

Gateway to the
**NORTHERN
POWERHOUSE**

Growth Track 360

Connected within an hour

Unlocking the potential of the cross border
economy, the North Wales & Mersey Dee Region

Centre for Solar Energy
Research at Glyndŵr University



A clear way to help rebalance the UK economy

This prospectus **Growth Track 360**, calls for substantial **rail investment** to enable **growth** in the cross border economy of the North Wales & Mersey Dee region, a call for investment backed with **360° of Stakeholder support**.

The investments in our transport system outlined in this prospectus, will support the North Wales & Mersey-Dee (NW&MD) region in fully **unlocking its economic potential**, doubling our GVA and significantly increasing our contribution to the UK economy as a result.

This is a dynamic area where **70,000 new jobs** are viable within the next 20 years. Infrastructure will fast-track the doubling of our existing **GVA to £50.5 billion**.

Transport investment will act as a key enabler to help link us into the wider economy of the Northern Powerhouse and European routes allowing us to expand the potential economic offer.

We have the opportunity to grow our **advanced manufacturing** hotbed that already boasts international names including Airbus, Vauxhall, Jaguar Land Rover and Essar.

Our **unique energy sector** is vital to keeping the UK economy efficient and effective; Nuclear - Wylfa Newydd Power Station, Trawsfynydd SMR, Warrington & Capenhurst, Wind & Wave energy, Waste to Energy and solar farms – low carbon & sustainable energy. There are 1000 hectares of connectable development land. We want to provide space for upwards of **63,500 new homes** by 2040. This is in addition to the **£25bn plus worth of investment projects** coming to the region.

With an outstanding national park and world class landscapes, 200 miles of coastline, UNESCO World Heritage sites and historic centres we already provide a quality of life and place to attract and retain the best talent.

Rail investment supports:

- ✓ GVA Growth
- ✓ Northern Powerhouse
- ✓ Housing
- ✓ Deprivation reduction
- ✓ Sustainability
- ✓ Universities & Colleges
- ✓ Jobs Growth
- ✓ Energy & Environment Sector
- ✓ Advanced Manufacturing
- ✓ Tourism
- ✓ Increased productivity for business

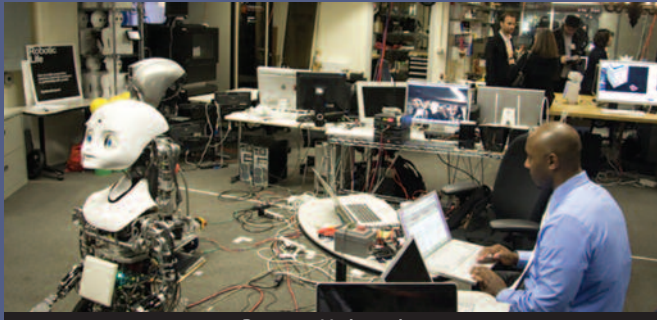
Our Vision, Growth Track 360 has full stakeholder support



With the right investment, we can deliver

Creating jobs and GVA growth

- Creating 70,000 new jobs in the next 20 years
- Doubling the GVA to £50.5bn in the next 20 years



Bangor University

Growing the advanced manufacturing hotbed

- Airbus
- Jaguar Land Rover
- IFor Williams
- Vauxhall
- Qioptiq
- JCB
- Essar
- Toyota
- Siemens
- Magellan Aerospace



Airbus, North Wales

A unique energy sector that is powering the UK economy

- Wylfa Newydd Nuclear Power Station & Trawsfynydd SMR
- Solar, Wind, Wave & Tidal energy generation
- Harnessing low carbon and renewable power sources
- Waste to Energy & Heat Network Developments
- Thornton Science Park, Capenhurst Technology Park, Ellesmere Port Energy Assets

Joining up Research & Innovation

- OpTIC St. Asaph
- Science Parks - Menai, Daresbury & Thornton
- Enterprise Zone Clusters
- Leading research universities
- Wirral Waters
- Manchester Airport
- 5 Enterprise Zones



Manchester Airport

Better connections for our Services Sector

- Finance: MBNA, Lloyds, Virgin Money – a vibrant finance & professional offer
- Excellence in logistics: Deeside Industrial Park, Wrexham Industrial Estate, Port of Holyhead and Liverpool SuperPort
- Market leading providers - Moneypenny, Avox, Moneysupermarket.com

Improving access to Education and Training

- Over 130,000 students in HE/FE across the region
- Total value to the economy of HE alone is £1.04bn

Making more of a prime asset for 'UK PLC'

- 1000 hectares of connectable development land and more potential beyond
- Better use of existing skills and expertise
- Providing space for a land-starved UK including upwards of 63,500 new homes by 2040

Providing a Quality of Life & Place to attract & retain the best talent

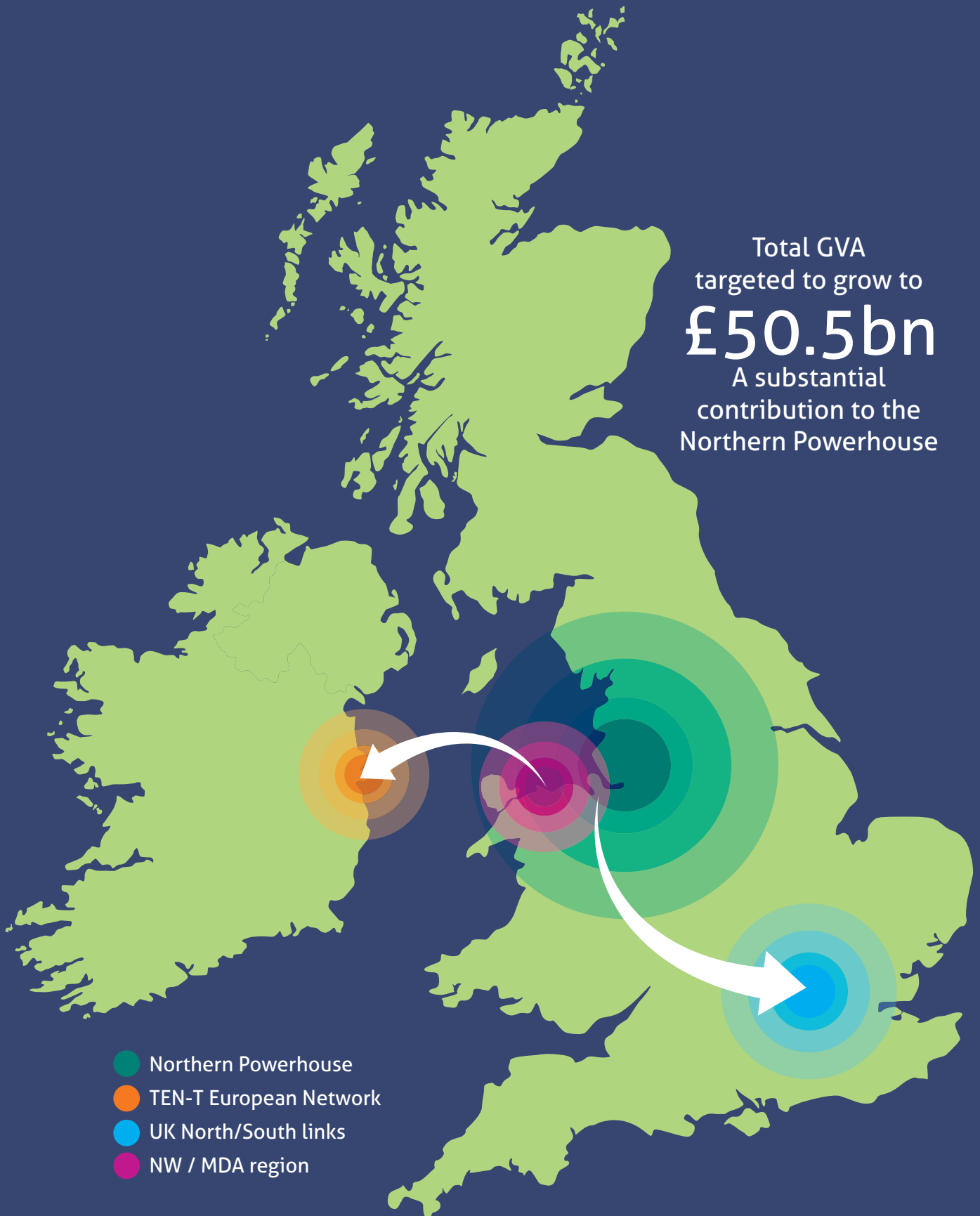
- An outstanding national park and world class landscapes
- 200 miles of coastline
- UNESCO World heritage sites and historic/cultural centres

Growth opportunities



A pivotal location and a great part of a bigger picture

Total GVA targeted to grow to **£50.5bn**
A substantial contribution to the Northern Powerhouse





Our vision for transport in North Wales & Mersey-Dee

Quicker, cleaner, more frequent and comfortable journeys to the right place at the right time.

With the right investment, our public transport network can provide faster and more frequent journey options at times when passengers need and want to use them, accessing the significant number of work, education and tourism opportunities we have across our region and neighbouring areas.

Public transport must provide, for the first time, a real alternative to the private car, giving passengers comfortable journeys on state-of-the-art trains that reflect the vibrancy and modernity of our cross border economy, relieving congestion, increasing capacity for freight and improving our environment in the process.

Public transport facilitates substantially enhanced international accessibility for businesses and visitors alike, connecting our nearby ports and airports with the places that people want to go to across North Wales & Mersey-Dee.

Our vision for transport

Quicker, cleaner, more frequent and comfortable journeys to the right place at the right time

The MW & MD Network

Status

Public transport work journeys, door-to-door within an hour

Overdue

Connected, modern public transport offering alternatives to the car

Overdue

High quality and well connected hubs, centres in themselves

Overdue

State-of-the-art rolling stock

Overdue

A great customer and business experience

Overdue

International connectivity to global markets

Overdue

Growing passenger and freight markets

Overdue

Over the past 20-30 years our road focused network has become consistently busier and is now over capacity. Now is the time to provide it with effective rail alternatives

The reality today

Over the last 30 years, vital investment has occurred in our strategic road network. This was critical to get us where we are today, but now a new 'balancing' level of investment is required in order to safeguard access for the next 30 years and offer the greater choice business demands.

The NW&MD area has some of the highest car-based commuting mode shares anywhere in the UK with rail's share at just 1% in Flintshire. Our public transport does not meet aspirations in terms of connectivity, frequency or quality of service.

Journey times are not competitive and this has significant impact on levels of employment, health, carbon emissions and economic resilience. Transport investment is essential in order to better connect areas that currently suffer from unemployment and deprivation. Where it has occurred, for example by extending Merseyrail to Chester, results have been dramatic both for the economy and connectivity with observed rail mode shares of up to 12%. A doubling of existing rail mode share in Flintshire, for example would save 700 return car journeys per day.

Typical scenario

"I love living in North Wales. I can bring up my family in a quality environment, where we're never far from the coast and beautiful mountains, but where there's also variation and value. The small hi-technology manufacturing company that I work for needs flexibility to be competitive in the global market it operates in. I'm therefore based in Liverpool City Centre a couple of days a week and out seeing clients across North Wales and the North of England for the rest of my time.

"The improvements made to the road network over the last 20 years are what enticed me to work for the company when I left Liverpool University allowing me to stay where I was brought up near Rhyl yet use my degree well. The roads have got busier and busier and going by car takes me well over an hour, but compared to the train that's nothing! I'd love to be able to sit and work on one train, making more use of my time to attract business, but the train is a nightmare – it's so crowded, uncomfortable and unco-ordinated.

"To get to Liverpool by 9am I'd have to leave Rhyl around 6.30 am. It's not very flexible and even though I have to pay a toll through the Mersey Tunnel it's way cheaper and quicker to go by car. Even if it was competitive because I'm out and about on other days, ticketing would be impossible. There are so many fare boundaries and deterrents that I end up being one of those people who sit in a car on the increasingly congested motorways – to be honest it's stressful and reduces my productivity."

“ There are so many fare boundaries and deterrents that I end up being one of those people who sit in a car on the increasingly congested motorways. ”



"Access to skilled workers from North Wales and the North West of England is essential for our multinational advanced manufacturing business. Reliable and fast transport links are key and investment in an efficient, connected rail network, serving major employment and population centres is therefore crucial."

**Steve THOMAS, Government Affairs Executive
AIRBUS UK**



Typical journey: Wrexham to Liverpool

 **110 mins** by rail, including wait time

 **53 mins** by car

A poor experience for all

The reality of travel in the area today by public transport is a network that **does not match up to the convenience, comfort or cost of the private car**. This is a particular issue given that many in more deprived areas do not have access to one. Even comparing direct rail journeys, such as Llandudno to Manchester Piccadilly, Wrexham to Bidston or Holyhead to Chester, with car journeys on congested roads, public transport is nearly always slower and operates predominantly on hourly frequencies.

Chester to Manchester is approximately the same distance as Reading to London – imagine if this journey took over an hour and only ran once an hour. Reading couldn't sustain its current vibrant economy.

Most public transport journeys are indirect and many involve both buses and trains, with poor quality of interchange facilities and rolling stock. The lack of integrated ticketing creates issues of disproportionate cost and journeys are normally significantly more expensive by public transport as a result. Deeside Industrial Estate, a journey of 20 miles from Rhyl, takes over an hour by public transport. There is land for 7,000 new jobs but employers and employees need better connections to attract, retain, and use currently wasted resources.

The main impact of these factors is traffic congestion at key pinch-points which, in turn is reducing levels of investment in the area and holding back growth. The result is an area which is not achieving its full economic potential despite its excellent geographical location and abundant natural assets. The major employers located in the area prove it is possible to run successful and productive operations, but these could contribute so much more with better connectivity.

We can solve many complexities through co-operation. We need a partnership of measured investment for which we can deliver great outcomes.

Wrexham to Manchester Airport by 9am

140 minutes by rail, 2 changes, average speed 20mph



50 minutes by car



Holyhead to Birchwood by 9am

180 minutes by rail, 3 changes, average speed 36mph



110 minutes by car



Birkenhead to Deeside Industrial Estate by 9am

73 minutes by rail, 1 change, average speed 12mph



40 minutes by car



Today's disjointed complex 'offer' – A constraint on growth



- Institutional Complexity
- Numerous local authorities and agencies
- Franchise diversity and differentials
- England and Wales
- Westminster and Cardiff

- Wales: Welsh Government as franchise specifier
- England: DfT as franchise specifier
- Hourly/lower frequency route
- Arriva Trains Wales
- Virgin
- London Midland
- Merseyrail
- Trans-Penine Express
- Northern Rail
- Future Committed Service via Halton Curve



Tomorrow's network without barriers – boosting economic growth



One integrated network

- Extending more London Euston trains to Bangor / Holyhead
- Doubling frequency between North Wales Coast Line and Manchester through Chester
- Extending Manchester trains to Manchester Airport or Leeds
- Creating new services between Liverpool / Airport and North Wales Coast / Wrexham
- Tripling journey opportunities between Wrexham and Liverpool

The Aim: door-to-door within one hour

A network which connects:

- Millions of people to jobs, with total door-to-door journeys of an hour or less
- In lots of directions to suit a multi-centric economy
- Linking jobs to housing and amenities
- Connecting centres of jobs growth to areas of high unemployment



University



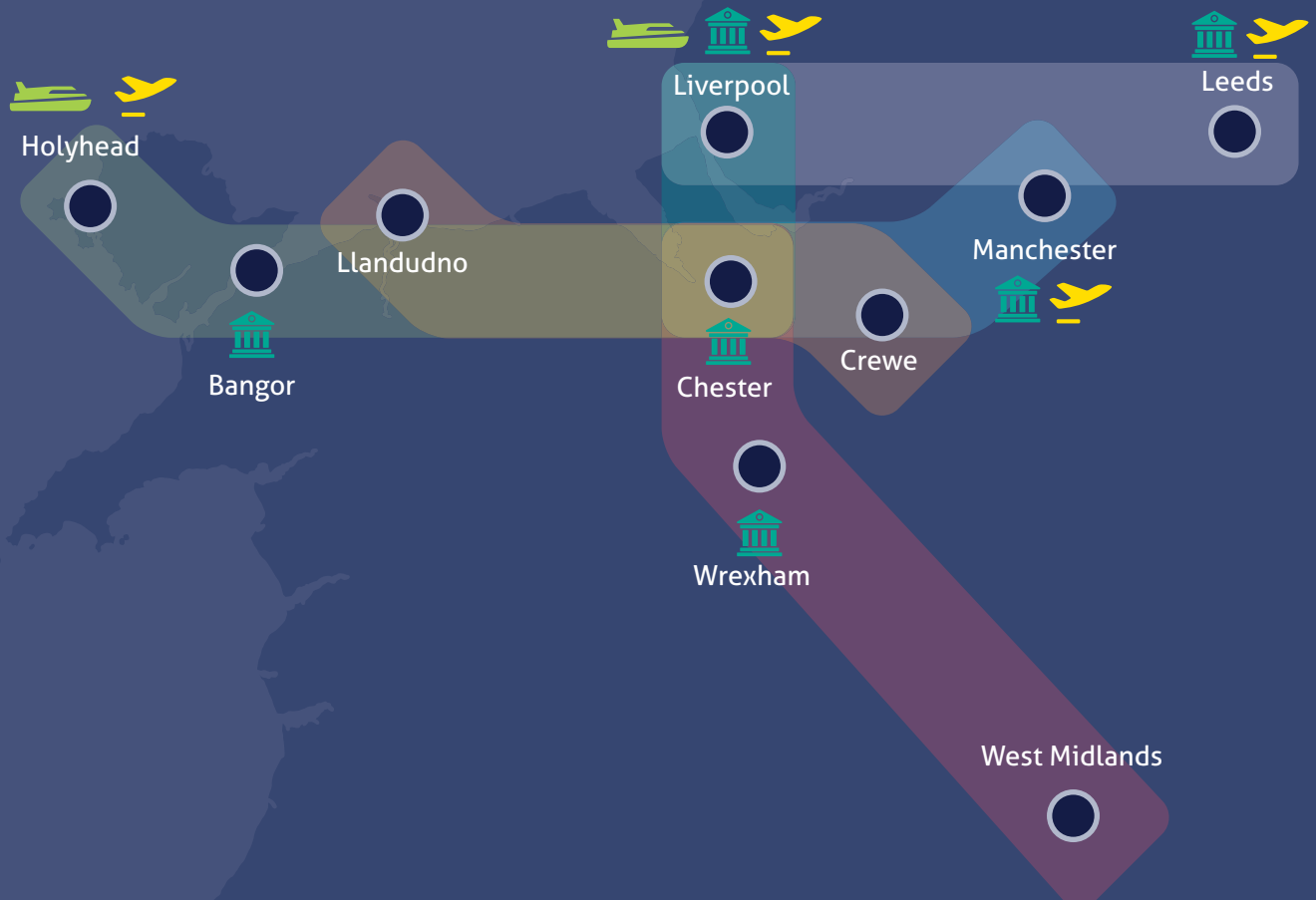
Port



Airport

Our area sits at the centre of a network of towns and cities. Geographically these should interact and share workforces, business and tourism. This does not happen as efficiently as it could with congestion within, to and from the area being an increasing issue.

Why is this? Because public transport journeys are infrequent, slow and expensive when compared with equivalent car journeys even with our valuable road network increasingly congested.





Outcomes of investment

This is a proposed deal, not a 'wish list'. For relatively modest investment we can contribute our full potential to UK PLC.

Transport

Investment in transport infrastructure will revolutionise rail travel in the NW&MD areas and beyond, making public transport significantly more attractive and reducing dependence on the private car and accelerating our transition to a more sustainable, lower carbon economy. Electrification, track enhancements and improved signalling of key rail routes will reduce journey time allowing frequency enhancements whilst improving reliability and quality. This will improve rail mode share and reduce the dependence on the private car for the 12m cross-border commutes per year (currently 85% by car).

The investment will also dramatically improve the ability to move freight within and through the region. The area is pivotally located on freight routes between Liverpool 2, the rest of the country, Ireland and mainland Europe. The improvements will enable more freight to be moved by rail, rebalancing UK port movements, and supporting the aspirations of the Northern Powerhouse. Passenger mode share to rail will also free up space for freight.

Economic

The ultimate aim of the proposed measures is to open up access within and to/from the area to achieve agglomeration effects such as linking labour and employment markets, connecting centres of population (some with high levels of unemployment) to centres of jobs growth, many of which have severe labour market shortages. Increasing capacity for freight movements, improving tourism links and doubling the GVA of the wider

area from £35bn to £70bn (and of the NW&MD area from £25.25bn to £50.5bn). The investment will connect five Enterprise Zones, high quality universities and FE colleges, and specialist healthcare across the region.

By creating better links between Liverpool City Region and North Wales, the Growth Track 360 rail investment package supports access to the Mersey Waters Enterprise Zone which is anticipated to deliver as many as 40,000 new jobs. The major developments at Wrexham (the UK's largest prison and Money Penny), Deeside (Northern Gateway), Ellesmere Port (Thornton) and Broughton (Warren Hall Business Park) are significant contributors to this, as are developments at Wylfa and Menai Science Park. We have great land opportunities but are poorly connected at present.

Business

The proposed improvements to the rail and integrated transport network will encourage new investment and businesses to the area and create sustainable methods for employees to access them. Their business-to-business connectivity to the major northern cities will be transformed. The large number of dedicated business parks in the area is testament to the potential for success that businesses already enjoy, however these are hindered by poor non-car connectivity. The transformational change that would result from the package of rail enhancement measures would help new companies to locate in the area, allowing employees to access them quickly and efficiently from a range of locations without resorting to the private car on increasingly congested roads.



The critical investments

Urgent completion of committed projects - £60m-£80m

To complete outstanding projects in North Wales that will have a transformational effect on rail services including:

- North Wales Coast signalling and line speed improvements
- Halton Curve – new line between North Wales and Liverpool
- North-South Line speed Improvements – partial redoubling between Chester and Wrexham

Many of these projects have slipped in priority over recent years, to slip further is unacceptable.

Chester station capacity & environment enhancements - £50m

- To increase the number of through platforms at Chester Station and allow more services to be extended toward the North Wales Coast and Wrexham
- To remove the Hoole Road Bridge barrier to electrification and realise the aspirations of the Chester City Gateway.

Station facilities upgrades - £20m

- To provide enhanced environment, Park & Ride, and Bus-Rail interchange at key stations in the NW&MD region
- To attract and accommodate higher numbers of passengers at key stations throughout the NW&MD region
- To increase public transport accessibility at Deeside Enterprise Zone by constructing a new station.

Line speed and frequency increases - £50m-£100m

A programme of further signalling and line speed enhancements, matched with a transformational franchise specification to improve journey times and frequencies on key routes including:

- Holyhead to Crewe and Warrington via Chester
- Wrexham to Bidston via Shotton and
- Wrexham to Chester.

Preparing for HS2 - £750m

Electrification between Crewe and Holyhead:

- Total impact / contribution to the economy of £2.5bn
- To allow Pendolinos to be extended from Crewe to the North Wales Coast, and potentially HS2 classic compatible services
- To facilitate electric services to run between the North Wales Coast and Manchester / Manchester Airport to connect with Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR).

Integrated & Smart ticketing strategy - £20m

- To increase the accessibility of public transport services across the NW&MD area
- To make multi-modal or multi-operator journeys easier, cheaper and more attractive
- To aid movement by public transport journeys beyond the boundaries of the NW&MD region.

Franchise and Services

- Transformational and growth based franchises, parity for the region
- Enhanced rolling stock fleets, the right capacity, better equipped
- Wales & Borders (W&B) – Retention of cross border through services
- W&B Rolling stock transition plan for a new fleet (new & refurbished stock)
- Merseyrail, Northern & Trans-Pennine Express, rolling stock replacement schemes.

Ingredients for change: Building on today's provision

The following list of both new and existing schemes has been identified to bring about transformational change in the North Wales and Mersey-Dee region:

Infrastructure

- North Wales Coast Line re-signalling and line speed improvements *
- North - South line speed improvements *
- Halton Curve *
- Chester - Wrexham full redoubling (Rossett to Wrexham)
- Chester station rail capacity enhancements
- Full line speed and capacity improvements: Crewe – Holyhead; and Chester – Warrington
- Electrification: Crewe – Holyhead; and Chester – Warrington
- Electrification: Wrexham – Bidston; and Wrexham – Chester
- Merseyrail Wapping and Stock Interchange tunnel schemes

Station investments

- Deeside Industrial Park
- Saltney / Broughton
- Local station upgrades



Core hub upgrades

- Chester
- Bangor
- Wrexham General
- Shotton Interchange

Services (maintain existing service levels with the following enhancements)

- 1 train per hour: Holyhead – Chester – Crewe – London Euston (direct HS2 connectivity)
- 1 train per hour: Holyhead – Chester – Wrexham – Cardiff / Birmingham (service quality and speed improvements)
- 2 trains per hour: Bangor / Llandudno – Chester – Warrington – Manchester – Manchester Airport
- 1 train per hour: Bangor – Llandudno – Chester – Liverpool South Parkway – Liverpool via Halton Curve
- 1 train per hour: Wrexham / North Wales Coast – Chester – Warrington – Leeds (via Manchester and Bradford)
- 1 train per hour: Wrexham – Chester - Liverpool South Parkway – Liverpool via Halton Curve
- 2 trains per hour: Wrexham – Shotton – Deeside – Bidston / Birkenhead North / Liverpool
- 1 train per hour: Llandudno – Llandudno Junction – Blaenau Ffestiniog
- 1 train per hour: Rhyl – Chester – Crewe
- 2 trains per hour: Chester – Northwich - Altrincham – Manchester

Other

- Integrated & Smart ticketing strategy
- Station automatic ticket machine rollout
- A digitally equipped network
- Bus / Rail interchange improvements at stations
- Key park and ride hubs
- On-train luggage space enhancements
- Value for money ticket pricing

* Scheme currently committed but not yet delivered

Return for investment: Positive cost benefit ratio

Help us to achieve locally

Investment priority	Facilitates
Line speed and frequency increases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service pattern enhancements • Extension of existing services • New connections
Chester station capacity and environment enhancements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased through-trains between North Wales and Crewe, Manchester and Liverpool
Preparing for HS2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to extend Pendolinos and HS2 services beyond Crewe to Chester and North Wales • Connectivity with Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds and Northern Powerhouse
Station facilities enhancements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Park and ride • Bus-rail interchange • Increased accessibility of services
Integrated & Smart ticketing strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-operator and multi-modal journeys • Quicker and easier ticketing with reduced decision making time.

And we can contribute more nationally

Quantity	Change following investment
Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1000 plus hectares of development with significant potential for more • Increased demand for new sites • Housing potential released • 70,000 new jobs
Labour market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connections to and from areas of high unemployment • Enhanced movement of people into and out of the area
Tax revenues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significantly expanded tax base • Potential reinvestment into the region
Land values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased dramatically, redistributing wealth generated to residents and businesses in the area
Gross value added	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GVA doubles from £25.25bn to £50.5bn • Region brought into line with the rest of the UK in terms of productivity

£1bn investment powers £25bn in GVA growth for UK plc



Evidence and key statements

Over many years much evidence has been collected, supporting the case for investment including:

- Taith Regional Transport Plan (2009);
- North East Wales Integrated Transport Taskforce Report (2013);
- Liverpool City Region Long Term Rail Strategy (2014);
- Liverpool City Region Growth Deal (2014);
- Wrexham to Bidston Rail Line Enhancements – Economic Appraisal Report (2015);
- Mersey-Dee Alliance Growth and Investment Prospectus (2014);
- Hooton to Helsby Demand Study (2015);
- North Wales Coast Electrification Strategic Outline Case (2016);
- Economic Growth and Social Benefit potential from Modernisation of rail services in North Wales – Greengauge 21 (2014); and
- Halton Curve Outline Business Case (2015).

This document is the first truly collaborative step to an increased momentum.

Key statements

“...there is firm evidence of significant economic benefits, that would result from the electrification of main line rail services from Crewe via Chester to Holyhead. A total impact/ contribution to the economy of £2.5bn.”
Greengauge 21 (2016)

“1 in 5 turn down job interviews or employment offers owing to inaccessibility.”
NEW Integrated Transport Task Force technical report (2013)

“...relatively small improvements in connectivity can provide significant benefit to overall connection, particularly if combined with revitalised routes, ticketing initiatives... and effective interchange.”

NEW Integrated Transport Task Force Technical Report (2013)

Now is the time for action, the opportunities are clear...

The NW&MD partners are ready and willing to contribute to the overall investment, however we ask for support from both the Welsh and wider UK Governments and from other stakeholders. Only with this investment can our region truly open the door to increased economic activity and a significantly enhanced contribution to the economy of UK Plc

“We are one voice for one economic purpose.”

Delivery

Governance

The NW&MD Taskforce has been established to co-ordinate action and reduce institutional complexity in this uniquely cross-border area. For the first time, it represents a single approach to delivery in an area of five core Enterprise Zones, eight local authorities, two national governments and a vibrant and varied private sector. Its partners are aligned to recognise one economic area and one ultimate unified transport network to serve this. The next step is to bring national governments and institutions to the table to work with us to deliver the huge latent opportunities of the area.

The core group representing public and private sector consists of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board (NWEAB), the Cheshire and Warrington LEP, and the Mersey-Dee Alliance (MDA)

Value for money

Investment in rail focussed transport in the NW&MD area has the potential to transform the economy and allow our workforce to access opportunities outside the region and vice versa.

We can demonstrate extremely good returns to investment for 'UK Plc' by increasing productivity and economic growth, expanding tax revenues and reducing welfare benefit payments through reduced unemployment.

The NW&MD Task force, one voice, one agenda, one economy



Councillor Samantha Dixon
Leader, Cheshire West and Chester Council



Ashley Rogers
Chairman - North Wales Business Council



Councillor Dilwyn Roberts
Chair - NW Economic Ambition Board



Colin Brew
CEO - West Cheshire & North Wales Chamber of Commerce



Councillor Derek Butler
Chair – Mersey Dee Alliance



Business & key stakeholder support

We need a proper public transport infrastructure

"We're a fast growing, global technology business headquartered in Chester. It's been our home for nearly 30 years but we now have colleagues in 11 different countries across the world and we're acutely aware of the challenges of getting to and from this part of the region.

"The Chancellor's commitment to creating a Northern Powerhouse is great and one we fully support. But we need a proper public transport infrastructure to support this and Chester sits well behind the curve. We need direct access to the region's airports; regular commuter trains to and from Manchester, especially, and vastly improved traffic management around the M56/M6 and M62 logjam.

"Aside from the challenges faced by visitors traveling in to our Chester office, we also know that we struggle to recruit talent to the city. Only 12% of our current 'Chester' staff come from outside the immediate Chester and North Wales region. And while they definitely represent the very best of local talent, it is becoming harder and harder to find the new recruits we want to bring on board as we scale the business. If we were assured of easy access, regular and comfortable commuting to and from the wider markets around Greater Manchester, we know we would get much higher levels of interest from the sort of candidates we need."

Richard Law, CEO GBG

Improved infrastructure creates capacity

"Sitting at a pivotal point between North Wales and the rest of Northern England; in close proximity to Manchester Airport, Liverpool's John Lennon Airport and Liverpool's Cruise Liner and Container Port, Chester requires a rail system to meet future demands.

"Improved infrastructure creates capacity. This provides Chester with a competitive edge in attracting skilled people and innovative businesses. We need to add more depth and strength to Chester's existing industrial and commercial foundations.

"Additional capacity, with faster journey times, are intrinsic for commuters and freight transportation. Being able to link in to HS2 means that Chester cannot be dismissed by companies and people looking to relocate. The removal of obstacles created by the lack of rail infrastructure will reduce congestion, improve business logistics and attract more people to live, prosper and raise their families in Chester.

"An improved rail system is not just for today, but, as history has proven, potentially for the next 100 years. Chester, being viewed by the UK and the rest of the world as a city that cannot be accessed swiftly, efficiently and for a reasonable cost, places Chester at a tremendous disadvantage and jeopardises the quality of life for future generations.

"An improved rail system is key to the wealth and health of Chester."

Marco Sambucci, Mosaic Money Management, Chester

Business & key stakeholder support

Unless the employee has a car, it is time consuming and expensive to travel to the Industrial Estate, which damages recruitment. Most of the highly skilled workforce travel about 60 – 100 miles per day to work in total and this can discourage this particular recruitment market, as the only other option is to relocate and some prospective employees do not wish to do this.”

Engineering Company Employee –Wrexham Industrial Estate

“Current limitations on travel options can mean a long commute for people (i.e. multiple bus journeys) or costly travel e.g. taxis from locations five or six miles away owing to early starts and no public transport options for those staff without cars.”

Leisure Attraction Employee – Cheshire West and Chester

“We operate in the energy sector, providing services and products (manufactured in North Wales) to companies in 53 countries on 6 continents. We travel extensively in the UK, maintaining collaboration links with universities for sponsored research, and visiting Clients. For both local and regional travel, the current rail system does not actively support our business and we therefore endorse the objectives of the Growth Track 360 prospectus for rail investment.”

Barrie Wells, Conwy Valley Systems Limited

“Only by having the best infrastructure and communications links can Chester continue to attract the investment, businesses, visitors and skills to support its growth and ambition.”

Alex Siddell, Grosvenor Estate

Typical scenario

My daughter has recently completed a degree at Bangor University and is looking for a job. She’s caught in a ‘catch 22’ situation – either get a car to access employment or move overseas. She’s very tuned into opportunities offered by the environmental sector and this is a place where sustainable energy potential is really big...my fear is that she’ll do what too many others do and move away because connectivity is so poor and unreliable.

With a bit of smart investment we’d both be so much better off and contribute more to the UK economy – she’s so bright that she’ll be running her own business in a few years. Trouble is I think she’ll be creating jobs for people in Europe or the USA, not good old North Wales.

She’s not expecting to be able to turn up and a tube train arrives every few minutes like it does in London – she’d love to just have a half hourly or even hourly reliable service to the key places she needs to get to.





Universities & Colleges



"As a local organisation with national and international reach, the efficient, effective and sustainable movement of our staff and students is of considerable importance. Bangor University therefore welcomes the publication of this Prospectus and fully endorses the campaign to extend high quality rail services throughout North Wales. Improvements in areas such as line speeds, frequency of services to major airports and cities, and modern rolling stock are long overdue, and will deliver an enormous boost to the economic vibrancy of the entire north Wales region."

Vice Chancellor, Professor John G. Hughes
Bangor University



Enterprise Zones & Ports



"Enhancing connectivity between NW Wales and the NE of Wales and England is a key enabler to allow the region to get the most benefit from major projects and inward investment opportunities. Doing so will lead to enhanced opportunity for economic growth and adding real value to the economy of the region and enhance future opportunities for our young people. The objectives of Growth Track 360 are integral to delivering our regions much needed and overdue, connectivity improvements."

Dr. John Idris Jones
Chair of Snowdonia Enterprise Zone



Tourism, Hospitality & Retail



"Chester Zoo attracts 1.7 million visitors each year. We work in partnership with transport operators to promote the use of sustainable public transport to our visitors. Improved rail services to Chester will ensure our current and future visitors view rail travel as a viable and attractive way of reaching the zoo and the city, which will deliver positive impacts to our city and our environment."

Liz Carnie, Finance Director
Chester Zoo



MP's/AM's/Peers/MEP's



"We are determined to ensure that we in North Wales maximise the potential of the cross border economy. It is vital we improve links with the developing Northern Powerhouse and via HS2, Manchester airport and our ports, link elsewhere nationally and internationally to bring prosperity to local people. Our aim is to make this a great place to live, work and visit."

Dr James Davies MP
Vale of Clwyd Constituency



Enterprise Zones & Ports



"Manchester Airport is the North's principal international gateway and serves 2.2million passengers a year from the North Wales and Mersey Dee region. Improving transport connections to Manchester Airport is key to realising the Government's Northern Powerhouse vision and better links will enable the regions across the North to fully exploit the stimulus that access to a major international gateway can provide. We therefore support the North Wales and Mersey Dee region in their proposals to improve rail connectivity to key cities and assets across the North such as ourselves."

Adam Jupp - Head of External Affairs
Manchester Airport



Advanced Manufacturing Sector



"As a global exporter of locally manufactured products in North Wales our business relies on attracting a highly skilled, diverse workforce. High quality, modern transport links are one of the key enablers to ensuring our region has a thriving economy and that we have access to key talent in the North Wales & Mersey Dee region. Excellent transport links are a key component in supporting our vital logistical needs to ensure that our business is easily accessible and our products can be transported globally. We take our employees well being seriously and investment in a high quality rail network in our region can only support this goal."

Martin Gray, Finance Director
Siemens



"Deeside is the gateway to North Wales - centrally located between North West Wales, Greater Manchester and the Northern Powerhouse. It is essential that we provide fast and reliable connections right across and beyond the boundaries of this socio-economic region of huge potential. I fully support the proposals in this prospectus - it is essential that we do this to realise the huge growth opportunities in advanced manufacturing, energy and tourism that can be achieved in this key UK region."

David Jones OBE DL
Chair of Deeside Enterprise Zone
Chief Executive, Coleg Cambria



"We're a fast growing, global technology business headquartered in Chester. It's been our home for nearly 30 years but we now have colleagues in 11 different countries across the world and we're acutely aware of the challenges, of getting to and from this part of the region. We need direct access to the region's airports; regular commuter trains to and from Manchester especially, and vastly improved traffic management around the M56/M6 and M62 logjam. Aside from the challenges faced by visitors traveling in to our Chester office, we also know that we struggle to recruit talent to the city. It is becoming harder and harder to find the new recruits we want to bring on board, as we scale the business."

Karyn Bright
Group Marketing Director, GBG



"Improving the railway infrastructure in North Wales will bring benefits to the Construction Industry in North Wales. Improved transport links will attract capital investment into the region. Many national retail and leisure operators are reluctant to invest in the region due to the current population catchment within an hour of their operations. Making these catchment areas more accessible within reduced time periods will encourage investment which will lead to construction opportunities and long term jobs across the region"

Mark Watkin Jones
Chief Executive Officer - Watkin Jones plc



"Money Penny is a successful business that currently employs over 500 people with ambitions to grow this number to 1000 over the next 3 years. Better connectivity and efficient connections are critical to us securing access to the labour markets we require. Money Penny fully supports the rail prospectus."

Rachel Clacher, Director
Money Penny



"Wrexham Glyndŵr University fully supports investment in the North Wales rail infrastructure. As an institution sited on the England-Wales border access is crucial for us and has a knock-on effect for the economy of Wrexham and north east Wales. This would in turn benefit tourism and other social and cultural factors of importance to the region, as well as creating jobs, so we are fully behind any proposals to invest in these areas."

Vice Chancellor, Professor Maria Hinfelaar
Wrexham Glyndŵr University



"The University of Law in Chester delivers professional legal education training for many students and serves the legal profession in the area. An improved rail link to the city would greatly assist the many students who use public transport to access our services and find the current service unreliable. A better rail service would also assist The University of Law to grow its business in Chester. In addition, as The University of Law will be delivering Legal Apprenticeships under the Government Trailblazer initiative from September 2016, involving students from across the region attending the University on a regular day-release basis, an improved rail service to the city would allow more firms and students to access the opportunities these apprenticeships aim to deliver."

Carol Draycott
Centre Director Chester, The University of Law



Cultural, Creative & Digital Industries



"Since moving to a new base in the Deeside and North Wales region in 2013, Wales Rally GB has gone from strength to strength, attracting greater commercial revenues and increased spectator numbers. Hosting this world class motor sport event brings economic impact, international exposure and kudos to the region, but it is clear that the benefits to the region could be significantly greater with an integrated public transport policy to facilitate access from other parts of the country. As such, we have no hesitation in supporting Growth Track 360's call for significant investment in the region's transport system."

Ben Taylor
Managing Director, Wales Rally GB



Advanced Manufacturing Sector



"Kronospan, as a major employer and a major user of the rail network for the transport of timber, we support the objectives of the Task Force in the Growth Track 360 prospectus."

Chris Ryan
Group Secretary, Kronospan



Energy & Environment Sector



"As part of the North Wales business community, we fully support any initiative that can boost the economy by improving transport infrastructure. This prospectus shows how greater cross-border connectivity is the key to attracting inward investment, creating jobs and fulfilling the region's potential."

Wheelabrator Technologies Inc. - developer of the Parc Adfer Energy Recovery Facility



Local Authorities & Public Sector



"Merseyside and North Wales' economies have been intertwined for generations. Wirral is the connection point between these two regions - with the Mersey on one shore and the Dee on the other. Goods, services and workers have crossed the border for years and improvements to our Bidston to Wrexham rail system with connections to Deeside are long overdue, if we are to realise the growth potential of this vibrant, high skilled region."

Cllr Phil Davies, Leader of Wirral Council
Economic Development Portfolio Holder, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority



Energy & Environment Sector



Morlais Tidal Energy fully supports 'Growth Track 360' and the much needed investment it will bring into the rail network, across the region. This well overdue investment will massively strengthen the link between the Anglesey projects, the Northern Powerhouse and the City of London and beyond. Underpinning and 'future-proofing' the developing Marine power sector in North Wales.

Andy Billcliff
Operations Director, Morlais



Construction & Engineering



"Liberty Properties is a commercial development company, which has been based in Chester for over 25 years and operational in the North West, Midlands and North Wales. With talk of the Northern Powerhouse on the agenda, I think it is imperative that Chester has improved connections to the major cities and conurbations of the North West. The current service between Chester and Manchester is poor, when it can take 2 hours to get to London, but over an hour to get to Manchester."

Emyr E Williams
Development Director, Liberty Properties



Construction & Engineering



"The time has come for North Wales to realise the tangible benefits accompanying the HS2 link to Manchester and the Northern Powerhouse. Improved infrastructure through national and local railway projects will unlock invaluable human resources which will in turn lead to growth opportunities. Construction will undoubtedly benefit either directly or indirectly through the supporting infrastructure, new schools, colleges and housing. We need less bureaucracy, less time spent on lengthy consultations and we need to accelerate our decision making process."

Chris Wynne,
Managing Director, Wynne Construction



Universities & Colleges



"Grŵp Llandrillo Menai is very supportive of the Growth Track 360 initiative. We believe that a modernised travel infrastructure along the north wales coast and across the border into the North West of England is the key to unlocking the massive economic potential of this area. Over the next few years we expect to see an exponential growth in our energy sector, which together with the advanced manufacturing developments on Deeside and the thriving tourism economy will underpin both economic development and inward investment in the area. The construction of Wylfa Newydd over the next ten years will alone bring up to 10K jobs to the area, this could be the vanguard for a further 70K jobs across the region, which will further stimulate the housing market and construction industry. The existing road and rail network is struggling to cope with current usage and the investments outlined in this prospectus, we believe will create a dynamic link running from the North of England across North Wales and on to Ireland."

Glyn Jones, Chief Executive
Grŵp Llandrillo Menai



Food & Drink



"We operate across North Wales and have interests in each county. Our customers need ready access to the region, and the majority are routed through Euston and Heathrow. As well as needing good access for our UK team, our coverage in 31 countries makes it essential that our busy customers can get to and from us with speed and ease, especially during days that are travel hungry and can be full of fatigue. North Wales and the Mersey Dee Region will only deliver competitiveness and be a part of the Northern Powerhouse, if we achieve the connectivity and timeliness, that is essential in our rail system (and associated infrastructure). The benefits will also be significantly reflected in the performance of industries such as tourism – where connectivity and service standards mean the difference between customers buying in or walking away."

John Newton Jones
Managing Director, Snowdonia Cheese



Tourism, Hospitality & Retail



"I whole heartedly support the above Rail Improvement that will provide significant advantages to the North West and North Wales linking into the Northern Powerhouse and greatly enhancing the services for future generations."

Ben Rafferty - Managing Director
Residence UK Holdings



Advanced Manufacturing Sector



"As a member of the Welsh business community, and vocal advocate for the Northern Powerhouse, I was saddened but not surprised to read that just 1% of commuters utilise rail as a means of transport in Flintshire. Our current infrastructure is absolutely substandard, hindering positive growth and development in our proud region of first-class manufacturing, research and service industries. Substantial investment in the improvement of transport links, and especially rail, is fundamental in the protection and growth of our business community and region as a whole. The UK Government needs to be pressured to address this as a priority and the prospective outcomes of positive action highlighted within the Growth Track 360 campaign cannot be denied."

Askar Sheibani
CEO, The Comtek Group



Food & Drink



"The current rail network to Deeside creates challenges in accessibility of staff and is a block to serious consideration of an integrated rail supply network in North Wales. With 50% of our staff from Wirral or Chester, there is an opportunity to improve accessibility by rail and encourage people out of their cars and into an integrated rail and cycle network that serves the 8000 people who work at Deeside. Improving rail access to Deeside also creates the platform to seriously discuss how the businesses of this area can work together and all benefit from a supply chain that is more sustainable and facilitates growth for this dynamic area."

Pete Robertson
Managing Director, Dailycer UK

**Advanced Manufacturing Sector**

"Connectivity is a key priority for all manufacturing businesses both for deliveries out and in, so relieving the pressure on the clogged up road network in the North West, and enhancing the rail freight facilities and capabilities will prove hugely beneficial in supporting the growth aspirations of all manufacturing business. Re-balancing the investment in rail infrastructure against that in road, delivers a double benefit and provides the platform on which manufacturing can seek to grow and develop locally in the North West, while still playing on a national and international stage. I am therefore wholly supportive of the Task Force proposals."

William Hogg,
Managing Director, Contour Showers Ltd.

**Local Authorities & Public Sector**

"Over a quarter of a million people already travel to and from Rhyl Railway Station each year, feeding into the Rhyl Transport Hub serving a large swathe of the North Wales coast. Tourism is the lifeblood of Rhyl directly supporting countless businesses and residents. Rhyl Town Council believes a more modern fit for purpose rail service is essential, to complement wider improvements currently taking place within our town and contribute to encouraging more private sector businesses to invest in our community, creating not only more and better attractions for our visitors, but also much needed employment for our residents."

Rhyl Town Council

**Cultural, Creative & Digital Industries**

"Rail investment in the North Wales & Mersey Dee region will be essential to the growth of tourism in North Wales. Venue Cymru offers a continuous programme of high profile events throughout the year and we regularly promote these events to audiences outside our primary catchment. We regularly receive comments from our visitors regarding issues with public transport identifying barriers when attempting to use train travel to visit Venue Cymru. The proposed improvements will act as a huge benefit not only for Venue Cymru but for the whole of North Wales when we are working hard, to encourage visitors from out of the area."

Richard Jones, Marketing Manager
Venue Cymru, Llandudno

**Tourism, Hospitality & Retail**

"The Welsh Mountain Zoo – National Zoo of Wales, Colwyn Bay, is one of only a couple of Welsh National institutions based in North Wales and is one of Wales' major tourist attractions. Our economic development and a sustainable future for the Zoo will depend increasingly on our public transport links to the Northern Powerhouse and European routes. Substantial investment is required in the currently disjointed rail transport system and we are vigorously supportive of Growth Track 360."

Nick Jackson, Director
Welsh Mountain Zoo

**Services – Financial, Professional & Logistics**

"Glenbrook is a property development and investment company active in the North West of England. We specialise in large and complex mixed use projects, and work with funding partners to deliver a range of new buildings. Manchester and Liverpool are our main focus, and whilst we would like to invest in Chester more, for the types of scheme we deliver we feel that its connectivity to major employment centres (predominantly Manchester and Liverpool) is poor, restricted by the long and infrequent train times. We believe that by increasing the frequency and speed of services, this will allow Chester to grow, which will support investment and development opportunities in Chester, which we would be keen to engage with."

Ian Sherry, Director
Glenbrook

**Business Associations & Forums**

"Efficient transport infrastructure and services are key in supporting IOD Member's access to key opportunities across the Northern Powerhouse and the rest of the UK market. We fully support the Growth Track 360 prospectus and urge the Chancellor to endorse it."

Robert Lloyd Griffiths OBE
Director – Wales, Institute of Directors

**Business Associations & Forums**

"The current rail system in the North Wales & Mersey Dee region is not fit for purpose. With the exception of London to Chester services, journeys are too slow, require changes and are in outdated and cramped rolling stock. The lack of fast, frequent connections to the Northern Powerhouse and employment centres in the region, is a constraint on our economic growth. Business thinks it's time to do something about it, before irreversible damage is done to our economy and even more potential economic growth, is lost. The Business Council strongly supports Growth Track 360 and the investments outlined, that we need for the region."

Ashley Rogers
Chair, North Wales Business Council

**Universities & Colleges**

"The King's School, Chester, is one of the top schools in the North West educating over 1000 girls and boys from a wide catchment area and attracts pupils from as far as Menai Bridge and Oswestry in North Wales and from areas such as Warrington and Crewe. We wholeheartedly support the campaign to improve the rail service to Chester, in particular in North Wales, where a third of our pupils reside. Improvements in rail services are crucial for a school such as King's, enabling more pupils to attend King's without the need for expensive and unnecessary road travel for families, enabling students to become independent travellers and without increasing road congestion. Furthermore, it will help us to attract the widest pool of excellent teachers and staff, critical to supporting our high quality education."

Vicky Titmuss, Director of External Affairs
The King's School, Chester

**Business Associations & Forums**

"Chester Growth Partnership, representing the business sector, is fully supportive of the case for improved rail connectivity to Chester. Effective and efficient infrastructure is imperative to the future growth and prosperity of Chester. Our ambitious plans for investment and growth can only be fully realised with better links to labour markets and integration with other commercial centres."

Guy Butler
Chair, Chester Growth Partnership

**Local Residents/Communities/Rail Users**

"NCRUG have long been campaigning for more frequent and longer trains on the Manchester/North Wales route, where peak time overcrowding is causing suppressed demand along the whole route. The M56/A55 road routes at most times of day suffer slow moving traffic in both directions which could be alleviated if a fast and frequent rail service was available. The opening of the Halton Curve in December 2018 will open up opportunities for fast, frequent services between North and North East Wales and Liverpool Airport, via Liverpool South Parkway and Liverpool City Region, thereby providing a reliable service across the notorious Runcorn Gap. This will greatly improve commuting times and be a sound basis for promoting leisure travel in the whole region and the near Continent".

Ced Green
North Cheshire Rail User Group

**Cultural, Creative & Digital Industries**

"NMI is a fast-growth company with its UK headquarters in Parc Menai, Bangor. NMI is a leading supplier of compliance testing and IT security auditing services to the worldwide gaming industry. With business development staff frequently attending tradeshows and conferences, auditors visiting customer sites worldwide, and management travelling to the Netherlands and other company locations, fast access to London and UK airports is essential to the effective operation of the business. We welcome the investment initiatives to improve the region's rail infrastructure, particularly faster and more direct links to Manchester and Liverpool airport, reliability, and fares more in line with European equivalents."

Dr Richard Edwards
Managing Director, NMI Gaming

**Cultural, Creative & Digital Industries**

"Time is money and so increasing the speed of trains between Chester and Liverpool / Manchester would greatly help our business, customers and staff and make us more competitive."

Simon Kent
Managing Director, Applied Intelligent Marketing

**Business Associations & Forums**

"Alongside skills, improving transport in North Wales is crucial to raising productivity, and this will underpin the long term prosperity of the region and the UK as a whole. Whether it's keeping people on the move or transporting goods from A to B, it's clear that rail is a critical driver of business growth, with 8 out of 10 firms seeing the network as crucial or important to their operations."

Emma Watkins
CBI Wales Director

**Business Associations**

"As we move toward a vision of a 'Northern Power House' it is essential that our businesses are provided the same opportunities to grow and flourish as is seen in other regions. On this basis electrification of the North Wales and West Cheshire train lines is crucial in ensuring West Cheshire and North Wales businesses feel connected to those major hubs that can offer growth potential and global opportunities. The economic potential that our region can offer the wider North West and national economy should not be underestimated but greater connectivity is key, to ensuring this is the case. West Cheshire & North Wales Chamber of Commerce would appeal to central government to recognise this issue and act quickly to ensure it is addressed."

Colin Brew, Chief Executive Officer
West Cheshire & North Wales Chamber of Commerce

**Tourism, Hospitality & Retail**

"Transport links around the region are important to us as a growing business, in order that we can move our staff and stock around easily. A large percentage of our business comes from within our region, particularly Manchester and Liverpool, and infrequent and time-consuming rail transport is often reported as a negative by these customers. If it could be improved, we would see a definite positive impact to our business"

Oddfellows
Jonathan Slater, MD

**Services – Financial, Professional & Logistics**

"An improved rail service to and from Chester is essential for the growth of this wonderful city, not just from a legal and commercial perspective but for ordinary folk and the 1000s of visitors who come and go every year."

Sarah Cornes
Ellis & Co. Solicitors

**Cultural, Creative & Digital Industries**

"Based in Colwyn Bay with premises also in Nantwich, our business has Client's from Dover to Edinburgh. The poor quality of rail services in the region and the overcrowded A55, mean that recruitment and expansion are exceptionally difficult. We support the demand for substantial rail investment in the Growth Track 360 Prospectus."

Alan Cooper
Director, Blue Fox Technology Ltd

**Local Authorities & Public Sector**

"As Police Commissioner, I welcome an improvement to the transport infrastructure in North Wales and improved links to employment opportunities. A boost to the economy is a boost to the feel good factor in North Wales, which leads on to less crime and disorder. Enhanced partnerships are the way forward."

Arfon Jones,
North Wales Police and Crime Commissioner

**Business Associations & Forums**

"Fundamental to any Tourism offer is the quality of our transport system into and throughout the North Wales region. Given the growing numbers of visitors arriving by train we do not have the capacity to cope with the demand. For many years in North Wales we have suffered a mediocre service so any investment in the regional rail infrastructure, is to be very warmly welcomed. We fully endorse and support this proposal and hope at long last the quality of our transport infrastructure will match the rest of our Tourism offer in North Wales."

Jim Jones
Managing Director, North Wales Tourism



Enterprise Zones & Ports



"Having an electrified, fit for purpose train line linking Anglesey Enterprise zone with the North Wales coast and the North of England, offers significant job opportunities to people within the region if the travel to work time is reduced. With the growth and success of enterprise zones and the Anglesey enterprise zone in particular focusing on supply chain opportunities, the transport links are essential to assisting us achieve our potential."

Neil Rowlands

Chair of Anglesey Enterprise zone



Tourism, Hospitality & Retail



"Marketing Cheshire fully supports the findings of the task force. The lack of regular and speedy rail connectivity is a major barrier to both the growth of tourism and the attractiveness of our area to skilled workers."

Katrina Michel

Chief Executive, Marketing Cheshire



Construction & Engineering



"Fellow professionals and customers are now increasingly traveling by train and presently find the current service unreliable. A better rail service would also assist Bolton Birch to increase its influence and grow its business in Chester and the surrounding areas. It will also enhance Chester's reputation and prospects as a must see destination well into the future."

Jonty Goodchild

Senior Director, Bolton Birch



Services – Financial, Professional & Logistics



"Chester is a beautiful city, with thousands of people coming here each year to visit and soak up the history and atmosphere. Any way we can encourage more visitors to the city we should all support as it will help our local economy. As an employer we have many staff who use the trains to get to and from work, so improving the rail services is something we support wholeheartedly."

Liz Chapman, Chester Practice Manager & Associate Director
Quality Solicitors Oliver & Co



Business Associations & Forums



"The Wales Tourism Alliance supports the call for investment in rail infrastructure within the North Wales & Mersey Dee Alliance area. Tourism & Hospitality facilities often compliment business, commercial, scientific and manufacturing activities. Visitors to the region whether for business or leisure, are dependent on integrated transport. Investment in rail infrastructure on the scale outlined within this publication will serve to help unlock the regions capacity to play a crucial role in ensuring the future sustainability of the Northern Powerhouse and will help to ensure Wales secures long-term economic benefit. There is demand for and capacity within the region for more visitors, therefore supporting the efficient movement of employees, visitors and residents through integrating rail networks with communities, airports and major industrial hubs is vital for the regions mid and long-term future. "

Adrian Barsby

Chair, Wales Tourism Alliance



Services – Financial, Professional & Logistics



"At Outwrite PR, we have Clients across the North Wales & Mersey Dee region and the wider UK. A rail system that allows our team to work on the move, is therefore absolutely critical. We need substantial investment in rail for the region, to support our substantial potential for economic growth. We ask the Chancellor to fully support Growth Track 360."

Tracy North

Managing Director, Outwrite PR



Business Associations & Forums



"Enhancement of our transport infrastructure, particularly rail, is an absolute essential for the North Wales economy if we are not to regress and become isolated from the mainstream benefits, as they accrue, of the Northern Powerhouse. The important cross border partnerships are in place. We want to work together and with the Westminster government. It would be a hugely damaging economic blow if we were not HS2 ready when that project arrives in Crewe."

David W Williams MBE

Chairman, North Wales Business Club

**Local Authorities & Public Sector**

"North Wales is a diverse and vibrant economy with world class assets in tourism, energy and advanced manufacturing. Right now we are showing what we can do by outperforming the UK's average growth rate. Like any business entity if we are to achieve the goal of sustainable, long term improvement in the region's economic growth and productivity it is vital that we invest in the future by upgrading our rail infrastructure and services. The Rail Prospectus demonstrates that the current rail network is not capable of supporting our economy and is a barrier to continuing growth. We are proposing an integrated and phased package of rail improvements that will enable economic growth and give people choice in how they travel for work and adventure in North Wales. Our proposals are innovative and realistic, working across boundaries to recognise how the real economy works, treating the network as a whole system and proposing phased investment in incremental improvements to build up the case for the electrification of the Crewe – Holyhead line prior to HS2 in 2027. Our vision is a modern and connected North Wales with a rail system that can deliver better living standards for its people and contribute to the development of the UK economy. Local Government in North Wales is on the Growth Track 360."

Dilwyn Roberts

Chair, North Wales Economic Ambition Board

**Tourism, Hospitality & Retail**

"I am the Franchisee of 4 McDonald's restaurants in Chester and Broughton (Wales). I fully support the proposals outlined in the North Wales Mersey Dee Alliance Rail Improvement Task Force prospectus. I hope that the proposal is well received by the Chancellor of the Exchequer."

Jeanette Roe, McDonald's Franchisee

Northgate Restaurants Ltd T/A McDonald's Chester

**Business Associations & Forums**

"The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport Cymru Wales supports the Growth Track 360 prospectus for rail investment as part of the required connectivity, to deliver a core rail network that enables an integrated transport network to connect North Wales and the Mersey Dee area, to the Northern Powerhouse and beyond. Such a network will bring many economic, environmental and social benefits to the regions on both sides of the Welsh border. The electrification of the North Wales Coast Main Line will also enable gauge clearance to W10 to support the development of intermodal freight between Ireland, North Wales, the rest of UK and Europe."

Dr Andrew Potter

Chair, CILT Cymru

**Business Associations & Forums**

"The Gwynedd Business Network has over 700 business members. We fully support the Growth Track 360 prospectus and this, for the first time offers a sensible fully costed integrated approach that provides excellent return on investment. This initiative is worthy of support and will greatly assist the future prosperity of North Wales going forward."

John Lloyd

Director, Gwynedd Business Network

**Services – Financial, Professional & Logistics**

"We employ more than 40 staff and have exciting plans to expand. Improvement in infrastructure and in particular the opportunity to access express trains to and from Manchester and Liverpool is essential to our staff, clients and expansion plans. To attract employees with good skill sets, the commute to the centre of Chester needs to be vastly improved which means putting in place frequent express trains at commuter times with sufficient rolling stock. Attracting people on to the trains will also relieve congestion and parking issues in the city. Chester and North Wales also need to be properly linked to the HS2 initiative at Crewe to ensure that, as a commercial city, Chester has consistent, fast connectivity to all the major cities so that existing businesses in Chester can grow and new businesses are attracted and all are able to make a real contribution to the UK economy."

Sally Pilott

Associate, DTM Legal LLP

**Cultural, Creative & Digital Industries**

"I believe developing a fully integrated transport system is fundamental to grow businesses in Gwynedd, and investment in the North Wales rail infrastructure is key part of that development."

Ian Nellist

Director, Electronic Spider Limited

**Tourism, Hospitality & Retail**

"We believe this investment will have a great positive impact on our local economy. Opening up North Wales to more tourism, more business opportunities and growing the local job market. It is important for the next generation that we are aiming to 'connect the gap' and this is an excellent initiative to do so. We have so much to offer businesses and tourists in North Wales and this will make it even easier for people to make us a destination of choice, or even stop off here whilst travelling to other destinations on a more frequent, more reliable, faster rail service."

Hannah Hughes

Manager, Deganwy Quay Hotel, Conwy

**Business Associations & Forums**

"CH1ChesterBID is the Business Improvement District for Chester City centre and represents over 500 businesses covering a diverse range of business sectors. Improved rail links are vital to the ongoing economic success of the city and will allow us to compete on both regional and national levels. Enhanced connectivity with the rest of the UK will help us attract the additional skills and investment Chester needs to prosper. Efforts to increase visitor numbers and dwell times will be wasted if people are unable to access the city in a fast and efficient manner and it is for these reasons, that CH1ChesterBID fully supports the proposals for improving rail links to Chester."

Carl Critchlow,

BID Manager

**Construction & Engineering**

"Transport is an integral part of modern life whether for people or goods. Welsh Slate is a business with a century's old involvement in serving markets local, national and international which recognises the continuing need to bring NW Wales closer to its markets and its customers and as such wholeheartedly supports this initiative for increased investment in rail transport for the North Wales & Mersey Dee region."

Chris Allwood

MD, Welsh Slate

**Tourism, Hospitality & Retail**

"We have ambitious growth plans over the next five years, and an efficient and effective rail infrastructure linking Chester to both the North West region and the rest of the UK is key requirement in helping us to realise these goals. We work with many businesses in both the North West and London, and travel times to both regions are currently similar! A fast, reliable 'integrated' rail network would not only bring us benefits in efficiency but encourage further cross-region collaboration, which will help the North West to stand out on the national stage and benefit the regional economy. We employ some 200 people at our HQ building, many of whom commute from outside the city. Improved rail links would not only ensure our existing colleagues have sensible commutes to work, but would help us to overcome one of the biggest recruitment challenges we currently face – attracting quality talent to the area."

Miles Hill

Chief Executive, Sykes Cottages

**Business Associations & Forums**

"As Chair of Deeside Business Forum, and vocal advocate for the Northern Powerhouse, I was saddened but not surprised to read that just 1% of commuters utilise rail as a means of transport in Flintshire. Our current infrastructure is absolutely substandard, hindering positive growth and development in our proud region of first-class manufacturing, research and service industries. Substantial investment in the improvement of transport links, and especially rail, is fundamental in the protection and growth of our business community and region as a whole. The UK Government needs to be pressured to address this as a priority and the prospective outcomes of positive action highlighted within the Growth Track 360 campaign cannot be denied."

Askar Sheibani

Chairman, Deeside Business Forum

**Business Associations & Forums**

"Chester Business Club strongly supports the initiative to establish enhanced rail links to and from Chester. There is no doubt that a more efficient service will be vital in helping underpin the City of Chester's trade, commerce and tourism prospects, coupled with helping retain existing jobs and creating new employment opportunities."

Bob Clough-Parker
Secretary - Chester Business Club

**Services – Financial, Professional & Logistics**

"I fully support the draft prospectus for Rail investment in the North Wales & Mersey Dee region (NW & MD), put together by the Cross Border Task Force for Rail Investment. Jackson Fire & Security are situated in Mold, North Wales, we are one hour from the large cities in the North West and benefit from these good links, with some of our largest clients based in Liverpool and Manchester. With the improved transport links between North Wales and the North West being proposed, we would benefit from the boost in economic growth as more companies set up in North Wales, we could generate more revenue closer to home, therefore contributing to a boost in the labour market by taking on more engineers, office support staff etc. We could also encourage our Project Managers to use the rail to carry out surveys in the North West, improving our environmental management."

Steve Jackson
Managing Director, Jackson Fire & Security Ltd

**Business Associations & Forums**

"The Creative North Wales network aims to develop a strong and vibrant digital-creative sector across North Wales. This rail investment across the region is imperative in order to support our vision of developing a creative corridor, across North Wales linking the region strategically from Dublin in the west to the Northern Powerhouse and key creative clusters in Merseyside, Manchester and further afield. The Creative North Wales Network fully endorses this prospectus as a key document for the development of the digital-creative sector, the wider economy and the prosperity of the whole area."

Gareth Jones
Chairman, C6

**Tourism, Hospitality & Retail**

"From a tourism perspective having good transport links are essential this is the case as demonstrated by the most successful tourism economies in the world, with the likes of Switzerland being a comparable example to Wales with varied geographies, remote regions and large cities. Having an electrified train line would significantly reduce travel times to the major cities in the UK including London. Studies show a typical short stay (2/3nights) visitor is prepared to travel up to 2 /2.5 hours. Currently this for north Wales covers the North West of England and West Midlands. Improving and offering a high speed train service will open up many more areas within the typical travel time."

Neil Rowlands
CEO, Treysgawen Hall

**Business Associations & Forums**

"An effective integrated transport system is essential if the economy in North Wales is to reach its full potential, and investment in our rail infrastructure is crucial to that. We are all too aware of the current connectivity problems faced by our members in North Wales in accessing key markets beyond the Welsh border. Investment in rail infrastructure is key to improving connectivity between North Wales and the North West of England and to reducing the pressure on the roads network at peak hours. A more effective transport system will make it easier for small businesses to attract clients and staff and to access markets beyond North Wales. With that in mind we would urge policymakers to take up the proposals in this document."

Gwyn Evans
Regional Chairman, FSB North Wales

**Services – Financial, Professional & Logistics**

"Clients, fellow professionals and customers, many of whom are now increasingly traveling by train in order to maximise their business efficiency on the move, but who presently find the current service unreliable, and currently see the City as 'out on a limb'. An enhanced and more efficient rail service will also assist us in increasing our local influence and to grow our own business in Chester and the surrounding areas."

Tim Kenney BSC FRICS
Partner, Kenneymoore

**Tourism, Hospitality & Retail**

"Bryn Williams at Porth Eirias is a new company that has invested a great deal of money in the local area. We felt that Colwyn Bay and the surrounding area was the right place for us due to the investment and growth already in place. We employ 45 plus local people in our Bistro and we use as much local produce as possible. We feel that the new cross border rail service will benefit us greatly and we have further plans for investment in the area by growing our business and other ventures. The rail service will bring people in from other area's which will benefit both ourselves and the local industry."

David Owen

Director, Bryn Williams at Porth Eirias

**Services – Financial, Professional & Logistics**

"Jane Lewis recruits healthcare professionals from all over North West England as well as North and Mid Wales. In order to complete the complicated recruitment process, potential staff are obliged to visit one of our office, the head office in Chester is incredibly busy with visitors and staff dropping off documents and time sheets every day. In addition our temporary staff attend annual mandatory training events at our offices in St Asaph and Chester. Having a reliable, efficient, electrified rail service linking our offices in Manchester, Chester and North Wales would greatly enhance the ability of our staff to move between offices and encourage much better links between the various business communities, I would strongly urge all Chester business' to support the plan to electrify the rail lines linking Chester with North Wales and other parts of North West England."

Nick Hodson

Director, Jane Lewis

**MP's/AM's/Peers/MEP's**

"Improved services, station improvements and line speed improvements need to be carried out as soon as possible as a pre-requisite for electrification. Fully modernising this vital railway link is crucial to the economy of all parts of North Wales."

Sian Gwenllian

Welsh Assembly Member

**Services – Financial, Professional & Logistics**

"From a business point of view, it would certainly help to increase the number of services directly to London. Having to travel frequently via Runcorn increase the time and cost to our practice."

Norman Pursglove

Chairman, Military House Limited

**Cultural, Creative & Digital Industries**

"An integrated, up-to-date public transport infrastructure is essential to allow us to fully capitalise on major developments such as the Pontio Arts & Innovation Centre in Bangor. A major rail upgrade would significantly increase the positive influence we could have on individuals, businesses and the regional economy through improved connectivity and reduced journey times."

Dewi Hughes

Executive Director, Pontio, Bangor University

**Services – Financial, Professional & Logistics**

"I have been working in North Wales and the North West for over 30 years. One source of amazement as well as frustration, has been the journey times by rail to the cities of Manchester and Liverpool and both airports. We need better connection to help develop the North Wales economy."

Peter Denton

Director, Williams Denton

**Voluntary Sector**

"I write to give my support to the North Wales Economic Ambition Board's campaign for investment into the Region's Rail Infrastructure. Having shared the draft prospectus with our Trustees, we are in agreement that faster, more frequent and better quality rail services would help the region to maximise potential economic growth and reduce barriers to employment."

Ann Woods, Chief Officer

Flintshire Local Voluntary Council



Energy & Environment Sector



"We operate in the energy sector, providing services and products (manufactured in North Wales) to companies in 53 countries on 6 continents. We travel extensively in the UK, maintaining collaboration links with universities for sponsored research, and visiting Clients. For both local and regional travel, the current rail system does not actively support our business and we therefore endorse the objectives of the Growth Track 360 prospectus for rail investment."

Barrie Wells
Conwy Valley Systems Limited



Tourism, Hospitality & Retail



"Zip World won international acclaim when it opened Zip World Velocity at Bethesda in March 2013, since opening another 2 sites in Blaenau Ffestiniog and Betws Y Coed. However, the public transport network has shown to be a barrier to the attainment of potential customers to travel to North Wales. With the right investment, our public transport network needs to provide faster and more frequent journey options at times when passengers need and want to use them, as the current offering is not competitive and lacks a quality of service."

Sean Taylor
Zip World Group



Local Residents/Communities/Rail Users



"Better transport links with other parts of the country will increase access to education, business and tourism in the Deeside, Flint, and Broughton areas and also to the rest of the county and the North Wales corridor. Investment will also allow access for the residents of Flintshire to the major cities & Universities across the UK and most importantly to our capital, Cardiff. This will result in increased opportunities to access employment, and increase the local economy from jobs and tourism. Better transport links will also create sustainable communities, where residents can access jobs and still remain within the county."

Flintshire Federation of Tenants & Resident Groups



Local Authorities & Public Sector



"We are pleased to have been considered and asked to support the Rail Task Force Prospectus, and as a railway society, some of our members are either retired or active railway employees, we whole heartedly support this initiative."

Brian Bollington
Chair, North Wales Railway Circle



Food & Drink



"Halen Mon export 33% of products and most of our key customers are based outside North Wales. If the train travelling time is reduced and the frequency of service increases, this will immensely help our business."

David Lea Wilson
Managing Director, Anglesey Sea Salt

