

ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL Scrutiny Report Template

Committee:	Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee
Date:	23 November 2022
Subject:	North Wales Economic Ambition Board Annual Report for 2021-22
Purpose of Report:	Present the Annual Report for 2021/22
Scrutiny Chair:	Cllr Dylan Rees
Portfolio Holder(s):	Cllr. Llinos Medi, Council Leader Cllr. Carwyn Jones, Portfolio Holder- Economic Development, Leisure and Tourism
Head of Service:	Dylan Williams, Chief Executive
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Local Members:	Applicable to all Scrutiny Members

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1 - Recommendation/s

The Committee is requested to:

R1 To consider and note the Annual Report for 2021-22.

2 – Link to Council Plan / Other Corporate Priorities

The North Wales Growth Deal is linked to Council priorities:

- Ensure that the people of Anglesey can thrive and realise their long term potential – Jobs and work opportunities
- Work with other North Wales Councils to attract investment to ensure that key projects that offer local employment opportunities go ahead.

3 – Guiding Principles for Scrutiny Members

To assist Members when scrutinising the topic:-

3.1 Impact the matter has on individuals and communities [focus on customer/citizen]

3.2 A look at the efficiency & effectiveness of any proposed change – both financially and in terms of quality [focus on value]

3.3 A look at any risks [focus on risk]

3.4 Scrutiny taking a performance monitoring or quality assurance role [focus on performance & quality]

3.5 Looking at plans and proposals from a perspective of:

- Long term
- Prevention
- Integration
- Collaboration
- Involvement

[focus on wellbeing]

3.6 The potential impacts the decision would have on:

- protected groups under the Equality Act 2010
- those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage in their lives (when making strategic decisions)
- opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language

[focus on equality and the Welsh language]

4 - Key Scrutiny Questions

5 – Background / Context

5.1 Annual reporting on progress against the North Wales Growth Deal is a requirement of the Final Deal Agreement. Following consideration by the North Wales Economic Ambition Board, the reports will be shared with Welsh Government, UK Government and the local authority scrutiny committees.

Progress and Highlights 2021/22

5.2 The Annual Report looks back on the progress made over the last year by Ambition North Wales. It covers the Growth Deal and other supported activities.

5.3 The report provides an overview of the Growth Deal and the progress made in delivering the projects as well as other key milestones achieved during the year, including:

- Three Outline Business Cases being approved and the approval of the first Full Business Case for the Digital Signal Processing Centre with Bangor University.
- Securing over £1m in additional grants to support projects in North Wales aligned to the Growth Deal.
- Securing the second tranche of Growth Deal funding of £20.45m in March 2022.
- Launching the Energy Strategy for North Wales with Welsh Government.
- Completion of the Local Full Fibre Network project which saw broadband services upgraded at 300 sites across the region.
- Launching the new website and brand for Ambition North Wales.

6 – Equality Impact Assessment [including impacts on the Welsh Language]

6.1 Potential impacts on protected groups under the Equality Act 2010

The Programme Boards and Project Boards will prepare equality and language impact assessments for each individual project. The impact assessments will be live documents and evolve alongside delivery.

6.2 Potential impacts on those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage in their lives (strategic decisions)

See 6.1 above

6.3 Potential impacts on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language

See 6.1 above

7 – Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising directly from approving the decision sought in this report.

8 – Appendices:

- | |
|---|
| 1. Appendix 1- North Wales Ambition Annual Report |
|---|

9 - Background papers (please contact the author of the Report for any further information):



Uchelgais Gogledd Cymru Ambition North Wales

Annual Report 2021-22



Datblygu cenedl o
arloeswyr bwyd a diod
Growing a nation of food
and drink innovators



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Foreword

The global economy continues to be impacted by factors such as the UK's exit from the European Union and the pandemic, with new and emerging challenges to navigate as a result of the ongoing uncertainty and devastation of Russia's attack on the Ukraine. We are now dealing with the aftermath and ongoing volatility of these situations as we rebuild the economy in North Wales. The outlook sees us heading into rising costs, the scarcity of skills and resources, the reality of climate change and a local economy that is bouncing back and in need of all the support available in order to survive and thrive in the coming years and beyond.

After years of work to pave the way for the North Wales Growth Deal, we are pleased to see it advance from being a set of initiatives on paper, to being real projects delivered by our teams across North Wales. This is a partnership that extends across sectors, for our industries and communities and essentially for people in North Wales now and for generations to come.

The Portfolio Management Office is now fully in place, and we continue to work side by side with the Regional Skills Partnership, UK and Welsh Governments. Together we are investing in new infrastructure and assets, delivering new highly skilled jobs, exciting opportunities and attracting further investment into the region. This will create a real foundation for long-term prosperity.

Our five Growth Deal programmes and their progress is set out within this report and demonstrates how we are tackling our key aims to make North Wales:

- **Connected**, through improving and developing digital connectivity and infrastructure, but also recognising the importance of moving towards an integrated and effective transport system.
- **Smart**, through promoting research and exploiting innovation in our high value sectors.
- **Resilient**, by creating new high value jobs and giving young people a reason to stay and a bright future at home.
- **Sustainable**, by embracing our responsibilities to the environment and developing our region sustainably through all of our investments.

We are fully committed and privileged to lead this important partnership for North Wales and look forward to seeing it continue to grow .



Councillor Dyfrig Siencyn
Chair of the Economic
Ambition Board



Councillor Mark Pritchard
Vice-Chair of the
Economic Ambition Board



Alwen Williams
Portfolio Director for
Ambition North Wales

The Last 12 Months

By the Portfolio Director, Alwen Williams

Despite the continued challenges on our communities, people and economy during the last twelve months, good progress has been made and significant milestones reached towards delivery of the North Wales Growth Deal and the wider ambition and vision for economic prosperity over the next 10-15 years.

Throughout the year we have seen gradual easing of Covid-19 restrictions, enabling us to host several UK and Welsh Government Ministerial visits to project sites and facilitate increasingly more face to face engagement with partners, stakeholders and investors.

Recognising the value and importance of setting out our ambition for North Wales and having a clear brand and identity to represent the strength of our regional partnership, we have worked with Tinint, a creative digital design agency, and Ateb Cymru, our new strategic communications partner to develop and launch our new 'Ambition North Wales' brand and website. Having this refreshed look and feel, supported by an on-line home for news and information is a significant step forward, particularly as we increase our engagement activities with businesses and potential investors in the region and beyond. Additionally, with Business News Wales, we've launched a new North Wales specific business channel and newsletter to share news of the latest Growth Deal developments thought-leading columns and topical features from key figures in the region.

Throughout the year we've seen progress with Outline Business Cases approved for three projects and a number of successful Gateway Reviews completed.

In February 2022, after its successful journey through the business case process, the first project funding agreement, with Bangor University was reached. A total of £3m of Growth Deal funding is now committed to invest in cutting-edge equipment to develop Digital Signal Processing (DSP) capability and technology at the University's established research centre, and supports the creation of up to 40 new jobs.

This first investment means we are truly off the blocks with delivery of the Growth Deal and it has demonstrated and proven the robust end-to-end governance and process underpinning the Growth Deal portfolio, its programmes and projects. Further to this, the second annual portfolio assurance review, conducted by an independent review team, achieved an Amber-Green rating. The outcome, the second highest delivery confidence rating available, verifies progress made over the last twelve months and builds on the Amber rating received last year. The review team noting in their report that: *"The Portfolio has made significant and impressive progress since the last Portfolio Assurance Review (PAR) review, in challenging circumstances."*

During summer we also worked to update our portfolio business case, which was adopted by the Economic Ambition Board in September, and subsequently submitted to Welsh and UK Governments as part of the annual funding award process. This included a presentation to a joint Welsh and UK Government board in December 2021 and the second funding instalment of £20.4m was received in March 2022.



Our Ambition

**“To build a more vibrant,
sustainable and resilient
economy for North Wales”**

We want to:

- Focus on improving the region’s economic, social and environmental well-being.
- See the region develop in a sustainable way, with opportunities for people to gain new skills for the future and develop rewarding careers, seeing businesses grow and communities prosper.
- Champion our language, culture and heritage, in line with the well-being goals for Wales.



Why invest in North Wales?

North Wales has unlimited potential to offer a unique and rewarding proposition for investors. The region offers competitive costs, beautiful landscapes, skilled people and much more. Our people are resilient, results driven and loyal. We are large enough to make an impact but connected enough to be dynamic and adapt quickly to learn new skills for the future.

We have pride in our heritage, culture, language and the environment and are welcoming to people and opportunities. This, along with the continued investment in our economy, makes North Wales the ideal location to invest.

Askar Sheibani, Chair of the Business Delivery Board believes in particular that North Wales is well placed to become a 'world leader' in renewable energy, with opportunities to develop tidal and marine renewable energy as well as generating green hydrogen.



Askar Sheibani,
Chair of the Business
Delivery Board

"North Wales has a really good opportunity and it is fortunate to have the landscape to turn itself into a world leader in renewable energy. It's not just magical thinking - this is within our reach. It's logical, practical and we can achieve it.

We have the natural resources, we have the manufacturing expertise, particularly in Deeside and Wrexham, and we have the people and partnerships to drive this forward. We have all of the ingredients and projects are starting, which I am very excited about."

An aerial photograph of a river winding through a vibrant green landscape. The river flows from the upper left towards the lower right. The banks are covered in lush green grass and scattered trees. In the background, rolling hills are covered in dense green forests. The overall scene is peaceful and scenic, with soft lighting suggesting early morning or late afternoon.

2021 /22 Highlights

Top Highlights of 2021 / 22

April 2021

We secured funding of £500,000 from the Welsh Government's Whole System Business Research Innovation for Decarbonisation scheme to help farmers decarbonise

May 2021

We secured a grant of £200,000 through the OFGEM Green Recovery scheme to develop low carbon technologies for homes such as EV charging points and heating systems

June 2021

We conducted focus groups with the public and private sector to help identify the priorities for mobile connectivity across the region's transport networks

July 2021

We hosted visits from UK Government and Welsh Government Ministers

August 2021

The Outline Business Case of the Glynllifon Rural Economy Hub project was approved

September 2021

We launched our Energy Strategy for North Wales with the Welsh Government, to transform how energy is used across the region

October 2021

We raised £2,300 for Mind, with the donations being split across the North Wales branches

November 2021

We secured a grant of £387,600 from the Community Renewal Fund to conduct feasibility studies for Smart Local Energy Systems

December 2021

Our first Full Business Case was approved for the Digital Signal Processing Centre at Bangor University

January 2022

We upgraded broadband services at 300 sites through the Local Full Fibre Network Scheme

February 2022

We helped three organisations to launch new agricultural systems that will help farmers decarbonise

March 2022

Morlais, the tidal energy stream project ran by Menter Môn, became ready to start construction

Quarter 1 Highlights

£200k OFGEM Green Recovery Funding Secured

We secured a grant of £200,000 from the OFGEM Green Recovery funding, bringing in 1MW of additional power at the Former North Wales Hospital, Denbighshire. This funding will provide the capacity to develop low carbon technologies and systems such as EV charging infrastructure and heating systems at the site, which are essential to reducing carbon emissions.

£500k WBRID Funding secured to help Farmers Decarbonise

We secured funding of £500,000 from Welsh Government's Whole System Business Research Innovation for Decarbonisation (WBRID) scheme to fund low carbon and agricultural projects. The funding is essential in developing projects as we aim towards the net-zero target.

Consultation on Mobile Connectivity Priorities

We held sessions with the private and public sectors to identify priorities for mobile connectivity across the region's transport networks.

Findings of the consultation sessions influenced the Growth Deal's Digital Connectivity projects.

We recruited five roles!

The Portfolio Management Team was further strengthened during this quarter, with appointments made within the procurement and social value field as well as project management support roles.

The Economic Ambition Board's Annual General Meeting

The North Wales Economic Ambition Board held its Annual General Meeting on 18th June with Councillor Dyfrig Siencyn confirmed as Chair and Councillor Mark Pritchard confirmed as Vice-Chair for the 2021-22 year.

Helping North Wales Farmers to decarbonise

Working in partnership with the Welsh Government and Coleg Cambria, we supported three organisations in creating low carbon agri-initiatives through the Whole Business Research Innovation for Decarbonisation (WBRID) scheme.



Three learners at Coleg Cambria, Llysfasi unveil the new Micro-Anaerobic Digestion (AD) system by Biofactory Energy

The three Initiatives:

1. BioFactory Energy designed, built and deployed an innovative Micro-Anaerobic Digestion solution. The aim is to capture methane from slurry and convert it into heat for use on the farm or as an off-grid source of energy.

This will reduce the amount of energy required from the grid and provide a cost saving on energy bills and fertilizer – as well as being beneficial to the environment.

2. Promar International are creating a bilingual, user-friendly online carbon accounting tool, and sustainability platform to measure and monitor sustainability of a farm. The new tool will measure and monitor the sustainability of a farm businesses and will let livestock farmers make year on year comparisons



3. M-Sparc managed the design and build of an innovative Artificial Intelligence computer vision and drone solution. The drone scans an area and identifies weeds, to trigger another drone to deploy a specific amount of pesticide to the weeds.

This has been successfully tested and proven to help reduce time and costs for farming communities as well as introduce an energy efficient opportunity to decarbonise farming.



Hedd Vaughan-Evans, Head of Operations and the M-SParc team with the 'Green Eagle' drone

Quarter 2 Highlights

Glynllifon Rural Economy Hub Outline Business Case Approval

August saw the approval of the outline business case for the Glynllifon Rural Economy Hub. The approval was a major milestone, bringing the project a step closer to creating a world-class hub to enhance the food and drink sector.



Parliamentary Under Secretary of State Visit

David TC Davies, MP and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Wales visited three Growth Deal projects: The Digital Signal Processing Centre, the Enterprise Engineering and Optics Centre and the Former North Wales Hospital, Denbighshire.

New Energy Strategy Launched

The new strategy was launched with a vision to transform the way energy is used across the region. Working with the Energy Service at Welsh Government, the strategy will bring us a step closer to the net-zero carbon target for 2050.



Minister Lesley Griffiths Visit

The Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales, and Trefnydd, Lesley Griffiths MS, visited the Morlais project as well as other low carbon schemes in the region.

Programme Assurance Review

The second annual Growth Deal assurance review was undertaken in August 2021 and delivered an Amber-Green rating, an improvement on the Amber rating received in 2020.

Quarter 3 Highlights

Full Business Case approval for the Digital Signal Processing Centre



The DSP Centre was the first Growth Deal project to have reached this milestone and to secure the funding. The £3 million funding will be invested in cutting-edge equipment to develop the facility, which will manage how digital information is processed efficiently and reliably. In addition to creating up to 40 new jobs for the region, it will be integral to respond to the increase in digital needs.

£387,600 from the Community Renewal Funding secured

We secured the funding to conduct Smart Local Energy System feasibility studies in four of the region's counties. These Systems could unlock many community benefits including the opportunity to generate and sell energy locally at a more affordable cost, the potential to create new jobs and contribute towards decarbonisation of the local energy system.

We held our first Early Market Engagement event

Our first ever 'Early Market Engagement' event was held for regional businesses in December. The aim was to help SME's to understand more about the procurement process behind the Growth Deal. The event focussed on our priorities and how businesses can get involved.

Launch of Ambition North Wales

A new name 'Ambition North Wales' and a new website and brand identity was launched in November to represent our vision for a prosperous North Wales and the partnership in place to deliver that vision.

Pob Cam Campaign to Promote Career Pathways

We ran a social media campaign, Pob Cam to show that there is no such thing as a wrong career move. The campaign saw Welsh pop star Elin Fflur and former Wales international footballer Owain Tudur Jones join in.



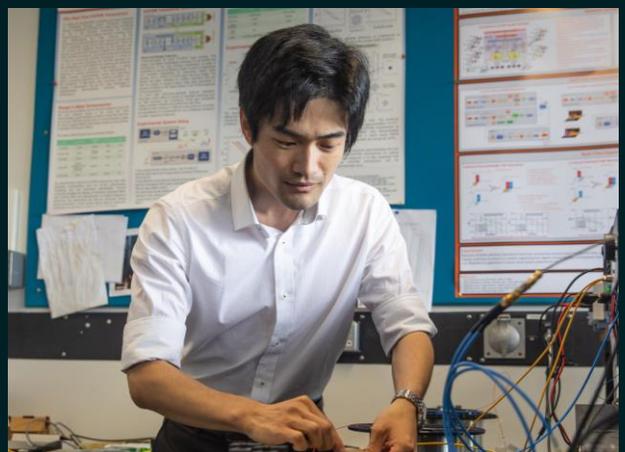
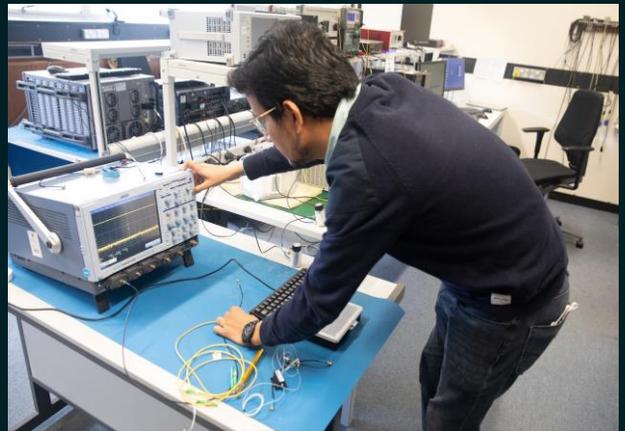
Digital Signal Processing Centre: Full Business Case **Approved**

Twelve months after the North Wales Growth Deal was signed, the first project was approved by the North Wales Economic Ambition Board.

The Digital Signal Processing Centre (DSP) is the first Growth Deal project to receive funding, securing £3 million to invest in cutting-edge equipment, which will develop the facility as well as create up to 40 new jobs. The project is recognised by both Welsh and UK Governments as being critical to the development and future of North Wales and the wider economy.

**Bangor University Vice-Chancellor,
Professor Iwan Davies said:**

“The DSP Centre is a prime example of how Bangor University is collaborating with industry and other academic institutions to develop solutions to address real-world problems through world-class research and development.”



Demonstration of how the DSP equipment can be used

Lead Sponsor:



Quarter 4 Highlights

Morlais gets Green Light to Start Construction

The project became ready to commence main construction phase after securing consents and £31m of ERDF funding and agreeing construction contracts.



Two Projects complete Gateway Reviews

The Last Few % project completed its Gateway 2 review in February with the Centre for Environmental Biotechnology project completing its Gateway 1 review in January. Both projects are working on addressing the recommendations as part of the development of their business cases.

The First Project becomes Operational

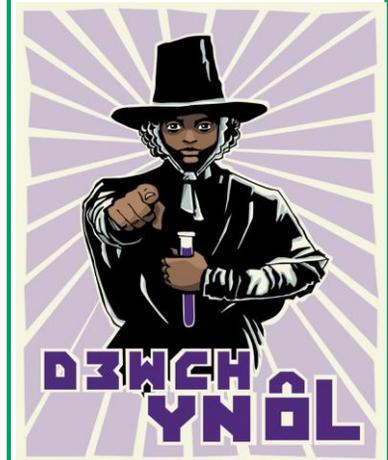
Following the approval of the first Full Business Case for the North Wales Growth Deal in December 2021, the Digital Signal Processing Centre has now placed orders for phase one of the project and the first items of new equipment have been received.

Funding Letter Agreed

Following the adoption of the 2021 update to the Portfolio Business Case in September, we submitted the update to Welsh and UK Governments as part of the annual funding award process. In March, we received and signed the award of funding letter for 2021/22 confirming the next instalment of Growth Deal funding of £20.45m.

We joined M-SParc's 'Dewch yn ôl' Campaign

We joined the 'Dewch yn ôl' campaign for the second time, with the aim of attracting young people to stay to live and work in North Wales.



The Local Full Fibre Network Scheme Improved Broadband Connections for 300 sites in North Wales



Improved Broadband connection at 311 sites*



Broadband connection improvement from 10Mbps to up to 1Gbps



165 of these sites are in rural* areas with previously poor Broadband Connections

Overview:

Over **300 public sites** such as doctor surgeries, ambulance stations and community hospitals benefitted from better broadband connectivity this year, due to the Local Full Fibre Network (LFFN) scheme, funded by the UK Government.

The Digital Connectivity team led on the delivery of this scheme, **helping the health care sector deal with the increase in demand for patient services**, following the pandemic.

The scheme has **targeted sites to tackle some of the challenges caused by slow or unreliable broadband services**, supporting them to adopt more efficient ways of working digitally and ultimately helping them to improve patient service delivery.

* Classified as rural by ONS

Caerffynnon Surgery, Dolgellau

"Having better broadband connection means that we have been able to provide a better service to our patients. The reduction in waiting for administrative tasks to be completed has led to patients waiting less for an appointment.

We have also been able to add services such as video conferencing to help patients remotely, which has made a huge difference to many of our patients, especially those who are most vulnerable."

Mrs Sarah Tibbetts, Practice Manager at Caerffynnon Surgery, Dolgellau.



From left: Dylan Rhys Griffiths (Deputy Senior Responsible Owner for the Digital Connectivity Programme), Kirrie Roberts (Digital Connectivity Project Manager), Sarah Tibbetts (Practice Manager), The Rt. Hon. Simon Hart (MP) and Cllr. Dyfrig Siencyn on a visit to Caerffynnon Surgery in Dolgellau

Denbighshire County Council

"The LFFN program has brought access to high speed fibre connectivity to a number of sites across Denbighshire. This has allowed us to take advantage of improved faster and more resilient connections to our core network. Having access to faster reliable internet has helped our customers and colleagues work flexibly from remote locations. Colleagues have been able to stay safe and be well connected to do their jobs on-line during the Covid-19 restrictions without being impeded by slow internet connectivity".

Barry Eaton, Interim Head of Service, Denbighshire County Council

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board

"World-class communications are essential to us so that we can ensure our services meet the needs of the local population.

Faster, more reliable connections can transform the way we live and work. Improved broadband supports our teams and systems across North Wales to become more resilient."

Jo Whitehead, Chief Executive for the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board

An aerial photograph of a coastal town in North Wales. The town is nestled in a valley between green hills and a rocky coastline. A multi-lane road runs along the coast, curving around a headland. The sea is a deep blue, and the sky is a pale, hazy blue. The text 'The North Wales Growth Deal' is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font in the center of the image.

The North Wales Growth Deal

Overview of the Growth Deal

Our Aims

- 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

Growth Deal Investment £240m

Total Investment: >£1bn

Spending Objectives

Create up to 4,200 new jobs

Generate up to £2.4bn net additional GVA

Our Programmes



Agri-food and
Tourism



Digital
Connectivity



Innovation in High
Value Manufacturing



Land and
Property



Low Carbon
Energy

Agri-food and Tourism

Programme Overview and Progress

Overview

This programme will promote and support employment and training in the Agri-food and Tourism sectors, building on world-leading skills and expertise already established within the region. Due to our diverse and striking landscape, the programme will maximise sustainable opportunities within North Wales.

Successfully delivered, the programme will optimise innovation and create employment and training opportunities. It will deliver facilities that drive a sustainable and globally competitive position for our region.

Glynllifon Rural Economy Hub

Lead Sponsor  Glynllifon
Llandrillo
Menai

The project will create a distinctive, world-class Rural Economy Hub on the Glynllifon estate near Caernarfon. It will provide regional start-ups or expanding businesses with facilities such as business units and an on-site knowledge centre. These will offer practical experience to support innovation and enterprise growth.

The project will strengthen opportunities for collaboration, supply chain development and growth within an expanding food and drink sector in North Wales.

Agri-food and Tourism

Programme Overview and Progress

Tourism Talent Network

Lead Sponsor 

The project sets out to future-proof tourism and hospitality skills provision and increase the commercial benefits from one of the best established and fastest growing sectors in the region.

Successfully delivered, it will stimulate public-private collaboration to coordinate action on skills and product development, transforming growth of the tourism and hospitality sector in the region.

Llysfasi Net Zero Farm

Lead Sponsor 

In a purpose-built facility on the agricultural college campus, this project will lead practical training in cutting-edge technologies and land management approaches to reduce emissions and enhance biodiversity.

This project will help ensure a resilient future for North Wales where carbon neutral land management and a developing renewable energy sector support sustainable, thriving and healthy communities..

Project Progress Tracker

	Stage 1 Determine the project context	Stage 2 Prepare the Strategic Outline Case	Stage 3 Preparing the Outline Business Case	Stage 4 Approval of the Outline Business Case	Stage 5 Preparing the Full Business Case	Stage 6 Approval of the Full Business Case	Stage 7 Project Implementation and Monitoring	Stage 8 Project Evaluation
Glynllifon Rural Economy Hub	Complete ✓	Complete ✓	Complete ✓	Complete ✓	In Progress 🕒			
Tourism Talent Network	Complete ✓	In Progress 🕒						
Llysfasi Net Zero Farm	Complete ✓	Complete ✓	In Progress 🕒					

Digital Connectivity

Programme Overview and Progress

Overview

This programme will address connectivity challenges within North Wales. Whilst the rest of the UK has benefited from improved services in recent years, many of our communities lack strong mobile and fixed broadband connectivity. The programme will enhance our region's capability to develop technologies for the future, ensuring that we can meet the increasing demand for digital and benefit from fast, high-quality connectivity.

The Last Few %

Lead Sponsor



Despite the rest of the UK benefiting from improved connectivity in recent years, parts of North Wales still lack consistent broadband coverage, which has impacted communities, businesses and the wider economy.

This project will address the 'digital divide' (the difference in connectivity quality between towns and rural communities) and consider how connectivity can reach the last of the region's premises currently without superfast (30 megabits per second) broadband. It will aim to provide sustainable and affordable broadband connectivity to benefit North Wales communities and businesses.

Digital Signal Processing Centre

Lead Sponsor



Digital Signal Processing (DSP) technology is a vital part of the digital economy and manages how digital information is processed efficiently and reliably between devices and people.

Bangor University has established leading capabilities in developing new DSP technologies, supporting industry collaboration, job creation and opportunities within the region's supply chains. The project is recognised by both Welsh and UK Governments as being critical to the development and future of North Wales and the wider economy.

Digital Connectivity

Programme Overview and Progress

Full Fibre at Key Sites

Lead Sponsor 

This project will enhance broadband connectivity for key locations in North Wales. These locations are rich in SMEs that will benefit from better connectivity.

Full fibre is a leading network technology that enables the highest-quality broadband. All businesses are reliant on better connectivity to address the increasing demand for digital. Ensuring that businesses can access competitive and affordable connectivity options is vital for growth, innovation and sustainability.

Connected Key Sites and Corridors

Lead Sponsor 

This project aims to enhance mobile connectivity on transport routes and provide competitive full fibre infrastructure to key commercial sites across the region.

Investment will be directed at fibreoptic networks which are essential for delivering 4G, 5G and gigabit capable broadband.

Project Progress Tracker

	Stage 1 Determine the project context	Stage 2 Prepare the Strategic Outline Case	Stage 3 Preparing the Outline Business Case	Stage 4 Approval of the Outline Business Case	Stage 5 Preparing the Full Business Case	Stage 6 Approval of the Full Business Case	Stage 7 Project Implementation and Monitoring	Stage 8 Project Evaluation
Last Few %	Complete ✓	Complete ✓	In Progress ⌚					
Digital Signal Processing Centre	Complete ✓	Complete ✓	Complete ✓	Complete ✓	Complete ✓	Complete ✓	In Progress ⌚	
Full Fibre at Key Sites	Complete ✓	Complete ✓	In Progress ⌚					
Connected Key Sites and Corridors	Complete ✓	In Progress ⌚						

Innovation in High Value Manufacturing

Programme Overview and Progress

Overview

This programme will promote innovation and commercialisation of technology in the manufacturing industry, building on the existing strength of the sector within our region.

In doing so, the programme aims to secure high-value employment and training opportunities and support manufacturing businesses to decarbonise in line with national and global efforts.

Centre for Environmental Biotechnology

Lead Sponsor



This project will explore the use of biological processes as low carbon alternatives to products and industrial manufacturing processes. Based at Bangor University, the project will research unique enzymes and how they can transform into products that have less impact on the environment than current materials and industrial chemicals.

Enterprise Engineering and Optics Centre

Lead Sponsor



The project will deliver state-of-the-art facilities to explore optics, photonics and composite materials as a lightweight material alternative, which will reduce carbon within the manufacturing sector.

The project will drive innovation and commercialisation within regional businesses, create jobs and attract inward investment.

Project Progress Tracker

	Stage 1 Determine the project context	Stage 2 Prepare the Strategic Outline Case	Stage 3 Preparing the Outline Business Case	Stage 4 Approval of the Outline Business Case	Stage 5 Preparing the Full Business Case	Stage 6 Approval of the Full Business Case	Stage 7 Project Implementation and Monitoring	Stage 8 Project Evaluation
Centre for Environmental Biotechnology	Complete ✓	Complete ✓	In Progress 🕒					
Enterprise Engineering and Optics Centre	Complete ✓	Complete ✓	Complete ✓	Complete ✓	In Progress 🕒			

Land and Property

Programme Overview and Progress

Overview

This programme will address land and property challenges within the region, to unlock opportunities and build on our strengths.

By addressing the challenges that face the property market in North Wales, the programme will develop sites to provide residential and employment premises. It will also maximise capacity at key transport links.

Holyhead Gateway

Lead Sponsor 

This project will enhance the port's capacity through land reclamation (creating new land from the sea) within the harbour. In doing this, the aim is to ensure the port can meet the increasing demands of both business and tourism visits to the region.

The port is one of the most used transport routes between the UK and Ireland. As the UK's second busiest port it is an important transport link between both countries.

Former North Wales Hospital

Lead Sponsor 

The former hospital is in a poor condition following recent arson attacks and severe vandalism. The project will demolish, decontaminate and clean the site so that it's suitable for residential development and employment premises. The aim is to attract private investment, deliver new jobs and create opportunities for businesses to relocate or expand.

Bodelwyddan Key Strategic Site

Lead Sponsor 

This project will provide primary services, such as power, telecoms and water for the development of residential and employment premises. In doing so, the aim is to attract private sector investment and provide opportunities for businesses to relocate and expand to create new jobs.

Land and Property

Programme Overview and Progress

Western Gateway

Lead Sponsor



This project will provide primary services such as power, telecoms and water for the development of employment and business premises. In doing so, the aim is to attract private sector investment and provide opportunities for businesses to relocate and expand to create new jobs.

Warren Hall

Lead Sponsor



This project will involve providing primary services such as power, telecoms and water to the site. It will also level the ground so that it's suitable for employment and business premises. The aim is to attract private sector investment and create opportunities for businesses to relocate and expand. It will also create new job opportunities.

Parc Bryn Cegin

Lead Sponsor



This project will develop land for new build employment and business premises. In doing so, the aim is to attract private sector investment and create opportunities for businesses to relocate and expand. It will also create new job opportunities.

Project Progress Tracker

	Stage 1 Determine the project context	Stage 2 Prepare the Strategic Outline Case	Stage 3 Preparing the Outline Business Case	Stage 4 Approval of the Outline Business Case	Stage 5 Preparing the Full Business Case	Stage 6 Approval of the Full Business Case	Stage 7 Project Implementation and Monitoring	Stage 8 Project Evaluation
Holyhead Gateway	Complete ✓	Complete ✓	In Progress ⌚					
Former North Wales Hospital	Complete ✓	Complete ✓	In Progress ⌚					
Bodelwyddan Key Strategic Site	In Progress ⌚							
Western Gateway	Complete ✓	In Progress ⌚						
Warren Hall	In Progress ⌚							
Parc Bryn Cegin	In Progress ⌚							

Low Carbon Energy Programme Overview and Progress

Overview

This programme will unlock the benefits of developing low carbon energy projects within the region, positioning North Wales as a leading location for the low carbon energy sector.

Our region's unique characteristics and natural resources offer the potential to develop projects that create new jobs, reduce carbon emissions and contribute to achieving net-zero by 2050.

Low Carbon Energy Centre of Excellence (Egni)

Lead Sponsor 

This project will invest in developing a Low Carbon Energy Centre of Excellence at Bangor University and M-SParc, enhancing the region's capabilities for research, design and innovation in low carbon energy. It will provide opportunities for further research, supply chain development and attract inward investment.

Morlais

Lead Sponsor 

This project will connect Morlais with the electricity grid system, enabling developers of tidal stream technology to deploy their devices in the zone. Morlais is located off the northwest coast of Holy Island, Anglesey and aims to generate electricity through tidal energy. Once the infrastructure is in place, it will use some of the best tidal resources in Europe.

Hydrogen Hub and Transport Decarbonisation

Lead Sponsor 

This project will support the deployment of green hydrogen to kick start the low carbon hydrogen economy in the region, including options for decarbonising transport networks.

Low Carbon Energy Programme Overview and Progress

Smart Local Energy

Lead Sponsor



The project aims to support energy projects across North Wales which will help achieve renewable energy and decarbonisation targets and have an element of local ownership. It will also help unlock private and community investment in new energy projects.

Local ownership is defined as assets owned by stakeholders located and operating in North Wales, whether that's individuals, communities, businesses or other organisations.

Trawsfynydd

Lead Sponsor



This project will deploy first-of-a-kind Small or Advanced Modular Reactors at the Trawsfynydd site to generate low carbon energy. The Growth Deal will contribute towards project development costs and infrastructure, helping to create jobs as well as position North Wales as a leading location for a technology that has significant potential for deployment across the UK and internationally.

Project Progress Tracker

	Stage 1 Determine the project context	Stage 2 Prepare the Strategic Outline Case	Stage 3 Preparing the Outline Business Case	Stage 4 Approval of the Outline Business Case	Stage 5 Preparing the Full Business Case	Stage 6 Approval of the Full Business Case	Stage 7 Project Implementation and Monitoring	Stage 8 Project Evaluation
Morlais	Complete ✓	Complete ✓	Complete ✓	Complete ✓	In Progress ⌚			
Trawsfynydd	Complete ✓	In Progress ⌚						
Low Carbon Energy Centre of Excellence (Egni)	Complete ✓	In Progress ⌚						
Smart Local Energy	Complete ✓	Complete ✓	In Progress ⌚					
Hydrogen Hub and Transport Decarbonisation	Complete ✓	Complete ✓	In Progress ⌚					

A scenic view of a mountain range with green and brown slopes under a blue sky with white clouds. The foreground shows a grassy hillside with some rocks. The middle ground features a valley with steep, rocky slopes covered in patches of green vegetation. In the background, several jagged mountain peaks rise against a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds.

Skills and Transport Programmes



Skills and Employability Programme Overview and Progress

Overview by the North Wales Regional Skills Partnership

Over the last 12 months the focus has been on ensuring employer membership and input from our key and growth sectors. We developed two new employer cluster groups as sub-groups of the board: Public sector employers and Construction employers. We also re-focused our work based learning provider group and appointed a new chair.

Moving forward, we will focus on further strengthening our employer membership as we develop the next employment and skills plan 2023-25 where there will be a strong focus on digital skills, net zero, Welsh language and employability. The plan will identify the key skills and employment priorities and any key regional sectors for the region, aligned to regional economic plans, including the Growth Deal.

Despite the continued challenges faced in the last year due to Covid-19, our priorities remain unchanged and have become even more important to ensure a skills led economic recovery in the region. We are still focused on providing support for our key and growth sectors in the region.

This year we have made progress by delivering on our action plan of activities for each of the three priorities.

Highlights from the Last 12 months

Labour Market Information (LMI): We strengthened our analytical capability and embarked on a deep dive to understand our changing landscape and the challenges and skills issues that are facing employers across our key and growth sectors. We have produced three Covid-19 LMI reports over the year which has helped informed Welsh Government's policies and programmes for Skills and Employability.

Published Green Skills Report: We commissioned Data Cymru to produce a Green Skills Report, which was published in March. This report outlines the approach they have taken to understanding green jobs and skills, sets out the major publicly available data sources, and then assesses the green jobs and skills challenges within key sectors of the Welsh economy.

Skills and Employability Programme Overview and Progress

Memorandum of Understanding, Trawsfynydd: To promote and support the development of a skills pipeline for nuclear decommissioning, we agreed to work collaboratively with Magnox Ltd and Grŵp Llandrillo Menai to support this ambition. This collaborative joint working arrangement will aim to deliver a range of proposed benefits for the region that will include, a clear skills pipeline that will help skills/training providers and the supply chain effectively plan for future skills requirements for the next 5-10 years.



Signing of the Trawsfynydd Memorandum of Understanding between the Regional Skills Partnership, Welsh Government and Grŵp Llandrillo Menai

Young Person's Guarantee: We completed a mapping work to understand the current landscape in terms of provision and support for young people 16-24 who are NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training). We consulted with programmes and projects across the region to better understand the current landscape of offer/support available in terms of the current education, employment, training and wellbeing support/provision available for young people locally and regionally.

Social Media Campaigns and Career events: There was a need for innovative interventions across all sectors to aid recovery from the pandemic last year. For the Regional Skills Partnership, this translated into working collaboratively with partners to arrange and deliver a range of social media campaigns and careers events. Some notable campaigns and events that we have supported deliver to raise awareness of local opportunities include; Your Career, Your Future; Digital Skills Festival; Tourism and Hospitality and Pob Cam.

Transport

Programme Overview and Progress

The Last 12 months:

- We worked as a region to write a coherent response to the Great British Railway Transition Consultation. There was positive involvement from all six local authorities, Transport for Wales and Growth Track 360.
- Since January, we have been supporting the phased implementation of the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee particularly around the Transport Functions. Seeking input from all six transport departments, the first annual budget and guiding the implementation team on key transport areas.
- Consideration has been given to the work required by the Corporate Joint Committee on developing the required Regional Transport Plan. Regular meetings of a regional transport group has ensured all partners remain updated on any developments relating to transport within the Corporate Joint Committee.

The Next 12 months:

- Local authorities will respond to the 'One Network' Consultation this June, we plan to further support the Local Authorities by drawing in their local responses into a strengthened regional response in order to further support their views.
- We will continue to support the implementation of a North Wales Corporate Joint Committee, with a particular interest in the transport function. The regional transport group will continue to work through the necessary tasks to ensure a streamlined transition to Regional Planning is made possible.
- With a publishing date targeted for summer 2023, this year will see the region begin to develop their first Regional Transport Plan as a Corporate Joint Committee. The focus will be on our regional response to implementing the Welsh Government vision for transport as detailed within the 'llwybr newydd', as well as the localised needs of our citizens, communities, businesses and environment.

Governance

The image features a solid teal background. On the right side, there are several overlapping, semi-transparent lime green geometric shapes, including triangles and trapezoids, creating a modern, abstract design.

Governance Overview

The Economic Ambition Board was established by local authority partners as a joint committee in 2019 and is the decision-making body for the North Wales Growth Deal, as well as leading on regional economic collaboration.

Having secured the Growth Deal in December 2020, the partners entered into 'Governance Agreement 2'. This agreement, which is a legally binding document, defines the role and function of the Economic Ambition Board and its use of delegated powers. It also outlines the decision-making structures and democratic accountability.

The Growth Deal's governance arrangements enable decisions to be made in an open and transparent way for the benefit of the whole of the region. While the Economic Ambition Board acts as the decision-making body for the Growth Deal, there are strong links both formal and informal to the Welsh and UK Governments as funders of the Deal.

The Economic Ambition Board has adopted a delivery model based on a best practice approach to portfolio, programme and project management. This approach is an integrated way of meeting an organisation's ambition, driving better decisions and increasing the likelihood of successful outcomes.

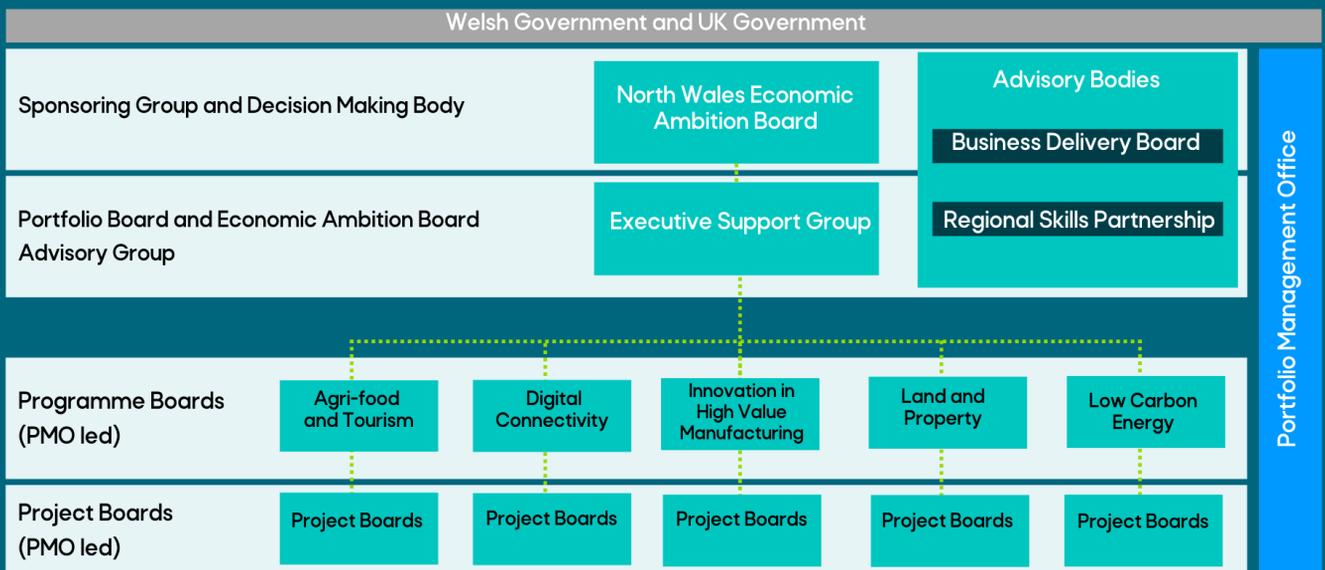
Scrutiny Arrangements

Scrutiny of the North Wales Growth Deal is provided by the six local authorities through their existing Scrutiny Committee arrangements. The Scrutiny Committees will consider the quarterly and annual reports produced by the Portfolio Management Office.

Reporting

The Portfolio Management Office will produce quarterly progress reports and an annual report on the Growth Deal which will be shared with Welsh Government and UK Government, the Economic Ambition Board and its partners. These reports will be publicly available on our website.

Growth Deal Project Delivery Structure



Added Value

We believe in giving back to North Wales. As a team, we work to ensure that we deliver additional benefits to the region and that our work improves the economic, social and Environmental well-being of North Wales.

Here are some examples of what we've done in 2021/22:

- We secured over £1m in additional grants to support projects in North Wales.
- We supported the Morlais Project in securing £31m from the Welsh European Funding Office.
- We raised £2,300 for local Mind branches in North Wales by walking the entire North Wales coastal path.
- We secured £78,000 in additional social value through the DSP procurement process
- We supported regional projects by providing input to the Theatre Clwyd redevelopment business case, which secured £25m from Welsh Government.
- We contributed to 'Cadw Cymru'n Daclus' campaign by collecting litter from our local communities.



The Next 12 Months

By the Portfolio Director, Alwen Williams

We need to look ahead with positivity and determination to deliver even more for North Wales over the next twelve months. It will undoubtedly be a challenge as we make sense of the new dynamics of working in the post pandemic world.

One of our key priorities is to develop our strategy for attracting private sector investment. We have a draft strategy in place that acknowledges the requirement to attract private sector investment directly into the Growth Deal projects, but also recognises that Growth Deal investment will improve the regions infrastructure, and therefore create more compelling investment opportunities for the business sector as well as highlight our strengths and competitiveness as a region.

The last two years have been anything but 'usual' in the way we work and we now have the opportunity to face out into the investor market with an approach that will capture and cultivate interest and demonstrate the potential North Wales can provide for investors. We have dipped our toes in the water this year, and held our first early market engagement event with businesses in the region, giving them an early view of our priorities and the opportunities for our local businesses over the coming years. We look forward to continuing to build on this relationship with our local supplier market as we move forward.

Having moved into the delivery phase of the Growth Deal during the past year, the next 12 months will be focused on securing approvals for our next tranche of projects with a real focus on delivering benefits and additional social value to the region. While there are challenges to overcome, particularly around inflation and increasing costs, the opportunities for North Wales are significant and deliverable.

The first of this next tranche, the Enterprise Engineering and Optics Centre by Wrexham Glyndwr University had an outline business case approved by the Board in April and will now progress through the procurement process before seeking a final investment decision in early 2023.

Driving towards a net-zero future is an underpinning principle for the Growth Deal. Investing in a way that promotes a greener and cleaner future for generations to come. This year we have worked with Arup to develop an approach that leads the way for capital investment to consider sustainable development and really deliver against the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act as we move forward. This has been described as a pioneering approach by our partners Arup. We're proud to be leading the way in North Wales and look forward to implementing the approach with our project partners over the coming year.

As a region and in partnership with UK and Welsh Governments we will continue to place focus on working together to take full advantage of Levelling-Up opportunities and will deliver an investment plan for the Shared Prosperity Fund as part of delivering against our Regional Economic Framework for North Wales.

The 'team North Wales' partnership continues to gain momentum and I am immensely proud of the impact being delivered but also, importantly, the growth in relationships and personal resilience shown by everyone involved throughout, what has, and continues to be, a prolonged period of economic uncertainty and instability. With this in mind, we can look ahead with confidence as we continue to deliver for North Wales.

Our Partners



£240m Growth Deal Investment funded by



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



UK Government
Llywodraeth y DU

Office of the Secretary of State for Wales
Swyddfa Ysgrifennydd Gwladol Cymru