



Growing Mid Wales October Newsletter

Mid Wales Growth Deal special

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Whether you've been following our newsletter since the start or you're reading it now for the first time, you may or may not have heard of the [Mid Wales Growth Deal](#)*. In a nutshell, it's a pretty big deal; £110m from both UK & Welsh Government to be exact, with a further £290m of additional backing expected from combined public and private investment. It aims to generate economic recovery and growth in the region.

With the [first allocation](#) of the investment flowing into the region and a series of key developments happening for the projects and programmes involved, we wanted to focus this month's newsletter on the Growth Deal.

We have a special recording with Leader of Powys County Council, Councillor James Gibson-Watt and Leader of Ceredigion County Council, Councillor Bryan Davies, discussing the fruition of the Deal.

Also, we share a report on the key decisions made at a recent Growing Mid Wales Board meeting and take a closer look at what those decisions mean for the future of the two Mid Wales Growth Deal Programmes: Sites & Premises, and Digital.

Our Meet the Team colleague this month is Stacey-Jayne Oakham, our Portfolio Analysis and Support Officer, who gives a behind the scenes perspective of the work involved with the Growth Deal.

Helping to grow opportunity in Mid Wales,

The Growing Mid Wales team

*Watch this Mid Wales Growth Deal explainer [video](#).

Investment Secured for The Mid Wales Growth Deal

An incredible milestone has been reached with investment being secured for the [Mid Wales Growth Deal](#).

In this special [Business News Wales](#) discussion, former First Minister Carwyn Jones is joined by Leader of Powys County Council, Councillor James Gibson-Watt and Leader of Ceredigion County Council, Councillor Bryan Davies, to discuss the fruition of the [Mid Wales Growth Deal](#) and what it will mean for both Ceredigion and Powys going forward. You will hear more about the projects moving forward and how the deal will make a difference for food, tourism and agricultural infrastructure, also the importance of working with private investors.

Listen here: [Business News Wales Mid Wales Growth Deal discussion](#)



Mid Wales Growth Deal Portfolio Engagement Workshops

On 28th September, Growing Mid Wales Board members and the Economic Advisory Group attended a workshop at AberInnovation to hear more about the Mid Wales Growth Deal projects.

The workshop helped to further understand the proposals that are being developed, provide constructive feedback and challenge to the project sponsors to help shape and improve the Portfolio as a whole as it progresses into 2024.

This was the third workshop of its kind and focused on the three remaining projects submitting Strategic Outline Cases: The Mid Wales Advanced Manufacturing Campus, Tir Glas, and the Montgomery Canal Restoration project.

At present, both Programmes and all nine Projects are progressing through the assessment framework that has been set out as per Government guidance and agreed by the Growing Mid Wales Board.





Overview of the Mid Wales Growth Deal Portfolio

We have added a new page to the Growing Mid Wales website providing more information on the Projects and Programmes that make up the current Growth Deal Portfolio.

You can view a snapshot of the proposals that are being developed for consideration for funding which cover a number of themes that have been identified as Strategic Growth Priority Areas in the Vision for Growing Mid Wales.

Mid Wales Growth Deal Portfolio webpage: www.growingmid.wales/MWGDProjects

Sites and Premises Programme given the green light for delivery stage

On 16th October, the Growing Mid Wales Board approved the Sites and Premises Programme Business Case. This means that the Programme can proceed into the Delivery Stage, where project proposals can be developed further.

The Sites & Premises Programme aims to stimulate property investment in the Mid Wales region to support its buoyant and varied industry sectors.

In a joint statement, Leader of Powys County Council, Councillor James Gibson-Watt and Leader of Ceredigion County Council, Councillor Bryan Davies said: *"We're extremely pleased to report that the Sites and Premises Programme can proceed into the delivery stage, bringing us closer to realising commercial development opportunities that will help boost the local economy and harness the talent of the region."*

After completing extensive research and analysis of market demand, the approved Programme Business Case sets out an action planning for our next steps, initiating a major programme of work with project partners to jointly deliver strategically located investments that will help create the conditions to drive enterprise growth and raise regional productivity.

Approval of the Programme Business Case does not commit Mid Wales Growth Deal funding at this stage but will allow project partners to develop their detailed proposals for the front-runner projects. This will include work to refine commercial proposals for each development, optimising their attractiveness to the marketplace.

It is vital that private sector backing is secured, to drive delivery forward in partnership."

A number of site options from across the region were appraised in detail during the business case process and two front runner sites are now being recommended for further progression:

Horeb Business Park, Llandysul in Ceredigion

This existing business park is principally occupied by Food Centre Wales. In partnership with Ceredigion County Council, an extension of the existing park would provide space for companies manufacturing and developing innovative products in the food sector, further enhancing this unique community alongside the existing Food Centre Wales pilot plant and skills and learning facilities.

Angela Sawyer, Food Centre Wales Manager said: *"Food Centre Wales' long established facilities at Horeb has a strong reputation for supporting new businesses in the food and drink sector. The provision of a larger commercial premises, upscaling to a more industrial scale will strengthen and enhance what the Centre has to offer nationally and regionally. This investment will align and complement other regional plans to drive food innovation forward and boost the local economy."*



1 - Food Centre Wales, Llandysul, Ceredigion

Llanidloes Road, Newtown in Powys.

This development will focus on the provision of new advanced manufacturing commercial units potentially alongside the creation of a separate innovation/ skills centre.

Working with NPTC Group of Colleges, as the landowners, the aim is to link companies to the College's Green Skills Academy learning objectives, and to support businesses with apprenticeship delivery and skills development.

Mark Dacey, Chief Executive, NPTC Group of Colleges said: *"The college continues to build the further education skills and learning base in an area of Powys that is already reputationally strong in the area of advanced manufacturing, providing technical knowledge and support to the workforces in the area. Developing this site and providing much needed commercial space for this sector also presents an exciting opportunity to link a growing business community with the college's future skills delivery activity, potentially with a focus on sustainable technologies that will support the region's Net Zero goals."*



2 - Newtown, Powys

The Programme Business Case has been produced by the Programme Team working closely with specialist advisers, Savills.

Nick Bennett, Director of Economics at Savills said: "At the beginning of this process we were very aware of the economic challenges facing Mid Wales and the need to identify sites that would have the biggest impact and offer greatest value for money for the Sites and Premises Programme and for the people of Mid Wales. After a rigorous process involving our experts in economics, planning and development I am delighted that we have stepped up to that challenge and provided GMW with some meaningful insights into current market demand."

John Collingwood, the Sites and Premises Programme Manager said: "This important piece of work has inspired the GMW and Savills teams to collaborate with a wide cross-section of stakeholders and design something that has the optimum potential to benefit for our local economy. The work with Savills is an exemplar of best practice and provides a solid foundation for the delivery of the Programme. These front runner sites, recommended for progression, represent the start of the Growth Deal's journey in making a positive impact on the region's commercial property needs."

Growing Mid Wales is eager to work with the private sector and secure wider investment for the development of commercial sites in the region (like the ones mentioned). If you are interested in talking more about potential investments opportunities and how we can work together, email: John.Collingwood@ceredigion.gov.uk



Growing Mid Wales Board: Digital Programme news

An updated version of the Digital Programme Business Case was presented to the Growing Mid Wales Board on 16th October which reflected on current trends and challenges with digital infrastructure provision in the region, taking into account a number of UK and Welsh Government initiatives that have or will be soon implemented across Mid Wales.

The programme was given the green light to progress the following projects identified as in need of intervention; the Very Hard to Reach Project (VHTR project), which will focus upon how best to improve broadband provision across the Region and the 4G Mobile 'not spot' Project which aims to improve both mobile coverage and capacity across both Ceredigion and Powys.



Meet the Team

Stacey-Jayne Oakham, Portfolio Analysis and Support Officer



- **When did you start with the team?**

I joined the Growing Mid Wales team in July 2021, when the Portfolio Management Office (PoMO) was first being established. It's an exciting opportunity for me to be part of a project, which could make a real difference to Mid Wales - where I live.

- **Can you tell us more about your role?**

My role is to support the Growth Deal team within Growing Mid Wales, mainly the Portfolio Operations Manager and the Managers for the two Programmes within the Portfolio – the Digital Programme and Sites & Premises Programme.

I organise various meetings and events, schedule Assurance Review interviews, monitor actions from various meetings to make sure they are progressed, and I keep an eye on the PoMO's expenditure.

I also monitor the submission of Business Cases and coordinate the assessment process - ensuring documentation control. Additionally, I monitor/track the progress of milestones and programme plans, ensuring any deviation/slippages from the baseline plan are escalated as required.

- **What are your current priorities?**

Having recently received the first formal award of capital funding for the Mid Wales Growth Deal (£4m for 2023/24 financial year), the current focus has been moving the Portfolio forward into delivery stage. We are working closely with Projects Sponsors on this, encouraging development of their business cases – we have held various workshops and stakeholder engagement events all of which have provided valuable feedback to the projects. Two of the projects recently submitted their Strategic Outline Cases - these have now been assessed and recommendations approved by the Growing Mid Wales Board to move forward to the next stage of development.

As for the other seven standalone projects, we are expecting to receive the remaining Strategic Outline Case and the six Outline Business Cases from the projects from this month onwards – which is exciting!

We will also be looking to establish the Benefits Realisation Plan for the Growth Deal shortly which I will be involved in developing. This will enable profiling and monitoring of the potential benefits to be achieved through delivery of the Programmes and Projects so they can be reviewed against Portfolio aims.

- **What developments have you seen over the years?**

It has been amazing to see the development of the Mid Wales Growth Deal over the last two years, so much has happened. I have seen the team grow and flourish. When the Growing Mid Wales team was first established it was quite small, but over time with the development of the two Programmes and the introduction of Regional Skills Partnership (RSP) and the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) it has grown.

During this time, it's been interesting for me to see the progress of the Programmes and Projects within the Portfolio, particularly their business case development. Since the nine standalone projects were selected in 2021, they have come quite far in developing their business cases – with Strategic Outline Cases/Business Outlines Case being assessed within the next month or two.

The two Programmes (Digital Programme & Sites and Premises Programme) have also developed well since they were first established, ensuring their business cases reflect the objectives/ambitions of the Mid Wales Growth Deal – while making sure they can also adapt to any changes when required. Both Programmes also underwent Assurances Reviews in September, which were undertaken to provide both Governments and the Portfolio with confidence that these Programmes will be able to deliver – and I'm please to say they both passed.



- **What's been your biggest achievement?**

Having worked as a Paralegal for nearly six years (prior to my current role) I would say my biggest profession achievement was when I was able to streamline a process which had been in place for quite some time – making it faster and more efficient, thus increasing the revenue it brought into the firm.

As for my personal life, taking part in the Blenheim Palace Triathlon in 2019 was a big achievement for me, as it was something I had never done before, and would like to do again in future.

Additionally last year I took up archery at a local club, which I have always wanted to do but never found the time. Since joining I have entered quite a few competitions and earned quite a few metals – which I'm quite proud of.

- **One word that sums up the Growing Mid Wales Team:**

Enthusiastic – Every member of the team is enthusiastic about seeing what they can help achieve for Mid Wales, it's wonderful to see.

Other Growing Mid Wales News

Looking for some funding?

There are several funding grants currently being supported by Powys and Ceredigion County Councils. To see what funding options there are currently visit the Funding & Grants webpages of both authorities:

Ceredigion: www.ceredigion.gov.uk/business/funding-grants

Powys: <https://en.powys.gov.uk/article/2892/Grants-and-Community-Support>

Global Centre Of Rail Excellence visit



Members of the Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership (RSP) team recently visited the Global Centre Of Rail Excellence site to find out more about rail innovation and to discuss future skills needs and alignment in Mid Wales.



3 - 7th from the left (L-R) Teresa Peel-Jones, RSP Employer Engagement Officer; Louise Grove-White, RSP Project Officer, and David Price, RSP Manager.

Keep up to Date

Need to catch up on what's been discussed in our meetings? Here's a reminder of where you can find the minutes for the following meetings:

- All minutes relating to the Growing Mid Wales Board are hosted on Powys County Council [website](#).
- Papers relating to the Growing Mid Wales Partnership can be found on our [website](#).

Keep up to date with Growing Mid Wales news, developments on activity and organisations we support by following our Twitter and Linked In pages:

<https://twitter.com/growingmidwales>

www.linkedin.com/company/growing-mid-wales

We're eager to reach out to as many organisations and businesses across Mid Wales as possible. You can make this possible by following, liking and sharing our pages.

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