the £160m funding allocation for the Investment Zone. The detailed arrangements for which will be set out in a Grant Funding Letter which will be shared with the CJC once received. The Inter-Authority Agreement will set out the financial implications for the CJC and the partner Councils.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. The Inter-Authority Agreement will set out the legal implications for partnership working and delivery between the CJC and two partner Councils. Geldards LLP are drafting the IAA and this will be brought to the Economic Well-being Sub Committee meeting in November for approval. This is a parallel document to the MOU and funding letters. It will underpin the relationship between the CJC as Accountable Body and the Councils. The governance arrangements which are being approved will be incorporated into the document. Its aim is to facilitate the delivery of the Investment Zone, provide clarity around roles and accountabilities and provide and agreed governance model to support delivery.

- 5.2. The investment Zone Advisory Board has been the subject of consideration in previous reports. This decision is aimed at creating the Board which will take the project forward. It's Terms of Reference and membership have been developed in partnership. The recommendation is to adopt these terms of reference and approve the nominated membership.
- 5.3. There is a further report on the Terms of Reference of the Economic Well-being Sub-Committee which seeks to formally delegate decisions around the implementation of the Investment Zone to the sub-committee. Until that occurs all Investment Zone decisions remain in the CJC unless specifically delegated.
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APPENDICES:

Appendix 1: Terms of Reference for the Investment Zone Advisory Board

STATUTORY OFFICERS RESPONSE:

i. Monitoring Officer:

"I have had the opportunity of advising on aspects of this report. I have no observations to add in relation to propriety."

ii. Statutory Finance Officer:

"I have been in regular meetings with the authors of the report discussing the developments described above, and I am satisfied that the information presented in this report is an accurate reflection of the current situation.

I refer to Part 4 of the report and I can confirm that further detailed financial information will be available when the formal grant funding letter is received, and the Inter-Authority Agreement will be a key document in ensuring clear financial accountability."