

CABINET

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 12 th July 2022
Report Subject	North Wales Regional Economic Framework
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy
Report Author	Chief Officer (Planning, Environment & Economy)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to present to Cabinet the final draft Regional Economic Framework (REF) for North Wales and to seek Cabinet's endorsement of its content.

The REF for North Wales promotes collaborative economic development across the region through an agreed and shared set of priorities for delivery amongst regional partners.

The Memorandum of Understanding (Memorandum of Understanding Working Together to deliver a stronger North Wales Economy) sets out how the Welsh Government, the North Wales Economic Ambition Board (NWEAB) and other partners would work in partnership to develop and deliver against a single common North Wales Regional Economic Framework.

In addition to the co-production that took place through the various NWEAB groups, two cross-sector stakeholder events took place. The first in May 2022 provided background and discussion on strengths and opportunities for the region. The second was a series of eight workshops which sought views on priorities for the region.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1.00	EXPLAINING THE NORTH WALES REGIONAL ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK
1.01	The Welsh Government's Economic Action Plan (EAP) established the basis for regional working, including a commitment to deliver a stronger regional voice through a regionally-focused model of economic development. This includes the establishment of regional teams and the development of Regional Economic Frameworks (REFs).
1.02	The development of REFs is an essential part of Welsh Government's commitment to a more regionally focussed model of economic development, supporting inclusive and sustainable economic growth; maximising opportunities to address regional and local inequalities and contributing to the Well-being Goals for Wales.
1.03	In developing the REFs, consideration must be given to the immediate recovery required in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic and the longer-term aspirations for the regions.
1.04	REFs are intended as a vehicle to help promote collaborative regional planning and delivery amongst public, private and third sector partners. Delivery will be focussed around a single shared vision for each region and supported by a suite of shared regional priorities and principles.
1.05	The development of REFs will be key in informing and influencing the delivery of Welsh Government funding priorities.
1.06	To create the first draft REF for North Wales, officials from Welsh Government's North Wales regional office and North Wales Economic Ambition Board have undertaken a period of targeted engagement with a range of key regional stakeholders to co-design this placed-based approach to economic development.
1.07	The first draft of the REF builds on pre-existing work and sets out the shared priorities for the region. These priorities align with Welsh Government's aspirations for a well-being economy which drives prosperity, is environmentally sound, and helps everyone realise their potential.
1.08	The well-being economy priorities are presented in the REF under three themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Social and Community Well-being Economy• Experience Economy• Low Carbon and Low Emissions Economy
1.09	The priorities are flexible, allowing the region to adapt and respond to the challenges and opportunities it is likely to face over the next 20 years.
1.10	The draft REF for North Wales was presented to the North Wales Economic Ambition Board Joint Committee on 10 December 2021. The Joint Committee decided to recommend the document for endorsement by each of the six North Wales local authorities.

1.11	Vaughn Gething MS, Minister for Economy released a written statement on 22 December 2021, publishing the four Draft Regional Economic Frameworks in Wales. In the statement he stated that further and final consideration of the document by the individual local authorities and other partners in the North Wales region, should continue into January 2022. He stated “We remain committed to working in partnership with partners and stakeholders to deliver against the vision and priorities set out in each of these documents: the opportunities and challenges require our combined efforts if we are to deliver effectively against our collective ambitions.”
1.12	<p><u>Next Steps</u></p> <p>The immediate next steps will be to establish, via the Economy Recovery Group (and other key partners), a delivery programme. This will include considering how we prioritise the delivery packages, and who is best to lead on those, recognising and respecting existing regional governance and delivery architecture. Some of this work is already taking place and we will therefore need to have a better grasp of all the ongoing work, the funding packages under each priority area before creating new areas of work.</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	There are no financial implications directly associated with this report nor are there any legal implications arising directly from approving the decision sought in this report.

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	Undertaken by Welsh Government and North Wales Economic Ambition Board as lead bodies for the REF’s production.

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	<p>Consultations undertaken by Welsh Government to support the REF’s production.</p> <p>Further consultation will be required in the production of the REF Delivery Programme.</p>

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 - North Wales Regional Economic Framework.

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@flintshre.gov.uk