



ECONOMIC WELL-BEING SUB-COMMITTEE

6th February, 2026

TITLE: Flintshire and Wrexham Investment Zone
- Year 2 Annual Delivery Plan

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1. The focus of this report is on the Year 2 Annual Delivery Plan and setting out the intended programme for the Year 2026-27. It covers progress made to date in Year 1 and some of the key activities planned for Year 2. Allocations included in this report are to be included in the Year 2 Annual Delivery Plan submitted to UK Government and Welsh Government to claim the Year 2 funds (expected to be received in April 2026).

2. DECISION SOUGHT

2.1. The Economic Well-being Sub-Committee is asked to:

- Approve the investment allocations of the Annual Delivery Plan for Year 2 and note allocations in Year 1 that will be utilised as part of the Year 2 programme.
- Approve the Investment Zone Programmes as set out in Section 4 of this report inclusive of a £4m allocation to the Wrexham University Business Gateway project.
- Permit the CJC's s151 to sign and issue the ADP documents to UKG and WG and make any further non-material amendments necessary to agree the ADP with UKG and WG.

3. REASON FOR THE DECISION

3.1. As stated in the report.

4. BACKGROUND AND RELEVANT CONSIDERATION

4.1. Background

4.1.1. 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.

4.2. Key Updates

4.2.1 The Year 1 Annual Delivery Plan has been agreed with Government. The key updates in relation to Year 1 and planning for Year 2 are as follows:

- adjustments to skills allocations to allow £4m to support the Wrexham University Business Gateway project;
- continued engagement with Wrexham University and Coleg Cambria to determine the initial skills programmes. Proposals are expected to be considered by the Regional Skills Partnership before being considered by the CJC;
- Transport for Wales are finalising the Bus Transformation Business Case;
- The Bus Capital Project will prepare a Business Case in Spring/Summer 2026;
- Airbus have prepared a Strategic Outline Case for the Manufacturing Readiness Centre project and require a further £14m from Welsh Government. This is part of a wider proposition that includes a new Logistics Centre on site;
- Proposals for a Skills and Innovation Centre at Wrexham Industrial Estate are being prepared by AMRC, Wrexham Leadership Alliance, Wrexham Council and Wrexham University. Phase 1 is a feasibility study. £3m of this £5m allocation is allocated to the Business Gateway Project;
- Padeswood Sidings allocation in Year 1 may increase – further discussion and agreement with IZ partners and Ambition North Wales Growth Deal to agree a change to the current allocation;
- Pochin Goodman are preparing a business case for investment to unlock their site at Deeside Gateway;
- UtopiaCity is preparing a business case for investment to unlock their development. The proposal is that £5m is allocated to upgrade the offsite sewer infrastructure and a further £5m is requested from the Growth Deal;
- Business Support programmes have been developed by Flintshire and Wrexham Councils and are ready to launch once the funds are in place;
- Business support regarding investment opportunity across Flintshire;
- MOU and Grant Offer Letter expected imminently; and
- Ongoing development of local NDR Investment Strategies (subject to individual Council approvals).

4.3. Programme Overview

4.3.1 The following have been commenced in Year 1 of the Investment Zone programme.

a) Planning and Programme

- preparation and agreement to the requirements of WG and UKG for Gateways 1-5
- preparation and agreement to the MOU
- preparation and agreement to the Inter-Authority Agreement
- development and agreement to a Tax Site Implementation Plan
- development and Council agreement to a Wrexham NDR Investment Fund Commencement Plan
- development and Council agreement to a Flintshire NDR Investment Fund Commencement Plan

- SLA with Flintshire and Wrexham Planning Departments for an Investment Zone Planning Unit
- Recruitment of principle officers in Flintshire and Wrexham Councils
- Support and CJC approval to the Knauf Investment Business Case (a Growth Deal Project)
- Promote the Investment Zone to forums and engagement events
- Support for key partnerships, in particular (set out in more detail in section 3.3):
 - Innovation Partnership Programme
 - Investment Zone Decarbonisation Programme
 - Transport for Wales - Business Case for Bus Transformation
 - National Manufacturing Institute

b) Skills

- The RSP, Coleg Cambria and Wrexham University development of early stage projects, prepared for RSP consultation in March 2026
- Specific further development of a pre-16 programme, entrepreneurial network and Knowledge Transfer Partnership programme for business R&D
- Development and RSP approval to an Investment Zone Skills Plan
- Established an Investment Zone Skills Group as a sub-group to the RSP

c) 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 small grants scheme ready to launch in Q1 2026
- Engagement with WU and CC on innovation support concepts for business

d) Infrastructure

- Preparation of an Innovation Centre Strategic Outline Business Case by Airbus and Coleg Cambria
- Outline proposal for infrastructure to unlock remaining development parcels at Deeside Gateway
- Ongoing engagement with landowners on Wrexham Industrial Estate regarding infrastructure requirements
- Concept development for an Innovation / SME facility at WIE
- Development of business case for bus transformation
- Establish workstream for Strategic Ecological Mitigation Delivery for WIE

4.4. Procured Programmes

4.4.1 The procurement of the Investment Zone Innovation Programme and the feasibility and demonstration of a National Manufacturing Institute for Wales are well advanced and expected to start in February 2026. Design of the Investment Zone decarbonisation programme is subject to further refinement with regional and national decarbonisation partners including Net Zero Industry Wales, NEWID and Deeside Decarbonisation Forum.

4.5. Year 1 and Year 2 Funding Allocations

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

4.5.1 Infrastructure

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

- 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 Siding project (currently allocated at £2m but could be increased to up to £6m subject to the change request process between Welsh Government and ANW 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
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	£0
Enterprise, Engineering and Optics Centre Project: Academic Support and R&D Output Wrexham Business Gateway (£1m) Wrexham University - Equipment at EOC	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) £2m Wrexham University Business Gateway (£3m)	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	£0	£0	£0
Padeswood Sidings - change in allocation subject to discussion and agreement	Flintshire	£2,000,000	£2,000,000	£0	£2,000,000	£0	£0	£0
Wrexham Gateway including Active Travel	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 Aligned to Sewer Upgrade Project	Wrexham	£5,000,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0

4.5.2 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.

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

4.5.3 Business Support

The key elements of the business support programme are focused on supporting businesses with innovation vouchers, coordinated by Wrexham University, a capital grants programme (including micro grants) for business, dispersed 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- Flintshire and 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

4.5.4 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.

The allocations for Year 1 will be re-profiled once project confirmations have been secured (expected in March 2026).

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	Flintshire and Wrexham	£7,851,555	£0	£262,000	£262,000	£2,200,000	£846,222	£3,046,222
- 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)								
- Skills Bootcamps across themes of Advanced Manufacturing, Industry 4.0 and Digital, with sector-relevant content developed in partnership with industry	Flintshire and Wrexham	£8,029,600	£0	£336,700	£336,700	£604,500	£941,200	£1,545,700
- Co-creation of new and co-created development of current offerings to support sector-specific skill requirements*								
- 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)	Flintshire and Wrexham	£4,486,000	£0	£373,000	£373,000	£0	£373,000	£373,000
- Degree Apprenticeships including the co-creation of Engineering Management MSc programme and incentives to support and stimulate programme demand								
- PhDs and MRes								
		£21,567,155	£0	£1,091,700	£1,091,700	£2,804,500	£2,280,422	£5,084,922

4.5.5 Programme

There is £6.4m available to support the programme admin elements of the Investment Zone programme, £220,000 per annum to Flintshire, £220,000 per annum to Wrexham and £200,000 per annum to Ambition North Wales. In addition, there is £1m to support the Planning Unit in Flintshire and Wrexham 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

4.6. Communications

4.6.1 The ADP will set out the following key strategies:

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 WG and UKG and managed by communications leads at the CJC with support from communications officers in both Councils.

Engagement Strategy, to set out a RACI for key organisations and stakeholders to the Investment Zone. The Engagement Strategy will be agreed with WG and UKG and managed by the programme leads at the CJC with support from IZ programme lead officers in both Councils.

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 WG and UKG and managed by communications leads at the CJC with support from communications officers in both Councils.

4.7. Investment Zone Procurements

- 4.7.1 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.
- 4.7.2 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.
- 4.7.3 The expectation is that all expenditure above £2,500 is evidenced with three quotes and commissioned activity over £25,000 is advertised either via Sell2Wales or another appropriate platform or framework.

4.8. Annual Delivery Plan Sign Off

4.8.1 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 UKG and WG. It may be necessary to make edits to the ADP as submitted. Any material changes will be reported to the Working Group.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1. As per the ADP Year 1 Report, the financial implications are set out in the budget tables above. We anticipate that the funds associated with Year 1 will be received by the CJC in February following completion of the Investment Zone MOU, Grant Offer Letter and Inter-Authority Agreement. The funds associated with this ADP are expected in April 2026. The interest earned on funds received will be estimated and agreed with the CJC s151 officer and allocations for this funding agreed between the IZ partners. The expectation is that resource requirements of the Investment Zone programme will require these additional funds. The IAA sets out the basis for revenue funds to be allocated to partners, and a simple claim process will be developed to provide an audit trail of payments.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1. This ADP Year 2 programme is subject to the completion of the MOU, Grant Offer Letter and IAA. Should the CJC be in receipt of the MOU and Grant Offer Letter week beginning February 2nd, the expectation is that the IAA, MOU and Grant Offer Letter could be completed within 2 weeks allowing for funds to be received for ADP Year 1 by the end of February and ADP Year 2 funds in April 2026.

APPENDICES:

None

STATUTORY OFFICERS RESPONSE:

i. Monitoring Officer:

“The Annual Delivery Plan will be one of the key platforms 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. It has been developed through the established governance arrangements of the Investment Zone.”

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 Annual Delivery Plan to be signed by Section 151 Officer and presented to UK Government and Welsh Government. I will continue to collaborate with colleagues to ensure that the Annual Delivery Plan is delivered as required and to provide the necessary support in the development of the Investment Zone.”