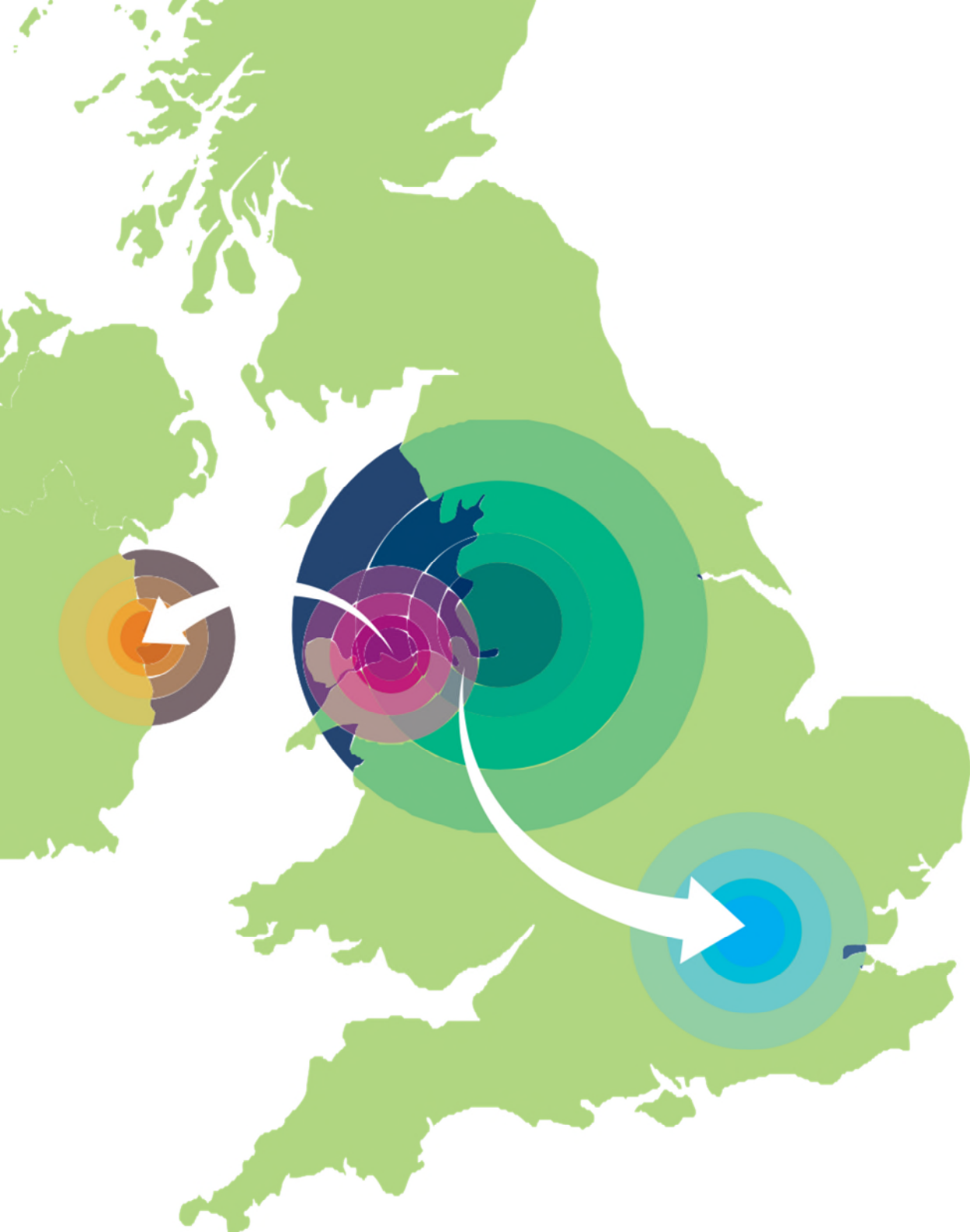


# A Growth Vision for the Economy of North Wales



north wales economic ambition board  
bwrdd uchelgais economaidd gogledd cymru



“A confident, cohesive region with sustainable economic growth, capitalising on the success of high value economic sectors and its connection to the economies of the Northern Powerhouse and Ireland.”

# GROWTH VISION FOR NORTH WALES

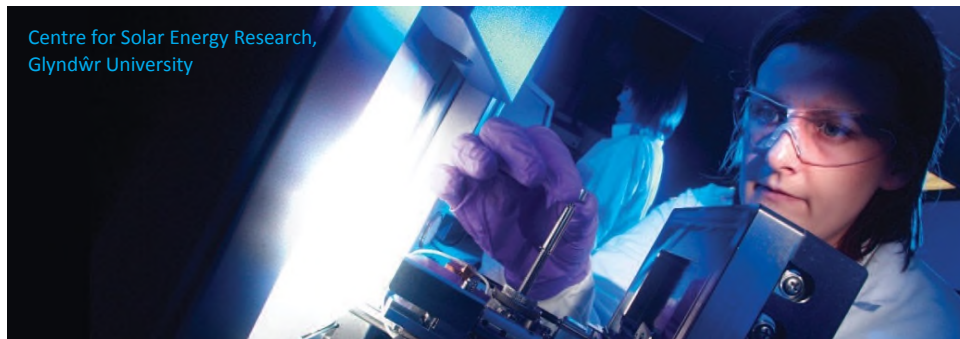
This is a single, joined-up vision for economic and employment growth for North Wales. It will be achieved through collaboration and partnership working, with a strong private sector involvement and a *“Team North Wales”* approach, building close economic relationships with neighbouring areas.

It will also create the conditions to support the delivery of the UK Governments’ National Infrastructure priorities in North Wales, particularly Wylfa Newydd – which is one of the largest private sector investments into the UK – and the rail modernisation project from Crewe to Holyhead, which will include electrification.

Our ambition for North Wales in 2035 is put forward in section 2 of the paper, with sections 3 and 4 setting out our Strategy and Action Plan of projects to deliver growth and enable the private sector to invest and boost productivity.

The purpose of this paper is to identify our vision for growth for North Wales, and to set out our Strategy and package of projects to realise that vision.

Various funding programmes will be explored to support the implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan of Projects, particularly a Growth Deal proposal with the UK and Welsh Governments.



Centre for Solar Energy Research,  
Glyndŵr University

The aims behind the vision are:

- To improve the economic, social, environmental, and cultural well-being of North Wales;
- To support and retain young people in the region’s communities;
- To address worklessness and inactivity across the region;
- To support and enable private sector investment in the region to boost economic productivity and to improve the economic and employment performance of North Wales.

# NORTH WALES IN 2035.....

Delivery of the vision will be powered by high value economic clusters throughout North Wales.

The **energy cluster** will have expertise around energy generation, low carbon technologies and processes, with businesses well-equipped to exploit opportunities as a result of investment in Wylfa Newydd, Trawsfynydd Small Modular Reactors and off-shore wind, biomass and tidal energy projects. Businesses within the cluster will have strong linkages with leading energy research centres, especially in the Northern Powerhouse area, so as to facilitate effective knowledge exchange, innovation, high quality research and development, and technology commercialisation.

Importantly, synergies with energy sector cluster development activity in neighbouring regions will be fully exploited, especially supply chain opportunities. North Wales, together with the cross-border area and

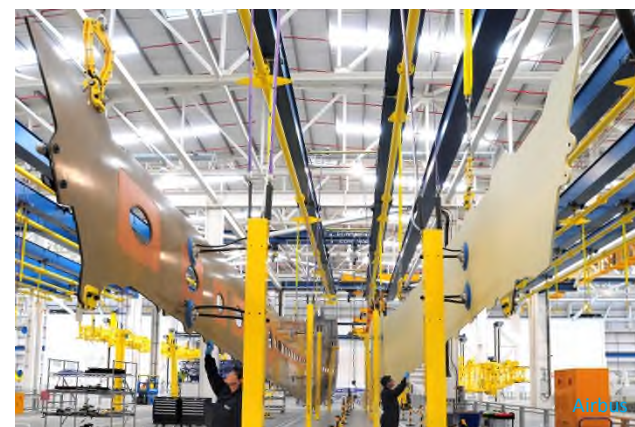


North West England, will be positioned as one of the leading UK locations for energy generation and energy related supply chain investment, with expertise in business and academia to seize opportunities for the global demand for low or zero carbon energy.

The **advanced manufacturing cluster** in the region will be highly competitive on the global stage. The region will be a hot-bed of activities

in this cluster, building on a strong network of anchor companies with international profile and a competitive edge in aerospace, materials and processes, marine and environmental engineering, automotive, electronics and food.

Anchor companies in this cluster will be supplied by SME's within the region with a reputation for high quality. The cluster will benefit from a portfolio of well serviced development sites as well as the availability of applied



knowledge assets and facilities, especially in higher education. Growth in this cluster will be driven in particular by Enterprise Zones (such as Deeside Enterprise Zone), as well as new investment in the Northern Gateway, Deeside; Wrexham Industrial Park; St. Asaph Business Park; Parc Bryn Cegin, Bangor and Parc Cybi, Holyhead.

The **digital cluster** will become an integral part of the region and the rapid growth of many digital businesses will confirm North Wales' position as a UK hub of technology excellence.

The diverse digital sector, including high performance computing, data analytics, media, cognitive computation etc., will be pivotal to the region, forging new innovative sectors and creating new ways to doing business.



The digital cluster will be the engine room for growth in North Wales, building on the competitive advantages in terms of academia, quality of life and outstanding natural beauty, and a quality infrastructure.

Creative industries, software development, health technology and financial science will all be part of such a cluster, building their own momentum for growth. Our strength in digital technology will be powered by strong applied research from the region's Universities and Further Education Colleges with electrical and software engineers driving the specialism in hardware and wireless communication. Some strategic sites will provide a focus for activities in the digital sector, in particular Menai Science Park, Wrexham Technology Park and St. Asaph Business Park.

The region will have a high concentration of digital companies – a significant technology cluster, creating a real and genuine “buzz” that will succeed in inspiring young people and creating an image of a modern, well-connected and outward looking region.

North Wales is economically connected to the [Northern Powerhouse](#). Administrative boundaries will not be a barrier, with the economy of North Wales inextricably linked and closely aligned to North West of England.

Cross border collaboration will take place on the delivery of strategic projects, such as transport, and the development of key high value clusters which will boost economic performance and productivity.

Some of the key transformational projects in the region, such as Wylfa Newydd and Trawsfynydd Small Modular Reactors, offer huge potential synergy with the energy cluster in the Northern Powerhouse, and will directly benefit from the advanced manufacturing expertise within organisations such as the Nuclear Advanced Manufacturing Research

Centre based in Sheffield and the University of Manchester's Dalton Institute.

The region will also benefit from developing trade, commercial and business links with Ireland. The economic advantages of being positioned between major economic centres such as Manchester and Dublin will be maximised – further increasing our appeal as a major business destination.

The improvement of the regional transport and economic infrastructure will both support sustainable housing growth and improve



access to the region to promote its visitor offer. Delivery of the Vision will be integrated into plans for sustainable community planning and development which respect the unique cultural and linguistic characteristics of the region.

Achieving this ambition will ensure that North Wales will have a strong regional offer to the UK and Welsh Governments. This offer will be a concentration of innovative businesses in high value economic clusters embedded in the region, capitalising on the high level skills base, quality infrastructure and excellent connections to the Northern Powerhouse. Such a concentration will establish North Wales as a “Locality of Excellence” for the location of businesses in high value clusters and as a consequence, boosting UK productivity levels and re-balancing the economy.

# STRATEGY TO DELIVER THE VISION

At the heart of our vision is the desire to improve **productivity**, **competitiveness** and **growth** across North Wales.

It has been developed and agreed by a wide partnership of people, organisations and the private sector who share a pride in, and ambition for, an area with unique assets, challenges and opportunities.

The focus will be on creating the appropriate conditions for high value economic clusters such as energy, advanced manufacturing and digital sector to flourish and boost their contribution to the performance of the economy.

This will be achieved by building on the strengths of the existing business base and overcoming barriers and challenges by delivering a package of strategic projects which are needed for positive change to transform the economy.

Increasing productivity is a key goal. However, to achieve this successfully, and to deliver a more successful and balanced economy, long term investment will be required to tackle long term challenges, especially around transport, skills and employment, business support and housing

needs.

The Strategy will deliver the vision of increased productivity, growth and jobs by focusing on the following:



**Improving the infrastructure across the region**, especially transport and digital, to facilitate and enable economic investment and to unlock the economic potential of North Wales. Digital technology needs to be significantly upgraded to act as a key enabler for productivity and driver of innovation and international trade. There is also a need to focus on improving access to employment sites, and to address traffic congestion problems on certain road routes, especially in the cross-border area. Investment also needs to take place in the North Wales railway network – the electrification of the railway line is a priority as well as improving the frequency, speed and the quality of rail services and the rolling stock. The region also needs to ensure that there is a portfolio of market-responsive, well-served, readily available development sites that meet the needs of current and future economic sectors and clusters, especially along the A55 corridor. This is crucial if we are to become the

favoured location of businesses and attract investment. The housing offer across North Wales - a key component of enabling growth - will have to respond to demographic shifts and cater for housing need across the region. There will be a need to encourage schemes that provide quality homes across a range of tenures, to suit a range of income levels and aspirations close to major employment centres.

***Improving and upgrading the region's skills base and providing employment growth***, focusing in particular on improving the supply of advanced skills in the high value economic clusters and tackling worklessness. Employers in the region need to be supported to drive skills provision that responds to their needs, retaining flexibility to respond to evolving requirements. We also need to ensure that young people and adults in the region are equipped with the skills that employers need, and ensure that the area provides an attractive employment proposition to attract and retain workers, particularly those with high level skills. The Advanced Manufacturing Centre at Deeside, the Aerospace Technology Centre at Broughton and the new Skills Centre for Energy and Environment at Llangefni are examples of key projects that need to be delivered to support the skills agenda. The education system across the region will have to become more demand-led, reflecting the priorities of employers and growth sectors in the education curriculum. We also need to ensure that those seeking work have the skills to access sustainable employment, whilst those in work need to be supported to develop



their potential. Worklessness will be tackled through the delivery of integrated and co-ordinated programmes that will focus specifically on the individual's needs and circumstances – providing them with the confidence and the support to access the labour market.

***Promoting and supporting business growth and innovation***, especially in key sectors, and strengthening supply chains within the region. We need to create a highly supportive and competitive environment for our businesses, so that they remain resilient and embedded locally. It is crucial that this support is effectively co-ordinated, especially through a Team North Wales approach. Businesses in the region will also have the opportunity to capitalise on major private sector investment schemes, such as Wylfa Newydd, Deeside Enterprise Zone, Orthios Holyhead, and it is crucial that they are supported and equipped to access the relevant supply chains and retain expenditure regionally. We also need to boost growth in our enterprise pipeline across exports, innovation and business start-ups, especially through interventions that have the full engagement and commitment of the private sector. We also need to ensure that the appropriate services and facilities are available in the region to support the business sector to access research and development resources, in particular from higher education and further education. Pro-active marketing initiatives are also required in order to attract new investment, building on the strengths of various localities across the region, and establishing North Wales as a key destination. Put simply, we need to be “better known” as a high quality and excellent location for new investment, particularly in the high value economic clusters.

The balance of benefits will be shared to support the sustainable growth of the different sub-regions of North Wales.

Consideration is being given now to a form of governance model which will be both inclusive and be capable of decisive and co-operative joint planning with Regional Partnerships such as Cheshire and Warrington.

# STRATEGIC PROJECTS TO DELIVER THE STRATEGY

A portfolio of strategic projects have been identified to support the delivery of the strategy. These projects – which have all been identified as priorities by a partnership including Local Authorities, Welsh Government, the private sector and Higher and Further Education Colleges - are included below under the relevant headings.

It should be noted that the key priorities of all six Local Authorities for Infrastructure, Skills and Business Growth have been incorporated within this portfolio.



## *Infrastructure Plan to enable Growth:*

### Road

- A55 / A494 Route Improvement Project (£210m), improving the main access from North Wales to the Northern Powerhouse\*:
  - Aston Hill improvement
  - Flintshire Bridge alternative route
- A55 Capacity and Resilience Improvements (£35m):
  - Congestion issues at key pinch points e.g. Halkyn and Abergele
  - Resilience improvements
- A483 / A5 Route Improvement Project (£300m), improving the main access from North Wales to the Midlands and South\*:
  - A483 / A55 junction at Chester Business Park
  - Wrexham Town Centre junctions
  - A483 / A5 junctions at Halton through to Oswestry
- A55 Menai Crossing (£135m)



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A487 Caernarfon Bontnewydd bypass (£85m)</li> <li>• Holyhead Port Access (£10-15m)</li> <li>• Localised access to employment opportunities</li> </ul>
Rail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The delivery of a detailed prospectus (Growth Track 360) that outlines our ambition for rail service improvements and connectivity with HS2 at Crewe hub – including proposals to improve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service frequency and speed improvements (£20m – £25m)*</li> <li>• Network capacity improvements (£35m)*</li> <li>• Rolling stock improvements</li> <li>• Electrification of the network (£750m)*</li> <li>• Improved stations at Deeside</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Integrated Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The delivery of a regional passenger transport network that fully integrates transport modes.</li> </ul>
Strategic Sites and Premises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver a managed programme that provides strategic employment sites with associated infrastructure including access: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Northern Gateway, Deeside (£10m)*</li> <li>• Warren Hall, Broughton (£20m)*</li> <li>• Wrexham Technology Park expansion (£10m)*</li> <li>• Wrexham Industrial Estate extension (£15m)*</li> <li>• Wrexham Business Quarter re-development (£8m)*</li> <li>• St Asaph Business Park expansion (£10m)</li> <li>• Abergele South East (£7m)</li> <li>• Parc Bryn Cegin, Bangor (£3m)</li> <li>• Parc Cefni expansion, Llangefni (£5m)</li> <li>• Parc Cybi, Holyhead (£2m)</li> <li>• Holyhead Port re-development (£5m)</li> <li>• Ferodo Site, Caernarfon (£5m)</li> <li>• Centre for Energy Generation at Trawsfynydd (£5m)</li> <li>• Snowdonia Aerospace Centre, Llanbedr (£6m)</li> <li>• Menai Science Park (£21m)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Establish a regional Delivery Body to bring forward site and premises development and identify innovative funding opportunities.</li></ul>
Digital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Promote and deliver projects that increases ultra-fast broadband and mobile coverage that enable our businesses to access new markets.</li><li>• Accelerate the roll-out of the connectivity infrastructure programme in the region.</li><li>• Support continued investment in the digital network and infrastructure, especially mobile connectivity, and promote activities to exploit the availability of superfast broadband. Monitor usage and promote the capacity provided.</li></ul>
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Address key barriers to housing delivery, especially in Wrexham and Flintshire, and ensure that a supply of adequate land for residential development is available to meet projected demand and need, especially reuse of brown field sites.</li><li>• Support to assist with costs associated with site remediation, the delivery of enabling infrastructure and the lack of funding caused by restricted access to banks and institutional funding will be available</li></ul>

(\* also included within the Cheshire & Warrington Growth Deal Bid)



## Skills and Employment Plan to enable Growth:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Delivery of a strategy that increases the uptake of STEM subjects to support energy, advanced manufacturing and digital sector in North Wales.</li><li>• Identify skills demands and work with providers in Higher/Further Education and the third sector to support developing and up skilling the regional workforce.</li><li>• Develop initiatives and projects to promote a skills pipeline across education and training providers in support of regional economic priorities.</li><li>• Deliver specific projects and programmes intended to support the key sectors:</li></ul>
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- Grŵp Llandrillo Menai / Horizon ABWR Centre of Excellence and Nuclear Campus at Llangefni
- Centre of Excellence in Sustainable Energy at Bangor University and Menai Science Park
- Advanced Manufacturing Centre at Deeside and Business Productivity & Engineering Lab at Wrexham Glyndwr University
- Aerospace technology Centre at Broughton
- New Science & Technology Quarter at Bangor University
- To resource and fund a cross-border careers advice service to support the skills provision pipeline.



## Supporting Business Growth Plan:

- Develop sector specific projects that support continued growth of the Advanced Manufacturing sector, especially in the Aerospace, Automotive, Packaging, Nuclear, Advanced Materials, Food & Drink sectors and Medical Sciences.
- Deliver the planned lower carbon energy generating and renewable energy projects, as well as promoting and supporting opportunities to develop further projects in the region, e.g. Morlais Marine Demonstration Zone, Sustainable Energy Catapult Centre.
- Promote the continued development of the high value / knowledge intensive Finance, Business, Creative & Digital service sectors growing in North Wales, e.g. Wrexham Financial Services.
- Boost growth in our Enterprise Pipeline on a cross-border basis across Exports / Innovation / Productivity and Business Start-Ups, through a package of funds and resources covering Research and Development Business & Higher/Further Education Research / Graduate Recruitment / Export Management / a regional 'Pop Up' Incubator Fleet.
- Leverage and pool existing resource supporting economic development through establishment of the North Wales Growth Acceleration & Investment Hub (North Wales Growth Hub), co-locating key Welsh Government and North Wales Economic Ambition Board resources in one location. All the key levers and support in one place - 'Team

North Wales’.

- Support businesses in the region to access opportunities stemming from major private and public sector investment schemes, especially through the supply chain. Some of these major projects include Wylfa Newydd, Menai Science Park, Enterprise Zones, Orthios Holyhead, and major road network improvements.
- Develop new initiatives to support the sustainability and resilience of the construction sector within North Wales.
- Provide support and incentives for major anchor companies based in North Wales to grow and develop further, such as Airbus / JCB / Siemens / Redrow / Moneypenny / Moneysupermarket / Toyota / Kingspan.
- Establish a Knowledge Transfer Programme - Connecting live business needs with research facilities and expertise across North Wales, Mersey Dee and wider Northern Powerhouse region.
- Develop projects to fast track the commercialisation of new technologies and market leading products, boosting innovation and productivity growth.
- Investment in the “Innovation Corridor” across North Wales to enhance and improve facilities and learning environments, and help position Bangor University, Glyndwr University, Coleg Cambria and Grwp Llandrillo-Menai in particular as hubs for innovation, research and development.
- Capitalise on the regions reputation as a place with great quality of life, as a world-renowned adventure tourism destination and as the pivotal location linking the Irish Market and our wider region of the Northern Powerhouse, by establishing a new Regional Marketing Fund to market North Wales.

# IMPACT ON THE REGION'S ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE

The forecasted growth rate for the regional economy – based on current trends – is 1.9% between 2016-2035. However, we can achieve a higher growth rate with the delivery of the Growth Vision and Strategy, and increase the value of the North Wales economy from £12.8 billion to £20 billion by 2035 – representing a growth rate of 2.8%.

The value of the economy would increase by 56% in less than 20 years. It is estimated that such growth levels will generate at least an additional 120,000 new employment opportunities. This is based on considerations contained in an independent report commissioned by the North Wales Economic Ambition Board which modelled different scenarios of future movements in GVA within North Wales.

Such improvements in GVA and employment growth will significantly reduce the output gap with the rest of the UK

The projected provision for housing allocations currently in adopted or proposed Local Development Plans across the region (which end at different times) ranges from 37,500 homes to 44,100, which is 2,500-3,000 new homes annually. To date, 13,100 dwellings have been completed between April 2007 and April 2015 – the majority in the Flintshire and Wrexham area. This shows that the region has to be more ambitious in planning sustainable housing growth.

Given the growth projected in the region, measures need to be in place to ensure the removal of constraints and barriers to release designated sites for housing development – especially in areas of high employment growth. (This action is included in the Infrastructure Plan in the Strategy). There will also be a need for further allocation of land for housing as the Local Development Plans are renewed from 2021 onwards. This gives us the opportunity to ensure that the land use planning process is closely integrated and aligned with our economic growth strategy.

**£7.2bn** value added to regional economy by 2035



# NEW RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE REGION TO DELIVER

The region is prepared and ready to accept new responsibilities and powers on key decisions that affect the region. This will support the delivery of the Growth Vision and Strategy, as well as promoting new ways of working and improving the co-ordination of services to businesses and people through a “Team North Wales” approach.

For example, there is potential to explore with the UK and Welsh Governments the following:

- Integration of employment and skills programmes at the regional level – in particular DWP programmes and WG skills initiatives targeted at the “hard to reach” groups and those who are economically inactive. An opportunity exists through such an approach to tackle worklessness in a much more meaningful and effective way, and tailor the new Work and Health Programme to meet the needs of North Wales.
- Asset Backed Investment Fund - This can be achieved if LA / WG / public body assets were pooled. Importantly if the approach was to be fully effective some of the powers currently held by WG from WDA / Land Authority days would give the new entity some key responsibilities and power.
- Strategic land use planning – in particular to achieve improved alignment between planning policies with economic development priorities. The process of identifying the supply

of land required for housing growth and economic growth could be done more regionally and strategically, as well as identifying strategic sites. An opportunity here to achieve better strategic integration between transport planning, economic planning and land use planning through a new and bold approach.

- A regional transport authority with the opportunity to prioritise schemes for funding across the region – with the aim of “enabling” economic growth.
- A business support and trade team – working across the region with a “team north wales” approach. This team would focus in particular on our growth sectors and overcoming barriers to growth and innovation. It could also include tourism and marketing.
- New fiscal powers at the regional level, in particular a programme of Tax Increment Finance projects funded by additional NNDR tax revenue gains from economic development activities, as well as a Regional Investment Fund to provide funding and finance for regeneration activities across the region.



Key partners unite behind Growth Track 360 rail prospectus

North Wales is well placed to receive a range of new responsibilities, and is confident that the powers that will be devolved to the region – following negotiations and agreement with the UK and Welsh Governments – will have a positive impact on the delivery of the Growth Vision and Strategy, boosting productivity levels and improving the employment prospects of our residents.

# The Growth Vision is supported by:



Councillor Dilwyn Roberts, Leader



Councillor Hugh Evans OBE, Leader



Councillor Aaron Shotton, Leader

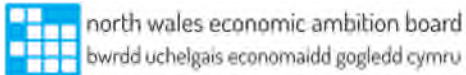


Councillor Dyfed Edwards, Leader



also

Chair, the North Wales Economic  
Ambition Board



Councillor Mark Pritchard, Leader



Councillor Ieuan Williams, Leader



Ashley Rogers, Chair



David Jones OBE, Chief Executive



Professor Maria Hinfelaar,  
Vice Chancellor



Professor John Hughes,  
Vice Chancellor



Glyn Jones OBE, Chief Executive





[www.northwaleseab.co.uk](http://www.northwaleseab.co.uk)

Contact: Iwan Trefor Jones on behalf of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board  
t. 01286 679162 e. [IwanJ@gwynedd.llyw.cymru](mailto:IwanJ@gwynedd.llyw.cymru)