Pecyn Dogfen Gyhoeddus

Gareth Owens LL.B Barrister/Bargyfreithiwr
Chief Officer (Governance)
Prif Swyddog (Llywodraethu)

Swyddog Cyswllt:
Maureen Potter 01352 702322

At: Cyng David Evans (Cadeirydd)

Y Cynghorwyr: Mike Allport, Mel Buckley, Chris Dolphin, Mared Eastwood, Ian Hodge, Ray Hughes, Richard Lloyd, Mike Peers, Vicky Perfect, Dan Rose a Roy Wakelam

5 Hydref 2022

Annwyl Gynghorydd,

RHYBUDD O GYFARFOD HYBRID
PWYLLGOR TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU'R AMGYLCHEDD A'R ECONOMI
DYDD MAWRTH, 11EG HYDREF, 2022 10.00 AM

Yn gywir

Steven Goodrum
Rheolwr Gwasanaethau Democrataidd

Sylwch: Gellir mynychu'r cyfarfod hwn naill ai wyneb yn wyneb yn Siambr y Cyngor, Cyngor Sir y Fflint, Yr Wyddgrug, Sir y Fflint neu ar-lein.

Bydd y cyfarfod yn cael ei ffrydio'n fyw ar wefan y Cyngor. Bydd y ffrydio byw yn dod i ben pan fydd unrhyw eitemau cyfrinachol yn cael eu hystyried. Bydd recordiad o'r cyfarfod ar gael yn fuan ar ôl y cyfarfod ar https://flintshire.publici.tv/core/portal/home

Os oes gennych unrhyw ymholiadau, cysylltwch ag aelod o'r Tîm Gwasanaethau Democrataidd ar 01352 702345.

R H A G L E N

1   YMDDIHEURIADAU

Pwrpas   I dderbyn unrhyw ymddiheuriadau.

2   DATGAN CYSYLLTIAD (GAN GYNNWYS DATGANIADAU CHWIPIO)

Pwrpas: I dderbyn unrhyw ddatganiad o gysylltiad a chynghori'r Aelodau yn unol a Hynny.

3   COFNODION (Tudalennau 5 - 16)

Pwrpas: I gadarnhau, fel cofnod cywir gofnodion y cyfarfod ar 5 Gorfennaf 2022.

4   RHAGLEN GWAITH I'R DYFODOL AC OLRHAIN CAMAU GWEITHREDU (Tudalennau 17 - 26)

Adroddiad Hwylusydd Trosolwg a Chraffu yr Amgylchedd a Gofal Cymdeithasol

Pwrpas: Ystyried Rhaglen Gwaith i'r Dyfodol y Pwyllgor Trosolwg a Chraffu'r Amgylchedd a'r Economi a rhoi gwybod i'r Pwyllgor am y cynnydd yn erbyn camau gweithredu o gyfarfodydd blaenorol.

5   CYFLWYNIAD I FWRDD UCHELGAIS ECONOMAIDD GOGLEDD CYMRU AC ADRODDIAD CHWARTEROL (Tudalennau 27 - 72)

Adroddiad Prif Swyddog (Cynllunio, Amgylchedd ac Economi) - Aelod Cabinet Cynllunio, Iechyd y Cyhoedd a Gwarchod y Cyhoedd

Pwrpas: Cyflwyniad i'r Bwrdd Uchelgais Economaidd a diweddariad chwarterol.

6   CANLYNIAD YR ARCHWILIAD HYFFORDDIANT STATUDOL (Tudalennau 73 - 92)

Adroddiad Prif Swyddog (Stryd a Chludiant) - Dirprwy Arweinydd y Cyngor a'r Aelod Cabinet Gwasanaethau Stryd a'r strategaeth cludiant rhanbarthol

Pwrpas: Rhoi gwybod i Craffu am ganlyniad yr archwiliad mewnol hyfforddiant statudol a rhoi'r wybodaeth ddiweddaraf ar y camau y cytunwyd arnynt.

7 ADOLYGU AMSERLEN CYNLLUN Y CYNGOR 2022/23 (Tudalennau 93 - 100)

Adroddiad Prif Weithredwr - Arweinydd y Cyngor a'r Aelod Cabinet Addysg, y Gymraeg, Diwylliant a Hamdden

Pwrpas: Adolygu amserlenni ar gyfer Cynllun y Cyngor 22/23 yn dilyn cais gan y Cyngor Sir ym mis Gorffennaf.

8 CYNLLUN Y CYNGOR 2023-28 (Tudalennau 101 - 108)

Adroddiad Prif Weithredwr, Prif Swyddog (Cynllunio, Amgylchedd ac Economi), Prif Swyddog (Stryd a Chludiant) - Arweinydd y Cyngor a'r Aelod Cabinet Addysg, y Gymraeg, Diwylliant a Hamdden, Aelod Cabinet Newid Hinsawdd a'r Economi, Aelod Cabinet Cynllunio, Iechyd y Cyhoedd a Gwarchod y Cyhoedd, Dirprwy Arweinydd y Cyngor a'r Aelod Cabinet Gwasanaethau Stryd a'r strategaeth cludiant rhanbarthol

Pwrpas: I Cytuno y Blaenoriaethau, yr Is-flaenoriaethau a'r Amcanion Llesiant arfaethedig ar gyfer Cynllun y Cyngor 2023-28.

9 PARC ARFORDIR SIR Y FFLINT (Tudalennau 109 - 172)

Adroddiad Prif Swyddog (Cynllunio, Amgylchedd ac Economi) - Aelod Cabinet Newid Hinsawdd a'r Economi

Pwrpas: Rhoi gwybod i aelodau am y datblygiadau o ran y gwaith cwmpasu er mwyn sefydlu Parc Arfordir a chytuno ar yr argymhellion i'w gweithredu.

10 ADFYWIO CANOL TREFI (Tudalennau 173 - 182)

Adroddiad Prif Swyddog (Cynllunio, Amgylchedd ac Economi) - Aelod Cabinet Newid Hinsawdd a'r Economi

Pwrpas: Darparu'r wybodaeth ddiweddaraf i'r Aelodau am yr ymatebion lleol sy'n cael eu cynllunio a'u darparu i adfywio canol trefi Sir y Fflint ac am fynd i'r afael ag eiddo gwag drwy gamau gorfodi. Argymell bod y Cabinet yn cymeradwyo'r Cynllun Camau Gorfodi drafft a'r dull arfaethedig i ddatblygu Cynlluniau Bro.

Sylwch, efallai y bydd egwyl o 10 munud os yw'r cyfarfod yn para'n hirach na dwy awr.

Mae'r dudalen hon yn wag yn bwrpasol

ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
5 July 2022

Minutes of the remote attendance meeting of the Environment and Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held on Tuesday, 5 July 2022

PRESENT: Councillor David Evans (Chair)
Councillors: Mike Allport, Ian Hodge, Richard Lloyd, Mike Peers, Vicky Perfect, Dan Rose, and Roy Wakelam.

APOLOGIES: Councillor Mel Buckley, Chief Officer (Streetscene & Transportation), and Head of Democratic Services

SUBSTITUTION: Councillor Rob Davies (for Councillor Roz Mansell)

CONTRIBUTORS:
Councillor Dave Hughes (Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Transport Strategy), Cabinet Member for Planning, Public Health and Public Protection, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy,
Chief Officer (Planning, Environment & Economy),
Chief Officer (Governance) (for minute number 9),
The Internal Audit Manager and Business Support Assistant (for minute number 10),
The Regulatory Services Manager (for minute numbers 10 and 15)
The Waste Strategy Manager (for minute numbers 10 and 15)
The Community and Business Protection Manager and the Food Safety Team Leader (for minute number 11)
The Enterprise and Regeneration Manager (for minute number 13)
The Transport Manager and Transport Area Co-ordinator (for minute number 14)

IN ATTENDANCE: Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator and Democratic Services Officer

6. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

   No declarations were received.

7. **MINUTES**

   The minutes of the meeting held on 7 June 2022 were approved, as moved and seconded by Councillors Richard Lloyd and Mike Allport

   RESOLVED:

   That the minutes be approved as a correct record.

8. **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING**

In presenting the current Forward Work Programme report the Overview and Scrutiny Facilitator outlined the items scheduled for the September and October meetings. She also reported on the ongoing items on the Action Tracking report and highlighted those which were completed.

The Chair referred to an email he had sent to committee members asking for suggestions for inclusion on the Forward Work Programme. As a substantial number of suggestions had been received these had been circulated to the Chief Officers for consideration. He asked if members were happy with providing time for the officers to report back to committee in September on how these would be best dealt with.

Councillor Mike Peers suggested that including timescales for each item would be very useful. A detailed discussion followed on the items on the Forward Work Programme with Councillor Peers saying that some of the timescales were outside officer control. The Chief Officer (Planning Environment & Economy) said that it was important that the Forward Work Programme was put in place in September and that he would bear in mind the comments made by Councillor Peers regarding timescales.

The recommendations as set out in the report, were moved and seconded by Councillors Mike Allport and Mike Peers

RESOLVED:

(a)   That the Forward Work Programme be approved;

(b)   That the Facilitator, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee, be authorised to vary the Forward Work Programme between meetings, as the need arises; and

(c)   That the Committee notes the progress made in completing the outstanding

9. **TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE COMMITTEE**

In presenting the report the Chief Officer (Governance) explained that in October last year the Chief Officer structure was changed and that the Terms of Reference required amendment to align with those changes. He referred Members to the existing Terms of Reference which was attached as Appendix 1 with the changes which had been made shown on Appendix 2. Once the Terms of Refence had been approved it would then be presented to County Council.

Councillor Mike Peers referred to page 36, the item on violence against women, domestic abuse and violence against women and asked if this would be best suited with the Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee or shared across two portfolios. In response the Chief Officer (Planning Environment & Economy) clarified that the reason for this was the team was managed by his portfolio and aligned with the community safety team. He took to the point and said

there would be flexibility where topics crossed over with invitations sent to other committees to join committee when these were being discussed.

The recommendation as set out in the report, was moved and seconded by Councillors Dan Rose and Roy Wakelam

RESOLVED:

That the Committee supported the proposed amendments to its terms of reference as set out in Appendix 2.

10. **END OF YEAR PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT**

In presenting the Annual Report the Internal Audit Manager confirmed it was based on the Council Plan for 2021/2022, which was approved at Full Council in June 2021. The Council priorities and performance targets against those priorities which related to Streetscene, Planning, Environment & Economy were outlined at 1.05 in the report. The Internal Audit Manager then provided information on the monitoring process involved throughout the year.

The Chief Officer (Planning Environment & Economy) provided information on the three red indicators which were:-

- support to local businesses to reduce their carbon footprint and provided more detail on this.
- Number of individuals entering employment, learning or volunteering
- Number of individuals receiving support

The Regulatory Services Manager then provided detailed information on the 5 red performance indicators for Streetscene and Transportation.
These were: -

- Multi model transport hub in Garden City
- Installation of electric charging points
- Introduction of two electric recycling vehicles which had been part funded by Welsh Government (WG) but there had been a delay in receiving those vehicles.
- Percentage of waste reused, recycled and composted
- Bus quality partnerships – WG network review

In response to questions from Councillor Mike Peers, the Regulatory Services Manager confirmed that the WG recycling, compost and reuse performance target was 64% for last year with the Council achieving 60.5%. This was due to increase to 70% in 2024/25 with the Council fined £200 for every ton sent to landfill if that target was not met. She provided information on the increased levels of residual waste collected during the pandemic as people worked from home and disposed of recycling within their black bin as the HRC sites and other services were closed. Moving forward she explained that once information from the compositional analysis

survey was received it would enable engagement with residents to encourage more recycling especially with the use of the food waste service.

In response to a question from the Chair on waste recycling and targeting the worst areas, the Regulatory Services Manager confirmed they were looking at RFID studies, putting chips on bins to make the service more efficient but the data was not available yet. This could provide information on how residents recycle but she added that most residents do recycle.

In response to a question from Councillor Richard Lloyd concerning the Council's website and the 'check your bin day' page, the Regulatory Services Manager confirmed that they were aware of the problem.   The page had been disabled with IT were currently working on this and it was hoped it would be up and running soon.   Residents were advised to call the Streetscene Contact Centre or refer to their collections calendar.

In response to a question from the Chair on the circa economy information on page 69, the Regulatory Services Manager provided information on the unsuccessful bid for the repair and reuse scheme at the HRC sites. This bid had been re-submitted for further circa economy funding which was being considered by Welsh Government (WG). It was hoped that this would be successful.

The recommendations as set out in the report, were moved and seconded by Councillors Mike Peers seconded by Councillor Dan Rose

RESOLVED:

(a)   That the Committee supported the levels of progress and confidence in the achievement of priorities within the 2021/22 Council Plan.
(b)   That the Committee supported the overall performance against 2021/22 Council Plan performance indicators.
(c)   That the Committee was assured by explanations given for those areas of underperformance.

11.   **FOOD SERVICE PLAN 2022-23 FOR FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

In presenting the report the Chief Officer (Planning Environment & Economy) said that this was a return to business as usual. The authority was very fortunate to have retained such an experienced team of officers and had also recruited other officers who had provided support across the council.

The Community and Business Protection Manager and the Food Safety Team Leader commenced the presentation which included slides on the following: -

- **Food Service Plan for 2022 – 2023**
- **Background**
    - ➢   Food Service Plan covers Food Safety, Food Standards and Animal Feed

> ➢ The Plan is an annual requirement of The Framework Agreement on Official Feed and Food Controls by Local Authorities
> ➢ Food Law Code of Practice and Feed Law Code of Practice with associated Practice Guidance governs what we do, when we do it and how we do it
> ➢ Service also covers Communicable Disease and elements of other Trading Standards legislation

- **Food Recovery Plan**
- **Minimum requirement of the Recovery Plan**
- **Review of 2021-2022**

> ➢ Achieved all programmed inspections in line with the Recovery Plan for Safety and Standards
> ➢ New businesses – inspected 91.4% of all new businesses for Hygiene and 88.6% for Standards
> ➢ Broadly Compliant figure improved to 98.5%
> ➢ Moved ahead of the recovery plan in relation to Category B and C Food Hygiene and Category A-C Food Standards interventions
> ➢ Feed interventions in farms not met – 32 out of 50 premises interventions completed
> ➢ Significant auditing of shellfish documentation from the Dee Estuary to improve compliance and traceability in the shellfish industry

- **Commitments for 2022 – 2023**

> ➢ All Category A, B and C (High Risk) Food Hygiene inspections
> ➢ All Category D non-broadly compliant Food Hygiene inspections
> ➢ All Category A (High Risk) Food Standards inspections and all Category B premises that are also due their Food Hygiene inspection
> ➢ 90% of all new businesses to be inspected for both Hygiene and Standards
> ➢ Feed – 72 Farms interventions and 40 High Risk premises across the range of Feed business types

- **Summary**

The Cabinet Member for Planning, Public Health and Public Protection was pleased that this was being shared with committee. The work undertaken by the team during the pandemic was outstanding, with track and trace unable to function without them. He referred members to page 117 which listed the 1,452-food premises within Flintshire, all of which required one inspection per year. The annual report provided reassurance that the farm to fork process was still working thanks to the ongoing work of the team and it was a tribute to them that issues very rarely come to light.

The Chief Officer (Planning Environment & Economy) confirmed this report would be presented to Cabinet next week with the Committee's views that it should be adopted.

The recommendation as set out in the report was moved and seconded by Councillors Mike Allport and Ian Hodge

RESOLVED:

To recommend the Food Service Plan 2022-23 for Adoption.

12. **NORTH WALES REGIONAL ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK**

In presenting the report the Chief Officer (Planning Environment & Economy) sought the committee's comments on the North Wales Regional Economic Framework (NWREF) with a view to it being endorsed by Cabinet next week. He provided an overview of Ambition North Wales as regards funding, delivery across the region and explained the Regional Economic Framework was established by Welsh Government (WG) and Ambition North Wales. He referred Members to Appendix 1 which outlined how this would progress over the next five years to address the recovery of the economy in North Wales. He provided information on the economic gap and the delivery plan, which would be brought back to committee. Any comments from committee would be taken back to Cabinet and he confirmed that all authorities across Wales were seeking to endorse this document.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy commenting that with WG and representatives of all local authorities of North Wales working together for the economic wellbeing of the region, there was the potential for North Wales to play a leading role especially regarding renewable energy.

The Chief Officer (Planning Environment & Economy) commented that one of the programmes of Ambition North Wales was a low carbon energy, with the first being the low carbon tidal energy project on Anglesey. Referring to the Forward Work Programme he said that each of the Programme Managers would be attending to outline the work each of the programmes was undertaking, with the Land and Property Manager attending in September and that low carbon energy could be next.

The recommendation as set out in the report, was moved and seconded by Councillors Mike Allport and Ian Hodge.

RESOLVED:

To recommend the draft 'Regional Economic Framework for North Wales' for endorsement by the Council.

13. **SHARED PROSPERITY FUND**

The Enterprise and Regeneration Manager provided an update on the Shared Prosperity Fund saying that some information was not available at present. The UK Government Programme replaced the EU Structural Funds which was revenue

based with £2.5 b funding over the next three years. He outlined the short timescales involved between the initial release and deadline for submissions. North Wales was required to submit a Regional Development Strategy by the 1st of August, and he explained how this money could be accessed and used.   The Enterprise and Regeneration Manager then provided detailed information on the Priorities, which were subject to change, for each of the three themes, community and place, support provided to local businesses and people and skills. He also provided information on the £10.8 m funding with recruitment of the staff required to deliver this a challenge. In conclusion the Enterprise and Regeneration Manager confirmed that this would be presented to Cabinet next week with WG approval in October. He confirmed that this would be brought back to committee following approval.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy said the situation was constantly changing with the same team also involved with the Levelling Up bid. When it came to funding Flintshire was 20 out of 22 authorities and felt disheartened that the funding of £10.8 m over 3 years was so low.

In response to the questions from Councillor Mike Peers, the Enterprise and Regeneration Manager confirmed that the Priorities had to be submitted by the 1st of August and would specify what interventions the council would like to choose from the programme. The workshops were publicised through the Flintshire Local Voluntary Council (FLVC) and partners, with 20 participants attending each one. The situation was still unclear with regarding the financial breakdown and work would continue to identify which projects met the criteria.   Cabinet would be leading on this, but a report would be brought to committee again in the autumn. The Enterprise and Regeneration Manager commented that UK Government had set out the mechanism for this but that Welsh authorities were receiving more funding than their English neighbours, as this was a bigger programme in Wales. That said the funding was also heavily weighted towards West Wales and the Valleys.

A discussion following with Councillor Mike Peers and the committee agreeing to change the wording of the recommendation to "That Members review the opportunity presented by the Shared Prosperity Fund programme and work undertaken to date and a detailed report would be presented to a future Scrutiny meeting."

The recommendation as amended was moved and seconded by Councillors Mike Peers and Mike Allport

RESOLVED:

That Committee reviewed the opportunity presented by the Shared Prosperity Fund programme and work undertaken to date and that a detailed report would be presented to a future Scrutiny meeting.

14.   WELSH GOVERNMENT'S CONSULTATION ON PROPOSALS FOR NEW BUS LEGISLATION

In presenting the report the Transport Manager explained that Welsh Government (WG) were seeking feedback on the White Pater proposals which would

fundamentally change the way that bus services were governed and operated in Wales. A detailed overview of the WG vision and the public consultation undertaken was given together with information on the current legislation (Transport Act 1985 and 2000) and the Council's responsibilities. Background information on the commercial bus providers was given with details of the review of the core network which were to hubs, main towns and public interchanges supported by the council with fewer services operating especially in rural areas. He also provided information on the impacts of deregulation over the years as regards services and the financial support provided by the Council and WG Network Support Grant. The pandemic had highlighted the vulnerability of the services and the impacts because of decreasing passenger numbers.

The Transport Manager then reported on the WG initiatives to enable the regulation of bus services across Wales, which were outlined in the report. Details of the list of measures and how these would be implemented with WG, local authorities and providers, and include measures to combat climate change and emissions. Local Authorities felt improvements were required but had concerns regarding the level of funding available to support this as well as provisions for rural services. Referring to the WG Questionnaire he provided detailed information on the key financial implications and risks and confirmed that comments from this committee would be fed back.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy agreed with the concerns raised and reported on his online petition to WG "Buses for People and not Profits" with former Councillor Carolyn Thomas. He felt that this initiative was trying to undo the damage of deregulation with its focus on social equity and reducing emissions but that there were unanswered questions around rural communities. He understood the impacts on small bus operators (SME) especially around school transport and that WG could intervene and take funding from one scheme and to provide to another without local authority input. The authority could be a high contributor with resources going elsewhere and wondered if all the routes in our rural communities would be prioritised when it operated in practice.

Councillor Mike Peers raised several concerns regarding the provision of the core network of buses and cross border services and the need to ensure rural communities maintained their services. The ambiguity surrounding the pooling of resources was also concerning. Referring to the train services he felt that the Wrexham to Bidston line, including the Deeside Parkway could be a useful hub but that the issues at Castle Cement were causing problems.

In response to the Wrexham Bidston line, Deeside parkway and Castle Cement concerns the Chief Officer (Planning Environment & Economy) reported on the Transport for Wales (TFW) bid in the levelling up funding to enable funding for Deeside Parkway, which would address the signalling at Castle Cement and allow two extra trains to run without impacting their freight services. This capital bid would be submitted once the portal was open. He provided information on the unsuccessful borderlines bid last year which included a park and ride facility at Penyffordd. The bid had been changed and would be re-submitted but that round 2 of levelling up would be more competitive but a decision would be received by the autumn.

The Transport Manager thanked the Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy and Councillor Mike Peers for their observations regarding the reallocation of funding especially as the authority had no control over how it was distributed. The criteria were still unknown, and clarification would be sought on that. If this failed and Flintshire was left without a bus service, the Integrated Transport System would fail as buses were an integral part of the various forms of transport. This could result in an increase in car usage and CO_2 emissions.

Councillor Dan Rose understood what WG were trying to achieve with the one ticket for buses and trains etc. and asked if the authority would still be responsible for the active travel initiatives. Would this eliminate the council's powers to create extra routes around what was provided by WG. In response the Transport Manager confirmed that active travel would be continuing as the authority worked closely with TFW and WG on strategic plans and cross border routes but that would have to link with the proposals and identification of transport hubs. The Transport Area Co-ordinator confirmed that no clarification had been received on the impact of local transport arrangements which were wholly funded by Flintshire or the funding under franchise model.

The Chair commented that as the committee had not seen the final response only the concerns raised, he suggested that the second recommended be removed. This was agreed by the committee.

The change in the recommendations was moved and seconded by Mike Peers and Roy Wakelam

RESOLVED:

(a)   That the Scrutiny Committee welcomed the proposals to introduce new legislation for bus services in Wales but noted some of the risks and challenges highlighted in this report.

15.   **RECYCLING BRING SITES**

In presenting the report the Regulatory Services Manager provided detailed information on the purpose of the sites, collection rates achieved and their locations across the county. Since they were established the successful kerbside recycling collection services had been introduced and there were now also 5 HRC sites for residents to use. The Regulatory Services Manager confirmed that these sites supported the council's recycling performance, but they were unmanned and unregulated sites and were abused with fly tipping incidents as the banks were only for glass and textiles. Several of these sites were in public and pub car parks which enabled businesses, such as the hospitality industry, to dispose of their waste which was not their intention. The Council's Area Cleansing Team then had to clear the fly tipping waste, which was disposed of as black sack waste, and their costs were now increasing. The council could not offset the costs by the glass collected. Consideration was being given to this as there were several outlets providing the services in conjunction with the weekly successful kerbside operation for these

residents to use. Regarding textiles these could be taken to the HRC sites or residents could use the charity bags households received through their letterbox or use sites on social media. There was also a bid currently with WG to pilot a doorstep collection service for textiles.

Councillor Mike Peers asked why residents took glass to a bring site when it was collected at the kerbside and was it clear who was using these bring sites. In response the Regulatory Services Manager explained these sites were unmanned so it was unclear which was business waste or whether residents brought these items.   There was no detailed information, and it was felt predominantly the waste was from businesses

Councillor Richard Lloyd reported that he had witnessed fly tipping at his local sites and that if there was an increased cost to remove this then he was in favour of their removal, especially as residents were able to use the kerbside collections.

In response to a question from Councillor Mike Peers on textiles the Regulatory Services Manager confirmed textiles could still be deposited at HRC sites but that recommendations would also be made to residents to use local charities in their area too. A comprehensive information pack would be provided to residents should these sites be removed

Councillor Dan Rose asked if a study had been carried out for those areas which were not in a pub car park to see if there was an actual need for the site. In response the Regulatory Services Manager reported a study had not been undertaken but if people wanted to travel to these sites there were alternatives to the kerbside collection at the HRC sites.

Councillor Ian Hodge understood that currently textiles were not collected in the kerbside services but there could be people who were unable to get to the HRC sites.   He felt this should not be removed until there was an alternative in place for them to use. In response the Regulatory Services Manager said there was always the option of charity shops to dispose of these items and that the funding bid to introduce kerbside collection was still with WG. A comprehensive package providing alternatives which were nearby would be included for residents.

The Cabinet Member for Planning, Public Health and Public Protection commented that charity shops took textiles and there were regular bags through the door asking for donations.

The Chair reported on incidents in his ward where bags were left outside charity shops and torn apart during the night. He asked if Charity shops had a limit on the stock they could accept.   In response the Regulatory Services Manager explained that a survey had not been undertaken as regards capacity but said when the bid was being prepared the Charity shops were interested in small textile items such as clothing for re-sale in their shops.   Promotion of the HRC sites and hopefully kerbside collection service would be recommended to residents.

The recommendations as set out in the report was moved and seconded by Councillors Richard Lloyd and Dan Rose.

RESOLVED:

(a)   That the Scrutiny Committee noted the issues and challenges around the continued provision of the recycling bring sites and increasing costs for such a provision.

(b)   That the Scrutiny Committee supported the proposed removal of the recycling bring sites across the county.

16. **MEMBERS OF THE PRESS IN ATTENDANCE**

There were no members of the press or public in attendance.

(The meeting started at 10.00am and ended at 12.21 pm)

....
Chair

Mae'r dudalen hon yn wag yn bwrpasol

CYNGOR Sir y Fflint Flintshire COUNTY COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 11th October 2022
Report Subject	Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking
Report Author	Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview & Scrutiny presents a unique opportunity for Members to determine the Forward Work programme of the Committee of which they are Members. By reviewing and prioritising the Forward Work Programme Members can ensure it is Member-led and includes the right issues. A copy of the Forward Work Programme is attached at Appendix 1 for Members' consideration which has been updated following the last meeting.

The Committee is asked to consider, and amend where necessary, the Forward Work Programme for the Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

The report also shows actions arising from previous meetings of the Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the progress made in completing them. Any outstanding actions will be continued to be reported to the Committee as shown in Appendix 2.

RECOMMENDATION	
1	That the Committee considers the draft Forward Work Programme and approve/amend as necessary.
2	That the Facilitator, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee be authorised to vary the Forward Work Programme between meetings, as the need arises.
3	That the Committee notes the progress made in completing the outstanding actions.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING
1.01	Items feed into a Committee's Forward Work Programme from a number of sources. Members can suggest topics for review by Overview & Scrutiny Committees, members of the public can suggest topics, items can be referred by the Cabinet for consultation purposes, or by County Council or Chief Officers. Other possible items are identified from the Cabinet Work Programme and the Improvement Plan.
1.02	In identifying topics for future consideration, it is useful for a 'test of significance' to be applied. This can be achieved by asking a range of questions as follows: 1. Will the review contribute to the Council's priorities and/or objectives? 2. Is it an area of major change or risk? 3. Are there issues of concern in performance? 4. Is there new Government guidance of legislation? 5. Is it prompted by the work carried out by Regulators/Internal Audit? 6. Is the issue of public or Member concern?
1.03	In previous meetings, requests for information, reports or actions have been made. These have been summarised as action points. Following a meeting of the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee in July 2018, it was recognised that there was a need to formalise such reporting back to Overview & Scrutiny Committees, as 'Matters Arising' was not an item which can feature on an agenda.
1.04	It was suggested that the 'Action tracking' approach be trialled for the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee. Following a successful trial, it was agreed to extend the approach to all Overview & Scrutiny Committees.
1.05	The Action Tracking details including an update on progress is attached at Appendix 2.
1.06	Following the request to all Members of the Council from the Chair of the Committee, many suggestions were received. Several of the suggestions have now been included on the Forward Work Programme. These include: - - Household Recycling Centres & Vehicle Permit Criteria - Woodland Strategy - Biodiversity - Waste Strategy Review - Coastal Park - Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO's) Two workshops have been arranged for all Members on the 26th of September to consider the Household Recycling Centres & Vehicle Permit Criteria Workshops prior to consideration at Scrutiny. Waste Strategy Review workshops will be held in November.

1.07	Two suggestions have been forwarded to the Education, Youth and Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee: -
	
	    - Parking outside schools (with a suggestion that a task & finish group could be considered)
	    - Recycling school uniforms.

1.08	Local ward issues have been forwarded to the relevant area co-ordinator for consideration.
1.09	The following items will be referred to the Climate Change Committee once established:- Electric charging points Rise in sea levels
1.10	The Assets Teams has been asked to consider the allocation of further land for allotments/orchards and community gardens.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	None as a result of this report.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	In some cases, action owners have been contacted to provide an update on their actions.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	None as a result of this report.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Draft Forward Work Programme Appendix 2 – Action Tracking for the Environment & Economy OSC.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Minutes of previous meetings of the Committee as identified in Appendix 2. **Contact Officer:** Margaret Parry-Jones Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator **Telephone:** 01352 702427 **E-mail:** Margaret.parry-jones@flintshire.gov.uk

7.00	**GLOSSARY OF TERMS**
7.01	**Improvement Plan:** the document which sets out the annual priorities of the Council. It is a requirement of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 to set Improvement Objectives and publish an Improvement Plan.

Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Forward Work Programme 2022/23

Date of Meeting	Subject	Purpose of Report/Presentation	Scrutiny Focus	Responsible/Contact Officer	Submission Deadline
15 Nov 2022 **10.00 am**	Housing regeneration grants & loans policy	To consider the draft refreshed Housing Regeneration Grants and Loans Policy and to recommend approval to Cabinet.	Pre-decision scrutiny	Chief Officer (Planning, Environment & Economy)	
	Biodiversity Sect.6 Reporting	To receive a report on Biodiversity to include details of the new requirements of the Section 6 Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty	Awareness raising	Chief Officer (Planning, Environment & Economy)	
	Local Toilet Strategy	To advise the committee on the approach and timescales for the statutory formal review of the Local Toilet Strategy	Pre-decision scrutiny	Chief Officer Streetscene & Transportation	
	Household Recycling Centre Vehicle Permit Policy	To review the current household recycling centre (HRC) operations and vehicle permit criteria	Policy review	Chief Officer Streetscene & Transportation	
	Communities for Work	To update the Committee on the work of the employability programmes and on the closure of the Communities 4 Work programme and any implications for the Council arising.	Awareness	Chief Officer (Planning, Environment & Economy)	

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ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME
APPENDIX 1

Date of Meeting	Subject	Purpose of Report/Presentation	Scrutiny Focus	Responsible/Contact Officer	Submission Deadline
	Shared Prosperity Fund	To receive an update		Chief Officer (Planning, Environment & Economy)	
	Levelling Up Fund	To receive an update		Chief Officer (Planning, Environment & Economy)	
13 Dec 2022 10.00 am	Wepre Park Management plan and charging	To receive a report outlining the management plan and charging proposals.	Pre-decision scrutiny	Chief Officer (Planning, Environment & Economy)	
	Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO's) review	To review the current PSPO's prior to consideration by Cabinet.	Policy review	Chief Officer Streetscene & Transportation	
	Council Plan 2022-23 Mid-Year Performance Reporting	To review the levels of progress in the achievement of activities and performance levels identified in the Council Plan.	Performance monitoring	Chief Officers	
	MTFS & Budget Setting 23-24	That the Committee reviews and comments on the Planning Environment & Economy and Streetscene & Transportation cost pressures and overall budget strategy and advises on any areas of cost efficiency it would like to see explored further.	Consultation	Chief Officers	

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ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME
APPENDIX 1

Date of Meeting	Subject	Purpose of Report/Presentation	Scrutiny Focus	Responsible/Contact Officer	Submission Deadline
10 Jan 2023 **10.00 am**	Memorials/Legacy in the Countryside Policy	To receive an update		Chief Officer Streetscene & Transportation	
	Streetscene Standards	The Streetscene Standards have not been reviewed since 2019. This report will review the existing standards and recommend amendments to ensure that the service continues to deliver to the needs and expectations of the public.	Policy review	Chief Officer Streetscene & Transportation	
	Grass Cutting Policy	To advise Scrutiny of the revised Grass Cutting Policy	Policy Review	Chief Officer Streetscene & Transportation	
	Waste Strategy	To review the Councils current Waste Strategy with the objective of achieving Welsh Government statutory recycling targets	Policy Review	Chief Officer Streetscene & Transportation	
7 Feb 2023 **10.00 am**	Woodland Strategy	To receive a progress report.	Assurance	Tom Woodall	
	Presentation by Land & Property Programme Manager – NWEAB – to be confirmed	To receive an update on the Land & Property Programme			

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ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME
APPENDIX 1

Date of Meeting	Subject	Purpose of Report/Presentation	Scrutiny Focus	Responsible/Contact Officer	Submission Deadline
7 March 2023 **10.00 am**					
18 April 2023 **10.00 am**					
16 May 2023 **10.00 am**	NWEAB Low carbon Energy (to be confirmed)				
13 June 2023 **10.00 am**					
11 July 2023 **10.00 am**	Council Plan 2022-23 Year-End Performance	To review the levels of progress in the achievement of activities and performance levels identified in the Council Plan.	Performance monitoring	Chief Officers	

Items to be added: -

Welsh Government Deposit Return scheme

Action tracking from Environment & Economy OSC October 2022

Item/Date	Discussion	Action	By whom	Status
Performance Report 08/06/21	The Chief Officer agreed to share results of the network review by Transport for Wales	The Bus Network Review undertaken by Transport for Wales (TfW) is currently ongoing and has yet to be concluded. An update is awaited from TfW. 06/09/22	Anthony Stanford	Timescale awaited.
Town Centre Markets 06/07/21	That consideration be given to starting a market at Flint & Buckley	Interim response provided. Outcome to be shared with the Committee when available Email update circulated 1/2/22 An update note will be circulated shortly which will contain a formal response to the questions asked by Scrutiny members on the Buckley / Flint markets idea. 03/10/22	Niall Waller	Timescale awaited.
Minutes 14/09/21	Litter from food outlets	Update on Welsh Government initiative to be circulated when available	Gabby Povey	Awaiting on current position from WG Timescale awaited.

End of Year Performance Monitoring Report 5 July 22	Check your bin day unavailable and Information on My Account incorrect.	Situation should be resolved soon. The system is still unavailable. Discussions are taking place with the systems administrator on providing a solution. Should be resolved within the next month. 27/9/22	Ruth Tulley	Ongoing

Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting	13th September 2022
Report Subject	An Introduction to the North Wales Economic Ambition Board and Annual report
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy
Report Author	Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the report is to present the Annual Report for 2021-22 and introduce the Committee to the Leadership Team of Ambition North Wales, the work which they undertake and the governance structure which supports their work.

Quarterly and 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.

RECOMMENDATIONS	
1	That the Board consider and note the Annual Report for 2021-22.
2	That the Board approves the submission of the Annual Report for 2021-22 to Welsh Government and UK Government as well as the local authority scrutiny committees.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	
1.01	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.
1.02	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.

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

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	None.

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	None.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.1	Appendix 1 North Wales Growth Deal – Annual Performance Report Appendix 2 Portfolio Risk Register – March 2022

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	None.

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	**Contact Officer:** Andrew Farrow (Chief Officer, Planning, Environment and Economy) **Telephone:** 01352 703201 **E-mail:** andrew.farrow@flintshire.gov.uk

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Mae'r dudalen hon yn wag yn bwrpasol

Uchelgais
Gogledd Cymru
Ambition
North Wales

Annual Report
2021-22

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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

Contents

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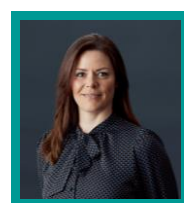
We are fully committed and privileged to lead this important partnership for North Wales and look forward to seeing it continue to grow .

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 easement 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.

"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."

Askar Sheibani,
Chair of the Business
Delivery Board

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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-initivaties 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

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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 and 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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."
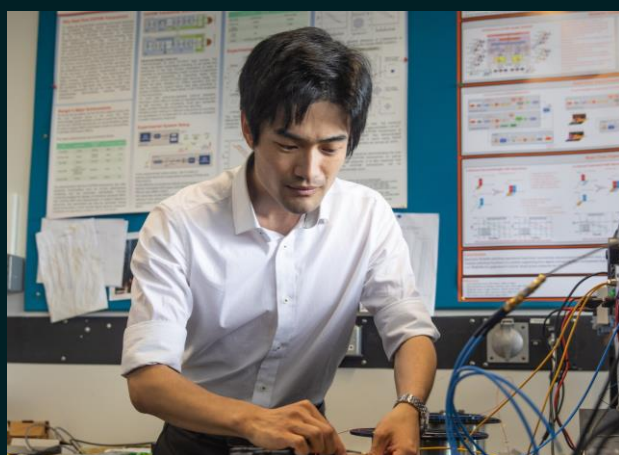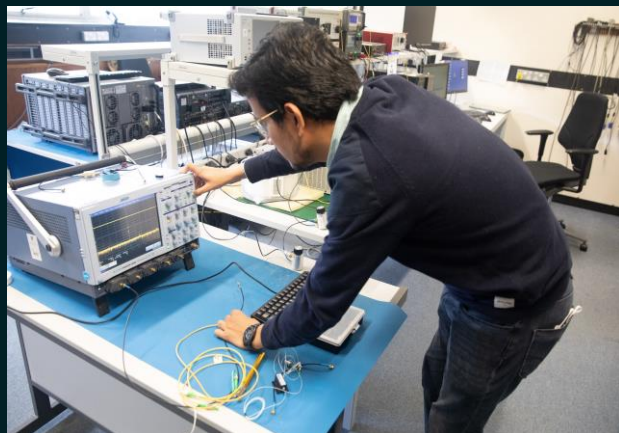
Demonstration of how the DSP equipment can be used

Lead Sponsor:

PRIFYSGOL
BANGOR
UNIVERSITY

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.

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.

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.

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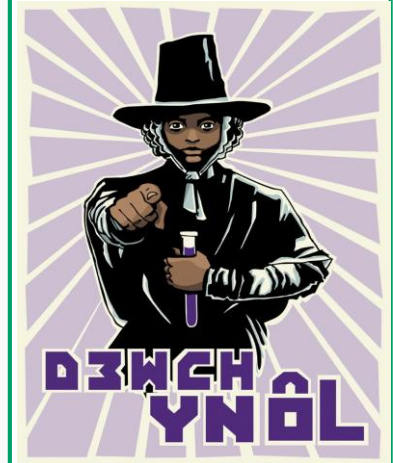
The Local Full Fibre Network Scheme Improved Broadband Connections for 300 sites in North Wales

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.

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* 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

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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   Grŵp 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 Grŵp Llandrillo Menai

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 COLEG CAMBRIA

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 Buinsess 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 Uchelgais Gogledd Cymru / Ambition North Wales

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 Uchelgais Gogledd Cymru / Ambition North Wales

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 Buinsess 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 🕐						

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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 PRIFYSGOL BANGOR UNIVERSITY

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 PRIFYSGOL glyndŵr UNIVERSITY

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 Buinsess 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 🕐			

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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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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 Buinsess 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							

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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   PRIFYSGOL BANGOR UNIVERSITY

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   MENTER MÔN

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   Uchelgais Gogledd Cymru Ambition North Wales

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

Uchelgais
Gogledd Cymru
Ambition
North Wales

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

cwmni **Egino**

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 Buinsess 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 🕐					

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Skills and Transport Programmes

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 challenge within key sectors of the Welsh economy.

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

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

Welsh Government and UK Government		
Sponsoring Group and Decision Making Body	North Wales Economic Ambition Board	Advisory Bodies / Business Delivery Board
Portfolio Board and Economic Ambition Board Advisory Group	Executive Support Group	Regional Skills Partnership
Programme Boards (PMO led)	Agri-food and Tourism / Digital Connectivity / Innovation in High Value Manufacturing	Land and Property / Low Carbon Energy
Project Boards (PMO led)	Project Boards / Project Boards / Project Boards	Project Boards / Project Boards

Portfolio Management Office

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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 costal 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.

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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

Planning, Environment and Economy Portfolio Risk Register

Key		
Underlying Risk Rating	The risk rating before any mitigating actions	
Current Risk Rating	This risk rating following the planned mitigation actions	
Target Risk Rating	The risk rating which is realistically achievable and by when	
Risk Trend	The trend of the risk since the last review date	
Risk Status	Open denotes a live risk	Closed denotes a closed risk
*Denotes the risk is specific to the 'Recovery'		
PE	Planning, Environment and Economy	

Risk Register - Part 1 (Portfolio Management)

Finance

Risk Ref.	Risk Title	Risk Type	Lead Officer	Supporting Officers	Underlying Risk Rating	Current Risk Rating	Target Risk Rating	Risk Trend	Risk Status
*PE02	Failure to meet income targets for Portfolio due to downturn in submission of planning applications, building regulations applications, Highways DC applications and licensing applications	Operational	Andrew Farrow	Sian Jones	R	Y	Y Q4 2022/23	NC ↔	Open
*PE03	Unable to regenerate Town Centres through implementation of the Town Centre Strategy due to insufficient resources and the compound economic consequences of the emergency situation	Strategic	Niall Waller	Karen Whitney Lang	R	A	A Q4 2022/23	NC ↔	Open
*PE24	Failure to deliver the Flintshire element of Regional Growth Deal projects	Strategic	Niall Waller	Rachael Byrne	Y	Y	G Q4 2022/23	NC ↔	Open
PE25	Domestic energy service is self-funding so remains vulnerable to a shortfall in income levels.	Operational	Niall Waller	Joseph Muxlow	A	Y	G Q4 2022/23	NC ↔	Open
PE23	Financial risks arising from programme for private sector homes improvements	Operational	Niall Waller	Joseph Muxlow	Y	G	G Q4 2022/23	NC ↔	Open
PE26	Essential Services are disrupted and/or stopped due to contract failure	Strategic	Andrew Farrow	Lynne Fensome	A	Y	G Q4 2022/23	NC ↔	Open
PE29 New	Failure to deliver the projects that receive funding from the levelling up fund due to the time constraints on the delivery programme for the funding to be used Note : New risk included as the bidding process has been delayed by Welsh Government	Operational	Andrew Farrow	Niall Waller	R	R	G Q4 2022/23	New	Open
PE30 New	Ability of the Portfolio to deliver projects that rely on external funding due to decreasing grant funding	Operational	Andrew Farrow	PEESMT	R	A	G Q4 2022/23	New	Open

Workforce

Risk Ref.	Risk Title	Risk Type	Lead Officer	Supporting Officers	Underlying Risk Rating	Current Risk Rating	Target Risk Rating	Risk Trend	Risk Status
*PE07	Impact on service delivery due to the resilience of staff and succession planning	Operational	Andrew Farrow	PEESMT	R	A	A Q4 2022/23	NC ↔	Open
PE28	Risk to service delivery through inability to recruit into vacant posts	Operational	Andrew Farrow	PEESMT	R	R	A Q4 2022/23	R ↑	Open

External Regulation

Risk Ref.	Risk Title	Risk Type	Lead Officer	Supporting Officers	Underlying Risk Rating	Current Risk Rating	Target Risk Rating	Risk Trend	Risk Status

Risk Ref.	Risk Title	Risk Type	Lead Officer	Supporting Officers	Underlying Risk Rating	Current Risk Rating	Target Risk Rating	Risk Trend	Risk Status
PE11	Non-compliance with Welsh Government Carbon Reduction Target due to external factors such as willingness of the wider public to support initiatives, access to funding to develop projects	Strategic	Andrew Farrow	Alex Ellis	R	A	G Q4 2022/23	R ↑	Open
PE12 Updated	The implications of Ash Die back on finances and reputation of the Council due to the scale of the problem and the ability to make safe Highways and Council amenity land Note : Risk trend is increasing due to the identification of further trees at high risk as peak surveying season is hit in advance of the felling season	Strategic	Tom Woodall	John Purchase	B	R	A Q4 2022/23	R ↑	Open
*PE14 Updated	Non-compliance with Sustainable Urban Drainage System legislation due to capacity of the team Note: risk trend is increasing due to a further loss of existing staff from this team and a continuing inability to attract applicants to vacant posts	Operational	Andy Roberts	TBC	R	R	A Q4 2022/23	R ↑	Open
PE17	Non-compliance with Welsh Language Standards due to the Welsh Language Commissioner's instruction to Flintshire County Council for translation of planning applications and consultation responses	Operational	Lynne Fensome	Sue Davies	R	A	Y Q4 2022/23	NC ↔	Open

ICT & Systems

Risk Ref.	Risk Title	Risk Type	Lead Officer	Supporting Officers	Underlying Risk Rating	Current Risk Rating	Target Risk Rating	Risk Trend	Risk Status
*PE21 Updated	Integration and assimilation to new case management system is not achieved Note: risk trend is increasing as Phase 2 of the project has started to introduce the system to Community and Business Protection	Project	Lynne Fensome	Sue Davies	R	A	G Q4 2022/23	R ↑	Open

Closed Risks

Risk Ref.	Risk Title	Risk Type	Lead Officer	Supporting Officers	Underlying Risk Rating	Current Risk Rating	Target Risk Rating	Risk Trend	Risk Status
*PE16	Capacity within the Community and Business Protection teams to resume planned and reactionary programmes of inspections due to existing backlog of work accumulated during the pandemic, ongoing Covid work and recruitment issues due to the national shortage of Environmental Health Officers	Operational	Sian Jones	Helen O'Loughlin/ Marian Davies/ Lisette Bembridge	R	G	G Q1 2022/23	NC ↔	Closed
*PE27 Updated	Risk to officers who do not adhere to the hybrid model developed for return to the offices Note: risk trend is reducing due to increasing familiarity with the Portfolio's ways of working and increasing confidence in our ability to provide a safe workplace with the measures in place to prevent the spread of Covid within the workforce	Operational	Andrew Farrow	PEESMT	R	G	G Q3 2021/22	G ↓	Closed
*PE05	Failure to meet income targets for Minerals and Waste Shared Service due to downturn in submission of planning applications and reduced compliance visits during lockdown and a subsequent potential economic downturn	Operational	Gary Nancarrow	Robin Williams	R	G	G Q4 2021/22	NC ↔	Closed

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Risk Ref.	Risk Title	Risk Type	Lead Officer	Supporting Officers	Underlying Risk Rating	Current Risk Rating	Target Risk Rating	Risk Trend	Risk Status
*PE19	Unsustainable demand on the Employment Mentoring service due to the economic implications of lockdown and the increase in referrals from Job Centres of those seeking employment	Operational	Niall Waller	Sharon Jones	R	G	G Q4 2021/22	G ↓	Closed
*PE18	Procurement, integration and assimilation to new case management system is not achieved due to market forces and compliance with Flintshire County Council terms of contract	Project	Lynne Fensome	Sue Davies	R	G	G O4 2021/22	G ↓	Closed
*PE13	Welsh Government call in the Local Development Plan due to our inability to meet the delivery agreement timetable	Strategic	Andy Roberts	Adrian Walters	B	G	G Q3 2020/21	G ↓	Closed
PE08 PE15	Decrease in Food Safety and Food Standards following exit from the European Union	Operational	Sian Jones	Helen O'Loughlin	B	G	G Q4 2021/22	G ↓	Closed
PE22	Increased anxiety among officers required to attend their work base due to non-compliance with risk assessment and increasing numbers of officers testing positive for coronavirus	Operational	Andrew Farrow	PEESMT	R	G	G Q2 2021/22	G ↓	Closed
*PE06	Decreasing availability of funding to deliver fuel poverty projects due to re-prioritisation of funding streams	Operational	Niall Waller	Joseph Muxlow	R	G	G Q1 2021/22	G ↓	Closed
*PE04	Failure to prepare and deliver Growth Deal projects due to potential realigning of capital funding	Strategic	Niall Waller	Rachael Byrne	A	G	G Q1 2021/22	G ↓	Closed
*PE01	Loss of Community Benefits by not maximising the inclusion of social value in Contracts	Strategic	Niall Waller	Olivia Hughes	A	G	G Q4 2021/22	G ↓	Closed
*PE09	Reluctance of staff to return to their work base and "normal working patterns on lifting of lockdown restrictions due to anxiety levels linked to increased exposure and personal circumstances and failure to take account into the personal preferences of officers in designing future service delivery models	Operational	Andrew Farrow	PEESMT	R	G	G Q2 2021/22	G ↓	Closed
PE10	Energy Saving initiatives not included in Capital Projects due to non-involvement of Energy Team with Property and Assets team on design of projects which may result in those projects accruing higher long-term costs	Strategic	Andy Roberts	Energy Team	R	G	G Q4 2021/22	G ↓	Closed
*PE20	Increase in non-compliant sites due to inability to conduct enforcement and site monitoring inspections	Operational	Andrew Farrow	Gary Nancarrow/Sian Jones/Andy Roberts/Tom Woodall	R	G	G Q4 2021/22	G ↓	Closed

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Risk Matrix

Impact Severity	Catastrophic	Y	A	R	R	B	B
	Critical	Y	A	A	R	R	R
	Significant	G	G	Y	A	A	R

	Marginal	G	G	G	Y	Y	A
		Unlikely	Very Low	Low	High	Very High	Extremely High
		Likelihood of risk happening					

ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 11th October, 2022
Report Subject	Outcome of Statutory Training Audit
Cabinet Member	Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Streetscene & Regional Transport Strategy
Report Author	Chief Officer, Streetscene and Transportation
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Streetscene & Transportation portfolio is committed to ensuring that all employees in the staffing structure are competent in their roles, and have the education to know what they need to know to do their jobs safely and have been trained to be able to do their jobs properly.

The portfolio employs in excess of 500 employees across a diverse range of activities with approximately two thirds being frontline operational workforce. The roles fulfilled within the portfolio span a range of functions covering office based administrative support staff, transport planners, civil engineers, traffic management and highway workers on Flintshire's high speed road network and recycling and refuse collectors. All work activities are subject to a level of risk and employees are therefore required to undertake a diverse range of statutory and mandatory training for their roles.

As part of the agreed Internal Audit Plan for 2021/2022, an internal audit of the training provision was undertaken in November 2021. The purpose of the audit was to assess whether statutory and mandatory training was in place and to provide assurance that workers were not undertaking work without such training in place. The audit provided some level of assurance, in that the audit did not identify any instances of any workers undertaking work without the necessary training; however, key controls to mitigate the strategic risks were found to be not effective or applied consistently and a number of areas for further improvement were recommended.

This report provides the Committee with an overview of the Compliance and Training service along with assurances regarding the recommended action taken and controls put in place following the audit.

RECOMMENDATIONS	
1	That the Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee notes and supports the work of the Streetscene and Transportation Compliance and Training team.
2	That the Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee notes and supports the action taken and controls put in place in response to the internal audit recommendations.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	OVERVIEW OF THE COMPLAINCE AND TRAINING TEAM AND EXPLAINING THE OUTCOME OF THE STATUTORY TRAINING AUDIT
1.01	The Streetscene & Transportation portfolio employs a Compliance and Training team, which consist of one Compliance and Training Manager, two Operational Trainers and two Compliance and Training Officers. The team is responsible for designing, implementing and managing an effective training and compliance monitoring programme across all Streetscene & Transportation operations, in order to ensure compliance with statutory requirements and ensure that the training provision meets the complex needs of a flexible, multi-skilled workforce across a diverse range of services.
1.02	In 2020, all face-to-face non-statutory training for the portfolio was suspended due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition to this, the longstanding operational trainer retired from his post, which led to the role being vacant for the duration of the pandemic. This brought about an opportunity for the training service provision to be reconsidered and, in 2021, the portfolio invested in the development of the training service by carrying out a review of the operational trainer role, which resulted in a stronger emphasis on compliance assessments post-training. This has been supplemented with the addition of a second training officer post, which enable the portfolio to increase the number of in-house training sessions to be delivered.

Subsequently, an upgraded training facility was designed and built during 2021 to enable training to be undertaken in a covid-safe environment. The new facility is intended to enhance the training offer by providing a modern, fit for purpose environment and it allows multiple training sessions to be carried out at any one time, as well as a comprehensive, undercover area for practical exercises or assessments. To supplement this, a digital training management system is currently being explored to improve the back office support in respect of data management for training records, session scheduling and documentation storage. |
| 1.03 | The portfolio continues to successfully maintain two training accreditations from the Road Transport Industry Training Board (RTITB) and is a registered MIDAS training provider with the Community Transport Association (CTA). This allows us to develop and deliver task specific practical training, which meets statutory |

| | and service delivery requirements and provide training to other council departments when required.

Maintaining industry recognised training accreditations in-house allows us to provide staff with access to quality training and provides assurance that training delivery meets high standards of training provision. The training team is required to be externally audited on a regular basis to ensure that best practice standards are continually maintained. |
|---|---|
| 1.04 | To supplement the current training provision, the portfolio has been successful in obtaining WULF funding via the Unite trade union and corporate training to provide additional HGV driving and plant and equipment training. We will be looking to develop this successful partnership working into 2022-2023 and we are currently considering what other non-statutory training may be provided through the funding, which could be offered to staff and workforce. |
| 1.05 | Pre-pandemic, in excess of 2,400 training events per annum were completed by managers, supervisors and front line workforce. Approximately ninety different course titles can be delivered across a diverse range of disciplines, which are required to address specific legislative requirements and the risks associated with work activities.

All agency workers are provided with the same level of induction and training as substantive members of the workforce to ensure their safety, health and wellbeing. This investment in agency staff is of benefit when full time positions become available as they already have the necessary experience and training to undertake the role. |
| 1.06 | As part of the agreed Internal Audit Plan for 2021/2022, an internal audit of the training provision within the portfolio was undertaken in November 2021. The internal audit was requested by the Chief Officer in response to concerns raised by trade union representatives that there was the potential that employees could be required to undertake a work task that they were not trained to do. The concerns that were raised predominantly came about due to the fact that all face-to-face non-statutory training had to be suspended as a result of the social distancing requirements during the COVID pandemic. |
| 1.07 | The audit focussed on the following areas of possible risk:

- Roles and responsibilities are not clear and risks and mitigations have not been identified via the risk registers;

- Managers are unaware / have incorrectly defined the mandatory training for each job role (internal / contractors);

- The system in place does not accurately record and evidence the level of training / certification including where due for renewal or expired;

- Operatives are assigned to work in areas for which they do not have the requisite training, thereby failing to comply with statutory regulations. This could result in injury, legal proceedings, financial loss and reputational damage to the Council;

- The policy and system in place does not deliver a dynamic and responsive workforce, risking an increased use of external contractors and a higher financial cost to the Council; |

	• The impacts of COVID-19 have not been adequately mitigated/managed.
1.08	The audit testing did not identify any instances of the operational workforce having to undertake a work task for which they were not trained to carry out.

The audit reported that areas managed well included:

• The Training Team are diligent with updating and managing training for the workforce.
• Training schedules developed using the master rotors *[sic]* are sent to managers and supervisors on a weekly basis.
• Non-attendance at training is reported to Managers and Supervisors and analysis of causes for non-attendance carried out to help with continuous improvement of training.
• The Training Team obtain management information from their systems and report numbers of trained/untrained to SMT.
• This data is used in an annual [*report *sic*] by the Corporate H&S group.
• Testing did not identify any instances of any operatives who had been asked to do work for which they were not trained.

However, the audit was assessed as Amber/Red due to a failure in addressing strategic risks and it identified that there were limited key controls in place to mitigate those risks. |
| 1.09 | The audit identified several areas for further improvement, which were:

• **Clarity of mandatory and non-mandatory training requirement** : the service needs to be able to demonstrate that all operatives have the requisite mandatory training to discharge their responsibilities safely.
• **Reliance on Manager awareness of Training Requirements for Roles and Jobs:** there are documents which state which training and skills are needed for each role, however these are rarely referenced by the Managers and Supervisors.
• **Risk management – operational risk not acknowledged:** the Council has a risk management framework which defines how risks are identified, recorded, managed and reported. Whilst there are two risks relating to statutory training on the S&T portfolio register (ST16 and ST30) they are both in regard to the difficulties posed by the Pandemic.
• **Lack of S&T Training Strategy or Policy:** currently Streetscene and Transportation does not have a specific training strategy or policy, rather it relies on the Council's corporate policy.
• **Lack of Training Recovery Plan:** currently sixty percent of training logged on the system is overdue or due in the next six months.
• **Use of spreadsheet and quality of data held:** the details of operatives, training received and training expiry dates is held in an internal spreadsheet. This document is extensive (in-excess of 6000 lines) and if corrupt would result in the loss of all training data.
• **Job Description - personal responsibility for continuous improvement:** There are job descriptions for all level of operatives in Streetscene, they are comprehensive in listing the principal accountabilities and knowledge and skills required for each post. Whilst they state all work must be completed in compliance with Health & Safety regulations and to an expected standard, |

	there is no requirement stated for continuous improvement and maintenance of skills and knowledge.
1.10	Since the audit has been finalised and key actions agreed, there are a number of measures that the portfolio has put in place, which are detailed as follows: - • **Clarity of mandatory and non-mandatory training requirement and Reliance on Manager awareness of Training Requirements for Roles and Jobs:** Operational managers within the Service Delivery team have identified all training requirements for the operational workforce. Each training requirement has been categorised as either statutory (required under legislation), mandatory (deemed necessary to deliver work compliantly and safely) or non-mandatory (required as best practice and for career development). This information has been collated into an annual training matrix which can then be cross referenced to existing employees to ensure that they are trained and qualified to carry out work tasks. This matrix will also be used to identify gaps in training for specific work areas with will assist with planning training for the year. • **Risk management – operational risk not acknowledged** Four additional service specific risks were included on the portfolio risk register: - ST51 - Inability to deliver training session due to vacancy of the training officer position - ST52 - Inability to deliver service due to untrained workforce - ST53 - Loss of training data due to inadequate recording process - ST54 - Increased expenditure on procuring training database systems • **Lack of S&T Training Strategy or Policy** A training policy specific to Streetscene and Transportation has been drafted and is due to be finalised, published and adopted by the portfolio in October 2022. • **Lack of Training Recovery Plan** Training was included within the Streetscene and Transportation plan for post-COVID recovery to ensure that the service reinstated training sessions in a controlled and compliant manner as the social distancing guidelines and restrictions eased. This ensured that training sessions could be reintroduced to ensure that any expired or near to expiry training requirements took place. • **Use of spreadsheet and quality of data held** The spreadsheet for holding training records has been revised allowing easier access to records by operational managers and supervisors. The database is now stable with regard to the number of records held and a backup copy is retained. The Training and Compliance manager is exploring a digital training database system that was developed in-house by the IT Service, which can be utilised to further improve data storage and training planning. Currently, Social Services use the database system, which is well-established and can be extended to accommodate the requirements of the Streetscene & Transportation portfolio.

- **Job Description - personal responsibility for continuous improvement**
  It has been made a contractual requirement for an employee to undertake the required mandatory training required of the role.

2.00	**RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**
2.01	IT support is required to develop the internal training management database system.

3.00	**IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT**
3.01	The actions undertaken by the portfolio intend to minimise the risk of an employee undertaking work tasks which they are not trained to do.
3.02	All risks identified within the portfolio risk register are currently assessed as being yellow or green risks as their current risk rating.

4.00	**CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT**
4.01	With the three Trade Unions (Unison, GMB and Unite)
4.02	With HR and corporate training.

5.00	**APPENDICES**
5.01	Appendix 1 – Internal Audit Report

6.00	**LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**
6.01	N/A

7.00	**CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS**
7.01	**Contact Officer:** Ruth Tulley, Regulatory Services Manager **Telephone:** 01352 704796 **E-mail:** ruth.tulley@flintshire.gov.uk

8.00	**GLOSSARY OF TERMS**
8.01	None

Flintshire Internal Audit

Audit Opinion

Audit Report

Title:	21/22 Statutory Training
Portfolio:	Streetscene & Transportation
Issued Dated:	December 2021
Report No:	19-2021/22
Report Status:	Final v2

Internal Audit engagements are conducted in conformance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.
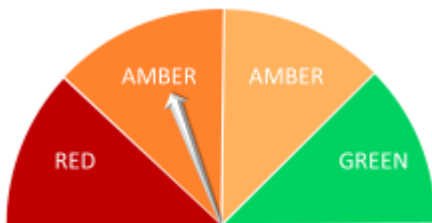
1 Executive Summary:

Introduction and Scope:

This review has been carried out as part of the agreed Internal Audit Plan 2021/22.

Streetscene & Transport (S&T) have a large and varied workforce, it comprises of 295 operatives working in areas as diverse as waste disposal to highway maintenance. Operatives can be internal or sourced from agencies and the task of ensuring they are up to date with statutory training and certification before they are assigned to work is a complex one. There are different statutory training events and certifications the operatives must attend or renew prior to working on a particular job or task.

Currently the Compliance & Training team consists of one manager, two administration officers and two training officers. The service has found recruiting training officers difficult in the last two years. The roles are currently in the process of being re-advertised for a third time following two unsuccessful rounds of recruitment. Staff rotas are produced by the Logistics Manager with the supervisors of each team setting daily/weekly tasks to the operatives on shift.

In 2019 the Compliance & Training Team delivered in excess of 2400 training events which were attended and completed by managers, supervisors and operatives, in over 90 different course areas. In some cases training and assessment will be carried out by an external body, for example HGV driving but the Council does have internal trainers and assessors.

The risks the audit focussed on included:
- Roles and responsibilities are not clear and risks and mitigations have not been identified via the risk registers
- Managers are unaware / have incorrectly defined the mandatory training for each job role (internal / contractors)

Audit Opinion:

In each report we provide management with an overall assurance opinion on how effectively risks are being managed within the area reviewed. Appendix A of the report details our assurance levels:

Assurance:	Explanation
Amber Red - Some	Some Assurance – Significant improvement in control environment required (one or more of the following) • Controls exist but fail to address all key risks identified and/or are not applied consistently and effectively • Key management information exists but is unreliable Conclusion: key controls are generally inadequate or ineffective.

The table below highlights the number and priority of agreed actions to be implemented.

Priority	High (Red)	Medium (Amber)	Low (Green)	Total
No.	2	4	1	7

- The system in place does not accurately record and evidence the level of training/certification including where due for renewal or expired
- Operatives are assigned to work in areas for which they do not have the requisite training, thereby failing to comply with statutory regulations. This could result in injury, legal proceedings, financial loss and reputational damage to the Council
- The policy and system in place does not deliver a dynamic and responsive workforce, risking an increased use of external contractors and a higher financial cost to the Council.
- The impacts of COVID 19 have not been adequately mitigated/managed

This audit has been assessed as Amber Red assurance. This is due to a failure to address strategic risks and that the limitations of the key controls to mitigate the risk; namely accuracy of data in current training spreadsheet, reconciliation of spreadsheet to rotas and heavy reliance on a single point of knowledge, are not effective.
It should be noted the testing did not identify any instances of any operatives who had been asked to do work for which they were not trained, the assurance is based on the risks identified.

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2 Summary Findings:

Areas Managed Well	Areas for Further Improvement
- The Training Team are diligent with updating and managing training for the workforce. - Training schedules developed using the master rotors are sent to managers and supervisors on a weekly basis. - Non-attendance at training is reported to Managers and Supervisors and analysis of causes for non-attendance carried out to help with continuous improvement of training. - The Training Team obtain management information from their systems and report numbers of trained/untrained to SMT. This data is also used in an annual by the Corporate H&S group. - Testing did not identify any instances of any operatives who had been asked to do work for which they were not trained.	- Clarity of mandatory and non-mandatory training requirement – the training spreadsheet holds all training and there is no identifier of statutory training, nor is statutory training numbers reported separately. - Reliance on manager awareness of training requirements for roles and jobs - There is no process or system to ensure the managers and supervisors are aware of the training needed for each role or job. - Risk management – There are no general risks for training stated on the portfolio's risk register, or risk method statements completed. - Lack of S&T Training Strategy or Policy - The service does not have a training strategy to reflect is very specific needs. - Lack of Training Recovery Plan - The increased training needs caused by Covid have not been included in the portfolio's recovery plan. - Use of Spreadsheet & data quality - The training record is being kept on a spreadsheet rather than a database and has limitations of use. - Job Description - personal responsibility for continuous improvement - The requirement for operatives to be responsible for attending training and highlighting any skill gaps is not included in the job descriptions.

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3 Action Plan:

Priority	Description
High (Red)	Action is imperative to ensure that the objectives of the area under review are met.
Medium (Amber)	Requires action to avoid exposure to significant risks in achieving the objectives of the area.
Low (Green)	Action encouraged to enhance control or improve operational efficiency.

No.	Findings and Implications	Agreed Action	Who	When
1 (R)	**Clarity of mandatory and non-mandatory training requirement** The service needs to be able to demonstrate that all operatives have the requisite mandatory training to discharge their responsibilities safely. The service maintains a training spreadsheet (Compliance & Training team) which is sent weekly to the managers and supervisors, this is based on the main rota of operatives which records the availability of all staff. We tried to analyse the data to provide assurance that all operatives have an up to date set of mandatory training for their role. Testing identified that • The spreadsheet does not distinguish between mandatory and non-mandatory training. It shows 60% of operatives will be overdue for training in the next 1-3 months, but it does not highlight which are mandatory and which are added value and personal development courses. • The reporting of training in the Health & Safety report and to senior management again reports the numbers of training sessions undertaken by the operatives. There is nothing to state if these were statutory training or not. • Interrogation of the spreadsheet is difficult due to size	We are pleased the testing did not identify any instances of any operatives asked to do work for which they were not trained. A training matrix will be developed to identify mandatory training required for each role. This will be a project for all the supervisors and managers with the Streetscene Service Manager ensuring the action is implemented by the agreed due date. The training spreadsheet will be redesigned to ensure statutory and non-statutory training are easily identified and training reports can specify how much training has been completed in the mandatory areas. Senior Compliance & Training Officer will report progress to the Streetscene Service Manager to ensure Pentana is updated with either an implementation date or revised due date if necessary. URN 03254	Neil Cox	31/03/2022

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No.	Findings and Implications	Agreed Action	Who	When
	a high number of duplicates (see URN 03239). • Accuracy of data is an issue, whilst these have been reported to the Training and Compliance team, there is a risk data will not be reported accurately (see URN 03239). The service has documents which state which training and skills are needed for each role, however this is not linked with the training spreadsheet. Management state they rarely refer to the documents in practice when producing the weekly work rotas (see URN 03223). If statutory training is not recorded and reported separately, it becomes more difficult to produce useful management information to help with the decision making on budgets and staffing needed for training a large and varied work force.			
2 (R)	**Reliance on Manager awareness of Training Requirements for Roles and Jobs** There are documents which state which training and skills are needed for each role, however these are rarely referenced by the Managers and Supervisors. The Manager also states he does not use the training record as it is confusing, and of such a size it is slow to open and prone to crashing. The service is heavily reliant on the extensive knowledge of the Logistics Manager and his team of supervisors. However this is not an adequate control. This form of control relies on nothing changing in both the workforce and in statutory training regulations. There is a risk, staff absence and turnover (including	Once the training matrix has been developed (see 3254), the information will be used to help restructure the training spreadsheet (see also 3239). Data protection regulations will be observed in how the spreadsheet will be made available to all relevant managers and supervisors. With these two documents there will be a process for managers and supervisors to show which training is required and which operative has the relevant, up to date skills. URN 03223	Gemma Boniface	30/04/2022

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No.	Findings and Implications	Agreed Action	Who	When
	managers and supervisors) and changes in the regulations determining training and skills would negate local knowledge and could result in unskilled operatives being assigned roles for which they were not trained. With no processes or system in place for checking the training and skills needed for each role to the training and skills an operative has, there is a risk the Council could face insurance claims and sanctions by HSE if unskilled/untrained operatives are tasked to do a job and caused harm to themselves or others.			
3 (A)	**Risk management – operational risk not acknowledged** The Council has a risk management framework which defines how risks are identified, recorded, managed and reported. The framework encourages that all risks should be reflected in the risk register, the controls recorded in the risk method statement and that management use the monitoring and reporting processes to review and score their risks based on evidence and performance data. This gives the services, portfolio and council sufficient assurance that risks are being managed and mitigated appropriately. Whilst there are two risks relating to statutory training on the S&T portfolio register (ST16 and ST30) they are both in regard to the difficulties posed by the Pandemic. The overall risk to ensure an effective statutory training strategy for a large and varied workforce is in place, monitored and managed is not included within the S&T portfolio risk register. The risk of an operative undertaking work for which they are not trained causing	Portfolio risks are reviewed on a monthly basis. The team will expand the stated risks to specify the risk associated with training a large and varied work force. This can be completed at the next monthly review in December. Risk Method Statements for these newly stated risks will be completed by the end of January URN 03196	Ruth Tully	31/01/2022

No.	Findings and Implications	Agreed Action	Who	When
	harm to themselves or others could result in insurance claims, financial loss and reputational damage from a Health & Safety Executive (HSE) investigation and improvement notice. Identifying risks and regularly reviewing them creates a culture where compliance and control is examined and continuously improved. This becomes part of the compliance checks to correctly train operatives or assign them to the right work. It also enables management to demonstrate the effectiveness of their strategy. Failure to state risks can result in a culture of stagnation and failure of service improvement.			
4 (A)	**Lack of S&T Training Strategy or Policy** Currently S&T does not have a specific training strategy or policy, rather it relies on the Council's corporate policy. S&T have many operative roles which require statutory training. Jobs cannot be completed by an untrained member of staff. A specific training policy would set out the portfolio's arrangements and responsibilities for providing statutory training to operatives. Without a specific policy there is a risk there is no consistent standard to which compliance checks are carried out. There is a risk the roles of the various staff are unclear and lines are blurred between duties. There is also a risk the requirement for operatives to be responsible for attending training and raising training needs with supervisors is not being stated.	The Senior Management team are currently developing a People Management Strategy with HR and the Corporate Training team. A training strategy for S&T will be developed in conjunction with this strategy. URN 03219	Katie Wilby	30/04/2022

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No.	Findings and Implications	Agreed Action	Who	When
	A dedicated training policy would help to form part of the risk management of stated training risks.			
5 (A)	**Lack of Training Recovery Plan** Currently 60% of training logged on the system is overdue or due in the next 6 months. The service is in the process of recruiting 50 new operatives. Many will come from current long term agency staff, however they will add to the already increased training needs, The Training Manager does have a plan to increase training and introduce more e-learning were viable, however this is not part of the Portfolio's strategic recovery plan. During the height of the pandemic Welsh Government (WG) allowed some required training renewal to lapse, however as we continue to move out of the crisis period, it is unlikely this leniency will continue . With the majority of operatives' training in need of renewal and a planned recruitment of 50 operatives, not including training in the portfolio's recovery plan fails to acknowledge the scale of the training needs created by the pandemic and the risks to the portfolio if the workforce's skills and training is not brought up to date. A plan would be able to set out the seriousness of the task ahead of the training team, it would also show the costs and capacity the service needs to complete the training of their large workforce.	The issues to Statutory training caused by Covid and how the service will meet the increased need for training will be specified within the Recovery Plan. This will be done in conjunction with the updating of the Risk Register (see 3196) URN 03222	Ruth Tully	30/01/2022
6 (A)	**Use of spreadsheet and quality of data held** The details of operatives, training received and due to expire is held in an internal spreadsheet, this is the document of record and would be used in any external	The service acknowledges the training spreadsheet has, due to its size, become a problematic system. Currently the spreadsheet is backed up weekly to ensure	Gemma Boniface	31/04/2022

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No.	Findings and Implications	Agreed Action	Who	When
Tudalen 88	audit by HSE. This is maintained by the Training Team, from reviewing this document it is clear the record is regularly maintained and updated. It is also clear they are monitoring when training has to be renewed. However the training record is nearly 6000 rows long and the manner in which it has been designed it will only get longer. Each time an operative attends a new training session (not updates training) another line is added duplicating name, payroll reference etc. Excel spreadsheets have a variety of tools for analysing data and can be an excellent programme, however it is not a database and the larger a sheet is the more unstable it becomes. The stability of a large sheet relies on the size of computer memory and speed. In the Council we use the thin client model, meaning all users access the program from a central online source. The reliance then is on the size of our servers, which is limited in the Council. This means larger spreadsheets will struggle and will be liable to corruption and loss of data. Managers have reported they find using the spreadsheet difficult and find that it can crash and be unstable when sorted. Analysis of the data found: • A number of operatives who had been recorded with multiple payroll references. This could mean the training has been recorded under the wrong name. This was caused by Excel not copying the cell above but continuing the sequence and the Training Officer not identifying the error. This has been communicated to the team and rectified. • Duplicate names, payroll reference and courses, this due to the design of the spreadsheet and	the safety of the data. The Compliance Manager is also concerned about the free entry on the spreadsheet which allows for errors to be more easily introduced. In the short term the training spreadsheet will be restructured in conjunction with the development of the training matrix to make it more stable and easier to use and to obtain management information from. In the longer term a business case will be produced and presented for the purchase and introduction of a staff training management database. URN 03239		

No.	Findings and Implications	Agreed Action	Who	When
	makes it difficult to obtain useful management information using Excel tools. Whilst it is clear the Training Team are diligent in maintaining the training record, they are using a spreadsheet which is not an ideal system for the type and large amount of data being added. There is a risk data may be lost or corrupted due to the limits of the excel system, due to the size of the record it is not a simple task to carry out regular data cleanse or spot errors.			
7 (G)	**Job Description - personal responsibility for continuous improvement** There are job descriptions for all level of operatives in Streetscene, they are comprehensive in listing the principal accountabilities and knowledge and skills required for each post. Whilst they state all work must be completed in compliance with H&S regulations and to an expected standard, there is no requirement stated for continuous improvement and maintenance of skills and knowledge. It is the responsibility of the Council to ensure they only use the appropriately skilled operatives to carry out duties, and to funding or host training events however it should be the responsibility of the operative to actively take part in the training and raise skill gaps with their supervisor/manager. By sharing the responsibility between both the Council and the operative it will help promote a culture of continuous improvement resulting in a highly skilled workforce.	Changing the job descriptions requires a re-negotiation with the Unions. The risk can be addressed by including the requirement for operatives to be pro-active in taking part in training in both the induction and in letters of appointment. These changes can be made immediately so all future appointments can be advised of their responsibility to take part in the training provided by the Council. For current employees it will be highlighted in one-to-ones and supervisions. URN 03220	Katie Wilby	31/12/2021

4 Distribution List:

Name	Title
Neil Cox	Officer Accountable for the Implementation of Agreed Actions

Name	Title
Katie Wilby	Chief Officer – Streetscene and Transport
Neil Cox	Streetscene Service Manager
Ruth Tulley	Programme Manager
Barry Wilkinson	Highways Network Manager
Gemma Boniface	Senior Compliance & Training Officer
Gareth Thomas (Streetscene)	Logistics Manager

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Appendix A – Audit Opinion:

The audit opinion is the level of assurance that Internal Audit can give to management and all other stakeholders on the adequacy and effectiveness of controls within the area audited. It is assessed following the completion of the audit and is based on the findings from the audit. Progress on the implementation of agreed actions will be monitored. Findings from **Some** or **Limited** assurance audits will be reported to the Audit Committee.

Assurance	Explanation
Green - Substantial	**Strong controls in place (all or most of the following)** • Key controls exist and are applied consistently and effectively • Objectives achieved in a pragmatic and cost effective manner • Compliance with relevant regulations and procedures • Assets safeguarded • Information reliable Conclusion: key controls have been adequately designed and are operating effectively to deliver the key objectives of the system, process, function or service.
Amber Green – Reasonable	**Key Controls in place but some fine tuning required (one or more of the following)** • Key controls exist but there are weaknesses and / or inconsistencies in application though no evidence of any significant impact • Some refinement or addition of controls would enhance the control environment • Key objectives could be better achieved with some relatively minor adjustments Conclusion: key controls generally operating effectively.
Amber Red – Some	**Significant improvement in control environment required (one or more of the following)** • Key controls exist but fail to address all risks identified and / or are not applied consistently and effectively • Evidence of (or the potential for) financial / other loss • Key management information exists but is unreliable • System / process objectives are not being met, or are being met at an unnecessary cost or use of resources. Conclusion: key controls are generally inadequate or ineffective.
Red – Limited	**Urgent system revision required (one or more of the following)** • Key controls are absent or rarely applied • Evidence of (or the potential for) significant financial / other losses • Key management information does not exist • System / process objectives are not being met, or are being met at a significant and unnecessary cost or use of resources. Conclusion: a lack of adequate or effective controls.

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Mae'r dudalen hon yn wag yn bwrpasol

CYNGOR
Sir y Fflint
Flintshire
COUNTY COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 11th October 2022
Report Subject	Council Plan 2022-23 Timeline Review
Cabinet Member	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure
Report Author	Chief Executive
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council Plan for 2022-23 was adopted by County Council in July. The Plan was reviewed and refreshed for content following on from our response to the pandemic and our Recovery Strategy. The themes and priorities remain the same to 2021/22 however there are some developments with sub-priorities.

The outline of the Council Plan for 2022/23 including the six themes, their priorities and actions is appended (as Part 1).

At County Council in July, it was requested Overview and Scrutiny Committee's review; (1) action timelines; and (2) some of the definitions be reviewed.

RECOMMENDATIONS	
1	To agree Council Plan Part 1 reviewed and updated timelines for completion

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	COUNCIL PLAN 2022/23
1.01	It is a requirement of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 for organisations to 'set out any actions to increase the extent to which the council is meeting the performance requirements.' Plans for organisations should be robust; be clear on where it wants to go; and how it will get there.
1.02	In July, County Council requested a review of timelines due to several target completion dates being set as March 2023. This review has been carried out for each of the actions of the Council Plan and is appended for reference. The dates have been reviewed by officers to ensure accurate targets are now identified. The document contains the updated target dates and rationale for the changes or no changes. The three categories of rationale are: **Core Business** – activity is ongoing; **Project** – activity has clear start and end dates; and **New Initiative** – activity has clear start date which may develop in the future.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	Resource implications have been considered during preparation of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and Capital Programme and will continue to be monitored during the regular budget monitoring and financial review arrangements.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	All Members have had the opportunity to consider and review the content of the draft Plan themes and priorities. Overview and Scrutiny Committees have reviewed and discussed the overall content of the Plan throughout January and February 2022.

4.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	**Ways of Working (Sustainable Development) Principles Impact**

Long-term	The Council Plan 2022/23 continues to be aligned to the Sustainable Development Principles across all their working. Assessment against these will be made at the end of year Annual Performance Report.
Prevention	
Integration	
Collaboration	
Involvement	

Well-being Goals Impact

	Prosperous Wales	Council Plan 2022/23 continues to provide evidence of alignment with the Well-being Goals. Specific strategic and policy reports include impact and risk assessments.
	Resilient Wales	
	Healthier Wales	
	More equal Wales	
	Cohesive Wales	
	Vibrant Wales	
	Globally responsible Wales	

Risk Management
Risks have been captured and added for information within Part 2 Council Plan 2022/23.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1: Council Plan (Part 1) 2022-23 Timeline Review (Streetscene & Transportation). Appendix 2: Council Plan (Part 1) 2022-23 Timeline Review (Planning, Environment & Economy).

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	None

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	**Contact Officer:** Jay Davies, Strategic Performance Advisor **Telephone:** 01352 702744 **E-mail:** jay.davies@flintshire.gov.uk

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	**Council Plan:** the document which sets out the annual priorities of the Council.
8.02	**Medium Term Financial Strategy:** a written strategy which gives a forecast of the financial resources which will be available to a Council for a given period, and sets out plans for how best to deploy those resources to meet its priorities, duties and obligations.

Mae'r dudalen hon yn wag yn bwrpasol

Portfolio	Task Description	Task Estimated Completion Date	New Estimated Completion Date	Task Type
Streetscene and Transportation	Converting the authority's fleet to electric and alternative fuels (hydrogen etc)	31/03/2023	31/03/2030	New Initiative
Streetscene and Transportation	Promoting the use of public transport through the further development of the Council's core bus network	31/03/2023	No Change	Core Business
Streetscene and Transportation	Promoting multi modal transport journeys and the development of strategic transport hubs	31/03/2023	No Change	Core Business
Streetscene and Transportation	Developing the County's electric car charging network	31/03/2023	31/12/2022	New Initiative
Streetscene and Transportation	Promoting active travel and further developing the County's walking and cycling network	31/03/2023	No Change	Core Business
Streetscene and Transportation	Achieving Welsh Government recycling targets	31/03/2023	31/03/2025	Core Business
Streetscene and Transportation	Support and promote Re-Use and Repair initiatives in partnership with Refurbs Flintshire	31/03/2023	No Change	Project
Streetscene and Transportation	Promoting the option to reuse and repair unwanted items at Household Recycling Centres by partnering with local Charities or social enterprises	31/03/2023	No Change	New Initiative
Streetscene and Transportation	Working in partnership, actively support and engage with community led groups by developing recycling initiatives	31/03/2023	No Change	New Initiative
Streetscene and Transportation	Developing and delivering transport infrastructure improvements as part of North Wales Metro programme and the Council's Integrated Transport Strategy	31/03/2023	No Change	Core Business
Streetscene and Transportation	Ensuring Flintshire strategic transport priorities are well-represented in the Regional Transport Plan from the forthcoming Corporate Joint Committee development	31/03/2023	No Change	Project
Streetscene and Transportation	Working in partnership, actively support and engage with community led groups by developing Local Environmental Quality initiatives	31/03/2023	31/03/2024	New Initiative

Mae'r dudalen hon yn wag yn bwrpasol

Portfolio	Task Description	Task Estimated Completion Date	New Estimated Completion Date	Task Type
Planning, Environment and Economy	Reducing the risk of fuel poverty for residents by increasing the energy efficiency of homes	31/03/2023	No Change	Core Business
Planning, Environment and Economy	Engaging, supporting and referring vulnerable households to reduce fuel poverty and improve health and wellbeing	31/03/2023	No Change	Core Business
Planning, Environment and Economy	Mapping Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO's) across Flintshire to ensure legal minimum housing standards are met and to improve residents' quality of life	31/03/2023	No Change	Project
Planning, Environment and Economy	Bringing empty homes back into use thorough the Empty Homes Loan	31/03/2023	No Change	Core Business
Planning, Environment and Economy	Exploring opportunities to develop a project management service for non-commercial landlords to encourage take up of the Empty Home Loan Scheme	31/03/2023	No Change	New Initiative
Planning, Environment and Economy	Targeting 'problem' empty homes in our communities and use enforcement powers where appropriate to improve our communities and increase housing supply	31/03/2023	No Change	Core Business
Planning, Environment and Economy	Exploring opportunities to maximise housing and revitalise our towns through the redevelopment of the High Street	31/03/2023	No Change	Project
Planning, Environment and Economy	Gathering information on annual Council greenhouse gas emissions to submit to Welsh Government and the Carbon Programme Board	30/09/2022	No Change	Core Business
Planning, Environment and Economy	Reviewing the procurement policy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from suppliers	30/09/2022	30/09/2022	New Initiative
Planning, Environment and Economy	Developing plans towards net zero carbon for our assets in line with Welsh Government guidance	31/03/2023	No Change	Core Business
Planning, Environment and Economy	Working with Flintshire's leisure and culture trust partners to reduce carbon emissions	31/03/2023	No Change	New Initiative
Planning, Environment and Economy	Reviewing the Council's Flood Risk Management Strategy	31/03/2023	No Change	Core Business
Planning, Environment and Economy	Reviewing the Council's Strategic Flood Consequences Assessment	30/11/2022	30/11/2022	Core Business
Planning, Environment and Economy	Carrying out flood investigations and alleviation works where appropriate	31/03/2023	No Change	Core Business
Planning, Environment and Economy	Assessing the feasibility of schemes within land assets for resisting flood and drought while enhancing biodiversity and increasing carbon storage	31/01/2023	31/01/2023	Project
Planning, Environment and Economy	Enhancing the natural environment through the delivery of the Section 6 Environment Act Wales biodiversity duty	31/03/2023	No Change	Project
Planning, Environment and Economy	Delivering an increase in canopy cover as part of the Urban Tree and Woodland Plan	31/03/2023	No Change	Project
Planning, Environment and Economy	Delivery of green infrastructure projects under the Local Places for Nature grant funding stream	31/03/2023	No Change	Project
Planning, Environment and Economy	Exploring opportunities to develop the Flintshire Coast Park through the production of a scoping study	31/03/2023	31/12/2022	Project
Planning, Environment and Economy	Delivering the Rights of Way Improvement Plan with a focus to ensure improved access for all and the promotions of Walking for Health	31/03/2023	No Change	Core Business
Planning, Environment and Economy	Assessing the feasibility of renewable energy and land assets and link to wider carbon ambitions	31/03/2023	No Change	New Initiative
Planning, Environment and Economy	Agreeing appropriate investment strategy for future renewable energy developments	31/03/2023	No Change	New Initiative
Planning, Environment and Economy	Support local businesses in their efforts to reduce their carbon footprint and become more resource efficient	31/03/2023	No Change	New Initiative

Portfolio	Task Description	Task Estimated Completion Date	New Estimated Completion Date	Task Type
Planning, Environment and Economy	Monitoring the health and vitality of town centres to support effective management and business investment decisions	31/03/2023	No Change	Project
Planning, Environment and Economy	Encouraging and support investment in town centre properties especially to facilitate more sustainable uses	31/03/2023	No Change	Project
Planning, Environment and Economy	Improving the environment in town centres	31/03/2023	No Change	Project
Planning, Environment and Economy	Supporting the growth of community enterprises in town centre locations	31/03/2023	No Change	Project
Planning, Environment and Economy	Engaging town centre small businesses and improve support packages available to them	31/03/2023	No Change	Project
Planning, Environment and Economy	Supporting small and/or local businesses to engage with public sector procurement opportunities	31/03/2023	No Change	Project
Planning, Environment and Economy	Supporting recovery of the County's Street and indoor markets	31/03/2023	No Change	Project
Planning, Environment and Economy	Supporting growth of the local and regional food and drink business sector through marketing and collaborative projects	31/03/2023	No Change	New Initiative
Planning, Environment and Economy	Supporting recovery of the tourism and hospitality sectors and rebuild confidence in the industry	31/03/2023	No Change	New Initiative
Planning, Environment and Economy	Supporting local businesses in their efforts to reduce their carbon footprint and become more resource efficient	31/03/2023	No Change	New Initiative
Planning, Environment and Economy	Increasing the scale and impact of the social business sector	31/03/2023	No Change	Project
Planning, Environment and Economy	Starting delivery of the local plans within North Wales Growth Deal for digital infrastructure	31/03/2023	No Change	Project
Planning, Environment and Economy	Connecting further rural communities to improved digital infrastructure	31/03/2023	No Change	Project
Planning, Environment and Economy	Ensuring timely adoption of the LDP once Inspector's Report received	31/12/2022	No Change	Core Business
Planning, Environment and Economy	Monitoring overall Plan performance via the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) and submit to Welsh Government	31/03/2023	No Change	Core Business
Planning, Environment and Economy	Maintaining and updating the LDP Housing Trajectory in line with planning decisions made	31/03/2023	No Change	Core Business
Planning, Environment and Economy	Making decisions at Planning Committee in line with the adopted LDP	31/03/2023	No Change	Core Business
Planning, Environment and Economy	Referencing the LDP growth strategy in early work on a North Wales Strategic Development Plan (SDP)	31/03/2023	No Change	Core Business
Planning, Environment and Economy	Co-ordinating a multi-agency approach to support businesses to recruit people from disadvantaged groups	31/03/2023	No Change	Project
Planning, Environment and Economy	Delivering mentoring and wider support programmes to assist disadvantaged people to re-engage with the labour market	31/03/2023	No Change	Project

Sir y Fflint Flintshire COUNTY COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 11th October 2022
Report Subject	Council Plan 2023-28
Cabinet Member	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure; Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Streetscene and the Regional Transport Strategy; Cabinet Member for Planning, Public Health and Public Protection; and Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy
Report Author	Chief Executive; and Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy); and Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation)
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council Plan for 2023 - 28 has been reviewed and refreshed to reflect the key priorities of the Council for the five-year term of the new administration.

The 'super-structure' of the Plan comprises of seven priorities and relevant sub-priorities. The seven priorities take a long-term view of recovery, projects and ambitions over the next five years. The priorities and sub-priorities relevant to the Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee are shown at Appendix 1.

The Council Plan 2023 - 28 will be published in a similar format to previous years, identifying actions aimed at achieving the Well-being objectives, priorities and sub-priorities. National and regional issues/risks which could impact on the achievement of these priorities will be identified and monitored.

Part 2 of the Council Plan will be considered by all Overview and Scrutiny committees to ensure full coverage of Part 1 of the Council Plan 2023/28 and its respective measures and their targets.

RECOMMENDATIONS	
1.	That the Committee support the proposed Priorities, Sub-priorities and Well-being objectives of the Council Plan 2023-28, as set out at Appendix 1.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	COUNCIL PLAN 2023-28
1.01	It is a requirement of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 for organisations to 'set out any actions to increase the extent to which the council is meeting the performance requirements.' Plans for organisations should be robust; be clear on where it wants to go; and how it will get there.
1.02	A full review has taken place to ensure the appropriateness and relevance of the well-being objectives, priorities, and sub-priorities going forward. This includes: • priority actions that continue from 2023 onwards for sustained attention • priority actions which could be removed as they have been completed or become operational (business as usual); and • emerging priority actions for 2023-28
1.03	The proposed structure of the Council Plan 2023-28 consists of seven priorities, well-being objectives, and sub-priorities as follows: **Priority: Poverty** **Well-being Objective:** Protecting our communities and people from poverty by supporting them to meet their basic needs and to be resilient Sub-priorities: - Income Poverty - Child Poverty - Food Poverty - Fuel Poverty - Digital Poverty **Priority: Affordable and Accessible Housing** **Well-being Objective:** Housing in Flintshire meeting the needs of our residents and supporting safer communities Sub-priorities: - Housing Support and Homeless Prevention - Housing Needs and Housing Options - Social Housing - Private Rented Sector - Empty Properties **Priority: Green Society and Environment** **Well-being Objective:** Limiting and enhancing the impact of the Council's services on the natural environment and supporting the wider communities of Flintshire to reduce their own carbon footprint Sub-priorities:

- Phosphates Mitigation
- Carbon Neutrality
- Climate Change Adaptation
- Flood Risk Management Strategy
- Strategic Flood Consequences Assessment
- Fleet Strategy
- Green Environment
- Flintshire Forest
- Green Access
- Renewable Energy
- Active and Sustainable Travel Options
- Circular Economy

Priority: Economy
Well-being Objective: Connecting communities and enabling sustainable economic recovery and growth
Sub-priorities:
- Rural Regeneration
- Levelling Up
- Town Centre Regeneration
- Business
- Transport Connectivity
- Digital Infrastructure
- Local Development Plan (LDP) Targets
- Spending Money for the benefit of Flintshire
- Reducing Worklessness

Priority: Personal and Community Well-being
Well-being Objective: Supporting people in need to live as well as they can
Sub-priorities:
- Independent Living
- Safeguarding
- Direct Provision to support people closer to home
- Local Dementia Strategy
- A Well-connected, Safe and Clean Local Environment.

Priority: Education and Skills
Well-being Objective: Enabling and Supporting Learning Communities
Sub-priorities:
- Educational Engagement and Achievement
- Digital Learning Opportunities
- Learning Environments
- Learning Community Networks
- Specialist Educational Provision
- Welsh Education Strategic Plan (WESP)
- Well-being

Priority: A Well-managed Council
Well-being Objective: A responsible, resourceful and trusted Council operating as efficiently as possible
Sub-priorities:
- People
- Anti-Racist and Anti-Discriminatory Council
- Financial Resilience

	- Flintshire Assets - Digital - Partnerships
1.04	The final Council Plan will be available as a web-based document published on the Flintshire County Council website following adoption by County Council in June 2023.

2.00	**RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**
2.01	Resource implications have been considered during preparation of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and Capital Programme and will continue to be monitored during the regular budget monitoring and financial review arrangements.

3.00	**CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT**
3.01	All Members will have the opportunity to consider and review the content of the draft Well-being objectives, priorities and sub-priorities including the opportunity to scrutinise targets set for 2023-28.

4.00	**IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT**
4.01	**Ways of Working (Sustainable Development) Principles Impact**

Long-term	The Council Plan 2023-28 continues to be aligned to the Sustainable Development Principles across all of their working. A full integrated impact assessment will be carried out for Council Plan 2023-28
Prevention	
Integration	
Collaboration	
Involvement	

Well-being Goals Impact

Prosperous Wales	Council Plan 2023-28 continues to provide evidence of alignment with the Well-being Goals. Specific strategic and policy reports include impact and risk assessments.
Resilient Wales	
Healthier Wales	
More equal Wales	
Cohesive Wales	
Vibrant Wales	
Globally responsible Wales	

Council's Well-being Objectives
The Council's Well-being objectives have been reviewed as part of this exercise. The refreshed set Well-being objectives is found within this report in section 1.03.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1: Council Plan 2023-28 – Proposed Priorities, Sub-priorities and Well-being Objectives relevant to the Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	None.

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	**Contact Officer:** Sam Perry, Performance and Risk Management Support Officer **Telephone:** 01352 701476 **E-mail:** Sam.perry@flintshire.gov.uk

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	**Council Plan:** the document which sets out the annual priorities of the Council.
8.02	**Medium Term Financial Strategy:** a written strategy which gives a forecast of the financial resources which will be available to a Council for a given period, and sets out plans for how best to deploy those resources to meet its priorities, duties and obligations.
8.03	**Council Plan Part 2:** the document which underpins the Council Plan, which captures Measures, Tasks and Risks.

Mae'r dudalen hon yn wag yn bwrpasol

Council Plan 2023-28 Development – Proposed Priorities

The following table provides an overview of proposed priorities for the Council Plan 2023-28

PRIORITY:	Green Society and Environment
Description/ Well-being Objective	**Limiting and enhancing the impact of the Council's services on the natural environment and supporting the wider communities of Flintshire to reduce their own carbon footprint**
Phosphates Mitigation	**Definition:** Provision of viable and deliverable options to mitigate the impact of phosphates from new development on Special Areas of Conservation protected rivers
Carbon Neutrality	**Definition:** A net carbon zero Council by 2030 and supporting wider decarbonisation actions across the County, making this central to Covid-19 recovery
Climate Change Adaptation	**Definition:** Be more resilient to the changes that have happened due to climate change and prepare for predicted future change
Flood Risk Management Strategy	**Definition:** Refresh the Council's flood risk management strategy to align with the national strategy and identify communities at most risk in Flintshire and the actions required to mitigate this risk
Strategic Flood Consequences Assessment	**Definition:** Review the Council's Strategic Flood Consequences Assessment in light of the Ministerial letter of November 2021, to prepare for the implementation of revised TAN15 Development and Flood Risk guidance which becomes operational in June 2023
Fleet Strategy	**Definition:** Reducing the environmental impact of our fleet
Green Environment	**Definition:** Enhance and increase biodiversity and trees to deliver multiple benefits for people, wildlife and the environment
Flintshire Forest	**Definition:** Development of a plan to establish a Flintshire Forest that will identify available land assets, budget requirements and a realistic delivery timescale
Green Access	**Definition:** The promotion, good management and protection of our green spaces to deliver multiple benefits to the environment and our residents and visitors
Renewable Energy	**Definition:** The promotion and support of renewable energy opportunities across the Council Estate and wider communities
Active and Sustainable Travel Options	**Definition:** Create opportunities to increase levels of walking and cycling (Active Travel) and the use of sustainable public transport options, enabling the undertaking of multi-modal transport journeys to access key destinations
Circular Economy	**Definition:** Support and promote the Welsh Government's strategy to create a sustainable, circular economy in Flintshire

Council Plan 2023-28 Development – Proposed Priorities

PRIORITY:	Economy
Description/ Well-being Objective	**Connecting communities and enabling sustainable economic recovery and growth**
Rural Regeneration	**Definition:** Ensure that Economy interventions consider and meet the needs of rural businesses and individuals
Levelling Up	**Definition:** Prepare and submit bids to the UK Government Levelling Up Fund programme to invest in projects in deprived coastal communities in Flintshire
Town Centre Regeneration	**Definition:** Regenerate and re-invent our town centres
Business	**Definition**: Enable business continuity and encourage appropriate investment
Transport Connectivity	**Definition**: Develop and promote effective transport connectivity while supporting recovery and economic growth
Digital Infrastructure	**Definition:** Ensure the digital networks facilitate and support recovery and growth
Local Development Plan (LDP) Targets	**Definition:** Achieve LDP policy objectives for growth, protection and enhancement
Spending money for the benefit of Flintshire	**Definition:** Grow our local economic vitality through social value commitments and procurement strategy
Reducing worklessness	**Definition:** Work with our partners to support individuals to gain employment

CYNGOR Sir y Fflint Flintshire COUNTY COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 11th October 2022
Report Subject	Flintshire Coastal Park
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Economy and Countryside
Report Author	Chief Officer (Planning, Environment & Economy)
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2014 a strategic framework of opportunities along the Dee Estuary foreshore was produced. The proposal of a coast park sought to identify the estuary foreshore as a single entity akin to a Regional Park.

The concept of a Flintshire Coast Park has been re-explored through the commissioning of a scoping study which reviews case studies and precedents before analysing the benefits and constraints. The study suggests potential coast park footprints and steps for implementation.

A Flintshire Coast Park for Flintshire would provide a fresh impetus and focus for the coast, raising the profile of the foreshore and enable communities and businesses to work sustainably and innovatively to help deliver environmental, economic and social prosperity.

RECOMMENDATIONS	
1	Members note the content of the scoping study and agree that the Flintshire Coast Park is taken forward as a local, informal entity.
2	Members agree that option two would be the preferred coast park footprint to take forward.
3	Members support the Access & Natural Environment Manager to establish a Flintshire Coast Park Steering Group to move forward on the next steps for implementation.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	**EXPLAINING THE FLINTSHIRE COAST PARK**
1.01	Following the completion of the Wales Access Improvement Programme (2006-2013), culminating in the opening of the Wales Coast Path in 2012, Flintshire identified a series of local ventures along the Dee Coastline from Talacre to Shotton that individually and collectively would help to: • Enhance and interpret the area's outstanding natural and heritage value • Attract and retain more visitors • Provide community facilities and events • Create jobs and enhance skills • Reverse environmental decline
1.02	In 2014 Flintshire commissioned the development of a strategic framework of opportunities along the Dee Estuary foreshore and produced a Flintshire Coast Park Prospectus. The proposal of a coast park sought to identify the estuary foreshore as a single entity akin to a Regional Park.
1.03	The Flintshire Coast Park review was put forward and considered at: Cabinet - 6th January 2022, where it was agreed to re-examine the idea of a Coast Park through the commissioning of a scoping study. Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 8th February 2022, where members supported the approach to commission a scoping study and recommended that the six hubs along the estuary (proposed in the 2014 prospectus), be reviewed.
1.04	In March 2022, a Scoping Study was commissioned (the Study, Appendix 1) to examine the potential for the formal establishment of a Flintshire Coast Park.
1.05	The Study discusses whether a formal Regional Park designation should be pursued, or whether the existing informal Coast Park brand should be more deeply embedded in local policy and priorities.
1.06	The Study also: • reviews Regional Park precedents in the UK, describing their journey from inception to designation; • reviews progress of projects listed in the 2014 Flintshire Coast Park prospectus; • examines legislation and planning policy hooks for a Regional Park; • consults with locally based stakeholders; • maps options for potential footprints of a Regional Park / Coast Park; • considers challenges faced by the Flintshire Coast and how some of those could be addressed through a Coast Park.

1.07	The study explores four potential footprints of a Flintshire Coast Park: • Option one has a coastal focus based on the 2015 Flintshire Coast Park prospectus, but with two additional gateways at Llannerch-y-môr and Saltney; • Option two would have the same coastal focus as option one, but with additional connection green infrastructure (GI) corridors from neighbouring communities; • Option three 'Dee Viewshed' would include all the elements of the previous options and would extend into the hinterland, where views from higher ground include the Dee Estuary; • Option four would include all the previous option elements and would have an extended footprint to include the remaining areas of the Lower Dee catchment in Wales. The study does not recommend any particular option as all have a range of potential benefit and dis-benefits, however on balance, it is felt that option two provides the most suitable footprint for maximum benefit.
1.08	The Study concludes with next steps in relation to either a formal Regional Park designation or embedding the more informal Coast Park status.
1.09	Lessons from the formal designation route show that, with a statutory remit and robust governance structures, momentum and longevity can be established with possibilities for influencing policy and potentially more opportunity for investment, business involvement and revenue generation. There is, however, currently no legislation available to accommodate a regional park designation in Wales.
1.10	Precedents using the more local, non-standard designation approach have been able to achieve some of the aspects of designated regional parks, however with their more informal structures and procedures they appear to be more vulnerable to changes in partnership arrangements, policy and time-limited funding streams.
1.11	**Next steps** • Transitional stage - this would involve: the establishing of a project team; articulating a vision; identifying costs and funding; developing a spatial plan and defining a detailed boundary; and setting up a body to provide a steer for the Flintshire Coast Park. This includes a short narrative on compliance with the Habitat Regulations Assessment. • Implementation stage - this would involve: engagement with key stakeholders, development of individual projects and construction contracts; setting up of administrative and monitoring systems. • Management stage - this would involve: development and sustaining of business, recreation, tourism and heritage initiatives.
1.12	**Timescales** There is significant work to undertake in the transitional stage and it is expected that it can be undertaken through 2023/24, with an expected Coast Park launch in spring 2024.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	Currently work along the coast is funded through external grant aid and delivered in house through the Coastal Rangers.
2.02	The financial implications of a Flintshire Coast Park are currently unknown but would be identified through the implementation phase as set out in the scoping study. Investment would be required either through external funding or from the capital programme.

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	The Flintshire Coast Park is expected to deliver positive impact benefits and a full integrated impact assessment will be completed as part of the transitional stage work.

Ways of Working (Sustainable Development) Principles Impact

Long-term	**Positive**: A Flintshire Coast Park will bring partners and communities together to deliver a vision for the Dee Estuary foreshore which will involve working together for its long-term prosperity.
Prevention	**No Change**
Integration	**Positive –** The Flintshire Coast Park will provide the opportunity for access, health and environmental objectives to be integrated within other polices and plans both within the authority and by partner organisations.
Collaboration	**Positive -** The Flintshire Coast Park would seek to collaborate with partners to work towards the delivery of the Coast Park Plan.
Involvement	Members, partners and stakeholders will be brought together through the Flintshire Coast Park Steering Group.

Well-being Goals Impact

Prosperous Wales	**Positive**: The coast makes an important contribution to the local economy with reports concluding that the Wales Coast Path contributes £16 million to Wales' economy annually. The vision for the Flintshire Coast Park has the opportunity to capitalise on this potential within Flintshire.
Resilient Wales	**Positive**: The coast will face many challenges over the next decades,

		including climate change and potentially coastal erosion. Having a Coast Park provides the means for these issues to be highlighted and discussed.
	Healthier Wales	**Positive:** A significant number of people already use the Wales Coast Path for access and recreation which has a positive impact on their health and wellbeing, keeping them fit and active. The stakeholder group would look at opportunities to enhance health and wellbeing opportunities in the area of the coastal park..
	More equal Wales	**Positive:** Discussions within the stakeholder group will include equalities and how the coast can deliver across the board whilst also maintaining community safety.
	Cohesive Wales	**Positive:** The Flintshire coast Park will bring different partners together enabling more cohesive planning and delivery of work along the coast.
	Vibrant Wales	**No change**
	Globally responsible Wales	**Positive:** Having opportunities for outdoor recreation on your doorstep reduces the need for travel making a positive contribution in minimising carbon emissions.

Flintshire Council's Well-being Objectives

Ambitious Council
The Flintshire Coast Park will have a positive impact, supporting economic growth through enhancing the local environment quality for local and regional business along the Dee Estuary foreshore

Achieving Council
The Flintshire Coast Park will have a positive impact, providing high quality, accessible, coastal environment and joining up with public and third sector partners to support quality of life in communities and for individuals and families

Caring Council
The Flintshire Coast Park will have a positive impact, making communities safe places by working with partners to prevent crime, repeat crime and anti-social behaviour

Green Council
The Flintshire Coast Park will have a positive impact, enhancing the natural environment and promoting access to open and green space

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	Consultation with partners and key stakeholders was carried out as part of the study but as the implementation stage progresses, engagement with stakeholder will be crucial

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Flintshire Coast Park Scoping Study.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	None.

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	**Contact Officer:** Tom Woodall, Access & Natural Environment Manager **Telephone:** 01352 703902 **E-mail:** tom.woodall@flintshire.gov.uk

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	**Wales Coast Path** – National walking route covering 870miles of the Welsh Coast. **Regional Park** – An area of land preserved on account of its natural beauty, historic interest, recreational use or other reason, and under the administration of a form of local government. **Green Infrastructure** – Green infrastructure is a network of multi-functional green space and other green features, urban and rural, which can deliver quality of life and environmental benefits for communities. **Natural Resources Wales** – Natural Resources Wales is the largest Welsh Government Sponsored Body, formed in April 2013, largely taking over the functions of the Countryside Council for Wales, Forestry Commission Wales and the Environment Agency in Wales.

Flintshire Coast Regional Park - A Scoping Study

JUNE 2022
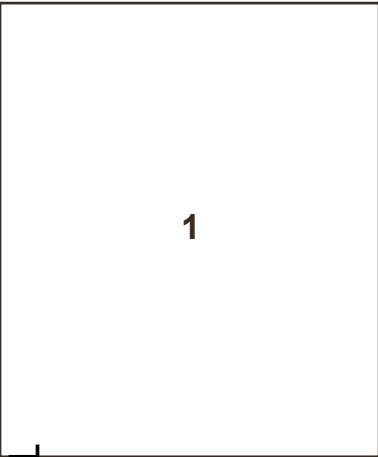
Photos on front cover:

1. Greenfield Dock

2. Flint Castle

3. Wales Coast Path, River Dee

4. Flint Dock

This document has been researched and drafted by The Environment Partnership (TEP) Ltd in collaboration with Flintshire County Council.

Contents

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Policy Review

Regional Park Precedents

Executive Summary

This Study sets out a potential pathway for the Flintshire Coast to attain a formal Regional Park status. The Study discusses whether a formal Regional Park designation should be pursued or whether the existing informal Coast Park brand should be more deeply embedded in local policy and priorities.

As part of the process, Chapter 2.0 reviews Regional Park precedents in the UK, describing their journey from inception to designation. This includes the Valleys Regional Park in south Wales which has established considerable momentum without a formal designation compared with the Lee Valley Regional Park in London and Hertfordshire which was established in legislation in 1966 and therefore has legal status and funding permanence.

Chapter 3.0 provides an update on the six gateways listed in the 2015 Flintshire Coast Park prospectus and concludes with the Coastal Communities Online Consultation of February 2022. The consultation reaches out to Flintshire residents and the comments include confirmation of the most popular destinations and activities, opportunities for improvement along the coast and the frequency of visits.

Chapter 4.0 highlights the potential Regional Park's fit with existing legislation, policies and programmes, while Chapter 5.0 summarises contributions from stakeholders including those from

Welsh Government, Natural Resources Wales (NRW), Dee Estuary Conservation group and Our Dee Estuary.

Why Designate is the topic for Chapter 6.0 and the narrative sets out the benefits of the designated Lee Valley Regional Park (LVRP) including the transformation of post-industrial land over a 50-year period and governance under the LVRP Authority. This is compared with the non-designated Valleys Regional Park in south Wales which has nevertheless set up a partnership with 13 local authorities, received substantial funding from Welsh Government and is referenced in Future Wales: The National Plan 2040. Both precedents work extensively with local communities by drawing residents into the natural environment, imparting new skills and supporting physical and mental health.

Chapter 7.0 sets out several potential footprints for the Regional Park or Coast Park alternative. Option One has a coastal focus based on the 2015 Flintshire Coast Park prospectus but with two additional gateways at Llannerch-y-môr and Saltney. Option Two would have the same coastal focus as Option One but with additional connection green infrastructure (GI) corridors from neighbouring assets. Option Three 'Dee Viewshed' would include all the elements of the previous options and would extend into the hinterland, where views from higher ground include the Dee Estuary. Option Four would include all the elements of Option One, Two and Three and would have an extended footprint to include the remaining areas of the Lower Dee catchment in Wales (mirroring the Our Dee Estuary initiative).

Addressing challenges is the subject of Chapter 8.0 and it outlines some of the challenges faced by the coastal communities in terms of socio-economic factors, infrastructure for business and visitor economy and how these could be addressed by a Regional Park or Coast Park alternative.

Chapter 9.0 draws together the findings of the scoping study described in the preceding chapters and recommends three stages (transitional, implementation and management) in the setting up and establishment of a Regional Park or Coast Park alternative.

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 In December 2021, Flintshire County Council (FCC) appointed The Environment Partnership (TEP) Ltd to carry out a Scoping Study (the Study) to examine the potential for a Flintshire Coast Regional Park designation. The Coast Park already has an informal status arising from a 2015 Flintshire Coast Park prospectus which has been endorsed by FCC.

1.2 The Study sets out a potential pathway for the Flintshire Coast to attain a formal Regional Park status. The Study discusses whether a formal Regional Park designation should be pursued or whether the existing informal Coast Park brand should be more deeply embedded in local policy and priorities.

1.3 The Study reviews Regional Park precedents in the UK, describing their journey from inception to designation.

1.4 In relation to Flintshire, the Study:

- Reviews progress of projects listed in the 2015 Flintshire Coast Park prospectus
- Examines legislation and planning policy hooks for a Regional Park
- Elicits contributions from locally based stakeholders
- Maps options for potential footprints of a Regional Park / Coast Park
- Considers challenges faced by the Flintshire Coast and how some of those could be addressed

1.5 The Study concludes with separate recommendations for next steps in relation to either a formal Regional Park designation or embedding the more informal Coast Park status.

1.6 The Scoping Study has been led by Flintshire County Council's Access and Natural Environment Team supported by a client steering group and a wider stakeholder group who have contributed to online discussions.

> **What is a Regional Park?**
>
> A regional park is an area of land preserved on account of its natural beauty, historic interest, recreational use or other reason, and under the administration of a form of local government.

Study Area

1.7 The broad 'Area of Search' for the Study is illustrated opposite. It focusses on the Dee Estuary upstream from Point of Ayr, including the hinterland to the Flintshire coast, and then following the River Dee towards Saltney and the local authority boundary with Chester.

1.8 The 'Area of Search' provided a starting point for consideration of the potential boundary options for the footprint of the Regional Park or Coast Park.

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Structure of the Report

1.9   This report presents the main conclusions of the Study. It comprises an initial introduction of to the commission, followed by eight chapters addressing key issues arising out of the Study.

1.10   Chapter 2 sets out precedent for regional parks in the UK, including examples from Wales, England and Scotland. The chapter includes reference to legislation and policy and a useful summary of research into regional parks carried out by the North West Development Agency. It also includes an introduction to the Living Levels Landscape Partnership (Gwent Levels).

1.11   Chapter 3 sets out the context of the Flintshire Coast in terms of the prospectus (published in 2015) and an update on activity completed since that date. It also includes a summary of the Coastal Communities online consultation undertaken early during 2022.

1.12   Chapter 4 highlights the potential Regional Park's fit with existing legislation, policies and programmes.

1.13   Chapter 5 summarises contributions from stakeholders and includes reference to the Review of the Wales Coast Path on its 10th Anniversary.

1.14   Chapter 6 considers reasons for a Regional Park designation.

1.15   Chapter 7 examines potential footprints for a Regional Park.

1.16   Chapter 8 considers some of the challenges faced by the Flintshire Coast and how some of those challenges could be addressed by a regional park or coast park.

1.17   Chapter 9 provides next steps for the Regional Park designation and the Coast Park alternative.

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View from National Cycle Route 5 south of Bagillt

2.0 Precedent

2.1 This chapter presents an outline of three regional parks across three of the UK's home nations, including where relevant, reference to the formal processes required in their designation. There is also an introduction to the Living Levels Landscape Partnership in Gwent. The chapter concludes with the findings of a research study into Regional Park models in the UK. The three regional parks are:

- Valleys Regional Park, South Wales
- Lee Valley Regional Park, Hertfordshire and Greater London
- Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park, West of Scotland

Valleys Regional Park, South Wales

2.2 The Valleys Regional Park (VRP) spans the former south Wales coalfield (see image adjacent). Defined in Future Wales: The National Plan 2040, the VRP area stretches from the western borders of Monmouthshire in the east to the Valleys of Carmarthenshire in the west; the Brecon Beacons National Park in the north; and the major cities of Cardiff, Swansea, and Newport to the south.

2.3 It covers an area of over 200,000 hectares (570 sq. miles) and is home to over one million people, approximately one-third of the Welsh population. Given this physical spread,

the park initiative operates within the local authorities of Carmarthenshire, Swansea, Neath Port Talbot, Bridgend, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Merthyr Tydfil, Caerphilly, Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen and provides an example of regeneration practice that looks across administrative boundaries. The VRP is also intended to be more than existing parks, forests, open spaces and amenity areas but is also to include settlements, heritage sites, industrial sites, derelict land and brownfield sites. It includes the footprint of the South Wales valleys coalfield. Due to the mix of landscapes, the VRP is not suitable for National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) designation.

Location and Boundaries of the Valleys Regional Park Area

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2.4 The concept of a Valleys Regional Park was considered in the South Wales Outline Plan (1949) and feasibility work was undertaken during 2008-2010 and post 2010 through the Valleys Regional Park Strategic Delivery Framework 2012 - 2020. However, the VRP was not officially incepted until 2019 and it has not yet been formally designated. During 2022 the intention of the Board will be to decide whether to pursue formal designation of the VRP.

2.5 Key to understanding how the VRP can act as a model for Flintshire is its fit with legislation and existing and emerging policies (discussed further in Chapter 4.0), including:

- Environment (Wales) Act 2016
- Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015
- Prosperity for All: The National Strategy
- Future Wales: The National Plan 2040
- Welsh Government Natural Resources Policy

2.6 The VRP has its own policy reference in the Future Wales: The National Plan 2040, and it states that Welsh Government supports the establishment of the VRP and that Strategic and Local Development Plans should embed its principles into their planning frameworks. Welsh Government will work with local authorities, the third sector and key partners to support the Valleys Regional Park and maximise opportunities for new development.

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VRP Discovery Gateways

Ynysangharad War Memorial Park

Discovery Gateways

2.7   VRP has been promoting Discovery Gateways as 'launchpads' into the landscape and heritage that tell the Valleys' story. There are currently 12 Discovery Gateways including the Blaenavon World Heritage Centre, Ynysangharad War Memorial Park and the National Lido of Wales and Llyn Llech Owain.

2.8   The VRP is funded by the Welsh Government Ministerial Taskforce for the South Wales Valleys and the European Social Fund. Funding is currently secured for a further 12 months until April 2023. VRP is managed by a strategic and operation lead, with five supporting posts covering communications, partnerships, communities, landscape and recreation.

VRP Guardians

2.9   The VRP Guardians are a dedicated team of experts delivering nature-based activities across the Welsh Valleys. Working through the Discovery Gateways and within local communities, the Guardians offer opportunities to connect with the nature on the doorstep whilst learning new skills in how to care for natural habitats and landscapes. There are 10 projects up and running, including three green social prescribing pilots.

Big Boc Bwyd

2.10   VRP partners with other organisations in the Big Bocs Bwyd (BBB) initiative. Working with schools, BBB's aim is to ensure that no child is hungry and that every child can learn how to make good food choices that enable them to thrive. BBB works with the four purposes of the Curriculum in Wales and works with children in learning about food, the benefits of growing food and cooking food.

Lee Valley Regional Park (LVRP)

2.11 Established by legislation in 1966, LVRP follows the course of the River Lee through Hertfordshire, Essex and Greater London. The LVRP has been working alongside partner organisations to transform the post-industrial land along the River Lee into a place for leisure, recreation, sport and nature.

> The Regional Park is now a mosaic of open spaces, heritage sites, country parks, farms, golf courses, lakes and riverside trails, campsites, marinas, angling and boating locations, attracting more than seven million visitors a year. In terms of designated sites for nature it includes eight Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Ramsar and Special Protection Area.

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2.12 The Lee Valley Regional Park Authority (LVRPA) was created in 1967 following the Lee Valley Regional Park Act 1966. The Act sets out the duty of the Authority to "*develop, improve, preserve and manage the park as a place for the occupation of leisure, recreation, sport, games or amusements…. for the provision of nature reserves and for the provision and enjoyment of entertainment of any kind*" (Section 12 (1)).
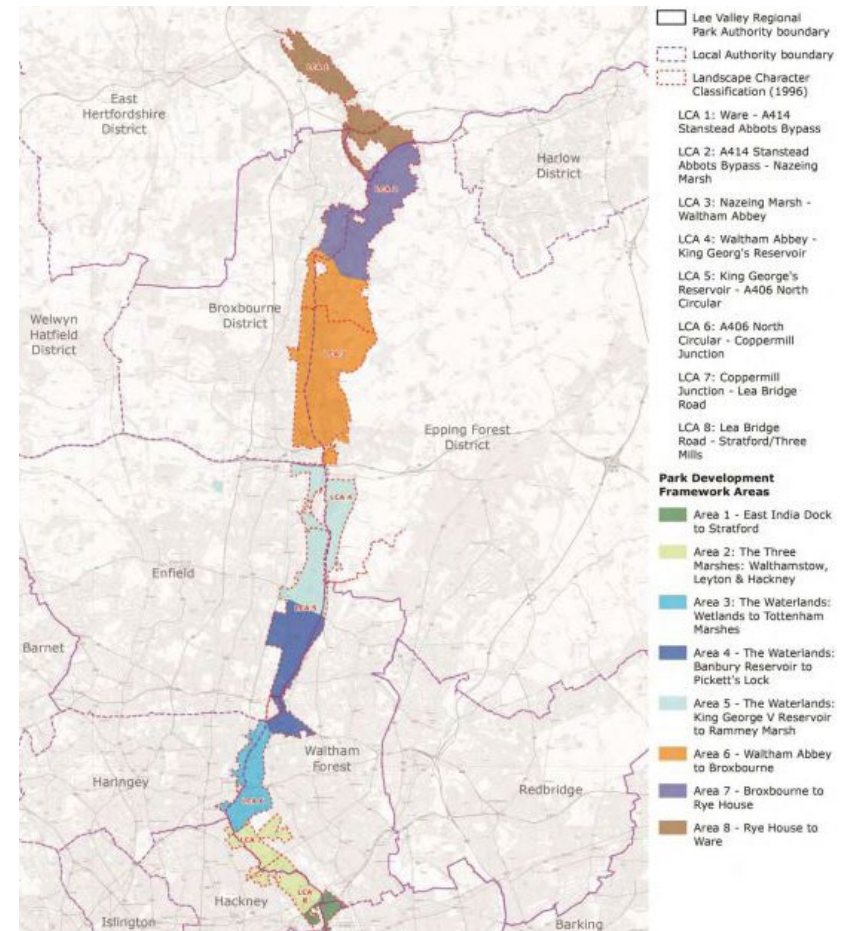
Location and Boundaries of the Lee Valley Regional Park Area

2.13 The Lee Valley Regional Park Act 1966 Section 14 made special provision about planning. As a result a this a suite of planning policy documents have been prepared and then updated over time. In July 2010, the Authority adopted the Vision, Strategic Aims and Principles followed by adoption of

a series of Thematic Proposals in January 2011 which set out development and management proposals on a broad Park-wide thematic basis. These have been subsequently updated by the Park Development Framework (2019). Despite the bespoke planning framework for LVRP, planning powers are conceded to the relevant planning authorities.

Governance

2.14   Guided by the governing legislation which created Lee Valley Regional Park Authority in the 1960s, the Authority is run by 28 Board Members drawn from across London, Essex and Hertfordshire. The board meets through a series of committees and full Authority meetings.

Plans and Developments

2.15   (LVRPA) has a mission and strategic business plan which aims to continue to transform the Regional Park into a world class visitor destination. The vision is to create a premier destination that brings together the best of nature, sport and discovery. By working together with a range of public and private sector partners, LVRPA intends to open up all of the Lee Valley, from the heart of the London to the Essex and Hertfordshire countryside, so that it becomes a unique combination of sights, activities and experiences.

2.16   A key focus is to create a zone of sporting excellence within Lee Valley Regional Park made up of the facilities delivered as part of the legacy of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, including:

- Lee Valley White Water Centre near Waltham Cross, Hertfordshire
- Lee Valley VeloPark; and
- Lee Valley Hockey and Tennis Centres, all within the Olympic Park at Stratford.

Funding

2.17   The Authority generates the majority of its income from commercial and business activities, maximising a range of opportunities in order to lessen the demand on council tax payers.

2.18   The rest comes from a levy on council taxpayers in London, Essex and Hertfordshire – which equates to 80p per person per year. The ceiling for the levy is determined by a formula set out in 'The Levying Bodies (General) Regulations 1992' which is adjusted annually to account for inflation.

2.19   The levy helps to keep Lee Valley Regional Park's parklands maintained to a high standard and its venues as accessible as possible. It also ensures that the park remains a regional attraction offering unique mix of nature, sport and leisure

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facilities to the people of London, Essex and Hertfordshire and beyond. It attracts around eight million visits a year. Around 80% of visitors are from London, Essex and Hertfordshire, with the remainder from other places both nationally and internationally.

2.20 Lee Valley Regional Park Authority has a statutory remit to develop and preserve leisure, recreation, sport and nature and so the money raised through the levy is directed to assets such as its eight Green Flag winning open spaces, three Green Heritage Sites and its sport and leisure venues.

Ranger Service

2.21 A dedicated team of 21 full-time and part-time Parkland Managers, Rangers, Assistant Ranger and Admin, look after open spaces within the 40.5 sq. km (15.6 square miles) , 26-mile long, LVRP.

Website

2.22 There is a dedicated website providing access to plans and developments and governance arrangements. Also available is the Lee Valley for nature, sport and discovery website for the general public.

Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park, West Scotland

2.23 Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park covers an area of 265 sq. km (108 square miles) across three local authorities: Renfrewshire Council, Inverclyde Council and North Ayrshire Council and has 700,000 visitors a year. In the 1960's Renfrew County Council proposed the Renfrewshire Regional Park and implemented a programme to manage an area of 30,000 acres (12,500 ha) including the creation of Muirshiel Country Park in June 1970. This was the blueprint for a modern-day Regional Park system in Scotland.

2.24 In 1981 the Wildlife and Countryside (Scotland) Act provided the enabling legislation for Scottish Regional Parks. In this Regional Parks are defined as "*large areas of countryside parts of which are available for informal countryside recreation*".

2.25 The policy statement on Regional Parks for Scotland by NatureScot points out their aims: "….*to facilitate both the appropriate understandings and enjoyment of the countryside and the integration of this with the other uses of the area, such as farming, forestry and other development, with the context of maintaining and enhancing a quality natural heritage setting. This type of approach is fully consistent with thinking about countryside management, as it has development over the last 20 years. Regional Parks have indeed been to the fore in applying this more integrated approach in Scotland*".
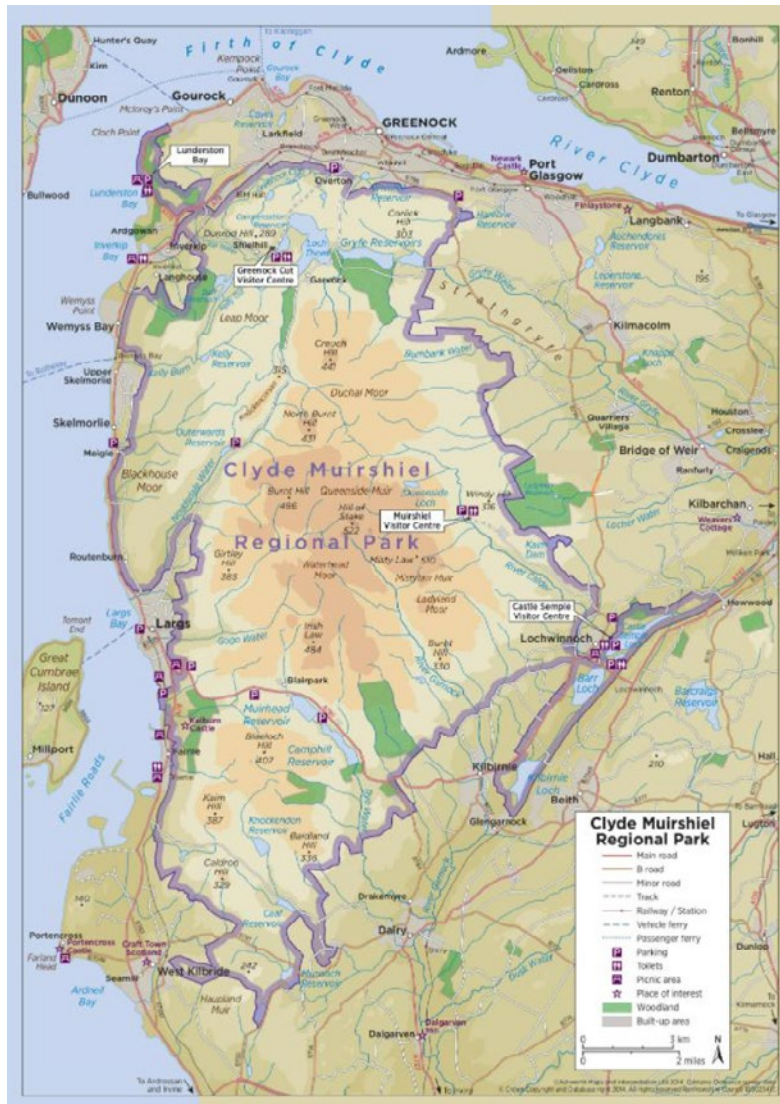
Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park

Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park Objectives

2.26   The objectives of the Park are:

- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, biodiversity and cultural heritage of Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park.
- To encourage and enable learning, understanding and enjoyment of Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park.
- To promote and foster environmentally sustainable development for the social and economic well-being of the people and communities within the Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park area.

2.27   The Park has three visitors' centres (Greenock Cut and Muirshiel and Castle Semple) which provide a centre for information with refreshments, toilets, car park, provision for outdoor learning and outdoor activities and a network of tracks and trails. The Park is supported by a countryside ranger service and an outdoor activity team and there are two conservation volunteer groups. There is an extensive Special Protection Area (SPA) in the central part of the Park.

2.28   The Park has a dedicated website and brand confirming details about: outdoor activities, events, outdoor learning, volunteering, land management, interpretation and heritage job. There is also information on governance and job opportunities.

2.29 The Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park Authority Joint Committee is governed by a Minute of Agreement (MoA) which was most recently agreed by Renfrewshire Council, Inverclyde Council and North Ayrshire Council in 2004. The annual budget of the Park was £1,323,000 in 2010/11. Apart the direct funding of the Park, the three partner local authorities continue to apply for external funds from Scottish Government agencies such as Nature Scot.

The Living Levels Landscape Partnership, Gwent

2.30 The Living Levels Landscape Partnership (LLLP) delivers a programme of work which will promote and reconnect people to the heritage, wildlife and natural beauty of the historic landscape of the Gwent Levels. The Living Levels Partnership came together in 2014 to develop and then deliver a sustainable vision for the Gwent Levels. It is a cross-organisational partnership, spanning administrative boundaries, working closely with communities and other stakeholders to produce evidence-based plans for the sustainable management of this landscape. Partners include the RSPB, NRW, Monmouthshire Council, Newport City Council, Cardiff Council, National Trust, the Wildlife Trusts, Bumblebee Conservation Trust, Gwent Archives, Buglife Cymru, Museum of Cardiff and Sustrans.

2.31 The Scheme covers an area of 225km squared extending from Cardiff and the River Rhymney in the west to Chepstow on the River Wye in Monmouthshire to the east. Predominantly low-lying agricultural land, criss-crossed with an intricate network of drainage channels and field ditches, the project area also includes the inter-tidal zone of saltmarshes, mudflats and sands that are revealed at low tide along the northern coastline of the Severn Estuary within Wales.

2.32 The Programme seeks to conserve and restore the important natural heritage features of the area, to develop a greater appreciation of the value of the landscape and to inspire people to learn about and participate in the heritage of the Gwent Levels. A £2.5 million grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, awarded in 2018 will help to lever in further funding and deliver a £4 million scheme from the date of the award.

2.33 LLLP has five members of staff, with a programme manager and other officers covering: community engagement, access and interpretation, finance and administration and volunteer coordination.

2.34 In terms of branding, marketing and outreach, Living Levels has an interactive website with an online geographical information system (GIS) linked to citizen science opportunities. There is a regular e-newsletter and You Tube channel. There are also Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts that promote the LLLP.

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Summary of Regional Park Precedent

Table 1: Summary of Regional Park Precedent

Name of Regional Park	Legislation	Key theme	Potential parallels with a Flintshire Coast Regional Park
Valleys Regional Park, South Wales (Envisaged in 1940s, but formally incepted in 2019, awaiting legal designation)	No primary legislation for Welsh regional parks currently available	Linking local people to landscape through the Discovery Gateways	Includes countryside, settlements, industrial sites & brownfield land
Lee Valley Regional Park South-East England (Envisaged in 1940s, designated by bespoke law in 1966)	Lee Valley Regional Park Act, 1966	Transforming post-industrial land into leisure, recreation, sport and nature	Mosaic of open spaces near to international and national sites designated for nature Close to high levels of human population
Muirshiel Regional Park, West Scotland (Established 1990)	The Wildlife and Countryside (Scotland) Act 1981	Focus on conservation while accommodating socio-economic well-being	Focus on integration of Park with other uses of the area, such as farming, forestry and other development, while maintaining and enhancing a quality natural heritage setting Upland area overlooking the Firth of Clyde

Table 2: Summary of the Living Levels Landscape Partnership, Gwent

Key Theme	Funding	Potential parallels with a Flintshire Coast Regional Park
Reconnect people to the historic landscape of the Gwent Levels	National Lottery Heritage Fund and direct funding from partners	Reconnecting people to the coastal landscape

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Research into Regional Park Models

2.35 Research into regional park models was completed on behalf of the former North West Development Agency (NWDA)[1]. This detailed review covered five key points which are transferable to Flintshire's coast:

2.36 Variety of Vision and Success: Regional Parks are very varied with different origins, objectives, roles and levels of success.

2.37 Variable Definition: The term Regional Park is applied to a wide range of projects, which are not always 'distinguished by something that is recognisably regional.' They include outdoor recreational projects that could easily be categorised in other ways.

2.38 Need for distinctive branding of the RP concept: There are relatively few Regional Parks in the UK and the concept would benefit from a better profile if this type of park is to be promoted.

2.39 Importance of regional brand: A 'theme' is of great value if a large area is to be designated as a Regional Park. 'There should be at least one thing that the Regional Park is noted for or that it does very well, and ideally better than anywhere else, at least in the region and preferably wider.'

2.40 Value for Integrating Land Management towards shared objectives: Regional Parks should provide a focus for integrated land management and the management of change. *'If an extensive area is managed collectively, there is greater prospect of accommodating different demands whilst reducing the possible conflicts.'*

[1] Research into Regional Park Models, NWDA (2003)

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3.0 Flintshire Coast Park Prospectus Update

3.1 Chapter 3 sets out the context of the Flintshire Coast in terms of the prospectus and an update on activity completed since that date. It also includes a summary of the Coastal Communities online consultation undertaken early during 2022.

3.2 The Flintshire Coast Park Prospectus was published in 2015 as an expression of the aspirations of the Council and its partners for the coast. It identified the significant work that had already been achieved including the implementation of the Wales Coast Path but recognised that access to the shore remained constrained and poorly presented in places. This was undermining the area's potential to develop the coast for recreation, tourism and appreciation of the unique wildlife and cultural heritage of the Dee Coast and Estuary. The vision and priorities for the coast park are:

> Our vision is for an accessible coast park which celebrates the natural environment and heritage of the Welsh coast. Our vision can be achieved through sustained investment and by working with key partners including community, businesses and public bodies who share the vision for the Coast Park.
>
> The Coast Park's priorities are:
>
> - Enhancing our tourist, recreational and cultural activity;
> - Improving gateways to the coast at Connah's Quay, Flint, Bagillt, Greenfield and Talacre;

> - Increasing useage by pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders along the Wales Coast Path; and
> - Stimulating interest in the coast's natural history and maritime culture.

3.3 The Prospectus proposes six key gateways (or hubs) onto the River Dee and its estuary including:

- Northern Gateway
- Connah's Quay Dock
- Flint Waterfront
- Bagillt Inlet and Bettisfield Hill
- Greenfield Dock and Greenfield Valley
- Talacre

3.4 The Prospectus includes indicative proposals for each hub, such as potential improvements to docks, inlets and re-development that would support the Coast Park aims and objectives.

3.5 As well as the site-specific proposals for the hubs, the overall use of the Wales Coast Path and links onto it from the hinterland is also a key consideration in the 2015 Prospectus.

3.6 During February and March 2022, TEP conducted several stakeholder interviews to establish progress of projects identified in the 2015 Prospectus. The findings inform Chapter 7.0 Potential Footprint.

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Six Key Gateways

Northern Gateway

3.7 The proposals for Northern Gateway include the longer-term delivery of 5,000 jobs and 1,000 homes. However, progress on the site has been delayed due to planning constraints and challenges to the market. The prospectus envisages a reconfigured waterfront onto the Dee with marina and waterside activity and a potential new foot and cycle bridge link to the Deeside Leisure Centre. As momentum builds at the Northern Gateway, there will be opportunity to promote and deliver the ideas from the prospectus.
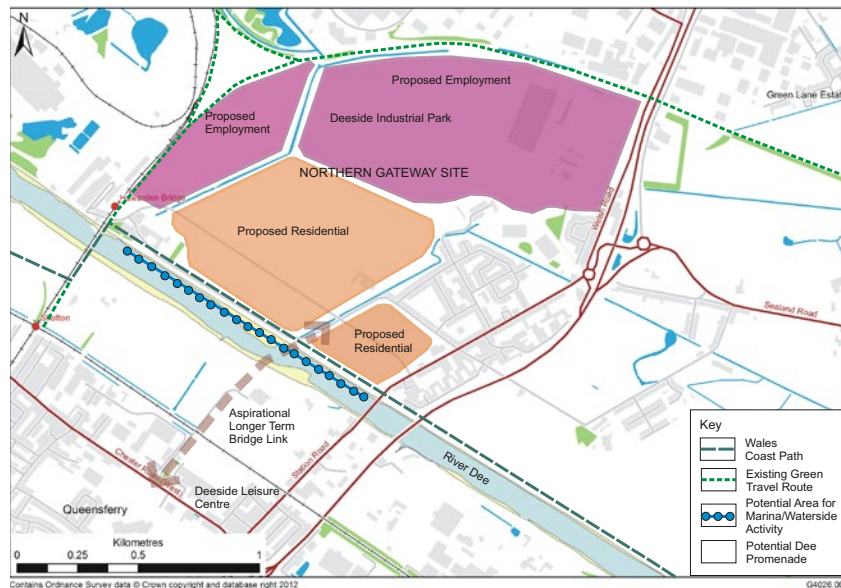
Northern Gateway

3.8 Recent works in the locality of the Northern Gateway include the upgrade of the cycle route infrastructure forming part of the Hawarden Railway Bridge to support the network of national cycle routes (NCN) 568 (Wirral-Neston) and 5 (Chester-Prestatyn).

3.9 The charity Care and Repair (North East Wales) has taken a lease for a building and part of the grounds at the Corus Shotton Sports and Social Club and they have converted a former bowling green into a garden. The Council's rangers have implemented tree planting in the Wepre Riverside area and the Wales Coast Path link (also NCN 5) to Connah's Quay Dock are off-road and in good condition.

Connah's Quay Dock

3.10 The Quay Waterman's Association has been promoting the Kathleen and May heritage centre in a refurbished community building next to the historic harbour. More recently public realm improvements have been undertaken on the quayside. There are also proposals to restore the dock by de-silting it, which would also enable summer boat trips onto the Dee Estuary.

3.11 The Wales Coast Path from Connah's Quay Dock to the eastern edge of Flint initially follows Kelsterton Road (B5129) and then Chester Road (A548). NCN 5 follows a similar pattern but includes a route through Golftyn to avoid parts of the B5129. The section of the Wales Coast Path and NCN 5 between Flint
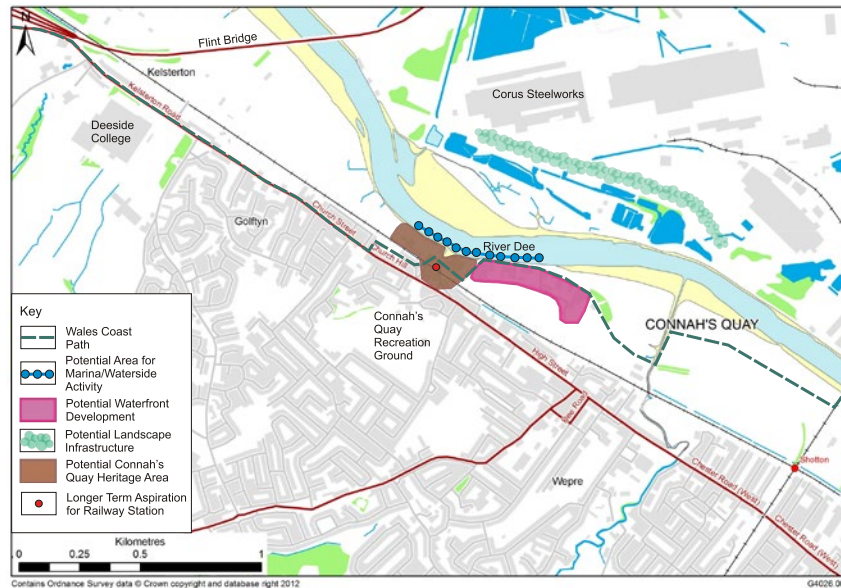
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and Oakenholt is particularly constrained as it joins the footway of the A548. Opportunities for an off-road Coast Path requires further investigation. At the eastern edge of Flint, both the Wales Coast Path and NCN 5 leave the main road and follow the coastline towards Flint Castle.
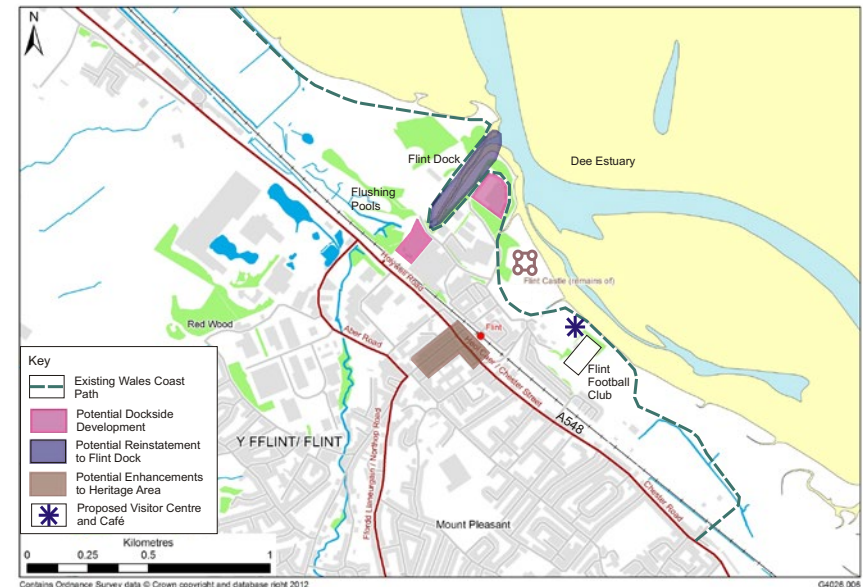
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Connah's Quay Dock

Flint Waterfront

3.12   The prospectus envisages that Flint town becomes reconnected to the castle and waterfront, with a potential visitor and interpretation centre near to the castle. Other proposals include a dockside development between the castle and the dock and the reinstatement of the dock. These opportunities are yet to be

realised. However, there are a number of projects proposed as part of the 2022 Levelling Up Fund bid (LUF22) and these are described under Chapter 5 – Local Wisdom.

3.13   The Wales Coast Path follows the edge of the dock and then the coastline towards the Bagillt Inlet. After passing to the south of the castle and dock, NCN 5 re-joins the A548 towards the eastern edge of Bagillt.



Flint Waterfront

Bagillt Inlet and Bettisfield Hill

3.14   The proposal envisages the reinstatement of the inlet for improved access to fishing boats and the conversion of the old colliery winding house into a heritage centre and café. The

proposal would also require access improvements from the coast road (A548). These opportunities are yet to be realised, however there has been recent engagement with local schools in terms of the heritage of the area. Hedgerows have been planted and new fences installed to manage anti-social activity.

3.15 The Wales Coast Path follows the coastline from Bagillt Inlet to Greenfield Dock. The section from Bagillt (sewage works) to Greenfield Dock is also available for cyclists.

3.16 Near to the eastern edge of Bagillt, NCN 5 joins Holywell Street (parallel to the A548) and heads west away from the coastal area along Gadlys Lane. NCN 5 follows an inland route, on high ground, before re-joining the coastal area at Gronant.
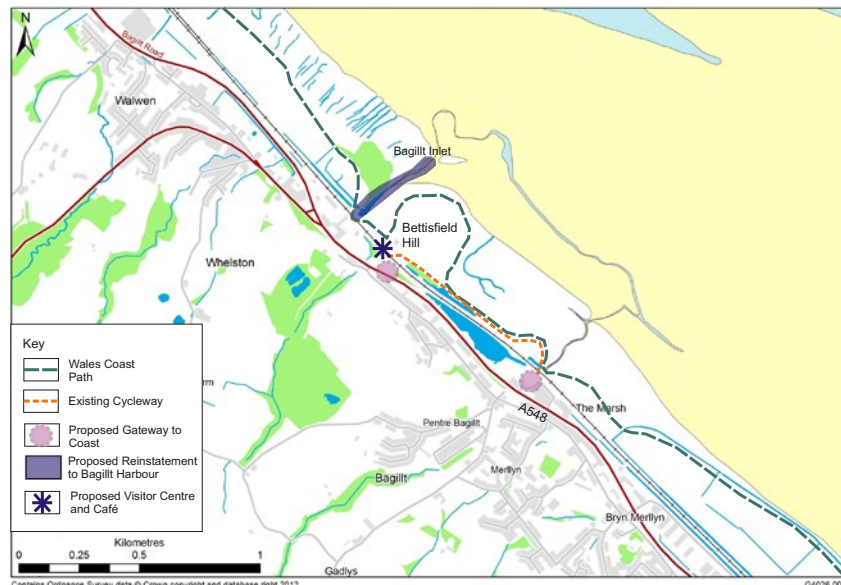

Bagillt Hill and Bettisfield Hill

Greenfield Dock and Greenfield Valley

3.17 The prospectus proposes improvements to the slipway of Greenfield Dock for fishing, cockling and leisure activities and the refurbishment of the former security gatehouse into a café. Some of these improvements have been completed, however stakeholders have reported some conflicts between pedestrians using the Wales Coast Path which passes through the car park at Greenfield Dock and the use of the use of the same facilty at certain times by cocklers and fishermen.

3.18 Since the publishing of the prospectus, the Greenfield Valley off-road route has been extended over the coast road (A 548) with links to Greenfield Dock through the Abbey View Trading Estate and connecting road network. The longer-term ambition is to extend the off-road route over the railway so that it connects with Greenfield Dock and the Wales Coast Path enhancing links between the coast with Greenfield Valley and Holywell.

3.19 The Wales Coast Path follows the coastline from Greenfield Dock to Mostyn, although it follows a small detour around the inlet where the Duke of Lancaster (Mostyn Funship) is docked. The inlet is subject to high tides and this causes access issues near the Duke of Lancaster. There is an aspiration to bridge the inlet to avoid the use of a detour for users of the Wales Coast Path.

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3.20   The Path continues along the coastline, although it returns to the coast road near to the eastern edge of the Port of Mostyn. It continues west along the road and then takes a detour through Fynnongroyw.
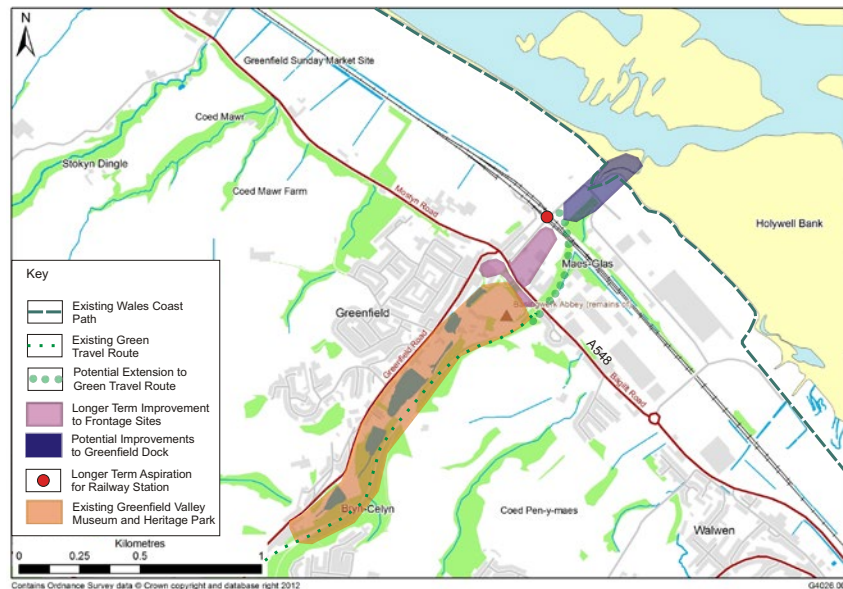

Greenfield Dock and Greenfield Valley

Talacre

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3.21   After crossing the coast road, the Path continues off-road towards regaining the coastline at the eastern edge of the ENI site and heads north towards Talacre beach. The former colliery opportunity site (see plan below) identified in the prospectus remains an aspiration in terms of contributing to the coast park.

3.22   The prospectus considers that Talacre is already a very successful hub and the challenge will be to draw Talacre's visitors along the coast to other potential visitor hubs at Greenfield, Flint and Connah's Quay. Transforming the opportunity site (former colliery) for recreation and nature could contribute to the first steps towards this.
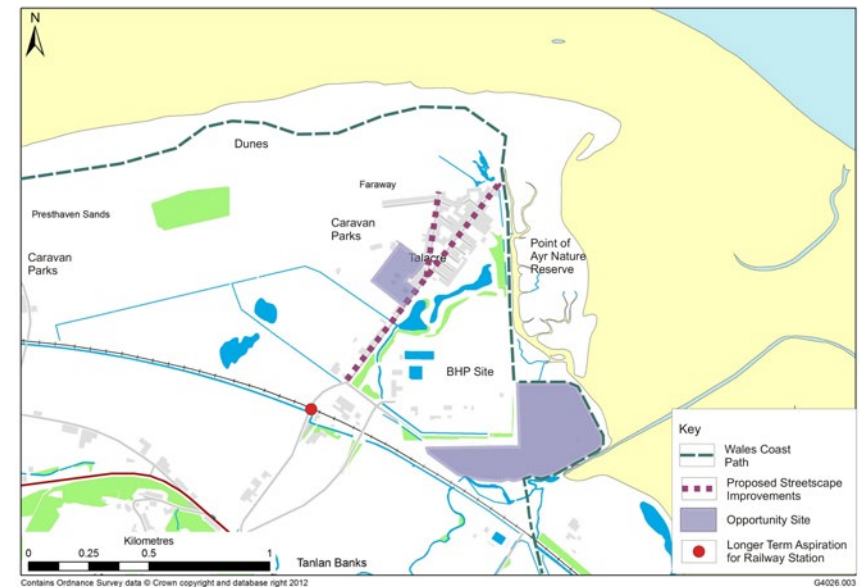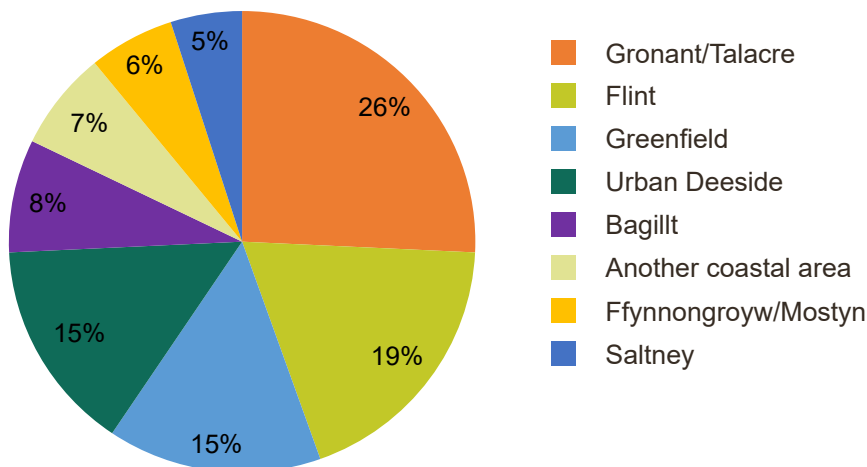

Talacre

Coastal Communities Online Consultation (February 2022)[2]

3.23 The online consultation was undertaken to provide evidence in support of the Levelling Up Fund (LUF) bid to be submitted during 2022. The consultation was structured as a questionnaire to establish the preferences of residents living in Flintshire. Approximately 1,500 people chose to respond to the questions and a summary of the consultation questions and responses is provided below. The consultation responses provide useful evidence as to how Flintshire residents use the coast and provides a steer for the regional park or coast park alternative.

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Q1. Which of the following Flintshire coastal areas do you visit most?

Gronant/Talacre	26%
Flint	19%
Greenfield	15%
Urban Deeside	15%
Bagillt	8%
Another coastal area	7%
Ffynnongroyw/Mostyn	6%
Saltney	5%

Q2. What are your main reasons for visiting your chosen coastal locations?

Leisure & Recreation	**81%**
Tourism Activities	**29%**
Shopping	**19%**
Visiting Family & Friends	**15%**
Food & Drink	**14%**
Local Services	**9%**
Work / Business	**8%**
Community Facilities	**7%**

Respondents permitted up to 4 answers

Q3. If going for fun or leisure what activites do you do at the coast?

|	
Walking / running	**79%**
Visit the Beach	**68%**
Visit Attractions	**40%**
Cycling	**19%**
Bird Watching	**15%**
Fishing	**5%**

Respondents permitted up to 3 answers

[2] Coastal Communities – Final overview report Generated 15-02-2022

Q4. When you are visiting Flintshire's coast, what is most important to you?

Highest Priority

Lowest Priority

1. The attractive environment
2. Feeling safe & secure
3. Availability of facilities
4. Plenty of things to see & do

Q6. Are there any particular reasons why you haven't visited some coastal areas?
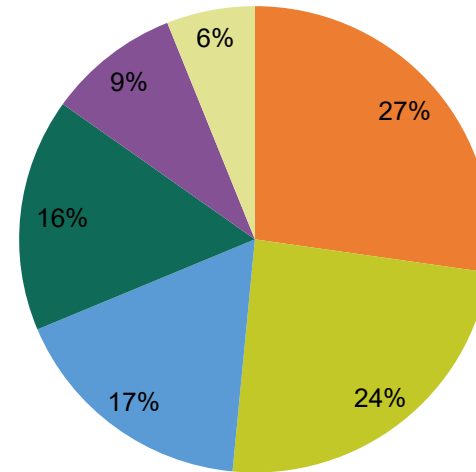
- 27% Didn't know of attraction/area
- 24% Lack of facilities
- 17% Inaccessibility
- 16% Safety & reputation
- 9% It does not interest me
- 6% Worries about Covid

Q5. For the spots you visit on the coast, what would you most like to improve?
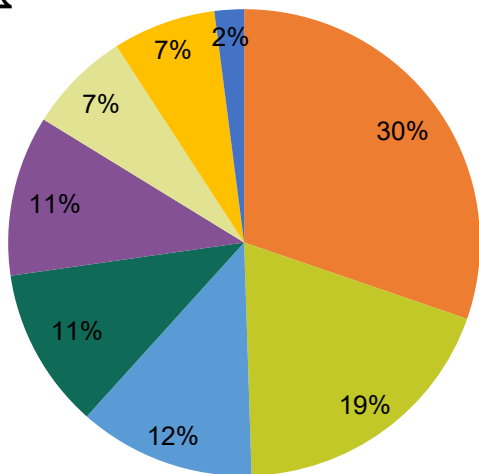
- 30% Car Parking & Toilets
- 19% Additional Walking Trails
- 12% Additional Cycling Trails
- 11% Cafe & Snack Kiosks
- 11% Seating & Picnic facilities
- 7% Better Disabled Access
- 7% Visitor Attractions
- 2% Improved Signage

Q7. How frequently do you visit Flintshire's coast?
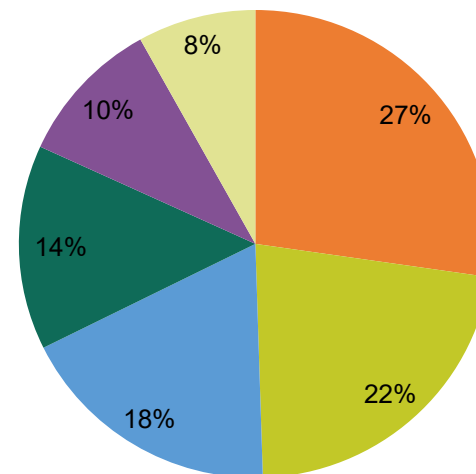
- 27% Several times a month
- 22% Monthly
- 18% Weekly
- 14% Several times a week
- 10% Daily
- 8% Annually

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Q8. What are your considerations for working or/& running a business by the coast?

It's an attractive environment	**56%**
Good access & public transport	**36%**
Good quality premises	**31%**
Good local workforce	**24%**

Respondents permitted up to 2 answers

Q10. Do you feel the coastal wildlife is being protected & enhanced?

53%

71% of respondents answered positively

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Q9. Do you feel connected to the Dee Estuary?

61%

72% of respondents answered positively

Q11. What is your age?

- 75+
- 65 - 74
- 55 - 64
- 45 - 54
- 35 - 44
- 25 - 34
- 18 - 24
- Prefer not to say

1% 1% 3%
16%
16%
8%
24%
29%
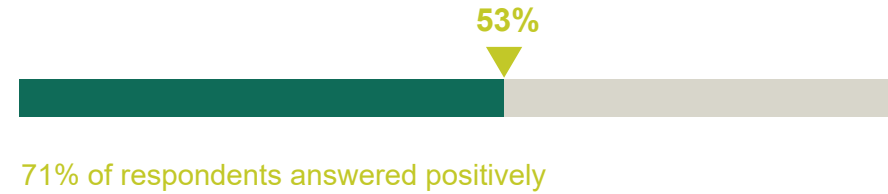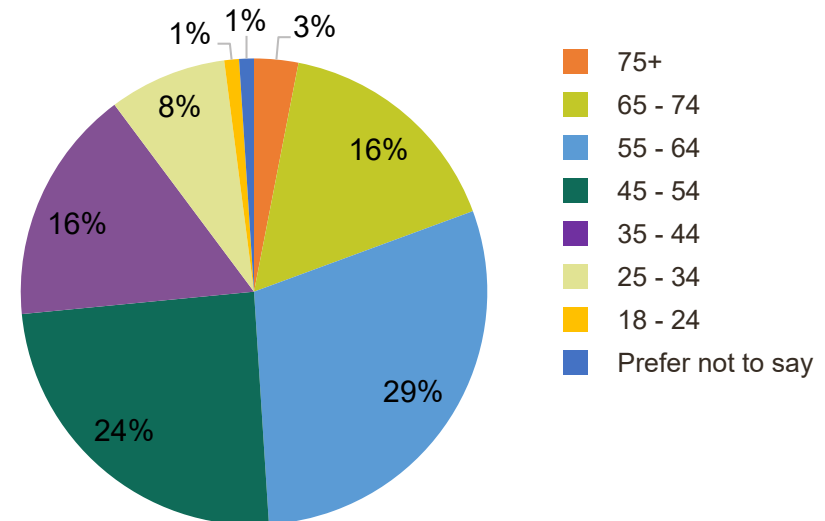
Summary Analysis

3.24   The online consultation provides details of Flintshire residents' responses in terms of: preferred location for visits, reason for visiting, the need for improvements, frequency of visits, consideration for running a business. It also includes the age range of respondents.

Question 1 – Which of the following Flintshire coastal areas do you visit most?

3.25   The top three areas are Talacre, Flint and Greenfield and this partly reflects the existing key gateway (hubs) from the Flintshire Coast Park Prospectus. In future there will be opportunity to attract visitors to the less popular locations such as Bagillt, Ffynnongroyw/Mostyn and Saltney.

Question 2 - What are your main reasons for visiting your chosen coastal locations?

3.26   The top three reasons for visiting are leisure and recreation, tourism activities and shopping. In future food and drink could be targeted as an offer as a means of extending visitors' dwell time on the coast and to increase spend in the area.

Question 3 - If going for fun or leisure what activities do you do at the coast?

3.27   The top three activities are walking/running, visiting the beach and visiting attractions. The regional park or coast park alternative could direct investment on the infrastructure and maintenance needed to support these activities. Cycling and bird watching are currently less popular, however future proposals for the coast could priorities these activities to diversify the offer on the coast.

Question 4 - When you are visiting Flintshire's coast, what is most important to you?

3.28   Respondents placed the following in order of importance: the attractive environment, feeling safe and secure, availability of facilities and plenty of things to see and do.

Question 5 - For the spots you visit on the coast, what would you most like to improve?

3.29   The top three items for improvement are car parking and toilets, additional walking trails and additional cycling trails. These are relatively low cost to implement, so any future proposals along the coast could prioritise investment on these items and secure more visits and loyalty towards visiting the area.

Question 6 – Are there any particular reasons why you haven't visited some coastal areas?

3.30 The top item is lack of awareness of attraction/area and this could be addressed at relatively low cost with online information and on-site interpretation and leaflets.

Question 7 - How frequently do you visit Flintshire's coast?

3.31 Over 90% of the 1,400 respondents to this question reported visiting Flintshire's coast monthly or on a more frequent basis. This indicates that the coast is visited relatively frequently by Flintshire residents. Investment in infrastructure, facilities and information could encourage even more frequent visits by Flintshire residents.

Wider Consultation

3.32 To establish the responses of visitors from outside Flintshire, further consultation could be undertaken and it is likely that this would be best undertaken in-person on site. A particularly interesting comparison would be the frequency of visits from those outside the county compared with Flintshire residents.

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4.0 Legislative and Policy Hooks

4.1 This chapter highlights the potential Regional Park's fit with existing legislation, policies and programmes and includes reference to:

- Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- Environment (Wales) Act 2016
- Planning Policy Wales Edition 11
- Future Wales: The National Plan 2040

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The Well-being of Future Generations Act places a duty on public bodies to carry out sustainable development, requiring an improvement in the delivery of all four aspects of well-being: social, economic, environmental and cultural and the seven well-being goals.

4.3 Public service boards' wellbeing assessments and wellbeing plans could inform the delivery of a Flintshire Coast Regional Park and provide existing mechanisms for engaging local communities to ensure they are integral to delivering local benefits from the sustainable management of the coast's natural resources.

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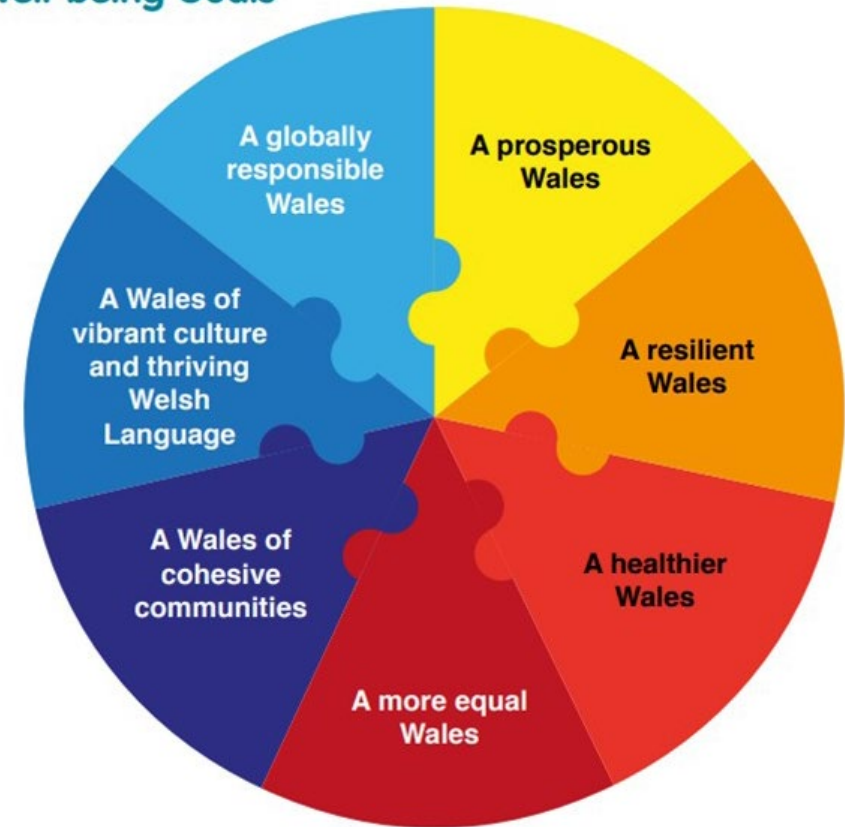
Well-being Goals

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act Well-being Goals

Environment (Wales) Act 2016

4.4 Area Statements are required under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and are produced by Natural Resources Wales (NRW). The Area Statements could have a key role in providing evidence and driving forward the actions needed to achieve a Regional Park vision.

4.5 The North East Wales Area Statement covers the three counties of Flintshire, Denbighshire and Wrexham and consists of five themes:

- Climate emergency: resilience and adaptation

- Develop and improve urban and rural green infrastructure

- Increasing woodland cover for social, environmental and economic benefits

- Promoting the resilience of ecosystems in maintaining and enhancing biodiversity

- Protecting water and soil through farming and sustainable land management

The Flintshire Coast Regional Park could be an exemplar for the implementation of such a natural resources policy, taking an integrated and collaborative regional approach.

Planning Policy Wales Edition 11

4.7 Planning Policy Wales (PPW) Edition 11 was published in February 2021. PPW sets out the land use planning policies of the Welsh Government and is supported by a series of Technical Advice Notes, Welsh Government Circulars and policy clarification letters.

4.8 The Flintshire Coast Regional Park could be an exemplar in terms of addressing and making a positive contribution to many place-based objectives of PPW:

- People and Places: Achieving Well-being Through Placemaking (Chapter 2)

- Strategic and Spatial Choices (Chapter 3)

- Active and Social Places (Chapter 4)

- Productive and Enterprising Places (Chapter 5)

- Distinctive and Natural Places (Chapter 6)

Future Wales: The National Plan 2040

4.9 Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 was published in February 2021 and forms the national development framework, setting the direction for development in Wales to 2040.

4.10 The Flintshire Coast Regional Park could be an exemplar in terms of addressing and making a positive contribution to the following policies:

- Shaping Urban Growth and Regeneration – Strategic Placemaking (Policy 2)

- Resilient Ecological Networks and Green Infrastructure (Policy 9)

- Strategic Policies for Regional Planning (Policy 19)

- National Growth Area - Wrexham and Deeside (Policy 20)

4.11 Further information on legislation and policies is provided in the supporting paper 'Policy Review and Assessment'.

5.0 Chapter Five - Local Wisdom

5.1   Stakeholder consultation using workshops and focused online interviews has provided useful information in terms of existing initiatives in the area, an update on progress with the Flintshire Coast Park Prospectus and a better understanding of key socio-economic and environmental priorities. The Chapter includes reference to the Review of the Wales Coast Path on its 10th Anniversary[3].

5.2   Table 3 outlines a summary of comments and questions from stakeholders. The process of engagement has helped inform the Study, while stakeholders have also been able to share their excellent local knowledge and help consider the case for Regional Park designation.

5.3   The consultation exercise also provided useful information the Our Dee Estuary initiative supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund. This is reported on in Table 4.

Table 3: Summary of Stakeholder Comments in relation to potential for a Regional Park

Organisation	Respondent	Key comments
Welsh Government	Officers leading on Designated Landscapes & Outdoor Recreation	Need to be clear about what type of designation aiming for to ensure buy-in
		Currently no legislation available to accommodate a regional park in Wales
		Opportunity for a regional park to contribute to the 30X30 Natural Resources Defense Council commitment to protect nature and life on earth
		Alternatively, more informal arrangement could be pursued
		There are other potential non-standard designations; this could involve setting up a memorandum of understanding between local authorities; potential for a community interest company (CIC) or charity
Natural Resources Wales (NRW)	Locally based officers	Opportunity for a regional park to deliver against seven goals of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (2015)
		Options for a Regional Park footprint: - Coast - Coast & green corridors (eg. Wepre Park) - Coast & hinterland
		Regional Park can convey history of the coast and celebrate existing 'working coastline'

[3]The Wales Coast Path Review Group (2022) Review of the Wales Coast Path on its 10th Anniversary

Organisation	Respondent	Key comments
Dee Estuary Conservation Group	Chair	Regional Park would need a dedicated staff team, governance & funding
		Regional Park could deliver against the aspiration of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (2015)
		Supportive of a Regional Park footprint including coast and hinterland taking advantage of views from high ground across the Dee Estuary and potential of circular routes linking with the Wales Coast Path
Our Dee Estuary	Project Manager	What would be the tangible benefits of a Regional Park designation?
		Would there be constraints on development arising from a Regional Park designation?
		What would be the rationale for Regional Park boundaries?
		How would deprived communities benefit?
		Opportunities to connect with a Dee Estuary coastline path & supporting facilities
		Would increased visitor footfall have an impact on wildlife
Sustrans	Volunteer (active in north east Wales area)	A Regional Park could encourage walking and cycling between attractions
		Suggested that the Discovery Gateways from the Valleys Regional Park would be transferable to the Flintshire Coast and would be a good attractor and footfall generator
Ramblers	Representative	Opportunity for more promotion of public rights of way (PRoW), cycle routes and 'white tracks' from the hinterland to the coast
Flintshire County Council	Officer Group (Access & Natural Environment; Destination & Tourism; Enterprise & Levelling Up)	Saltney should be included in any Regional Park with its proximity to the River Dee and for it to maximise the potential of recent access improvements in the area. There would also be opportunity to draw from the attractions and footfall arising from Chester
		Opportunity for a Regional Park to promote the Flintshire Coast with co-ordinated approach to signs, interpretation and information
		Regional Park footprint should focus on the coast rather than the hinterland as wider area would dilute the brand
		Regional Park footprint should focus on public land and public rights of way (PRoW)
		Would there be a statutory reporting system for a Regional Park?

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Table 3 (continued)

Organisation	Respondent	Key comments
Flintshire County Council	Environment and Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee (8th February, 2022)	Support for Flintshire Coast Regional Park Scoping Study
Private individual	Landowner at Llanerch-y-môr	Support for a hub being created at Llanerch-y-môr

Table 4: Our Dee Estuary update

Our Dee Estuary Update
Recently received 3 C's funding from DEFRA for coastal partnership work
Potential for resurrection of the Dee Estuary Partnership (DEP)
Assuming regional park designation pursued, DEP could lead governance of the park
English Coast Path - Aspiration to connect with the Wales Coast Path (via a spur provided by WCP) at the country border (near Burton Wetlands)
Considering a West Kirby to Point of Ayr walking circuit with advice needed for transport, accommodation and subsistence

Summary of the Wales Coast Path on its 10th Anniversary (May 2022)

5.4   The Wales Coast Path Review Group (WCPRG) undertook a review of the Wales Coast Path, ten years on from its opening. Some of the report's recommendations align with the themes and principles discussed in the earlier chapters and would support the establishment of a Flintshire Coast Regional Park or coast park alternative given the prominence of the Wales Coast Path's. These include the following:

- Welsh Government should use the power of the Wales Coast Path as a catalyst for connecting people to nature more often and for longer, to help realise the wider benefits to health and wellbeing, and to promote a cultural change towards a deeper appreciation and enjoyment of nature and the outdoors.

- WCPRG could encourage the Wales Coast Path National Partnership Group to work with organisations to expand filming of the Path. This could be used as a promotional tool allowing potential visitors to experience the Path remotely and plan a visit more effectively.

- Consideration should be given to developing a dedicated Wales Coast Path business portal, bringing together businesses along both the whole and sections of the Coast Path to improve collaboration, provide advice and support, and identify further opportunities for business development and the creation of employment.

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6.0 Why Designate?

6.1 The earlier chapters set the scene for some of the reasons 'for' and 'against' formal designation as a regional park. This chapter considers this in more detail.

Why Designate?

Lee Valley Regional Park – a positive experience for regeneration, nature and revenue generation

The Lee Valley Regional Park (LVRP) was established by bespoke legislation in 1966 and has been very successful in transforming post-industrial land along the River Lee into a place for leisure, recreation, sport and nature. It is now a mosaic of open spaces, heritage sites, country parks, farms, golf courses, lakes and riverside trails, campsites, marinas, angling and boating locations, attracting more than seven million visitors a year.

6.3 In terms of governance, the Act of Parliament required the creation of the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority run by 28 Board Members drawn from across London, Essex and Hertfordshire. In accordance with the legislation, a suite of planning documents was prepared (with updates) to direct the development of the LVRP. Despite the bespoke planning framework for LVRP, planning powers remain ceded to the relevant local planning authorities.

6.4 The Authority generates most of its income from commercial and business activities, maximising opportunities to lessen the demand on council taxpayers. Nevertheless, the LVRP benefits from a levy on council taxpayers in London, Essex and Hertfordshire – which equates to 80p per person per year. Lee Valley Regional Park Authority has a statutory remit to develop and preserve leisure, recreation, sport and nature and so the money raised through the levy is directed to assets such as its eight Green Flag winning open spaces, three Green Heritage Sites and its sport and leisure venues.

6.5 Lee Valley Regional Park Authority (LVRPA) buys goods, works and services from a range of suppliers within the external market. Contracts vary from small one-off purchases to large works or service contracts. These include: construction of building and infrastructure; environmental and restoration works to watercourses and waterbodies; landscape design, management and maintenance; and provision of health and safety services.

6.6 LVRP has a community access fund to support community groups and charities by offering free access to our venues and services to organisations that engage with hard-to-reach communities. It also has an Active Communities Grant Scheme for a range of projects including: engaging inactive and less active people; engaging groups underrepresented in sport and physical activity; and initiatives committed to demonstrating an impact on their participants.

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6.7 LVRPA reaches out to volunteers and has a Volunteers Strategy (current version October 2021) setting out aims, responsibilities, legal considerations and policies and procedures. During 2020 over 1,200 volunteers contributed over 11,000 hours (around 60% less hours than in 2019, pre-pandemic). Volunteering was carried out across the LVRPA parklands and venues to support Fisheries, Rangers Service (livestock checkers, litter pickers, conservation and honorary wardens). LVRPA has held the Investing in Volunteers accreditation (national standard) for 15 years. Volunteering is available to individuals, corporate groups and clubs.

The LVRPA website has a launchpad to the public facing 'Visit Lee Valley' which successfully conveys the ethos and brand.

Lessons for the Flintshire Coast

6.9 LVRP is arguably a very successful model for a potential Flintshire Coast Regional Park to follow, particularly the established mosaic of spaces for leisure, recreation, sport and nature use set alongside urban uses and sites designated for nature conservation. This along the 26 mile length of the LVRP from rural Hertfordshire to London Docklands.

6.10 The governance structure underpinned by a bespoke planning framework would also provide leadership, direction and longer-term vision. However, planning powers can remain ceded to the local planning authority.

6.11 Most of the LVRP income comes from commercial and business activities with the remainder from a levy on council taxpayers.

6.12 The many benefits LVRP bring to local businesses, community groups and volunteers are clearly set out above.

Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park – a positive experience for integrated land management and countryside recreation

6.13 Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park is the largest of the three Scottish regional parks. They cover large areas of countryside, parts of which are available for informal countryside recreation. The designation was created to enable the coordinated management of recreation across large area of land and other uses such as farming and forestry. Clyde Muirshiel has a network of visitor centres with provision for outdoor activities and support from a countryside ranger service and an outdoor activity team.

6.14 The Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park Authority Joint Committee is governed by a Minute of Agreement (MoA) agreed by Renfrewshire Council, Inverclyde Council and North Ayrshire Council. The Park covers 108 square miles, receives 700,000 visitors a year and has an annual budget of approximately £1,000,000 per year.

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Lessons for the Flintshire Coast

6.15 The Park is a useful model for the Flintshire Coast were it to designate a larger area of land requiring coordinated management across several uses such as recreation, farming, nature conservation and multi-functional green infrastructure, with learning, understanding and enjoyment about the environment also a priority. Parts of Clyde Muirshiel border with the Firth of Clyde and there are many distinctive views from higher ground towards the Firth. This is another parallel with the Flintshire Coast and its links with the Dee Estuary.

6.16 Thus, the Clyde Muirshiel model is likely to be most applicable to Regional Park Option 3 – Dee Viewshed or Option 4 – Lower Dee Catchment (Welsh side) with their more extensive footprints.

Why Not Designate?

6.17 Research and stakeholder consultation shows that there are regional parks, partnerships or programmes which have been successful without reliance on a formal designation.

Valleys Regional Park – a positive experience for linking local people to landscape

6.18 These include the Valleys Regional Park (VRP) in South Wales which has successfully set up partnership with 13 local authorities, charities such as Groundwork received funding from the Welsh Government Taskforce and the VRP has its own policy reference (Policy 35) in the Future Wales: The National Plan 2040. One of the key initiatives of the VRP is the promotion of 12 Discovery Gateways to engage with residents, while also benefitting visitors. Working through the Discovery Gateways the dedicated team of VRP Guardians enable residents to connect with the nature on their doorstep whilst learning new skills in how to care for natural habitats and landscapes. VRP partners with other organisations in the Big Bocs Bwyd (BBB) initiative working with children in learning about food, the benefits of growing food and cooking food.

Lessons for the Flintshire Coast

6.19 The VRP is a good model for the Flintshire Coast in that its footprint covers a range of landscapes from protected

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nature conservation areas, elevated rural areas, settlements, employment land and former industrial areas. The VRP is referenced in Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 and there would be opportunity for the Flintshire Coast to contribute to requirements and aspirations of Policy 20 National Growth Area - Wrexham and Deeside. The focussed engagement with residents and visitors at the VRP Discovery Gateways is also a good lesson for the Flintshire Coast.

The Living Levels Landscape Partnership, Gwent – linking local people to the coast

6.20   The Living Levels Landscape Partnership (LLLP) has potential parallels with the Flintshire Coast in that it delivers a programme of work which will promote and reconnect people to the heritage, wildlife and natural beauty of the historic landscape of the Gwent Levels. It works with partners to seek to conserve and restore the important natural heritage features of the area, to develop a greater appreciation of the value of the landscape and to inspire people to learn about and participate in the heritage of the Gwent Levels.

6.21   LLLP has five members of staff and also reaches out through its interactive website and the online geographical information system (GIS) linked to citizen science. There is a regular e-newsletter, You Tube channel and social media channels that all promote the LLLP.

Summary

6.22   Lessons from the formal designation route show that with a statutory remit and robust governance structures, momentum and longevity can be established with possibilities for influencing policy and potentially more opportunity for investment, business involvement and revenue generation. Other factors that drive success in this model are vision, leadership, partnerships and a focus on core mission (e.g., recreation, visitor numbers and associated business, nature conservation).

6.23   Precedents using the non-standard designation approach have been able to achieve some of the aspects of designated regional parks, however with their more informal structures and procedures they appear to be more vulnerable to changes in partnership arrangements, policy and time-limited funding streams.

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7.0 Potential Footprint

7.1 A key task of the Scoping Study is to consider a potential footprint for a Regional Park designation or coast park alternative. Consideration of the potential footprint has been influenced by earlier chapters discussing regional park precedents, the Flintshire Coast Park prospectus, policy and local wisdom.

7.2 Four options have been examined. Maps for each option are included on the following pages, and the footprint of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is provided for context.

Option 1: Coastal Focus

7.3 Option 1 is based on the Flintshire Coast Park prospectus, extending from Point of Ayr to Connah's Quay, with a 500m inland buffer from the coastline. Based on stakeholder advice, it is recommended that the coastal focus should extend upstream to Saltney, which borders England and Cheshire West and Chester Council. The distance from Point of Ayr to Saltney is approximately 20 miles.

7.4 In recent years there have been improvements to the active travel network around Saltney, with good linkages west to the Flintshire coast and east towards Chester. Its inclusion in the footprint would add to the integrity of the visitor experience between Chester and Point of Ayr.

7.5 Stakeholders have suggested the inclusion of Llannerch-y-môr as a hub. It is characterised by activity generated by the Duke of Lancaster, its market and the Abakhan Fabric outlet. In addition, the Wales Coast Path follows the coastal inlet at the Duke of Lancaster.

7.6 Option 1 includes the six hubs from the Coast Park prospectus: Talacre, Greenfield Dock and Greenfield Valley, Bagillt Inlet and Bettisfield Hill, Flint Waterfront, Connah's Quay Dock and Northern Gateway. Llannerch-y-môr and Saltney would become the seventh and eight hubs respectively in a "Coastal Focus" footprint.

7.7 The benefit of this footprint is that it is already well-established in corporate priorities for the Council and NRW. There is a strong brand based on a "string of pearls" i.e. several hubs situated along the promoted Wales coastal path. There is a relatively limited number of private landowners and businesses, and there are established links with several of them. This means that there is likely to be relatively little resistance to a more formal designated status, and probably a good uptake of opportunities to join in with the Park.

7.8 The converse is that there are fewer businesses and few residents within the Coastal Focus, so there are limited opportunities to generate revenue, volunteering and community involvement in new projects.

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Option 1: Coastal Focus

KEY

Coastal focus

Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

Key Hubs

Option 2: Coast and GI focus

7.9 Option 2 would have the same coastal focus as Option 1, with additional connecting green infrastructure (GI) corridors including:

- Llannerch-y-môr
- Greenfield Valley towards Holywell
- Flint – working with the proposals of the Flint Green Infrastructure Strategy (2022)
- Wepre Park
- Link from Hawarden Bridge to the proposed English Coast Path near Burton Point
- Saltney

7.10 The benefit of this option would be to draw footfall from the coast path into important settlements and GI assets; and vice-versa. The settlements and GI assets noted above still have visual and/or cultural connections with the coast, so the title of "Flintshire Coast Park" would not be anomalous.

7.11 The benefit of this option is that it is well-established in corporate priorities for the Council and NRW. It would bring the Coast Park closer to many existing communities, thus increasing opportunities for volunteering, sponsorship and business involvement. The focus of the Park would be on management of public greenspace, the civic realm and public

rights of way within the inland corridors, so there would be relatively little need for extra engagement with private landowners. This in turn means there would be less likelihood of resistance to the concept of a formal designation.

View from public rights of way, south of Rhewl-Mostyn, looking towards Dee Estuary and Wirral Peninsula

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KEY

- Coastal and GI corridor focus
- Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
- Key Hubs
- Key GI corridor

Option 3: Dee Viewshed

7.12 Option 3 would include all the elements of Option 1 and 2 and would extend into the hinterland, where views from higher ground include the Dee Estuary.

7.13 The benefit of this option would be to promote the distinctive heritage, landscape and views of the hinterland. This is also firmly in line with NRW's aspirations for the area and would encompass some of the Flintshire Leisure Tour – Flintshire's Golden Circle initiative (Tour Taith) and land in the vicinity of Flintshire Castle.

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Liverpool Anglican Cathedral

View from public rights of way, south of Rhewl-Mostyn, looking towards Dee Estuary and Wirral Peninsula

7.14 Another potential benefit of a larger scale footprint would be to improve the perception and visibility of the Flintshire Coast to a much wider audience. There would be many opportunities to improve public rights of way and the active travel network to and from the coast.

7.15 This option also forms a good link between the Clwydian Range AONB and the Flintshire Coast. It includes high-quality non-designated landscapes and access linkages from the AONB to the Coast. In the context of NRW's ambition to extend the scope of land protection beyond the AONB, this option is clearly defensible in terms of landscape, ecological and recreational value.

7.16 An important factor in consideration of this footprint is that much of the additional land would be in private ownership, so there would be a need for consultation and active engagement with landowners and tenants. Whilst the nature of Park activity means that each landowner or tenant can opt in or out of land management or access improvement initiatives, nevertheless there would need to be a clear and thoughtful approach to engagement to build consensus and avoid unnecessary controversy.

KEY

Dee viewshed

Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

Key Hubs

Key views from higher ground

Key GI corridor

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## Option 4: Wider focus (lower Dee catchment) – Welsh side

7.17   Option 4 would include all the elements of Option 1, 2 and 3 and would extend to include the remaining areas of the Lower Dee catchment in Wales (mirroring the Our Dee Estuary initiative). In addition to the larger physical footprint, this option could build upon the momentum and networks established by the Our Dee Estuary initiative.

7.18   The benefits and disbenefits of Option 3 also apply to Option 4.

7.19   As the principal additional purpose of having a catchment-oriented footprint is to positively influence water quality and biodiversity at scale, the remit of the Park team would definitely need to include working with private landowners, tenant farmers and commoners to promote sustainable land management initiatives, and help source funding and training for that purpose. Whilst this would have significant resource requirements, it offers many more opportunities for partnerships with NRW, water companies and tourist businesses who would benefit from sustainable land and water management.

7.20   A longer-term possibility for Option 4 would be to extend the footprint of a regional park across the national border to reflect the whole Lower Dee catchment and the Our Dee Estuary initiative.

View from national border looking over Dee Marshes towards Flintshire

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Option 4: Wider Focus (lower Dee Catchment) Welsh Side
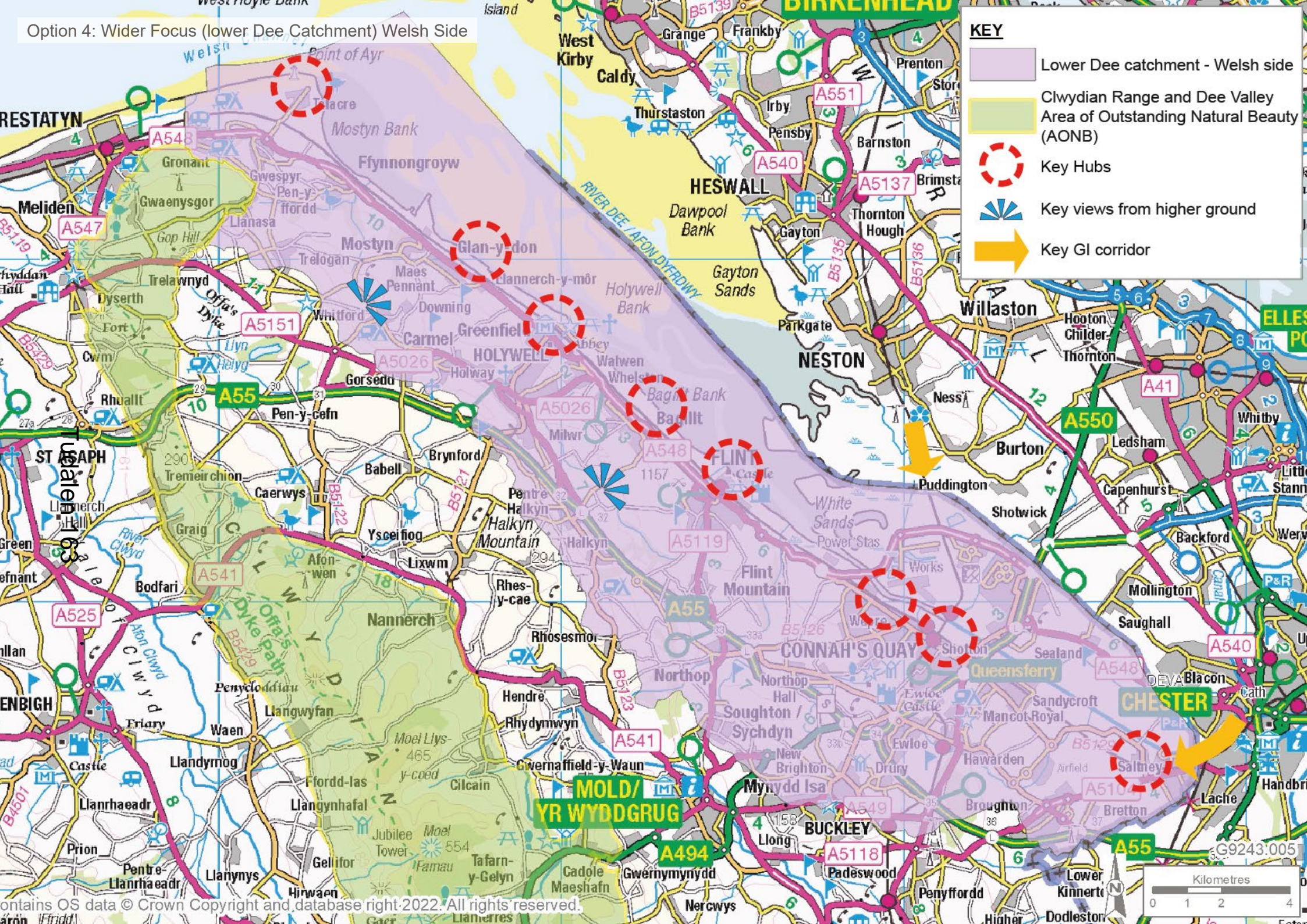
KEY

Lower Dee catchment - Welsh side

Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

Key Hubs

Key views from higher ground

Key GI corridor

8.0 Addressing Challenges

8.1   This chapter outlines some of the challenges that communities on the Flintshire coast are facing. It suggests how these challenges could be addressed by a regional park; or by a coast park alternative.

Socio-economic factors

8.2   Research undertaken on behalf of Flintshire County Council (FCC) to support a Levelling Up Fund (LUF) bid to Government shows high levels of deprivation along the coast with a lack of investment, increasing anti-social behaviour and a housing stock suffering from low quality and poor mix of tenures.

8.3   There is also a disconnect between local residents and large institutions and employers such as Airbus, Toyota and Tata Steel. The coastal community has a skills deficit relative to the rest of Flintshire. This applies to both the over-50s and younger people (in full time education). There is a shortage of the sort of skills needed by local employers, and the skills deficit also restricts entrepreneurship in the area.

Infrastructure for businesses

8.4   There is a lack of investment in commercial premises resulting in buildings in poor condition also displaying a lack of energy efficiency. This risks premises being vacated by business occupiers, thus disrupting local supply chains. Low grade premises also leads to negative perceptions of the area amongst businesses, residents, communities and visitors.

8.5   Disconnect between residents, their heritage and natural environment

8.6   Fisheries and dock management have traditionally been important to the Flintshire coast, however, there has been a decline and loss of skills associated with these traditional industries. Consultation also reveals that some residents consider local heritage and natural environment assets along the coast to be associated with industrial decline and contamination and so choose not to engage with the coastal landscape.

Visitor economy

8.7   There are many areas of high environmental quality which can be appreciated from the Wales Coast Path, together with many designated wildlife areas. Figures from Natural Resources Wales show that, in the 11 months to September 2013, 419,603 people used the Coast Path in Flintshire. Despite good footfall there is evidence of a lack of dwell time and spend by visitors in the Flintshire coastal towns.

8.8   Further to this, the 2020 STEAM[4] monitoring figures for Flintshire estimate that the County attracted 2.93-million-day

[4] STEAM (Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor) is an evaluation model used by many Destinations Management Organisations.

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visitors. Each visitor is estimated to spend on average £56 per head. In addition, there are 4.7 million people living within a 60-minute drive time, the ideal catchment for day visitors.

8.9 In essence, Flintshire has a large and relatively untapped market close to hand. The tourism sector businesses in Flintshire have made recommendations for tourism development along the coast, and these inform the coast park vision.

Public realm

8.10 Chapter 3.0 of this study highlights the aspiration to improve connections between the coast and hinterland. However, some of these linkages have yet to be improved, which can induce a fear of crime and a negative perception of parts of the coast. The Coastal Communities online consultation undertaken during early 2022 highlighted the attraction of the coastal environment, but noted that there were local spots avoided by visitors and locals due to poor facilities or neglect of management.

Civic pride

8.11 Consultation suggests that Flintshire's coastal communities are proud of their locale. However, this is perhaps more linked to the identity of individual places and communities, rather than a connection with the natural environment, heritage and traditional industries.
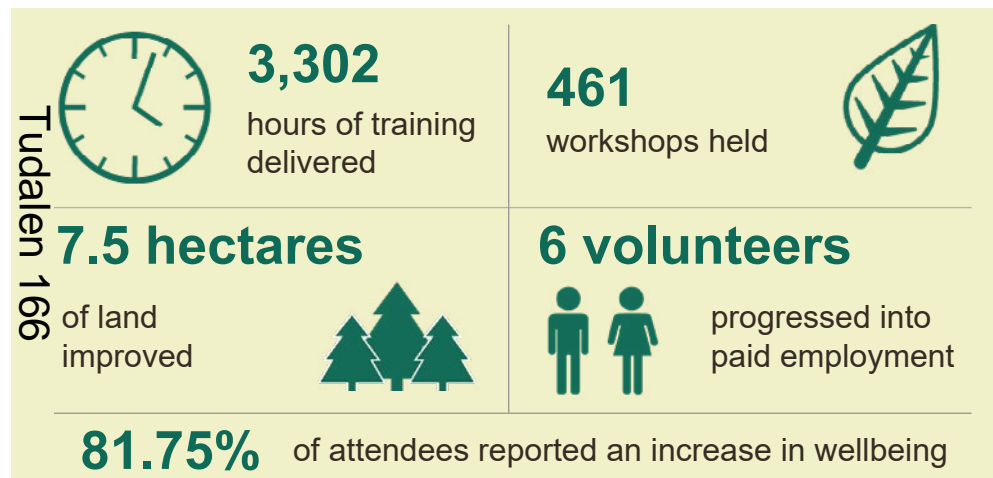
Addressing the Challenges

8.12 In summary, Flintshire Council's LUF Vision development work lists the following challenges faced by the Flintshire Coast. It is possible to use a regional / coast park to help address the challenges.

Local communities experiencing economic decline, disconnection and acute deprivation

8.13 This challenge requires an emphasis on skills, employability and creating a local entrepreneur culture. Investment in skills will drive greater productivity and employability, in turn attracting inward investors and community entrepreneurs.

8.14 The regional park precedents outlined in Chapter 2.0 show how local employment can be uplifted with interventions from rangers, outreach and engagement workers. This builds skills, self-esteem and awareness of environmental issues within the local community.

8.15 This focus on skills is demonstrated in the South Wales's Valley Regional Park (VRP). In the VRP Discovery Gateways, a dedicated team of Guardians enable residents to connect with the nature on their doorstep whilst learning new skills in how to care for natural habitats and landscapes.

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8.16 VRP also partners with other organisations in the Big Bocs Bwyd (BBB) initiative, working with children in learning about food, and the benefits of growing and cooking food.

8.17 Data gathered from the VRP Guardians Scheme from May 2021-Jan 2022 advises that:

3,302 hours of training delivered

461 workshops held

7.5 hectares of land improved

6 volunteers progressed into paid employment

81.75% of attendees reported an increase in wellbeing

Lack of investment in commercial premises (town and industrial parks) along the coastline

8.18 Investing in the physical appearance and energy efficiency of commercial premises helps to secure existing jobs and supply chains. There is also increased potential for start-ups and incubators allowing them to establish and grow, in turn providing stepping stone employment for people with low skills - connecting pockets of deprivation with economic assets and jobs.

8.19 Much has already been achieved in terms of environmental remediation of degraded sections of the coastline. Ongoing improvements include opening views and improving sustainable transport links to the coast. This will contribute to the setting of commercial premises, attracting inward investment and helping retain skilled employers and employees.

8.20 The 2022 Coastal Communities consultation confirmed that the coastal location was generally an attractant for businesses and confirmed a market for food and activity-based micro-businesses associated with the coast.

Decline of traditional industries linked to the area's identity and heritage (i.e., cockle fishing & processing/dock management)

8.21 The LUF Vision development work recommends that partners (Welsh Government, NRW and FCC) work together to promote local industries and infrastructure, including a thriving fishing industry. Awareness raising is needed amongst communities, businesses and stakeholders and strong links between schools, colleges and employers.

Built heritage across coastline and town centres is falling into disrepair and disappearing

8.22 The LUF Vision development proposes a celebration of the area's heritage, traditional industries and natural assets through a modern, accessible and sustainable offer to residents and

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visitors. The tourism offer is to promote increased visits, dwell time and spend, while operators of heritage assets can offer employment and training.

8.23 A regional park or coast park alternative would promote the coast as a place for leisure, recreation and heritage interest and the expectation is that footfall would increase as a result. Either designation could promote links to the town centres: resulting in increased visits, dwell time and spend; and the regeneration of built heritage such as the old colliery winding house at Bagillt.

8.24 Ynysangharad Park and National Lido in the Valley Regional Park (VRP) is an historic family attraction and is an outdoor pool attraction and industrial themed adventure play park – unique to Wales. The Grade II listed lido has been restored and updated. It has external and internal showers, heated changing facilities and three heated swimming pools, for families, dedicated swimmers and social swimmers of all ages and abilities. Lido Ponty features a state-of-the-art Visitors' Centre which tells the story of The National Lido of Wales. Restored features include the 1920's turnstiles and wooden cubicles.

Poor linkages between natural assets, areas of enterprise and services, and residential areas. Use of linkages (paths etc.) reduced due to fear of crime, negative perceptions of areas connected by linkages by residents and visitors.

8.25 Improved connectivity can increase residents' and tourist accessibility and visits to heritage sites, the natural environment and town centres.

8.26 This approach has been demonstrated by the Living Levels Landscape Partnership (LLLP) in Gwent. It delivers a programme of work which will promote and reconnect people to the heritage, wildlife and natural beauty of the historic landscape of the Gwent Levels. It has a staff team that enable this, along with online engagement.

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9.0 Next Steps

9.1　This chapter draws together the findings of the scoping study described in the preceding chapters and it recommends three stages in the setting up and establishment of a Regional Park or Coast Park alternative. These are:

- Transitional stage, which would involve: the establishing of a project team; articulating a vision; undertaking gateway projects; developing a spatial plan and defining a detailed boundary; and setting up an arm's length body to provide a steer for the Regional Park or Coast Park alternative. This includes a short narrative on compliance with the Habitat Regulations Assessment.

- Implementation stage, which would involve: management of individual projects and construction contracts; setting up procurement with the attendant financial controls and administrative systems.

- Management stage, which would involve: development and sustaining of business, recreation, tourism and heritage initiatives.

9.2　In terms of the transitional stage five actions are proposed to get things going. A further three actions are recommended marking the start of the implementation stage. Actions for the management stage are outside the scope of this study.

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Transitional Stage

ACTION 1 – Establish a Flintshire Coast Project Team

9.3　A transitional project team will be needed to ensure on-going decision-making and action between now and when a new system of governance with an 'arm's length body' becomes effective. It is a priority therefore, that a dedicated Project Team is established at the earliest opportunity. This team should have strong leadership and dedicated resources including both professional staff and administrative support and a budget for park development and feasibility studies.

9.4　The team leader will need to be a confident public communicator with a passion for the coast and its communities and an ability to forge links with politicians, businesses, community leaders and funders. The ability to "broker" agreements to make progress even where there are differences of opinion and emphasis is critical.

ACTION 2 – Establish a Vision, Goals and Brand

9.5　A vision for the Flintshire Coast will need to be established and supported by what distinguishes the coast, what it does well and what is recognisably regional. The 2015 Coast Park Prospectus provides a basis for testing and updating a vision statement, taking soundings from the Coastal Communities Survey 2022 and from stakeholders on a Steering Group /

Board of Reference. Alongside a vision statement, a set of core goals can be developed. Once drafted, the vision statement can be publicised in a branded format, starting to establish a distinct identity for the Park.

ACTION 3 – Undertake Detailed Studies for Gateway Projects

9.6   This will bring more detail to the gateway projects (hubs) referred to in Chapter 7.0 along with the skills development and engagement proposed in Chapter 8.0. Outputs include feasibility study, costings, programme, funding sources, stakeholder mapping and a schedule of regulatory consents

ACTION 4 – Develop a Spatial Plan

9.7   Achieving delivery of the 'Flintshire Coast' concept will require collaboration and partnerships with a range of public and private sector organisations and should be directed towards achieving a co-ordinated network of projects and initiatives that support the over-arching vision. The preparation of a Spatial Plan is a fundamental next step in this process and we recommend that this is progressed following completion of the studies outlined above.

ACTION 5 – Define a Detailed Boundary for the Flintshire Coast

9.8   Chapter 7.0 of this report articulates the rationale for four potential footprint options and these will be subject to further Member and Officer consultations.

9.9   Once a preferred footprint has been selected, the following work should be undertaken:

- Consult key partners on the recommended 'Project Area', refine this as necessary to address any issues arising and seek to agree the Project Area as a working boundary for the Flintshire Coast.
- Complete an audit of key proposals and initiatives within and adjacent to the Flintshire Coast to recommend ways in which the concept can be delivered by.
- Led by the project team, determine the process by which the detailed boundary will be defined.
- Develop criteria for identifying the detailed boundary.

Habitat Regulations Assessments (HRA)

9.10   As much of the coast is subject to international nature conservation designations, project-specific Habitats Regulations Assessments may need to be carried out for most developments, even those not immediately adjacent the designations. The exception is projects solely concerned with managing and enhancing the designated sites.

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9.11 Coast Park projects which involve built facilities, car parks and access improvements may need to be screened for HRA, to ensure that avoidance and mitigation of adverse effects is considered from project inception. In most instances, simple siting and design tweaks can avoid adverse effects.

9.12 As the Coast Park plan is not yet a formal statutory plan, it does not require a "plan-wide" HRA. Nevertheless, it is advisable that long-term business plans and work programmes for the Coast Park note the Habitats Regulations and commit the Council to work with NRW to ensure any site-specific projects are subject to HRA screening and mitigation.

9.13 Should the Coast Park proceed to a formal designation as a regional park, it will require a plan-wide HRA. This need not be onerous as one aim of the Coast Park is to manage the Dee Estuary, but nevertheless, a plan-wide HRA will identify potential implementation risks and promote ecological good practice in project design

9.14 It is envisaged that the transitional stage will take in the region of two to three years to undertake. It would include the setting up of an arm's length body from FCC to implement and then manage the Regional Park or Coast Park alternative. The three actions outlined on the following pages mark the start of the implementation stage.

Implementation Stage

ACTION 6 – Prepare a Business Plan and Funding Applications

9.15 To ensure the effective development and delivery of the Vision, the Flintshire Coast must have access to significant public funding over many years. In many cases, this funding should be used as seedcorn or for leverage or match. It is essential therefore, that there is ongoing dialogue and consultation with Welsh Government, key agencies and FCC to promote the initiative, and to secure additional public sector investment, business sponsorships and philanthropic contributions.

ACTION 7 - Undertake a Communications Campaign

9.16 The Scoping Study provides new impetus to the Flintshire Coast initiative and offers the potential to promote the benefits of the project to a wide range of audiences. However, the study is also by its own brief, a technical document, which is unsuited for presentation to a non-technical or lay audience. The project team should therefore, at an early stage, hold a major dissemination event aimed at capturing the attention of the Region's major organisations. Key actions should include:

- Preparation of a presentational package to allow the conclusions of the feasibility study and the Flintshire Coast concept to be presented to key partners including:

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Welsh Government, NRW, CADW, Our Dee Estuary, Dee Estuary Conservation Group, Sustrans, Ramblers and local businesses.

- Identifying several 'Project Champions' within key organisations; high profile individuals who are committed to the concept and capable of marketing this at the highest level.

- A media campaign to raise awareness of the project nationally and regionally. This should focus on the populist press including TV, radio and newspapers but should also target professional and technical journals.

- Consideration of a new name and logo for the initiative.

- Develop a Flintshire Coast website and social media channels to disseminate information and act as a point of contact for local communities.

ACTION 8 - Develop a Consultation and Engagement Programme

9.17 For the Flintshire Coast to be successful in achieving its objectives continued consultation with a wide range of stakeholders and users groups will be required. There will be a need in the early stages, to present the Vision and ideas emerging out of the Scoping Study and the recommendations from Action 7 above will assist this. It will be important in the early stages to gain the support of key partners and statutory

agencies and a programme of meetings and workshops should be developed to facilitate this. Key actions will include:

- Developing a consultation programme to review the outcomes of the Scoping Study with key partners.

- Identifying ways in which local communities can engage in the process of developing and delivering the Flintshire Coast initiative.

- Develop a programme with local schools and colleges to engage young people in the initiative.

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ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 11th October 2022
Report Subject	Town Centre Regeneration
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy
Report Author	Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Smaller town centres across the United Kingdom have been facing challenging economic circumstances for many years due to changing customer behaviours. The Covid-19 pandemic accelerated these trends and although it remains too early to understand the long term impacts. It is important that future proofing towns is addressed by creating more sustainable use of properties within town centres.

This report provides an update on the strategic context for town centre regeneration and the programmes of work currently underway. Furthermore, it provides details about the development of Place Plans and the enforcement action required to tackle empty properties within town centres.

RECOMMENDATIONS	
1	That the requirements to develop Place Plans for the seven towns (Buckley, Connah's Quay, Flint, Holywell, Mold, Queensferry and Shotton) in Flintshire are noted and Members support the sequence in which the proposed work is delivered within the constraints of resource available.
2	That the requirement to address vacant town centre properties through an enforcement action plan is noted, and Members support the criteria and approach to be used.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	**EXPLAINING TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION**
1.01	There are a number of challenges facing all small towns in the UK: • Changing customer behaviour, which has accelerated during the Covid pandemic, has dramatically reduced expenditure through high street shops. It is not expected that this will return fully to pre-Covid levels potentially leaving towns with more retail units than they can sustain. • Many units are owned remotely by national or international property finance companies or speculative investors with limited interest in their effective management and no stake beyond their investment in the success of the town centre. • Smaller, more marginal shopping centres are struggling to remain viable with a major collapse of property values and considerable difficulties in attracting tenants. • Although there is a relatively low proportion of vacant retail units in Flintshire town centres, there is considerable underused space above the ground floor and weak business resilience is believed to mask the true picture which manifests in gradually declining building condition and a lack of investment. • There are a small number of longer-term vacant properties in towns which can have a blighting effect on their locality.
1.02	Although Flintshire town centres have not been immune to this process, the loss of major national chains and the increase in vacant floor space has not been as significant an issue as local towns had very few national brands still present and Woolworths was the only closure of significance. The loss of high street banks has been more significant in a number of Flintshire towns. This gradual decline in vitality has, in turn, impacted on the scale and vitality of the street markets in the County.
	Strategic context
1.03	In 2020 Welsh Government launched its Town Centres First policy to help breathe new life into town centres by locating services and buildings in town centres wherever possible. It has since launched a national £90m Transforming Towns investment package and encouraged the public sector to support towns through delivering regeneration activity which aims to increase footfall and create or sustain vibrancy. Funding available through the Transforming Towns initiative has created new opportunities for investment in town centre properties in Flintshire particularly by providing access to grant funding and repayable loans.
1.04	Since 2020, Welsh Government has increasingly focussed on town centre regeneration, and as part of this, tackling empty town centre properties. As part of its Transforming Towns initiative funding has been made available through a repayable loans programme (delivered through each local authority) to support tackling empty properties. Welsh Government has set out a requirement for local authorities to each agree an approach and

	criterion for tackling vacant town centre properties and to produce an action plan for this work. Welsh Government has also provided training and advice in support and has encouraged local authorities to use their enforcement powers more fully to bring units back into use.
	Flintshire town centre regeneration strategic approach
1.05	The strategic approach to town centre regeneration in Flintshire was approved by Cabinet in May 2019 and subsequently refreshed in March 2020 immediately before the pandemic restrictions came into place. The strategic priorities agreed include: • refreshing the evidence base on town centre vibrancy and vitality; • responding proactively to market interest in town centre investment and actively seeking to encourage investment wherever there are appropriate opportunities; • continuing to support front line service outlets in town centre locations to enable access to Council (and partner) services whilst also helping to sustain footfall; • approving Local Development Plan policies for town centres that enable land use change to be managed to promote sustainability and vitality; • identifying key sites for future redevelopment with an emphasis on diversifying land use to increase sustainability and vitality; • starting, subject to the availability of capital resources and detailed investigation into commercial viability, to acquire key sites for redevelopment; • taking advantage of potential investment in transport infrastructure by Welsh Government to identify how wider regeneration benefits can be realised in the immediate vicinity; • supporting town centre stakeholder groups to develop and implement action plans for their towns and will undertake County-wide actions to support town centres for example through promotional activity; and • helping businesses to adapt to the changing economic climate.
1.06	In addition, the 2020 Cabinet report highlighted a number of areas for particular focus in the future: • identify potential future development sites and develop options for their future assembly and redevelopment; • diversify land uses to maintain the vitality and viability of town centres; • target vacant or underused properties in town centres for intervention including making full use of Council enforcement powers; • investigate the feasibility of piloting a community ownership structure for town centre properties for Holywell; • use these work streams to develop potential projects for future capital funding opportunities; and • continue to progress the potential redevelopment of the Mold Hallfields site.
1.07	In May 2021, a further Cabinet report provided an update on progress against the regeneration priorities and areas of particular focus and

	identified the need for additional staff resource to deliver the increased scale of the programme and more property-related regeneration. The report to Cabinet in May 2021 also outlined the need to update action plans for each town centre to ensure interventions fit together into a coherent whole. This ambition directly aligns with the subsequent request from Welsh Government to develop Place Plans for each town centre.
1.08	Since the last update to Cabinet in May 2021, a significant amount of work has been completed take forward the agreed priorities and increase resource and capacity within the regeneration team including: 1. successfully completing the Local Development Plan examination process; 2. increasing staff resource through appointing three additional regeneration staff: a Regeneration Assistant, Regeneration Manager and an additional Regeneration Officer (to commence in post in November 2022); 3. creating a further two Project Development Officer roles on a fixed term basis to support the development of projects and Place Planning; 4. developing an updated four year regeneration work programme including forecasted financial requirement to deliver all aspects of the work including town centre and also coastal regeneration priorities; 5. scoping out a plan for the development of Place Plans for seven town centres across Flintshire in 2022-24 informed by Welsh Government's expectations. 6. developed a criteria and action plan for the Council to tackle empty properties through enforcement action with the aim of bringing long-term empty properties back into use; 7. installation of smart devices across town centres to measure usage including real time data, which can be used to inform decision making within each town centre. 8. delivery of Green Infrastructure schemes in Shotton and Flint through Welsh Government investment; 9. provided a one-to-one support service to businesses with investment proposals for High Street properties; 10. supporting applicants to access business loans and grants to invest in their High Street properties; 11. developing and delivering environmental improvement schemes and supporting active travel proposals; 12. progressing the acquisition of property in one of Flintshire's town centres (due to complete by October 2022) with funds secured through Welsh Government investment. 13. reviewing internal governance arrangements for the management of Place Making across the Council, and increased opportunities for more collaborative working across a range of services within the Council and participation in the Council's Places Group. 14. delivering a promotional campaign for independent businesses in town centres (launched in Spring 2022), as a follow on form very successful first and second phases in 2020 and 2021. 15. designed and delivered consultation workshops to identify local needs for investment through the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund totalling £10.8 million for 2022-2025, and actively

	participated in the development of the local investment strategy (submitted to UK Government in August 2022); and 16. leading the development of proposals for the regeneration of Connah's Quay Docks as part of the Council's Levelling Up Fund application for Alyn and Deeside funding bid (submitted to UK Government in July 2022).
	Place Plans
1.09	In May 2022 Welsh Government informed local authorities of the requirement to establish Place Plans and provided a framework to inform this work. As part of this, Welsh Government confirmed that the availability of funding would be conditional on Place Plans being in place. Welsh Government's guidance suggests Place Plans should include a vision for each town, bring together a range of existing plans and strategies, and be informed by local engagement, consultation and a range of data and statistics to evidence local need.
1.10	In response to Welsh Government's requirement for local authorities to establish Place Plans for towns, scoping work has been completed to identify a range of actions that the Council will need to complete and to identify indicative timescales for doing so. Key elements that will be completed for each Place Plan include: • a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis of each town; • desk-based review of data and key statistics; • review of existing strategies (local, regional; • a series of online and face-to-face consultation and engagement actions/ events with members, local residents, businesses and other key stakeholders; • identifying priorities and potential actions arising from consultation – • developing an updated vision for each town centre and developing action plans content. • writing up final plans – following feedback/ further consultation and engagement with stakeholders. • submitting the Place Plan to the Council's Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny committee. • Seeking approval and sign off from Cabinet for completed Place Plans.
1.11	It is anticipated that the development of each town centre Place Plan will take approximately six months to complete, and there is staff capacity to develop two or three concurrently at any one time. It is therefore likely that all seven Place Plans for Flintshire will be completed within 18-months to 2 years. There are three main criteria identified to determine which towns should be included in the first tranche of Place Plan development. These are: i) already established priorities which have previously been approved by Cabinet where a targeted approach and plan for

	town centre(s) has been identified and work already started to bring together a range of services and partners;
	ii) any town where major projects are already under development and the opportunity to attract funding/ significant investment could be jeopardised if a Place Plan is not developed as a priority; and
	iii) where, without a Place Plan, the opportunity to align strategic priorities across the Council and wider public sector partners would be missed.
	In light of the above criteria, it is recommended that the initial Place Plans are developed for Buckley, Holywell and Shotton.
	The timetable for the development of Place Plans is subject to variation due to external factors, changing circumstances or opportunities in the towns and the learning generated through the development of the first tranche. It is anticipated, though, that there will be two towns in the second tranche of Place Plans (Connah's Quay and Queensferry) and two in the final tranche (Mold and Flint). More team capacity will be available for the development of the first tranche of Place Plans as later tranches will run alongside increased project delivery.
1.12	It is not proposed that Place Plans are developed for settlements without town centres; where there is a critical mass of retail, hospitality and service functions. This is due to the need to concentrate scarce Council resources and because Welsh Government regeneration resources are not available outside of town centres.
	Enforcement Action Plan
1.13	To assist Local Authorities in dealing with their empty properties, Welsh Government has developed an Empty Property Enforcement Programme with financial support package available to Local Authorities who wish to undertake enforcement action on prominent town centre empty properties. To gain access to this fund, it is a requirement that representatives from the local authority have attended Welsh Government training and produced their own local action plan (a living document) for dealing with long-term empty properties through enforcement action. The Council has completed this.
1.14	Cabinet approval is required for the criteria to be used to prioritise properties for intervention, set out below: • Is the property of special architectural or historic interest and therefore in need of protection? • Is the property subject to legal restrictions on what changes can be made to buildings, greenery and street furniture? • Is there known anti-social behaviour at the premise/ address? • Any known public health matters/ concerns? • Any issues known / reported by the local elected Member? • Any complaints received from the general public? • What length of time has the premises been vacant?

	• What is the condition of the premises (summary)? • Are they any identified issues which would require the Council to gain access to check non-compliant building work, dangerous structures or demolitions? • Is there any evidence of business rates (non-domestic rates) being paid within recent years held by the Council? • What is the Planning history for the building including extent of the site, planning permissions affecting the premises, any restrictions that apply and the impact of any unauthorised uses on the premises? • Has any advice been provided to the owner/ enforcement action been taken by the Council previously, if so what? The Enforcement Programme will target properties across all areas of Flintshire but Welsh Government Transforming Towns resources are only available to target town centre properties.
1.15	The properties to be targeted will remain confidential to enable effective and commercially sensitive discussions to be held with property owners. Authority is sought for the Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy) and Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy oversee the operation of the action plan and to report progress to Cabinet and to the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

2.00	**RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**
2.01	**Financial resource** The following funding has been secured from Welsh Government to deliver town centre regeneration priorities in Flintshire: • £510,000 revenue for use over the next 3 years which will support economic development activity including the recruitment of two new Project Development Officers; • £680,000 capital towards town centre regeneration and property acquisition projects to be delivered in 2022-23; and • £1,260,000 for the Council to administer as a repayable loan scheme over the next five years. In addition to the above, the following Welsh Government funding is available for town centre regeneration from 1 April 2023: • £2.6 million available across North Wales, with up to £250,000 available per application; and • £150,000 allocation per annum for the delivery of small-scale property improvement projects in Flintshire. The funding outlined above provides good opportunities for regeneration projects in Flintshire, however it is either repayable or requires significant match funding. Without capital funds the Council will not be able to take full advantage of these opportunities to regenerate town centres.

Capacity

The regeneration team currently stands at four individuals. As a result of Cabinet approving extra staff resource in 2021, three appointments have been made since this approval, and two posts are currently being secured which will see the team increase to seven staff in total from December 2022 onwards.

The additional resource brings a broader range of skills, knowledge experience to the regeneration team particularly in property-related regeneration work and the delivery of loan investments. This resource is needed to successfully deliver the regeneration priorities detailed in the Regeneration Programme including those outlined in this report and manage risks to the Council.

Specialist advice and expertise

The proposed Place Making approach will place demands upon other teams in the Council to deliver specialist advice and support, for example property, legal services, planning and public protection. The Council has already begun to purchase specialist property and legal expertise on a consultancy basis in order to effective survey, value properties, advise on specialist legal and conveyancing advice and to help plan viable end uses and acquisition of property for future regeneration uses, this will continue to be needed to deliver the Regeneration Programme.

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT

3.01		

Identified risk	Action to manage risk
Lack of experience and capacity to deliver programme of work.	Recruit additional resource (in progress, due to be completed by December 2022).
Lack of specialist advice and support internally within the Council.	Procure advice from external specialists.
Lack of funding to deliver Regeneration work programme.	i) Maintain positive working links with external funding bodies. ii) Ensure future funding requirements/ future regeneration schemes are known to Welsh Government. iii) Consider investing own Council resources into projects that would otherwise not progress/ not deliver benefits. iv) Recycle regeneration loans to maximise impact of funds available.

	Failure to meet expectations.	i) Effective monitoring and management of regeneration activity by the Council's Places Group, Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet.
		ii) Prioritise work in line with local needs and funding opportunities.
		iii) Place Plans to be developed in a phased approach over 2 years to manage workload and resource.
		iii) Engage public and partners to inform content of Place Plans to ensure local needs are met.
		iv) Deliver Regeneration Communications Action Plan.
	Loss of funding.	i) Adherence to terms and conditions of external funding secured.
		ii) Effective budget monitoring and financial management.

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	A series of public meetings and digital consultations will need to be carried out as part of the development process for each of the seven Place Plans. Local residents, businesses, internal and external colleagues will have the opportunity to participate over the next two years. Information gathered from consultations will directly inform the content of Flintshire's Place Plans and actions contained within future delivery plans of both the Council and its partners.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	None.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	None.

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	**Contact Officer:** Niall Waller (Enterprise and Regeneration Manager) **Telephone:** 01352 702137 **E-mail:** niall.waller@flintshire.gov.uk

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
	Empty Property Enforcement Programme – a Welsh Government initiative aimed at assisting Local Authorities to deal with properties which have been empty for a period of time through the use of enforcement powers. **Green infrastructure** - Green infrastructure is a network of multi-functional green space and other green features, urban and rural, which can deliver quality of life and environmental benefits for communities. (tcpa.org.uk) **Place Making** – a multi-faceted approach to designing, developing and managing public spaces across a range of stakeholder which capitalises on local assets and has people's health, happiness and well-being at the forefront of decisions made. **Place Plans** – a document which is developed for a defined settlement which identified local needs which are informed by consultation and engagement with the local stakeholders along with a vision for the settlement area and actions to achieve this. **Places Group** – a group of senior officers from across the Council and Lead Member for Climate Change and Economy which is responsible for overseeing the monitoring, management and implementation of Place Making priorities. **Town Centres First** – a Welsh Government policy which focuses on town centres being the first consideration for all decisions on the location of workplaces and services. **Transforming Towns** – a Welsh Government targeted regeneration investment programme which aims to support the redevelopment and improvement of town centres across Wales.