



Uchelgais Gogledd Cymru
Ambition North Wales

Annual Report 2025/26

MAE'R DDOGFEN HON AR GAEL YN GYMRAEG HEFYD.
THIS DOCUMENT IS ALSO AVAILABLE IN WELSH.



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Our Ambition

To be confident and cohesive, focused on improving the region’s economic, social and environmental well-being.

To see the region develop in a sustainable way, with opportunities for people to gain new skills, develop rewarding careers, for businesses to grow and communities to prosper.

All while championing the Welsh language, our culture and heritage, in line with the well-being goals for Wales.

Foreword

As Chair, I'm pleased to present on behalf of Ambition North Wales our Annual Report for 2025/26. This has been a year of important transition, strengthened partnership and continued progress, as we have worked collectively to support a more resilient, connected, innovative and sustainable North Wales.

One of the most significant developments during the year was bringing together the Growth Deal, the Regional Skills Partnership and the Portfolio Management Office team within a new corporate structure - the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee known under the brand name Ambition North Wales, creating a stronger platform for regional collaboration and long-term delivery.

Alongside this transition, I have continued to embed the policies, processes and governance arrangements needed to support our wider responsibilities for economic well-being, regional transport and strategic planning. These foundations are essential to ensuring that our regional ambitions are supported by robust decision-making, clear accountability and effective delivery.

This report reflects the progress made across 2025/26, including key achievements through the North Wales Growth Deal, the Flintshire and Wrexham Investment Zone, the Regional Transport Plan, the Strategic Development Plan and the wider programme of regional activity. It also recognises the substantial work taking place behind the scenes to develop business cases, strengthen assurance, engage with governments, support project sponsors and build the capacity needed to deliver over the long-term.

I am grateful to our partners, stakeholders and delivery teams for their commitment, expertise and constructive collaboration throughout the year. Their contribution has been central to maintaining momentum, responding to change and ensuring that our work remains focused on the needs and opportunities of the region.

Looking ahead, I do so with confidence in the strength of our partnership and the shared commitment that underpins Ambition North Wales. The year ahead will bring further challenges and opportunities, but the progress set out in this report demonstrates that we are well placed to continue working together for the benefit of our people, communities and businesses.



Cllr Mark Pritchard

**Chair
North Wales
Corporate Joint Committee**

A Year of Delivery, Transition and Momentum

2025/26 for Ambition North Wales has been a year of transition and momentum, combining major changes in terms of governance, structure and process with significant delivery and maintained investment focus. On 1 April 2025 the North Wales Growth Deal, the Regional Skills Partnership and our team transferred into the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee, under the Ambition North Wales brand. This has enabled the organisation to move into a more confident phase of delivery, supported by strengthened governance, renewed leadership and a focus on regional impact.

This year has seen significant progress across the Growth Deal, with seven projects now in delivery and a further ten approved and ready to move into delivery next year. A number of business cases have been approved, spend has accelerated, and a reserve list has been created to ensure that strong, deliverable projects can be brought forward. The portfolio has also been reset, with projects withdrawn and funding released for reinvestment in reserve list projects with clear deliverability and benefits for the region.

The formal approval of the Flintshire and Wrexham Investment Zone by the UK and Welsh Governments was another major milestone, marking the start of a ten-year programme to drive investment, create opportunities for local employers and communities, and support long-term economic growth.

Alongside this, Ambition North Wales has continued to support wider regional priorities, including skills and employability, strategic transport, strategic planning and investment opportunities. These areas are increasingly interconnected, and our role is to help align activity, strengthen delivery and maximise the benefits for residents, businesses and communities.

Organisationally, this has also been a year of growth and renewed leadership. Alongside our appointments as Chief Executive and Portfolio Director, other key appointments have strengthened the delivery structure, including Dylan Williams (Chief Executive of Isle of Anglesey County Council) as Growth Deal Senior Responsible Owner and the appointment of Non-Executive Advisors, Dave Penrith and Nick Bennett.

Work has continued to build stronger internal systems and capability following the transfer, with work progressing on governance, corporate planning and transformation activity, providing the foundations needed to deliver an increasingly complex regional portfolio with confidence, pace and transparency.

As we look ahead, we feel privileged and excited to work with talented and committed politicians, colleagues, partners and stakeholders across the region. Together, we will continue to build on the progress made this year, maintain momentum on delivery and focus on creating a vibrant, thriving and sustainable economy for North Wales.



Alwen Williams
Chief Executive



Hedd Vaughan-Evans
Portfolio Director

Driving Ambition, Growth and Opportunity in North Wales

As the recently appointed Non-Executive Advisors to Ambition North Wales, we are delighted to be supporting the next stage of the region's development. North Wales has significant opportunities ahead, and we believe the private sector has a vital role to play in helping shape, challenge and strengthen the work being taken forward by Ambition North Wales.

One of our first priorities will be to establish a new Business Advisory Board, bringing together experienced private sector leaders and employers from across the region. The Board will provide independent advice, strategic insight and constructive challenge, ensuring that the voice of business is embedded in the delivery of major regional programmes, including the North Wales Growth Deal and the Flintshire and Wrexham Investment Zone.

We see the Board as a vital link between Ambition North Wales and the wider business community. By drawing on the expertise, networks and practical experience of business leaders, it will help identify opportunities, address barriers and support investment that delivers long-term benefits for businesses, communities and future generations.

The Business Advisory Board will be at the heart of this momentum, helping to challenge assumptions, strengthen decision-making and act as a powerful advocate for Ambition North Wales and the region. Its contribution will be important in helping realise our shared vision of a vibrant, sustainable and resilient economy where businesses can grow, communities can flourish and North Wales can fulfil its economic potential.

We are looking forward to working with partners across all sectors to build a Board that can champion North Wales, support sustainable and inclusive growth, and help ensure that the region is well placed to realise its full economic potential.



Dave Penrith
Non-Executive Advisor



Nick Bennett
Non-Executive Advisor

Milestones

April 2025 to March 2026



The Economic Well-being Sub-Committee approved the establishment of a reserve list of 17 North Wales Growth Deal projects.



The North Wales Clean Energy Fund was launched.

April

May

June

July



The Growth Deal and the Portfolio Management Office transferred to the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee on 1st April 2025.



Alwen Williams was appointed Chief Executive of the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee.



Dave Penrith and Nick Bennett were appointed as Non-Executive Advisors for Ambition North Wales.



A consultation on the Draft Delivery Agreement for our Strategic Development Plan was undertaken.

November

October

September

August



Funded by the Growth Deal, the CanfodAu building at Wrexham University was officially opened.



Engagement on our digital connectivity work at Connected Britain and our Energy programme at the Welsh Renewable & Clean Energy Cluster Network.



Announcement of the approval of the Gogledd Môn Sites and Premises Project - unlocking the next stage of a £10.4million regeneration investment.



Confirmation by Welsh Government on its distribution of the Regional Transport Fund to local authorities across the region.

December

January

February

March



The Flintshire and Wrexham Investment Zone was formally approved by UK and Welsh governments.



Stakeholders visited the site of Dairy Sheep Wales - part of the wider Glynllifon Rural Economy Hub project.

North Wales Corporate Joint Committee



Regional Transport Plan



Strategic Development Plan



Economic Well-being

North Wales Corporate Joint Committee

The North Wales Corporate Joint Committee (CJC), which uses the brand name Ambition North Wales, is a public body that comprises the six local authority administrative areas of North Wales, covering Gwynedd, Anglesey, Conwy, Denbighshire, Wrexham and Flintshire councils, and Eryri National Park Authority.

On 1st April 2025 the Portfolio Management Office, the North Wales Growth Deal and the Regional Skills Partnership transferred into the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee .

The Corporate Joint Committee has a statutory responsibility for regional transport, strategic planning as well as a non statutory responsibility for enhancing and promoting the economic well-being of North Wales.

Regional Transport Plan

The North Wales Regional Transport Plan sets out a vision for a safe, sustainable, affordable and integrated transport network that supports economic growth, improves connectivity and reduces reliance on private vehicles. Developed by Ambition North Wales with local authorities, Transport for Wales and Welsh Government, the plan will be delivered by local authorities through Regional Transport Fund schemes, with oversight from the Transport Sub-Committee. By prioritising public transport, active travel and innovative mobility solutions, the Regional Transport Plan aims to improve access to jobs and services, reduce environmental impacts and create a more connected and resilient transport system for North Wales.

Strategic Development Plan

The Strategic Development Plan will provide a regional framework for planning across North Wales, recognising that communities, markets and infrastructure needs to extend beyond individual local authority boundaries. It will support a cohesive long-term vision for sustainable economic growth, infrastructure, quality of life and balanced development, while aligning with Welsh Government statutory requirements and national priorities. The Corporate Joint Committee has submitted its Delivery Agreement, including the statement of community involvement and timetable, and following Welsh Government approval work to deliver the Strategic Development Plan over the next five years has now commenced.

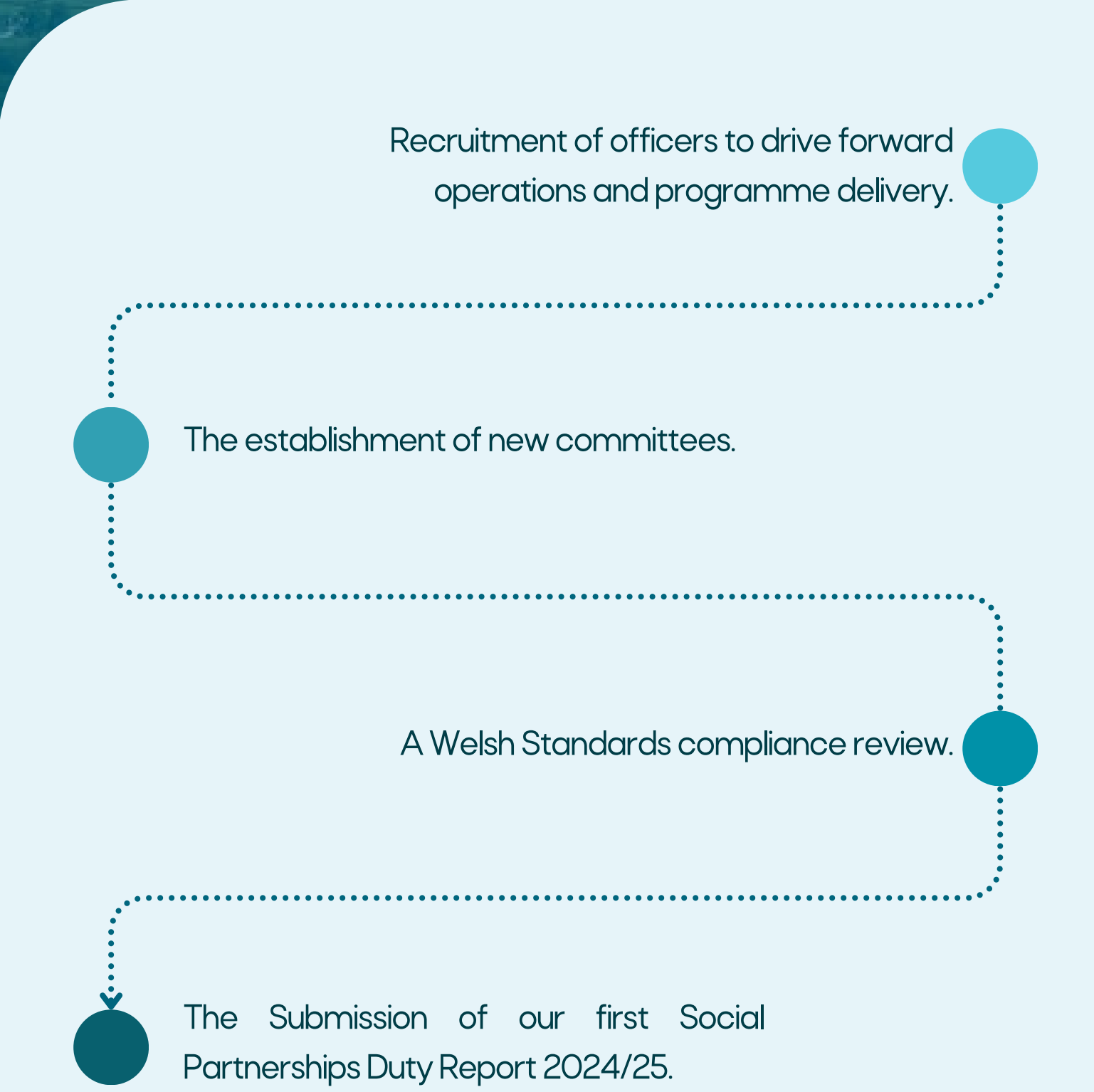
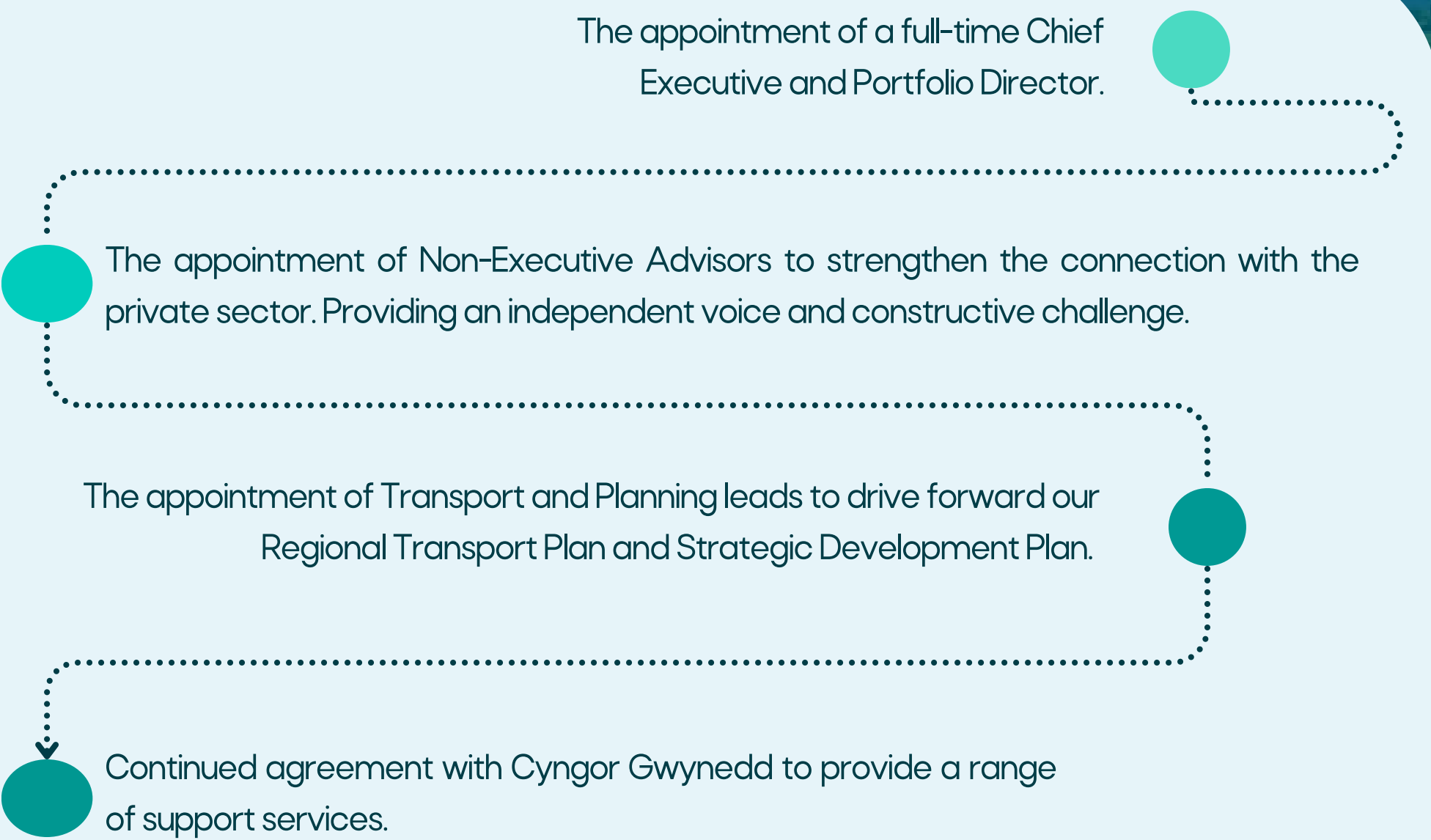
Economic Well-being

In addition to its statutory responsibilities, the Corporate Joint Committee has a non-statutory duty to enhance and promote the economic well-being of North Wales. This function currently comprises five core areas: the North Wales Growth Deal, the Flintshire and Wrexham Investment Zone, the Regional Skills Partnership, Strategic Energy, and Shared Prosperity. Together, these programmes support the region's economy and contribute to long-term economic growth across North Wales.



Corporate Joint Committee Highlights

As we enter a new chapter for Ambition North Wales, now the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee, with the Portfolio Management Office, the North Wales Growth Deal and the Regional Skills Partnership transferred since the 1st of April 2025. An ambitious and long-term programme of change continues to establish the Corporate Joint Committee. Key highlights during the last 12 months have included:





Regional Transport Plan

Regional Transport Plan

The long-term vision of the Regional Transport Plan is that North Wales will have a safe, sustainable, affordable, resilient, and effective integrated transport network that supports economic growth, prosperity for all, inclusivity and well-being.

Our vision is supported by **four SMART objectives**:



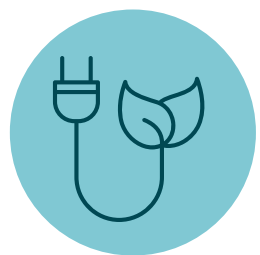
Improve digital connectivity and local services



Improve accessibility and transport choice



Enable sustainable economic growth



Enable decarbonisation through transition to a zero-emission fleet

Our public and stakeholder consultation on the Regional Transport Plan came to a close in April 2025.



1,600+

responses received during the consultation.



67%

of consultation respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the vision and objectives.



The feedback has informed the Regional Transport Plan.



Regional Transport Plan

Approved by the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee in July 2025.

Became policy after its approval by Welsh Government in September 2025.

On approving the Plan, the then Cabinet Secretary stated that the plan “is a great achievement and a big step forward for regional collaboration” and confirmed that “it is consistent with the Wales Transport Strategy, and the policies are adequate for implementation of the Wales Transport Strategy in the region.”

£28m

capital funding secured for sustainable transport interventions to be delivered in 2026/27

The Regional Transport Plan includes a Delivery Plan that sets out the schemes that could be delivered in North Wales if funding is available. Ambition North Wales worked closely with the local authorities in the region to prioritise which of these schemes to fund with Regional Transport Funding in 2026/27. This work secured over £28m of capital funding for sustainable transport interventions to be delivered in 2026/27, which improve access to jobs, services, education and leisure for communities across North Wales.

Funding allocation 2026/27



61%

for walking, wheeling and cycling schemes



19%

for highways schemes



7%

public transport



6%

electric vehicles



5%

for road safety capital



Strategic Development Plan

Strategic Development Plan

Work commenced on the Strategic Development Plan Delivery Agreement in April 2025, with a draft document published for public consultation during July and August 2025. Key stakeholders and partners were directly invited to participate to ensure the development process was as informed as possible.

Following consideration of the consultation feedback received, the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee approved the draft Delivery Agreement in September 2025 for submission to Welsh Government, subject to the identification and approval of an appropriate budget for Strategic Development Plan preparation.

In January 2026, the Corporate Joint Committee approved its 2026/27 budget, which included provision to commence work on the Strategic Development Plan. At the same meeting, the Corporate Joint Committee approved submission of the draft Delivery Agreement to Welsh Government, which subsequently granted approval within one week of receipt.

Evidence gathering to support the development of the Strategic Development Plan is currently underway.





Economic Well-being



Flintshire and Wrexham Investment Zone



North Wales Growth Deal



Regional Skills Partnership



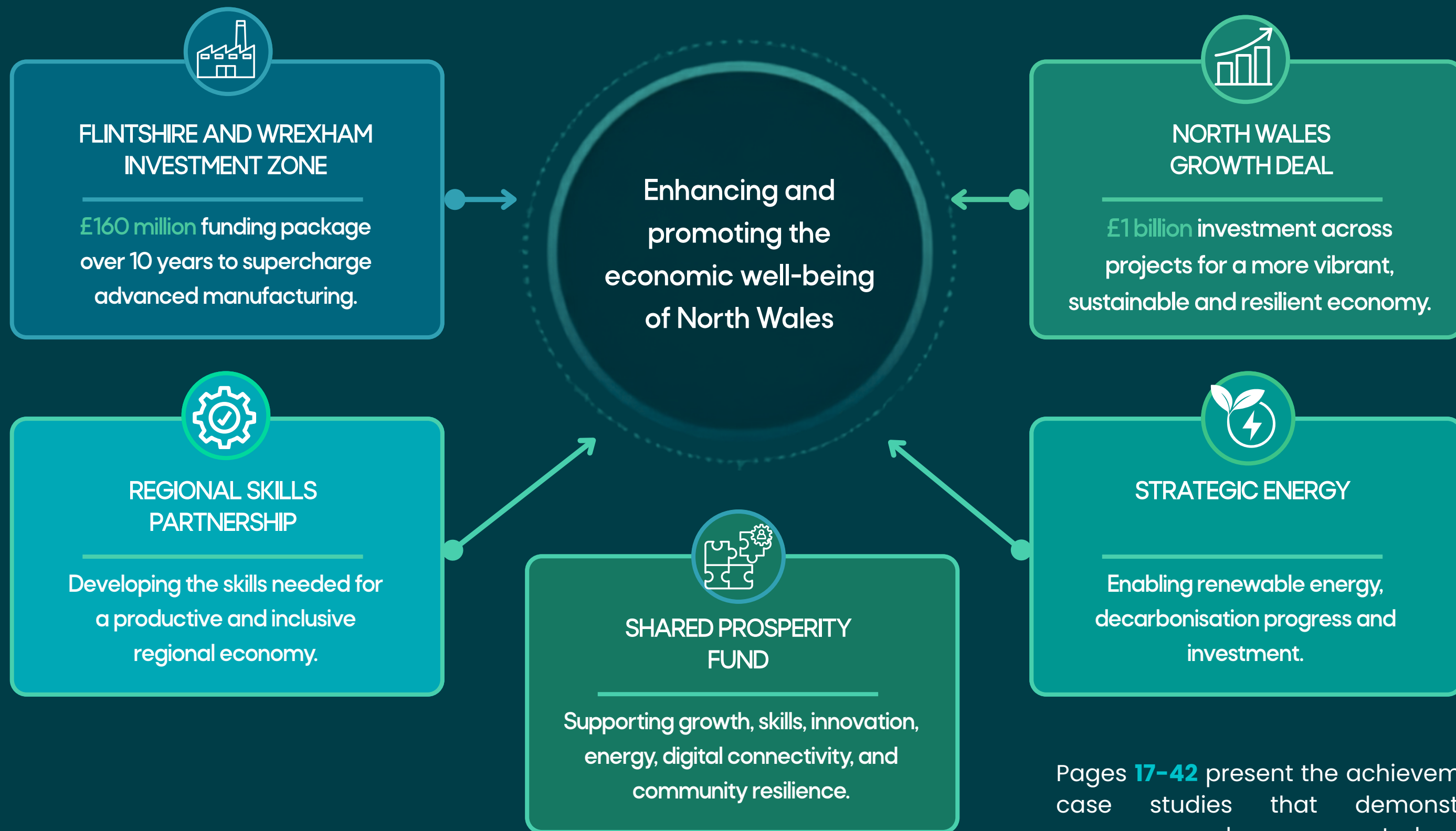
Shared Prosperity Funding



Strategic Energy

Economic Well-being

Supporting investment, innovation, skills and sustainable growth across **North Wales**.



Pages **17-42** present the achievements, outcomes and case studies that demonstrate how these programmes have supported economic well-being across North Wales during 2025/26.



Parth Buddsoddi
Sir y Fflint a Wrecsam
Flintshire and Wrexham
Investment Zone

Flintshire and Wrexham Investment Zone



funded by:



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



UK Government
Llywodraeth y DU
Office of the Secretary of State for Wales
Swyddfa Ysgrifennydd Gwladol Cymru

Flintshire and Wrexham Investment Zone

The Flintshire and Wrexham Investment Zone is supported by £160m of government investment over 10 years to drive growth in the advanced manufacturing sector in Flintshire and Wrexham. It is being delivered by a partnership between Flintshire County Council, Wrexham County Borough Council, Ambition North Wales, Welsh Government and UK Government.

The region's industrial story spans over a century from steel, chemicals and energy to the advanced aerospace, automotive, and food and life sciences clusters that have grown alongside them. Generations of skilled workers have formed a regional workforce with manufacturing embedded in its culture. The technical aptitude, sector knowledge and work ethic have taken decades to develop.

Building on this unique heritage, the Investment Zone is accelerating further growth in manufacturing activity, skills, transport infrastructure, key investment sites and innovation. It is a long-term programme to promote what the region has to offer and maximise the impact of future investment: for investors, businesses, local people and communities.



The Investment Zone will:



Create 6,000 new jobs, growing the manufacturing sector in terms of jobs, Gross Value Added (GVA) and investment in modern manufacturing such as aerospace, defence, automotive engineering, life sciences, food and food packaging.



Attract investment in business growth, and an overall development of at least 5.5 million sqft of new floorspace to physically grow the sector's capability to manufacture and employ.



Create three tax sites, offering a range of tax reliefs to occupying businesses, including business rates relief, land transaction tax relief, enhanced capital allowances and employer national insurance contributions relief.



Help local communities achieve a higher overall skills level in the manufacturing workforce and encourage more young people to pursue quality jobs in new manufacturing roles linked to skills of the future.



Deliver a significant uptake in the use and satisfaction of public transport, enabled by new, reliable, high frequency bus services operating on more direct routes between communities and employment sites.

Overview of the Investment Zone



£160m

government investment
over 10 years



£1bn+

in private investment
targeted



6,000

new high quality jobs



40%

of the regional economy
in manufacturing

9

locations ready for
investment across three
tax sites

5.5m sq ft

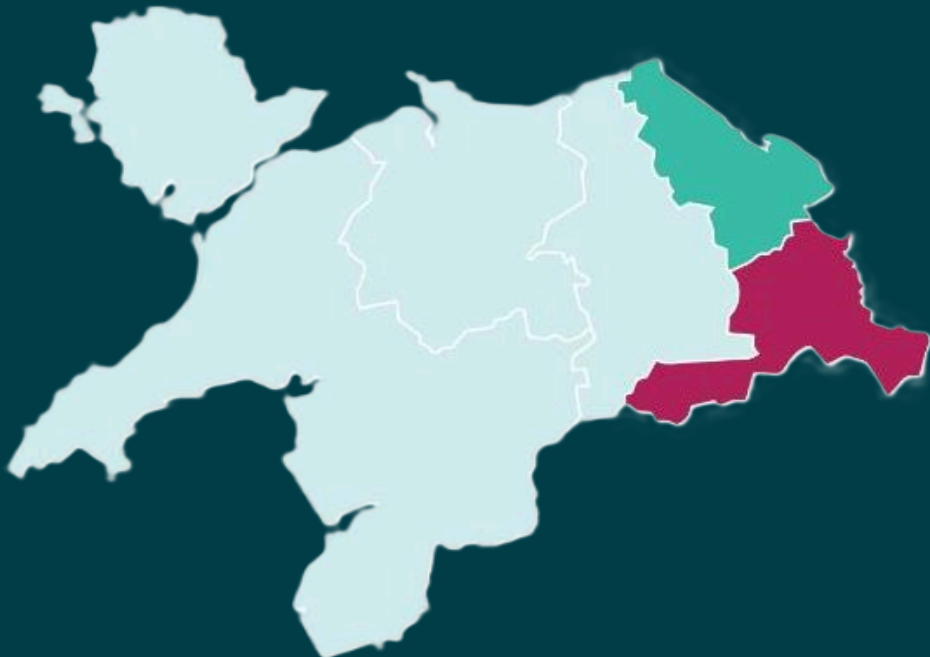
of new development potential

2

brand new innovation
centres promoting business
growth and resilience

1

dedicated planning unit,
streamlining consents for
investors



£5.5bn

in annual exports from the
existing cluster

£7.5m

business grants through
the local authority
delivered business
support programme



Skills & Workforce

31,000

manufacturing
specialists in the
local workforce

120+

graduate internships
and undergraduate
placements

12 & 15

degree
apprenticeships
and higher
engineering
apprenticeships
respectively, per year

100+

training courses for
upskilling and reskilling
the workforce

300+

participants in higher
level courses and
micro-credentials

3 & 6

PhD and MRes
research opportunities
respectively, directly
linked to Investment
Zone priorities

Progress in 2025/26

Flintshire and Wrexham Investment Zone officially launched

The Flintshire and Wrexham Investment Zone officially launched, with the funding allocated, and agreements signed between UK Government, Welsh Government, Ambition North Wales, Flintshire County Council and Wrexham County Borough Council. These approvals have enabled dedicated programme managers to be recruited, and specialist resource allocated, including legal, financial and planning, to drive delivery. Three tax sites – Deeside Gateway, Warren Hall and Wrexham Industrial Estate – were designated in November 2025, providing a range of tax reliefs, making these ideal sites to establish and grow businesses.



Flintshire and Wrexham Investment Zone Skills Strategy

The Investment Zone Skills Strategy was approved by the Regional Skills Partnership (RSP) on the 12th June 2025. The Skills Strategy was prepared by the RRegional Skills Partnership working with Wrexham University, Coleg Cambria and independent providers to set out an ambitious programme to attract local people into skilled roles, address gaps in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) participation, retain more graduates in rewarding careers and increase the representation of women and minority groups in the manufacturing sector.

Skills funding

An initial £12 million has been allocated to Wrexham University and Coleg Cambria over five years. This funding will enable hundreds of new training courses, providing upskilling and reskilling opportunities for at least 1,500 people. There will be employer co-designed training courses, and 12 new degree apprenticeships per annum (including in higher engineering, digital and SMEs).



Small Business Grants programmes were launched

Small Business Grants programmes were launched by both Flintshire and Wrexham councils in January 2026. Grants of up to £100,000 are available to support Small and Medium Enterprises in the advanced manufacturing sector to grow, create jobs and innovate. With a minimum 30% match funding paid by the business, these grants can enable the purchase of new equipment, property adaption or decarbonisation, or support accreditation or certification.



Improvements to public transport connectivity

Work is underway with Transport for Wales to develop the business cases for a number of rail and bus projects which will improve public transport connectivity to key employment sites across Flintshire and Wrexham. It will increase the workforce catchment and prioritise connecting local communities, so access to new jobs doesn't depend on car ownership, and opportunities are open to all. The first tranche of these projects are expected to come forward for approval in the coming year. The Port of Holyhead, Manchester Airport and the M53/M56 are all within reach, giving Investment Zone businesses ease of access to national and international markets and supply chains that few other Investment Zone locations can match.

Advisory Board

An Investment Zone Advisory Board, has been established to oversee delivery and progress. With representatives from across the public and private sectors, including Ambition North Wales, Flintshire County Council, Wrexham County Borough Council, Parliamentary representatives, the Regional Skills Partnership, Wrexham University, AMRC Cymru, North Wales Business Council and business leaders, it will ensure expertise is harnessed and momentum maintained for the years ahead.





Cynllun Twf
Gogledd Cymru
North Wales
Growth Deal

North Wales Growth Deal

funded by:



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



UK Government
Llywodraeth y DU
Office of the Secretary of State for Wales
Swyddfa Ysgrifennydd Gwladol Cymru

Overview of the Growth Deal

To build a more vibrant, sustainable and resilient economy in North Wales.

To build on our strengths, to boost productivity while tackling long-term challenges and economic barriers to deliver inclusive growth.

To promote growth in a scalable, inclusive and sustainable way, in line with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Investment



£240m

Growth Deal target investment



Total target investment:
over **£1bn**

Spending Objectives



Create up to
4,200
new jobs

Our Programmes



Innovation in High
Value Manufacturing



Agri-food and
Tourism



Digital
Connectivity

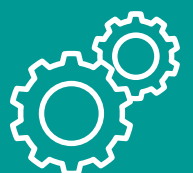
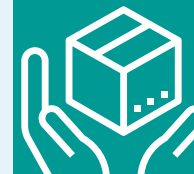


Land and
Property



Low Carbon
Energy

Growth Deal Delivery to Date in Numbers

	7 Projects in delivery		10 Projects approved not yet in delivery (funding committed)		8 Developing business cases (funding ringfenced)
	121 Jobs created (63 new jobs, 58 construction jobs)		£30.65m Growth Deal spend		£34.21m Total investment
	£6.4m Revenue income secured		5,885 Individuals engaged in careers-focused sessions		2,349m ² Floorspace developed
	106 Actions to strengthen local supply chains		26 New collaborations involving 111 organisations in support of Growth Deal projects		163 New knowledge management products created and shared

Academi Croeso



Academi Croeso, formerly known as the Tourism Talent Network, led by Grŵp Llandrillo Menai, is a hub-and-spoke model designed to create a single, coherent route into training, apprenticeships and career development across the visitor economy. The project reached a major milestone during 2025/26 with the official launch of the new brand at Theatr Clwyd in November. The launch brought together partners and stakeholders from across the tourism and hospitality sector, and marked an important step in strengthening the region’s skills pipeline for one of North Wales’ most established and distinctive industries.

During the year, delivery continued across partner sites, with build activity progressing at Portmeirion and work continuing with Zip World and other partners. The project also secured approval for additional time to bring forward a Business Justification Case for a replacement spoke, ensuring that the remaining investment can be targeted in a way that supports long-term impact. Academi Croeso is helping to future-proof skills provision, strengthen links between training and industry, and support a more resilient tourism and hospitality sector in North Wales.



“ Academi Croeso facilitates access for learners to first-class training facilities through connecting education with industry. By supporting learners and future employees in the tourism and hospitality industries to be taught and trained in real environments ensures that they are fully equipped to respond to the current and future needs of the North Wales economy. ”

Aled Jones-Griffith
Chief Executive



£3.94m
Total
investment
(to date)



25
Apprentices
registered
(to date)



30
Enterprises
supported
(to date)



£1.3m
Capital income
secured by
project
(to date)



15
New knowledge
management
products created
(to date)



Enterprise Engineering and Optics Centre

Prifysgol Wreccsam
Wrexham University

CanfodAu - Centre for Engineering and Innovation, the new facility at Wrexham University's Plas Coch campus, was officially opened in November 2025. The pioneering centre provides space for research, innovation and collaboration between students, researchers and businesses, marking a significant milestone for the Innovation in High Value Manufacturing Programme.

Focused on advanced manufacturing, composite materials, optics integration and hydrogen technologies, CanfodAu will support the co-creation of new products and processes that accelerate decarbonisation and industrial transformation. By equipping local businesses with access to specialist tools, expertise and infrastructure, the project aims to turn research and development into commercial value and help North Wales businesses compete globally.

During the year, procurement of specialist equipment progressed and additional investment was approved to enhance the offer. Work continued on associated activity including the hydrogen lab development, and also the OpTIC refurbishment at the University's base in St Asaph. The Enterprise Engineering and Optics Centre will help position North Wales as a place where high-value manufacturing can grow, innovate and attract investment.

“CanfodAu embodies the ambition at the heart of Wrexham University's vision to be a world-leading modern civic university: delivering the skills, innovation and partnerships that create jobs, improving productivity and driving inclusive growth across North Wales. Designed as a catalyst for collaboration, research and enterprise, this unique and groundbreaking facility has quickly become a flagship asset for the region. National recognition as Building Project of the Year at the Constructing Excellence in Wales Awards, together with Wrexham University's recognition as the Daily Mail's Welsh University of the Year, reflects the strength of our collective ambition and the transformative impact this investment is having on our communities, businesses and learners.”

Professor Joe Yates

Vice-Chancellor and CEO, Wrexham University



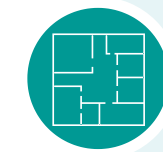
£12.25m
Total investment
(to date)



created 13 direct jobs
(to date)



75 students completing
qualifications (to date)



2,187m2 research floor
space created (to date)



26 enterprises supported
(to date)



Cydnerth

The Cydnerth project has progressed well into delivery this year. The project supports the Morlais tidal energy development by investing in infrastructure to connect to the National Grid. This enables increased deployment of tidal turbines and supports the generation of renewable energy from one of North Wales' major low carbon assets.

The loan agreement between Ambition North Wales and Menter Môn was completed during the year, with three loan drawdowns processed by March 2026. Construction activity progressed at Parc Cybi, Holyhead, including work to pull cables through ducts to extend the Morlais infrastructure and connect it to the grid. The project is now progressing well in delivery, with benefits monitoring underway and further activity continuing into 2026/27.

£

£8.87m

Total investment
(to date)



4

Jobs created
(to date)



73

Careers-focused
engagement events
(to date)



69

Actions taken to
develop/strengthen
local supply chains



3

Actions taken to
enhance biodiversity
(to date)



“

The support of Ambition North Wales is essential to establishing a new marine energy industry in North Wales, ensuring market access and long-term job opportunities. The transition of Cydnerth into construction marked a significant milestone for the region. It will enable the strengthening of local supply chains, support sustainable economic growth, and secure North Wales' position as a leading player in the future of clean energy generation.

”

Gerallt Llywelyn Jones, Director, Menter Môn Morlais Limited

Centre for Environmental Biotechnology+

The Centre for Environmental Biotechnology+ continued to make good progress throughout the year. The project supports Bangor University's ambition to develop world-leading capability in the discovery and characterisation of novel extremophilic enzymes of industrial relevance, creating a platform for research, collaboration and future investment.

Laboratory facilities at Henfaes were fully refurbished during the year, and specialist equipment continued to arrive, including the main bioreactor. The project identified an underspend, and a change request was approved to reallocate funding towards additional benefits, including collaboration and training space and enhanced research and development capability. The project is nearing completion of its delivery stage, with benefits already being realised and further activity continuing into 2026/27.



“This investment in the Centre for Environmental Biotechnology+ builds on the research of a group internationally recognised for its excellence. The investment supported by the North Wales Growth Deal will enable the team to bring that excellence to deliver for the regional economy. The investment has enabled the establishment of a specialist facility equipped to scale up the science and work with industry to upskill and to translate the science into new products and processes.”

Professor Paul Spencer, Pro-Vice-Chancellor



£2.56m
Total investment
(to date)



£2.64m
Revenue income secured
(to date)



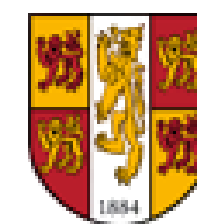
8
Direct new jobs
(to date)



72
New knowledge management
products created and shared



26
Students completing
qualifications (to date)



PRIFYSGOL
BANGOR
UNIVERSITY

Clean Energy Fund

In July 2025, Ambition North Wales launched a £24.6 million fund to provide vital financial support for businesses and voluntary-sector organisations, wanting to deliver clean energy or decarbonisation projects. The launch event brought together more than 90 stakeholders and marked the start of a new route for supporting renewable energy, decarbonisation and local ownership across North Wales.

The overall fund, which will run over a five-year period initially, consists of two key sub-funds for organisations based in North Wales. A voluntary sector sub-fund led by WCVA for charities, social enterprises, and community-led projects; with UMi delivering on a private sector sub-fund for businesses. A third reserve fund can consider applications from other organisations and alternative funding models.

The fund aims to deliver a £100m investment in the region, create 150 new jobs, and cut up to 125,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent.

Throughout the year, the fund received expressions of interest and applications across its sub-funds. Promotional activity included events, podcasts, articles, shows and engagement with potential applicants and delivery partners. By year-end, the first Investment Panel meeting had taken place and the first projects had been approved. The Clean Energy Fund is now an important part of the regional energy landscape, providing a practical route for projects to move from feasibility and ambition towards investment and delivery.



“The economic and environmental benefits that schemes bring are significant, and very much in line with our planet-friendly approach to financing voluntary sector organisations in Wales.”

Gwenith Elias, Clean Energy Investment Manager, WCVA

“Investing in clean energy and decarbonisation projects is a win win for businesses as the outcomes can lead to lower costs, improved efficiencies and unlock new growth opportunities.”

Matt Popple, Partnerships & Project Manager, UMi



Moving into Delivery

A number of projects secured full business case approval and are moving into delivery



Parc Bryn Cegin

Design and Consultancy Teams for the Parc Bryn Cegin project have been appointed by Welsh Government to obtain a project scheme and submit for planning and other consents. New employment units are set to be delivered in collaboration with Welsh Government, providing 1,730sqm of modern, energy-efficient business floor-space at Parc Bryn Cegin.



Gogledd Môn Sites and Premises

The Gogledd Môn sites and premises project secured Business Case approval, and is currently mobilising for delivery. The project will refurbish the former Marine Terminal Building at Porth Amlwch and build ten business units at the nearby Industrial Estate. Together, these developments are expected to support 95 new jobs, and create 2,300m² of new commercial floorspace.

Freeport Gateway

The Freeport Gateway project secured approval to join the Growth Deal. The project will acquire, demolish, decontaminate, create development plots and provide access and mains services to the former Peboc/Eastman site on the Parc Bryn Cefni Industrial Estate. In addition, five light industrial units will be created on Plot 2 of the Tregarnedd Industrial Park, with Plot 3 brought forward for sale to the private sector for development.



Former North Wales Hospital

A phased approach was agreed for the project, the contracts were secured for the Phase 1 enabling works and ecological mitigation work. The project aims to redevelop and restore the derelict 53-acre site by introducing new housing, commercial units and green community spaces.





Port of Mostyn

The project has secured business case approval, with procurement completed for the appointment of the main contractor. The project includes improvements to the existing berth and redevelopment of the Marsh Row site. The improvements are designed to ensure the port can handle the next generation of larger offshore wind components and accommodate businesses operating across the renewable energy supply chain.



Egni

Full Business Case approval was secured by the project, which will now see work move into the construction phase. This second building at M-SParc will expand capacity to support businesses, researchers and innovators working across low carbon energy and advanced technologies.

Glynllifon Rural Economy Hub

Dairy Sheep Wales, part of the Glynllifon Rural Economy Hub project, marked the moving into delivery with a spade in the ground event on site during February. The project positions North Wales as a global leader in sustainable milk production alongside creating high quality jobs within the rural community. Work continues on the Business Justification Case for the Sustainable Dairy element of the project.



Society 5.0

The business case for the Society 5.0 project marked the project officially joining the Growth Deal. The project will enhance the Enterprise Engineering and Optics Centre project, giving industry greater access to world-class high-precision engineering resources. Building on the Enterprise Engineering and Optics Centre's strengths, it extends benefits beyond the original scope, boosting skills and productivity, driving innovation in products, processes, and services across North Wales.



The Digital Programme Moving into Delivery



Advanced Wireless

Having secured business case approval in July 2025, we are preparing to launch a new £18.8 million fund to support businesses in the region to upgrade their wireless technology systems. The Fund will run until March 2030 for businesses with projects based in North Wales. Grant funding for up to 50% of eligible project costs will be allocated, with individual grants of between £20,000 to £2 million being made available.

Advanced wireless technology includes the latest Internet of Things, 5G, Wi-Fi and satellite communications systems, to help businesses boost their connectivity, improve productivity, automate processes and operate more efficiently. These technologies can support activities such as remote monitoring, data sharing and smarter operations across a wide range of industries.



4G+

The 4G+ project is preparing to launch two targeted grant funding streams to support the delivery of mobile infrastructure and help unlock development opportunities across key economic sites, transport routes, and business and tourism hubs in North Wales - supporting growth, investment, and future 5G deployment.

The 4G+ project supported the first small cell deployment with O2 and Ontix, improving mobile connectivity in Flintshire. Four sites have been installed, including at Deeside Industrial Park, highlighting O2's commitment to supporting both industry and local communities. Ambition North Wales played a key role by helping Local Authorities introduce Open Access Agreements, enabling telecoms providers to use local authority infrastructure and accelerate connectivity improvements across the region.

We launched the North Wales Digital Connectivity Forum that brings together key public and private sector partners to strengthen mobile and broadband infrastructure, address digital communications challenges, and support the region's digital transformation.



LPWAN (Low Power Wide Area Network)

This project aims to deliver extensive and accessible LoRaWAN (Long Range Wide Area Network) coverage - providing businesses and public sector users with a cost-effective solution for adopting Internet of Things applications. It's anticipated to deliver 130+ gateways hosted by councils to improve connectivity and efficiencies across multiple public services while providing network access to private users to enable trialling and innovation in their businesses.

In 2026 a complementary Ambition North Wales led, Shared Prosperity Fund funded project supported 16 farm businesses across the region to trial the technology. This resulted in a wide range of business benefits being successfully identified in different types of farms and the use of the technology continuing after the project. More industries will be engaged throughout the project to promote the potential of LoRaWAN across the economy.

Social Value within the Growth Deal



We have consistently sought to maximise the regional benefits generated through Growth Deal capital investment. Our procurement principles place a strong emphasis on securing added value, with a clear commitment to embedding social value across Growth Deal delivery.

All procurements over £100k are required to include social value commitments, with project sponsors expected to apply a 15% social value weighting within their scoring criteria. The main objective is to secure additional community and social benefits through project delivery, while also helping local, regional and national businesses compete for contracts, particularly where they are well placed to deliver meaningful social value.

This approach supports the ambitions of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023, ensuring that economic growth also delivers lasting environmental and community benefits.

Total value of Growth Deal contracts awarded (inc VAT)

£72.3m

86%

of Growth Deal contracts awarded to North Wales suppliers

79%

of Growth Deal contracts awarded to SMEs

Glynllifon Rural Economy Hub

A £3.7M contract has been awarded to Anglesey based company OBR Construction to undertake the main works package on the Dairy Sheep Wales build. Their social value offer equates to £33,042.

Contract Value

£3.7M

Social Value

£33k

Egni

The M-SParc Phase 2 works contract was awarded to local North Wales supplier Wynne Construction. The contract value of £844k, includes a social value offering of:

Contract Value

£844k



30 weeks work experience placements



5 local FTEs to be recruited for the Egni project.



295 training weeks through new entrants/apprenticeships



An estimate of £5,566,000 to be spent with the local supply chain through the contract.

Enterprise Engineering and Optics Centre

Wrexham University awarded two contracts with a combined value of £1.5M for Mechanical Electrical Alterations and Supply, Delivery and Installation of a Bed Filament Winder. The Eletrical Alterations contracts was awarded to AJ Field a Flitshire based supplier. The combined social value totalled £86k:

Contract Value

£1.5M

Social Value

£86k



Apprenticeships



Employment opportunities



Local Supply Chain Expenditure



A £5,000 donation to a community project in Wrexham



Partneriaeth Sgiliau Rhanbarthol
Gogledd Cymru
North Wales
Regional Skills Partnership

Skills and Employability



funded by:



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



Regional Skills Partnership

The North Wales Regional Skills Partnership (RSP) continues to play a key role in supporting Ambition North Wales priorities by ensuring workforce development and skills provision remain aligned with the region's economic ambitions, major investments and future growth opportunities.

Supporting the Flintshire and Wrexham Investment Zone was a key priority during 2025/26. The Regional Skills Partnership led development of the Investment Zone Skills Strategy and helped identify the workforce requirements needed to support future growth. This work contributed to the approval of the Investment Zone Skills Programme, securing £12 million for Coleg Cambria and Wrexham University to strengthen advanced manufacturing skills, develop specialist facilities and build the talent pipelines needed to support future investment across North Wales.



The Regional Skills Partnership also supported delivery of the North Wales Growth Deal through workforce planning, labour market intelligence and engagement with project sponsors. During the year, Project Prince (Knauf), Society 5.0 (Wrexham University), Albert Gubay Business School (Bangor University) and the Egni Project (M-SParc) presented their skills plans to the Regional Skills Partnership Board, providing updates on delivery, skills requirements and future workforce demand. These discussions helped align project workforce needs with regional skills provision and strengthen collaboration between projects, employers and education providers.

The Regional Skills Partnership supported skills planning linked to opportunities including HyNet, renewable energy, offshore wind and emerging nuclear developments.

The Regional Skills Partnership also worked closely with employers, including SMEs, helping businesses access skills support, inform training provision and develop the workforce needed for growth and productivity.

The North Wales Skills Portal continued to connect individuals and employers with jobs, training, careers information and business support, while promoting opportunities arising from regional investment and economic growth.

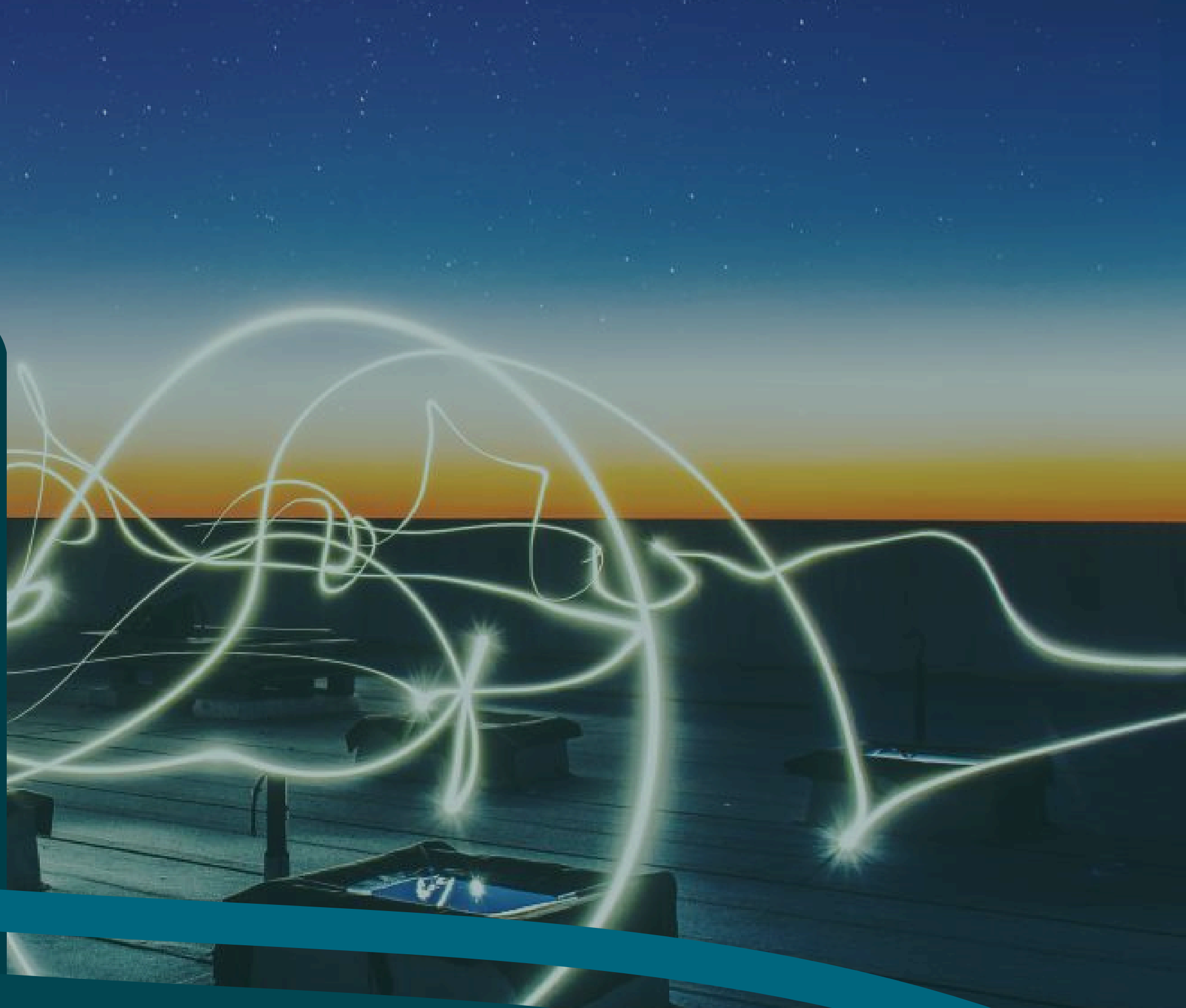


During the year, the Regional Skills Partnership o progressed development of the next North Wales Skills and Employment Plan 2026-2029.

Through extensive engagement with employers, providers, local authorities, Welsh Government and regional stakeholders, the plan will establish the region's skills priorities and help ensure future provision aligns with emerging economic opportunities.

The refreshed plan is scheduled for launch in Autumn 2026.

Strategic Energy



funded by:



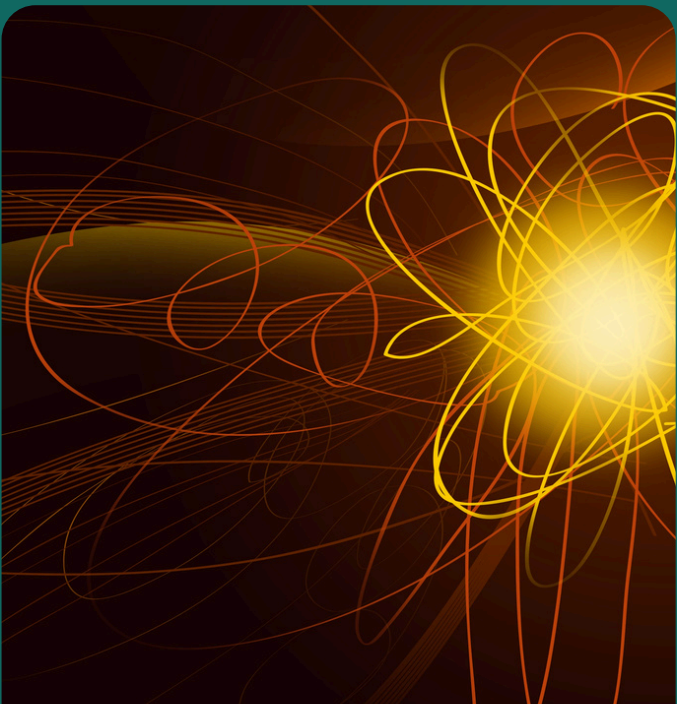
Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Strategic Energy



Local Area Energy Plans

Five Local Area Energy Plans have been endorsed by local authorities, with one remaining in the political approval process.



North Wales Energy Advice Hub

The North Wales Energy Advice Hub was launched by Ambition North Wales, providing stakeholders with a central source of guidance, tools, case studies and funding information to support decarbonisation projects.



Energy Dashboard

A dashboard was developed to monitor the uptake of renewable and low-carbon technologies across each local authority area, providing visibility of decarbonisation progress across North Wales.



Collaboration

Mapping of renewable energy and decarbonisation projects across North Wales was undertaken to improve visibility of regional activity, support collaboration and identify investment opportunities.



Investment Prospectus

A North Wales Strategic Energy Investment Prospectus was produced to showcase priority energy projects, attract investment and support the delivery of projects identified through the Local Area Energy Plans and Regional Energy Strategy.

Shared Prosperity Funding



Funded by
UK Government



Wedi ei ariannu gan
Llywodraeth y DU

Shared Prosperity Fund

Funded by UK Government  Wedi ei ariannu gan Llywodraeth y DU

Ambition North Wales secured over £1m of Shared Prosperity Funding to deliver on workstreams maximising the benefits and opportunities available to businesses and communities across the region, through investments aligned to the North Wales Growth Deal. These activities helped strengthen the impact of regional investment by supporting business growth, skills, innovation, energy, digital connectivity and community resilience.

Shared Prosperity Fund activity concluded during March 2026 with a series of events designed to share learning and support future opportunities. Two community energy knowledge transfer events were held, led by energy consultancy firm Greener Edge, helping participants understand how their projects could progress through the Clean Energy Fund. The Smart Agriculture IoT Trials project also showcased practical uses of Internet of Things (IoT) technology in rural settings, culminating with another knowledge transfer event at Derwydd Farm in Corwen for farmers and rural professionals.

North Wales Skills Portal

Through SPF-funded activity, the Regional Skills Partnership worked alongside Loud Speaker and regional colleges to deliver a number of sessions engaging more than 70 young people across North Wales. The workshops provided labour market intelligence, explored local career pathways and included insights and training around interpersonal skills, helping learners to better understand future opportunities and the skills employers value.

Feedback gathered through workshops informed the Youth Insights Report, providing evidence around career aspirations, barriers to progression and awareness of local opportunities. These insights will be used to support and inform upcoming campaigns and communications aimed at young people, helping to promote opportunities in the region and raise awareness of green skills and future careers across North Wales.

“ Thank you so much to North Wales Skills Portal for hosting the feedback session with Loudspeaker Events at Grŵp Llandrillo Menai. It was a really valuable opportunity, and I particularly want to mention how amazing and engaging Rich was throughout. He did a fantastic job of encouraging the learners to take part, and it was brilliant to hear their insights and watch them become so involved. The session on interpersonal skills was incredibly impactful, and it was clear the learners gained so much from Rich’s delivery and approach.”

Shoned Owen, Enterprise Officer for Coleg Menai & Coleg Meirion Dwyfor



NORTH WALES **SKILLS**
portal
SGILIAU GOGLEDD CYMRU

Smart Agriculture IoT Trials

A targeted programme of support for 16 farms across North Wales was designed to trial the latest digital technologies and tackle some of the main challenges they face day to day. The power of the Internet of Things (IoT) innovations and LoRaWAN (Long Range Wide Area Network) technologies were central to the launch of this new exciting network for farmers.

Poultry Shed Problem Detection

Derwydd, Llanfihangel Glyn Myfyr

Llyr Jones of Derwydd Farm, Denbighshire, took part in the Smart Agriculture IoT Trials Project to explore how LoRaWAN sensor technology could improve water management and poultry welfare on his 500-hectare upland farm. The farm installed water-level sensors on its main water tanks to monitor supplies from its boreholes and provide early warnings of potential issues, helping to ensure a continuous water supply while reducing the risk of costly reliance on mains water. Light intensity sensors were also installed in poultry sheds to monitor conditions and alert staff to any deviations from optimal settings, supporting bird welfare and enabling a rapid response to issues outside normal working hours. In addition, temperature and humidity sensors were used to monitor the farm's egg storage facilities. The trial demonstrated how IoT technology can improve farm efficiency, provide real-time operational insights, enhance animal welfare, and support more informed decision-making, leading Derwydd Farm to continue using the sensors beyond the pilot project.



Funded by
UK Government



Wedi ei ariannu gan
Llywodraeth y DU

Smart Monitoring of Electric Fencing

The Cloy, Wrexham

Andrew Gresty of The Cloy Farm near Wrexham participated in the Smart Agriculture IoT Trials Project to explore how digital technology could help reduce labour requirements and improve farm management following a spinal injury that led to a transition from dairy to beef production. The farm installed LoRaWAN-enabled Fencyboy sensors to remotely monitor electric fence performance across its grazing platform, providing real-time alerts on voltage drops and power outages. This enables faults to be identified quickly without the need for manual fence inspections, helping to reduce workload, improve livestock management and minimise the risk of cattle escaping. The technology has already helped identify areas for infrastructure improvements and is expected to strengthen farm biosecurity by maintaining secure boundary fencing, supporting the efficient management of a growing beef enterprise.



Farmers benefitted from being trained and supported on how to utilise data dashboards to improve business productivity. Work concluded with an agri-tech knowledge transfer event, led by our delivery partner Mentera, on a farm near Cerrigydrudion to share key findings, insights and lessons from the trials.

Clean Energy Feasibility

Funded by
UK Government



Wedi ei ariannu gan
Llywodraeth y DU

In collaboration with provider Greener Edge provision of direct support to organisations to undertake feasibility studies and develop their energy and decarbonisation project proposals was awarded to seven organisations - Bay of Colwyn Town Council, Llangollen Pavillion, Nant Gwrtheyrn, Park in the Post Community Interest Company, Anglesey Agricultural Society, Hafod Colliery Social Centre and Stiwt Theatre.

Llangollen Pavilion

The pavilion is a nationally significant cultural venue and is planning a low-carbon transition to protect its future by reducing operating costs along with supporting the local community. With technologies including solar PV, battery storage, heat pumps and EV charging, it's estimated savings include:

- a carbon reduction of 46,68 tCO₂e
- around £269,000 over a 10-year period



"We're incredibly grateful for the support from Denbighshire County Council and Ambition North Wales. With only a small team and volunteers, we didn't have the technical expertise needed for a full sustainability assessment, so appointing trusted consultants was essential. Greener Edge have been excellent to work with, through site visits and detailed scoping, they've given us a clear plan that shows the way forward"

**John Gambles, Chair, Llangollen Musical
Eisteddfod**

Bay of Colwyn Town Council

Colwyn Bay Town Hall, a Grade II listed community hub completed in 1907. The feasibility study found that heritage-friendly secondary glazing, solar PV and battery storage, air source heat pumps, and lighting upgrades could improve comfort and efficiency while reducing CO₂ by 32.80 tCO₂e per year, cutting lighting energy use by 66%, supplying 66% of annual electricity demand with solar and battery, and saving an estimated £75,000 over 10 years.



"The Town Council declared a Climate and Nature Emergency a few years ago. We were very conscious of our direct emissions and inhabiting a grade 2 listed building, comes with its challenges around energy in particular. We were successful in getting support for Clean Energy Feasibility studies and worked with Greener Edge. They came to explore the building with us to understand our current usage and our various occupants. We have around six at the moment, all with different numbers of staff occupying the building at different times of day."

Tina Earley, Town Clerk to Bay of Colwyn Town Council

Charity of the Year



Charity of the Year

Every year Ambition North Wales select a charity of the year. The team’s charity for last year (September 2024/2025) was the Rape & Sexual Abuse Support Centre (RASASC) North Wales. RASASC provides vital information, specialist support, and therapy to anyone aged three and over who has experienced sexual abuse or violence—whether recent or historic. Their services also extend to partners and family members affected by such experiences, offering compassionate, professional support to help people heal.

The team have held a fantastic mix of fundraising activities and fun for the charity from hosting a series of successful bake sales, with the efforts culminated in a hugely popular Spin Fest that brought colleagues and the community together. A big thank you to everyone who got involved and supported these brilliant events and the charity! The team also created care packages for RASASC clients to the value of £1,159.

A big thank you to Rape & Sexual Abuse Support Centre (RASASC) North Wales for being our Charity of the Year—we’re incredibly proud to support such a vital organisation.

We raised an amazing
£3,271
for the charity

We are proud to announce that our Charity of the Year (September 2025/2026) is St David’s Hospice.

The charity provides high-quality specialist palliative care to patients with life-limiting illnesses. Operating 24/7, it offers inpatient care, hospice-at-home services, day therapy, and bereavement support to patients and their families.

We plan to support the organisation’s dedicated team through a range of fundraising and awareness-raising activities throughout the year.

Keep an eye out for more of our events taking place near you as we continue to support this vital cause throughout the year!



Looking Ahead: The Next 12 months

The year ahead will build on the strong foundations established in 2025/26. Under the democratic leadership of the six constituent council Leaders, working collectively through the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee, we will accelerate investment, strengthen confidence in delivery and create even greater opportunities for communities, businesses and partners across North Wales.

As our programmes gather pace, we will continue strengthening the organisation by embedding robust systems, enhancing capability and progressing our transformation journey. These improvements will ensure we have the capacity, agility and transparency needed to manage an increasingly complex regional portfolio and maximise its impact.

Transport will remain a key priority, with capital investment supporting sustainable interventions that improve access to jobs, education, services and leisure opportunities. These investments will help create better-connected communities, support decarbonisation and strengthen long-term economic participation.

Work will also continue on the Strategic Development Plan, supporting a more coordinated approach to land use, housing, infrastructure, transport and economic development. This represents an important step towards a sustainable and prosperous future for North Wales, balancing local priorities with regional opportunities.

Across the Flintshire and Wrexham Investment Zone, projects will continue to move from planning into delivery. This includes business grant funding, skills initiatives and investment in infrastructure to accelerate the development of key strategic sites.

The North Wales Growth Deal will gather further momentum, with more projects entering delivery and increasing focus on investment, job creation and long-term economic value. Progress is expected across projects including construction starting on projects including but not limited to Parc Bryn Cegin, Gogledd Mon Sites and Premises and Port of Mostyn

Digital connectivity will remain central to inclusive growth. New grant schemes and the continued work of the North Wales Digital Connectivity Forum will help tackle connectivity challenges and support communities, businesses and public services.

We also look forward to seeing more businesses and voluntary organisations benefit from the Clean Energy Fund as part of the wider Low Carbon Energy Programme.

Alongside this, preparations will begin for the Welsh Government's new regional approach to the Local Growth Fund, which the CJC will deliver from April 2027.

Together, these priorities signal a new phase for North Wales, defined by delivery, ambition and partnership. Guided by the collective leadership of the six constituent council Leaders and informed by the needs and aspirations of our communities, we will continue to work collaboratively with partners to create a more prosperous, resilient and well-connected North Wales.



Alwen Williams
Chief Executive
Ambition North Wales

Our Partners



£240m Growth Deal Funding

£160m Flintshire and Wrexham Investment Zone Funding by

