



NORTH WALES CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEE

28 November, 2025

TITLE: Flintshire and Wrexham Investment Zone - Year 1 Annual Delivery Plan

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1. The focus of this report is on the Year 1 Annual Delivery Plan (ADP) and setting out the intended programme for the Year 2025-2026.
- 1.2. This report should be viewed in the context of the report to the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) regarding the Flintshire and Wrexham Investment Zone Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and Inter-Authority Agreement (IAA), which were agreed at the CJC meeting on 7th November, 2025.

2. DECISION SOUGHT

- 2.1. This report asks the CJC to consider the following items for approval:
 - The investment allocations of the Annual Delivery Plan;
 - The Investment Zone Programmes as set out in Section 3 of this report;
 - The Terms of Reference for the Flintshire and Wrexham Investment Zone Working Group (*Appendix 1*);
 - That the CJC's Section 151 Officer is permitted to sign and issue the Annual Delivery Plan documents to UK Government and Welsh Government and make any further non-material amendments necessary to agree the ADP with both Governments.

3. BACKGROUND AND RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

3.1. Background

Investment Zones are required to agree Annual Delivery Plans with UK Government and Welsh Government in the final quarter of the financial year to secure the annual payment from Welsh Government in the April of each financial year. Funds are paid in advance in April for anticipated expenditure in the financial year. Expenditure is reported in each Annual Delivery Plan and any material changes to the Annual Delivery Plan.

3.2. Programme Overview

The strategic activities for 2025-26, by intervention are listed in 3.2.1 to 3.2.4. Some of these activities have been completed as part of the Investment Zone's proposal process and some are underway:

3.2.1 Planning and Programme

- preparation and agreement to the requirements of Welsh and UK Governments for Gateways 1 – 5 in the Investment Zone's proposal process as set out within the Government's guidelines for Wales
- preparation and agreement to the Memorandum of Understanding
- preparation and agreement to the Inter-Authority Agreement
- development and agreement to a Tax Site Implementation Plan
- development and Council agreement to a Wrexham Non-Domestic Rates Investment Fund Commencement Plan
- development and Council agreement to a Flintshire Non-Domestic Rates Investment Fund Commencement Plan
- Service Level Agreement with Flintshire and Wrexham Planning Departments for an Investment Zone Planning Unit
- Recruitment of lead Investment Zone development officers in Flintshire and Wrexham Councils
- To support the Knauf Investment Business Case (a North Wales Growth Deal funded project)
- Promote the Investment Zone to forums and engagement events
- To support and develop key partnerships, in particular (set out in more detail in section 3.3.1 – 3.3.3):
 - Innovation Partnership Programme/National Manufacturing Institute
 - Investment Zone Decarbonisation Programme
 - Transport for Wales - Business Case for Bus Transformation

3.2.2 Skills

- Regional Skills Partnership, Coleg Cambria and Wrexham University development of early-stage projects
- Development and approval to an Investment Zone Skills Plan
- Establishment of an Investment Zone Skills Group as a sub-group to the Regional Skills Partnership

3.2.3 Business or Stakeholder Support

- Establish relationships with key investment partners, landowners and developers
- Engage with businesses interested in growing and investing in Flintshire and Wrexham
- Design of a small grants scheme for businesses
- Engagement with Wrexham University and Coleg Cambria on innovation support concepts for the business community

3.2.4 Infrastructure

- Preparation of an Innovation Centre business case by Airbus and Coleg Cambria

- Outline proposal for infrastructure to unlock remaining development land parcels at Deeside Gateway
- Ongoing engagement with landowners on Wrexham Industrial Estate regarding infrastructure requirements
- Concept development for an Innovation / SME facility at Wrexham Industrial Estate
- Development of business case for a bus transformation programme to address key service needs at employment sites at Flintshire and Wrexham
- Establish workstream for Strategic Ecological Mitigation Delivery for Wrexham Industrial Estate

3.3 Procured Programmes

The following three programmes will be delivered in partnership with key stakeholders. To commission these projects, a tender via Sell2Wales is necessary. The scope of these projects is set out below:

3.3.1 Major Industry Innovation Partnership / National Manufacturing Institute for Wales

Call for a partnership of established innovation partners with industry to develop the feasibility of a National Manufacturing Institute for Wales. The proposal should consider how major manufacturing businesses can increase their adoption of Machine Learning and AI to increase manufacturing efficiency, increase productivity and strengthen their local supply chains. The feasibility study should demonstrate the concept in business facilities and present a vision and necessary next steps to create a NMIC facility in NE Wales. The concept should take account of existing innovation and manufacturing engagement in the region.

The feasibility study is expected to cost £150,000 and take 12 months to deliver. Bidding partnerships must demonstrate their prior experience, capability and manufacturing capability to be considered for this commission.

3.3.2 Investment Zone Industrial Decarbonisation Partnership - Programme Development

Call for a partnership of Industrial Decarbonisation partners to undertake industrial engagement and programme development to set out an ambitious decarbonisation programme over the next 25 years. The programme will set out the key projects and interventions necessary to support industry investment in decarbonisation.

Proposals are welcomed from a consortium of partners willing to collaborate to achieve industrial decarbonisation through a range of measures including electrification, low carbon fuels for heat and carbon capture.

The programme will be funded to a budget of £100,000 for a 12 month period. A key output of the programme is a vision and roadmap to achieving industrial decarbonisation across the Investment Zone, highlighting the key opportunities for significant steps towards a net zero region.

3.3.3 Innovation led Industrial Growth Programme

Call for experienced innovation practitioners to engage with business, government, and academia - through a triple helix approach - to drive innovation and economic development across the Investment Zone. The Programme should be pro-active in its approach to securing

social and environmentally responsible industrial growth through innovation and the adoption of new technology.

The Programme should set out an ambitious implementation design for the support of small business and the funding and facilities necessary to achieve this. The Programme should also set out the best approach in Flintshire and Wrexham to support scale up of small or early-stage businesses as well as engage with SMEs on their growth and productivity challenges. The Programme should explore how best to localise and grow the supply chains of the region's major manufacturing businesses.

The budget for this work is £150,000 and is expected to take 12 months. The key output of the programme is the design of a future innovation programme and the funding and facilities necessary to deliver it. The programme may look to the Investment Zone for future funding and any further ask should be set out in the Programme Report.

3.4 Year 1 and Year 2 Funding Allocations

The following tables set out the ADP funding allocations, organised by Theme and illustrating the capital (CDEL) and revenue (RDEL) allocations in the financial years 2025-26 (ending March 2026) and 2026-27 (ending March 2027).

3.4.1 Infrastructure

As outlined above, the key infrastructure projects in Years 1 and 2 relate:

- to the establishment of a bus transformation programme, prepared by Transport for Wales and agreed by transport leads for Flintshire and Wrexham Councils;
- Capital investments to support the skills and innovation programmes;
- Capital investments in support of tax site growth at Deeside and Wrexham; and
- a capital contribution to the Padeswood Sidings project.

Description of the Intervention/project	Spatial Focus & Postcodes	IZ Funding Amount	Year 1 25/26 (Actual)			Year 2 26/27		
			CDEL	RDEL	Total	CDEL	RDEL	Total
Bus Transformation programme, supported as revenue spend	Flintshire and Wrexham	£20,000,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£2,250,000	£2,250,000
Capital investment to support the bus transformation programme	Flintshire and Wrexham	£4,500,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	
Enterprise, Engineering and Optics Centre Project: Academic Support and R&D Output Wrexham University - Equipment at EEOC	Wrexham	£3,350,000	£0	£0	£0	£1,000,000	£0	£1,000,000
Manufacturing Readiness Centre with Airbus + CC (Flintshire)	Flintshire	£17,600,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Industry Transformation Centre with AMRC (Wrexham)	Wrexham	£5,000,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Grant support to unlock key employment sites, focused on IZ Tax Sites Allocated to unlocking UtopiaCity or wider infrastructure on WIE	Wrexham	£5,000,000	£0	£0	£0	£5,000,000	£0	£5,000,000
Padeswood Sidings	Flintshire	£2,000,000	£2,000,000	£0	£2,000,000	£0	£0	£0
Wrexham Gateway	Wrexham	£5,000,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Deeside Gateway (Pochin Goodman)	Flintshire	£3,500,000	£0	£0	£0	£3,500,000	£0	£3,500,000
Wrexham Industrial Estate No specific project allocation	Wrexham	£5,000,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0

3.4.2 Research and Innovation

The two key research and development projects are a partnership with Bangor University to explore opportunities to enhance digital and data connectivity across Flintshire and Wrexham and capital allocations to R&D focused projects with local businesses. This opportunity focuses on an area of academic expertise at Bangor University – further promoting and enhancing the Digital Signalling Processing Centre of excellence, supported by the North Wales Growth Deal.

Description of the Intervention/project	Spatial Focus & Postcodes	IZ Funding Amount	Year 1 25/26 (Actual)			Year 2 26/27		
			CDEL	RDEL	Total	CDEL	RDEL	Total
Bangor University Data Project	Flintshire and Wrexham North Wales	£1,017,995	£59,550	£59,550	£119,100	£59,550	£59,550	£119,100
Flintshire and Wrexham Council led business support grants	Flintshire and Wrexham	£7,909,550	£150,000	£0	£150,000	£950,000	£0	£950,000
Totals		£8,927,545	£209,550	£59,550	£269,100	£1,009,550	£59,550	£1,069,100

3.4.3 Business Support

The key elements of the business support programme are focused on supporting businesses with innovation vouchers, co-ordinated by Wrexham University, a capital grants programme (including micro grants) for business, administered and managed by the two Councils.

Description of the Intervention/project	Spatial Focus & Postcodes	IZ Funding Amount	Year 1 25/26 (Actual)			Year 2 26/27		
			CDEL	RDEL	Total	CDEL	RDEL	Total
Knowledge Transfer Partnerships, Vouchers, Mini-Full Projects, 130-140 vouchers per year	Flintshire and Wrexham	£4,675,300	£0	£667,900	£667,900	£200,000	£467,900	£667,900
Grants for Manufacturing Growth	Flintshire and Wrexham	£6,500,000	£6,500,000		£6,500,000			
Delivery of grants for manufacturing growth	Flintshire and Wrexham	£8,100,000	£950,000	£0	£950,000	£950,000	£0	£950,000
Co-ordination of existing business support arrangements and micro-grant support	Flintshire and Wrexham	£950,000	£0	£0	£0	£50,000	£50,000	£100,000
		£20,225,300	£7,450,000	£667,900	£8,117,900	£1,200,000	£517,900	£1,717,900

3.4.4 Skills

Detailed discussions are ongoing with the core skills partners (Coleg Cambria and Wrexham University) regarding the specific design of the initial skills programme. The intention is to deliver a range of business facing skills courses and employment initiatives that both address industry need and support the next wave of school leavers to engage with the roles created by growth and opportunity in the Investment Zone.

Description of the Intervention/project	Spatial Focus & Postcodes	IZ Funding Amount	Year 1 25/26 (Actual)			Year 2 26/27		
			CDEL	RDEL	Total	CDEL	RDEL	Total
- Pre 16 STEM Engagement with Schools and Third Sector organisations - Internship Programme - Skills Academy - Capital Investment in Coleg Cambria's Deeside and Bersham sites for enhanced Apprenticeship facilities and school link provision - Capital Allocation for Skills Delivery (including pre-16)	Flintshire and Wrexham	£7,851,555	£0	£262,000	£262,000	£2,200,000	£846,222	£3,046,222
- Skills Bootcamps across themes of Advanced Manufacturing, Industry 4.0 and Digital, with sector-relevant content developed in partnership with industry - Co-creation of new and co-created development of current offerings to support sector-specific skill requirements*	Flintshire and Wrexham	£8,029,600	£0	£336,700	£336,700	£604,500	£941,200	£1,545,700
- Entrepreneurial skills training programme developed for regional / sector-specific needs	Flintshire and Wrexham	£1,200,000	£0	£120,000	£120,000	£0	£120,000	£120,000
- Apprenticeship incentive scheme, supporting recruitment and retention of AM / Digital Apprenticeships, Higher Engineering Apprenticeships (L4) and Degree Apprenticeships (L5/L6) - Degree Apprenticeships including the co-creation of Engineering Management MSc programme and incentives to support and stimulate programme demand - PhDs and MRes	Flintshire and Wrexham	£4,486,000	£0	£373,000	£373,000	£0	£373,000	£373,000
		£21,567,155	£0	£1,091,700	£1,091,700	£2,804,500	£2,280,422	£5,084,922

3.4.5 Programme Administration and Delivery

Over the ten-year duration of the Investment Zone, a total of £6.4m is available to support the programme's administration. From this allocation, £220,000 per annum is allocated to Flintshire Council, £220,000 per annum to Wrexham Council and £200,000 per annum to the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee (Ambition North Wales) to undertake its statutory role as the accountable body. In addition, there is £1m to support the Planning Unit in Flintshire and Wrexham Councils and a further resource to support studies and projects in the Investment Zone. The first three of these projects is set out above.

Description of the Intervention/project	Spatial Focus & Postcodes	IZ Funding Amount	Year 1 25/26 (Actual)			Year 2 26/27		
			CDEL	RDEL	Total	CDEL	RDEL	Total
Flintshire Council	Flintshire	£2,200,000		£220,000	£220,000		£220,000	£220,000
Wrexham Council	Wrexham	£2,200,000		£220,000	£220,000		£220,000	£220,000
CJC	Flintshire and Wrexham	£2,000,000		£200,000	£200,000		£200,000	£200,000
Planning Unit	Flintshire and Wrexham	£1,000,000		£200,000	£200,000		£200,000	£200,000
Studies	Flintshire and Wrexham	£930,000		£195,000	£195,000		£150,000	£150,000
		£8,330,000		£1,035,000	£1,035,000		£990,000	£990,000

3.6. Communications

The Annual Delivery Plan will set out the following key strategies:

- 3.6.1 **Communications Strategy**, to allocate the resource and set out the key communications opportunities in Year 1 and 2 of the Investment Zone. Initially focused on the announcements associated with the programme launch and later focused on project announcements and IZ developments. The Communications Strategy will be agreed with Welsh and UK Governments and managed by the CJC's communications officer with support from communications officers at Flintshire and Wrexham Councils.
- 3.6.2 **Engagement Strategy**, to set out a RACI for key organisations and stakeholders to the Investment Zone. The Engagement Strategy will be agreed with Welsh and UK Governments and managed by the programme leads at the CJC with support from IZ programme lead officers in both Councils.
- 3.6.3 **Marketing Strategy**, to develop the messaging, branding and marketing materials available to the Investment Zone and to set out how the IZ is promoted alongside key partners. The Marketing Strategy will be agreed with Welsh and UK Governments and managed by communications leads at the CJC with support from communications officers in both Councils.

3.7. Key Investment Zone Decisions

The basis for decision making in the Investment Zone is set out in the Inter-Authority Agreement. The principle of decision-making resting with the body undertaking the project assurance is understood, i.e. projects assured by the CJC will be determined by the CJC (or Economic Well-being Sub-Committee (EWSC) and projects assured by the partner Council will be approved for investment by the relevant local authority. Major delegated programmes with the Investment Zone will be accompanied by a Grant Funding Agreement between the CJC and the local authority setting out how decisions should be made and reported.

Theme	Decision Structure
Programme	Decision made by accountable body for spend (CJC, Flintshire and Wrexham for use of its own funds as per the IAA) Procured partnerships expected to be tendered and awarded by the CJC/EWSC.
Infrastructure	Major projects approved by the CJC and projects below the agreed threshold approved by the two Councils unless Council's request the assurance and decision are undertaken by the CJC.
Business Support	Approval by the organisation undertaking the assurance.
Research and Development	CJC to approve the Data project, Councils and CJC to determine decision making to grants awarded to business.
Skills	Approval by the EWSC, via the RSP and IZ Skills Sub-Group.

3.8. Investment Zone Procurements

The expectation is that the CJC and two host Councils will follow their own procurement contract standing orders or Procurement Policy when spending Investment Zone resource on key expenditures. If the CJC requires its own procurement policy to be followed by any third party, it will set this out in the Grant Funding Agreement aligned to the investment concerned.

Businesses should follow the requirements of the Grant Funding Agreement and as a minimum follow the spirit of public sector procurement and in delivery of projects with IZ support set out how they are meeting the wider policy objectives of the Investment Zone in terms of social partnerships, with particular regard to the Fair Work Statement.

The expectation is that all expenditure above £2500 is evidenced with three quotes and commissioned activity over £25,000 is advertised either via Sell2Wales or another appropriate platform or framework.

3.9. Annual Delivery Plan Sign Off

Approval of this report will enable the ADP document to be signed off by the Senior Finance Officer (S151) of the CJC. Approval to the ADP by both Governments will enable the final MoU and Grant Funding Offer Letter to be issued by Welsh and UK Governments. It may be necessary to made edits to the ADP as submitted. Any material changes will be reported to the Working Group.

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1: Terms of Reference for the Investment Zone Working Group

STATUTORY OFFICERS RESPONSE:

i. Monitoring Officer:

“The ADP will be one of the key platform for delivery and performance. The CJC needs to consider the plan in this context and ensure that it is content with the proposed programme and outputs.”

ii. Statutory Finance Officer:

“The approval of the Annual Delivery Plan is a key step in the governance of the Investment Zone programme. Government guidance requires the ADP to signed by Section 151 Officer and presented to UK Government and Welsh Government. I will continue to collaborate with colleagues to ensure that the ADP is delivered as required.”