



NORTH WALES CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEE

23rd January, 2026

TITLE: North Wales Innovation Partnership Fund
- North Wales Innovation Board

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1. To summarise the progress made on a North Wales Innovation Partnership Fund proposal and to seek approval to the submission of an 'Expression of Readiness' and Terms of Reference for a new North Wales Innovation Board.

2. DECISION SOUGHT

- Approve the Terms of Reference attached to this report as *Appendix 1*.
- Submit an Expression of Readiness for a North Wales Local Innovation Partnership Fund proposal.

3. REASON FOR THE DECISION

3.1. Background

- 3.1.1 In July 2025 the CJC took a decision to welcome proposals for a North Wales Innovation Board. Since this time, the 'Innovation Board Working Group' stakeholders have been working together on the scope and role of such a Board. Much of the initial discussion considered how a focused board could bring expertise and guidance on innovation themes to support the delivery of the Investment Zone in a similar vein to how the Regional Skills Partnership is supporting Investment Zone Skills Strategy.

- 3.1.2 The opportunity for a regional innovation board has developed significantly since the Government's announcement of the Local Innovation Partnership Fund.

3.2. Local Innovation Partnership Fund

- 3.2.1 The Government has announced its intention to administer £500m for a programme of Local Innovation Partnerships across the UK. Some regions, including Cardiff Capital Region have been earmarked £30m, whereas other regions, including North Wales are invited to consider a competitive process to secure £20m of revenue and capital funding. The Local Innovation Partnership programme is a 5-year programme intended to support innovation across industry, academia and the public sector (the triple helix).

- 3.2.2 The thematic focus of the proposal is evolving but likely to focus on the 'Sustainable Manufacturing' opportunities for businesses across North Wales to respond to the major investment opportunities including Anglesey Freeport, AI Growth Zone, Wylfa SMR Programme, Offshore Energy Programme, North Wales Growth Deal and the Flintshire and Wrexham Investment Zone.
- 3.2.3 If approved, it is expected that Ambition North Wales will submit the 'Expression of Readiness' to UK Research and Innovation by the deadline on the 12th February, 2026. Further details on the proposal will be brought back to the CJC if UKRI invites the region to prepare a proposal.
- 3.2.4 There is clear intent from the partners, that investment and delivery will occur locally and across North Wales and complement existing funding arrangements.

4. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1. Ambition North Wales has financially supported the development of the Local Innovation Partnership Fund and proposals for a North Wales Innovation Board.
- 4.2. The financial considerations relating to the Innovation Board will be determined by the Board in early meetings to determine the level of resource required to operate the programme. Initially, the Board will be supported by Ambition North Wales from resources within existing programmes.
- 4.3. The financial considerations relating to the Local Innovation Partnership Fund proposal will be brought back to the CJC once it has been confirmed by UKRI that North Wales is invited to submit a formal proposal. This would include the administration of up to £20m over 5 years with the majority of funds being distributed to partners across North Wales.

5. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1. The legal aspects of the Local Innovation Partnerships Fund, including a partnership MOU and delivery and funding agreements will be brought back to a future CJC once it has been confirmed that North Wales will prepare a formal proposal.
- 5.2. The Terms of Reference attached set out the basis for the operation of the Innovation Board.

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1: Terms of Reference for the North Wales Innovation Board

STATUTORY OFFICERS RESPONSE

i. Monitoring Officer

"This report represents an interim step in creating the Partnership Fund. When the details of the proposition are being considered for approval by the CJC the overall governance structures and function will need to be detailed and aligned."

ii. **Statutory Finance Officer**

"I have no objections to the decision sought from a financial perspective. I note from paragraph 4.3 that the financial considerations relating to the Local Innovation Partnership Fund proposal will be brought back to the CJC once it has been confirmed by UKRI that North Wales is invited to submit a formal proposal."