

GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET

REPORT TO THE CABINET

13 September, 2016

Cabinet Member: Cllr. Mandy Williams-Davies, Cabinet Member for Economy & Community

Subject: Growth Vision for the Economy of North Wales

Contact Officer: Iwan T. Jones, Corporate Director

The decision sought

To approve the "Growth Vision for the Economy of North Wales" as the basis for negotiations with the UK and Welsh Governments over a Growth Deal Bid for the region.

Local Members' Views

Not a local matter.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. Attached to this report is the "*Growth Vision for the Economy of North Wales*" document. It sets out clearly the Strategy, Priorities and Action Plan of Strategic Projects to deliver sustainable economic and employment growth across the region.
- 1.2. The "Growth Vision" document provides the strategic framework and context for strategic partners, particularly the UK and Welsh Governments, to collectively guide investment to North Wales and pool resources to fund strategic projects.
- 1.3. It also sets out a clear ambition for North Wales, especially in relation to infrastructure development, skills and employment, and business growth. If funding is secured to deliver the action plan of projects, the region will experience sustainable economic growth and the value of the North Wales economy from £12.8 billion in 2015 to £20 billion by 2035. Such growth rate will generate at least an additional 120,000 new employment opportunities.

Cyswilt:
01286 679868
01286 679490

cabinet@gwynedd.gov.uk



- 1.4. A theme that constantly underpins the "Growth Vision" document is collaboration and partnership working, with a strong private sector involvement and a "Team North Wales" approach. This builds on the strong alliances and joint planning that has taken place recently in the region through the work of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board.
- 1.5. There has been extensive consultation during the process of preparing the "Growth Vision". Organisations such as Bangor University, Glyndwr University, Grwp Llandrillo-Menai, Coleg Cambria, Cheshire & Warrington LEP, Enterprise Zone Boards, Mersey Dee Alliance, Welsh Government, UK Government and others have been involved and engaged with the work over the last couple of months.
- 1.6. A significant contribution has come from the private sector through the North Wales Business Council. They have taken a pro-active approach, playing a significant role in the formulation and development of the Growth Vision and Strategy. At its meeting on the 4 July, 2016 the Business Council approved the "Growth Vision" and endorsed the Action Plan.
- 1.7. The involvement of the Local Authorities has also been crucial. The Leaders and Chief Executives of six Local Authorities met on the 15 July, 2016 and endorsed the "Growth Vision" for submission to the UK and Welsh Governments.
- 1.8. There has been positive engagement with the new Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure of the Welsh Government. He has given his informal support to the concept of a "Growth Vision" for North Wales, which is integrated with North West England and connected to the wider UK economy.
- 1.9. Positive discussions have also taken place with the Secretary of State for Wales and the Under-Secretary of State at the Wales Office.
- 1.10. The document was officially approved by the North Wales Economic Ambition Board at its meeting on the 1 August, 2016.
- 1.11. There is therefore a broad base of support across the various sectors of the region to the "Growth Vision". Given this base and strength of support there will no doubt be collectivism and momentum in the delivery of the Strategy.
- 1.12. We are now seeking formal approval of the six Local Authority Cabinets in the region for the vision and strategy.
- 1.13. The intention thereafter is to hold discussions and negotiations with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Wales Office and Welsh Government, especially in relation to a potential investment programme to deliver the action plan of projects. It is also intended to hold discussions about a possible "Growth Deal" for North Wales. The Growth Deal is considered as one of the vehicles to secure investment to achieve the aims and aspirations of the "Growth Vision" from now until 2035.
- 1.14. It is important to stress that the purpose of this report to Cabinet is to ask for support to the enclosed Strategy and the strategic projects which will seek to secure economic growth across North Wales. This will be the basis for detailed discussions with Westminster Government and Welsh Government to secure investment to the region and to fund the various projects. Any financial commitment which falls on the Council, or any implications to the Council's responsibilities as a result of proposed new governance or constitutional

arrangements will come back before Cabinet for specific decisions as the scheme develops.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. To approve the "Growth Vision for the Economy of North Wales" as the basis for negotiations with the UK and Welsh Governments over a Growth Deal Bid for the region.

Opinion of the Statutory Officers

The Chief Executive:

"Future sustainable economic growth is crucial for the future of the county and its people; however, achieving this means that we must collaborate more extensively in order to be able to create the appropriate environment and gain access to some of the levers which will create this. Considerable work and discussions have gone into creating this document. It is now hoped that this sets the strategic context which will allow Gwynedd as part of a wider scheme to attract investment to realise the schemes to which the document refers. Clearly, any individual commitments will have to be assessed on a project-by-project basis as they arise."

The Monitoring Officer:

"Clearly, this report is submitted before the Cabinet as an initial formal step in order to try to establish the project. An element of commitment is unavoidably a part of such a decision. However, it is noted that this is an initial step to seek to secure agreement and support to the national level vision. The nature and potential size of the project mean that further detailed work and decisions will be required on matters such as governance and specific commitments. This will unavoidably involve decisions by the individual councils when agreeing to establish and realise project(s). Therefore, it is crucially important that the development of the project gives priority to agreeing and establishing a suitable and appropriate regional framework for governance."

The Head of the Finance Department:

"I support the recommendation for the Cabinet to approve the "vision for growth" and for the regional partnership to proceed to hold discussions with Westminster and Welsh Governments. There would be valuable opportunities for the North Wales region with a "Growth Scheme", together with potential financial risks for the relevant local authorities. Therefore, I intend to support and advise the Corporate Director as this innovative agenda progresses, with a view to maximising the benefits for the people of Gwynedd."

Appendices

Appendix 1 Growth Vision for the Economy of North Wales