

Report to	Cabinet
Date of meeting	7 <sup>th</sup> June 2022
Lead Member / Officer	Councillor Jason McLellan, Leader and Lead Member for Economic Growth and Tackling Deprivation / Emlyn Jones – Head of Planning, Public Protection and Countryside Services
Report author	Emlyn Jones - Head of Planning, Public Protection and Countryside Services/Gareth Roberts (Public Protection, Regeneration and Economic Development Manager)
Report Title	Adoption of the North Wales Regional Economic Framework

## **1. What is the report about?**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the Regional Economic Framework (REF) for North Wales and to seek its adoption by the Council. The REF is attached in appendix 1.
- 1.2. The REF for North Wales promotes collaborative economic development across the region through an agreed and shared set of priorities for delivery amongst regional partners.
- 1.3 The Memorandum of Understanding (Memorandum of Understanding Working Together to deliver a stronger North Wales Economy) sets out how the Welsh Government, the North Wales Economic Ambition Board (EAB) and other partners would work in partnership to develop and deliver against a single common North Wales Regional Economic Framework.

## **2. What is the reason for making this report?**

2.1 As outlined in the report

## **3. What are the Recommendations?**

3.1. That the REF for North Wales is endorsed and adopted by the Council.

## **4. Report details**

4.1 The Welsh Government's Economic Action Plan (EAP) established the basis for regional working, including a commitment to deliver a stronger regional voice through a regionally-focused model of economic development. This includes the establishment of regional teams and the development of Regional Economic Frameworks (REFs).

4.2 The development of REFs is an essential part of Welsh Government's commitment to a more regionally focussed model of economic development, supporting inclusive and sustainable economic growth, maximising opportunities to address regional and local inequalities, and contributing to the Well-being Goals for Wales.

4.3 In developing the REFs, consideration must be given to the immediate recovery required in the wake of the Coronavirus pandemic, and the longer-term aspirations for the regions.

4.4 REFs are intended as a vehicle to help promote collaborative regional planning and delivery amongst public, private and third sector partners. Delivery will be focussed around a single shared vision for each region and supported by a suite of shared regional priorities and principles.

4.5 The development of REFs will be key in informing and influencing the delivery of Welsh Government funding priorities.

### **THE NORTH WALES REGIONAL ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK**

4.6. To create the first draft REF for North Wales, officials from Welsh Government's North Wales regional office and North Wales Economic Ambition Board have undertaken a period of targeted engagement with a range of key regional stakeholders to co-design this placed-based approach to economic development. In addition to the co-production that took place through the various EAB groups, two cross-sector stakeholder events took place. The first in May, which provided background and

discussion on strengths and opportunities for the region. The second was a series of eight workshops which sought views on priorities for the region. Officers from Denbighshire Council participated in these workshops.

4.7. The first draft of the REF, builds on pre-existing work, and sets out the shared priorities for the region. These priorities align with Welsh Government's aspirations for a well-being economy which drives prosperity, is environmentally sound, and helps everyone realise their potential.

4.8 The well-being economy priorities are presented in the REF under three themes: • The Social and Community Well-being Economy • Experience Economy • Low Carbon and Low Emissions Economy

4.9 The priorities are flexible, allowing the region to adapt and respond to the challenges and opportunities faced over the next 20 years.

4.10 The draft REF for North Wales was presented to the North Wales Economic Ambition Board Joint Committee on 10 December 2021. The Joint Committee decided to recommend the document for endorsement by each of the 6 North Wales local authorities.

4.11. Vaughan Gething MS, Minister for Economy released a written statement on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2021, publishing the 4 Draft Regional Economic Frameworks in Wales. In the statement he stated that further and final consideration of the document by the individual local authorities and other partners in the North Wales region, should continue into January 2022. He stated "We remain committed to working in partnership with partners and stakeholders to deliver against the vision and priorities set out in each of these documents: the opportunities and challenges require our combined efforts if we are to deliver effectively against our collective ambitions."

### **Next Steps**

4.12. The immediate next steps will be to establish, via the regional Economy Recovery Group (and other key partners), a delivery programme. This will include considering how we prioritise the priorities, and who is best to lead on those delivery packages, recognising and respecting existing regional governance and delivery architecture. Some of this work is already taking place and we will therefore need to have a better grasp of all the ongoing work, the funding packages under each priority area before creating new areas of work.

## **5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?**

5.1. The REF delivers against the current Environment priority - that the environment is both attractive and protected, but also supports community well-being and economic prosperity.

## **6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?**

6.1. There are no financial implications for the Council arising directly from adopting the REF

## **7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?**

7.1. The REF is aligned to the '5 ways of working' of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The contents have been co-defined through engagement with a diverse group of regional stakeholders. A Well-being Impact Assessment will be carried out as the REF delivery plans are developed.

## **8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?**

8.1. A virtual cross-sector region wide engagement event was held in May 2021 with public, private and third sectors was organised. The output of the event was reviewed by partners who were developing the REF.

## **9. Chief Finance Officer Statement.**

9.1. The service has confirmed that there are no implications for the Council arising directly from adopting the REF

## **10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?**

10.1. There are no risk implications to the Council in adopting this report. Not adopting would delay its formal approval and therefore North Wales might be disadvantaged compared to other parts of Wales

## **11. Power to make the decision**

11.1 section.2 of the Local Government Act 2000