



Growing Mid Wales March 2025

Welcome to the March edition of the Growing Mid Wales Newsletter!

This month, we're delighted to share that the UK and Welsh governments have confirmed the release of £11.8 million in funding for Mid Wales—marking a major milestone in the Growth Deal's rollout. The announcement coincided with a ministerial visit to the first project backed by the Deal: the Elan Valley Lakes development, which aspires to become a leading example of sustainable tourism.

We also shine a spotlight on five successful feasibility projects exploring how rural communities and the agricultural sector can play a leading role in decarbonisation through smart energy systems and innovation.

Preparations too are underway for the upcoming launch of the Mid Wales Commercial Property Investment Fund—tailored to support local businesses in scaling up and enhancing premises.

Elsewhere, we're inviting views on the future of travel in the region through the Regional Transport Plan consultation - you have until 04 April to have share your views

We're also supporting inclusive workforce growth with events encouraging employers to consider the untapped potential of skilled prison leavers.

If you're looking to make a difference, we also highlight two exciting new roles to support delivery of the Growth Deal.

As always, your engagement helps us shape a more prosperous, sustainable Mid Wales. Let's continue building together.

Helping to grow opportunity in Mid Wales,

The Growing Mid Wales team

Extra £11.8m unlocked for Mid Wales Growth Deal as first project takes shape



1 - Celtic Rainforest

The UK and Welsh governments have confirmed the release of £11.8m of funding for Mid Wales as part of an investment package aimed at boosting the regional economy.

The announcement came as Ministers toured the first project to secure support from the Mid Wales Growth Deal, which is backed by £110m from both governments - aimed at attracting further investment from the public and private sectors.

The visit to the Elan Valley Lakes development - which aims to set a new benchmark for sustainable tourism - marked a significant step forward for the Deal as projects begin to move from planning to delivery.

The first package of work, which will enhance the visitor experience, boost local revenue, and safeguard the natural beauty and biodiversity of the Elan Valley, will focus on two key areas:

- Celtic Rainforest Expansion - Connecting and restoring 117 hectares of fragmented woodland as part of the National Forest for Wales.
- Visitor Centre Design - Initiating redevelopment designs to enhance the visitor experience, integrating environmental education and sustainable practices.

This first phase alone is projected to deliver an annual economic impact of £4m, with an estimated £17m contribution to the regional economy by 2040.

Read our full article on our [News page](#).



2 - Elan Valley Lakes (L-R) Steve Lesbirel, Chair, Mid Wales Economic Advisory Board; Councillor Bryan Davies, Leader of Ceredigion County Council; Dame Nia Griffith DBE MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Wales Office; Councillor James Gibson-Watt, Leader of Powys County Council; Rebecca Evans MS, Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary for Economy; Martin Driscoll, Business Support and People Director, Dŵr Cymru; Carwyn Jones-Evans, Portfolio Senior Responsible Owner, Growing Mid Wales; Peter Perry, Chief Executive, Dŵr Cymru; Eifion Evans, Chief Executive, Ceredigion County Council; Emma Palmer, Chief Executive, Powys County Council; Barry Rees, Corporate Director, Ceredigion County Council; Diane Reynolds, Director of Economy and Community Services, Powys County Council; Vicky Martin, Head of Visitor Attraction Strategy, Dŵr Cymru.

Successful applicants embark on their feasibility studies in optimising rural grids through agricultural communities

We're pleased to announce the five successful applicants for funding to carry out feasibility studies in decarbonising agriculture.

The projects will explore innovative solutions that apply a whole systems approach to understanding the role of agriculture and land-based industries in enabling decarbonisation across rural communities.

Below are the successful applicants along with a summary of the focus of their studies:

1. **Severn Wye Energy Agency** - Helping business lower the load: Focusing on implementing Smart Local Energy Systems (SLES) in industrial and business parks, this project aims to reduce energy demand on the grid through local renewable energy generation and battery storage. Based at Four crosses near Welshpool.
2. **Centre for Energy Equality - HARVEST** (Holistic Agricultural and Rural Virtual Energy System Transition): Using a decentralised, community-owned model, a virtual power plant that would link household, business, and farm-based renewable energy systems—such as solar panels and batteries. Based in Llanidloes.

3. **Challoch Energy** - Village rural energy in Mid Wales: Evaluating the potential for developing a community based, local integrated energy system which will both decarbonise the community and bring financial benefits through more affordable energy. Locations across both counties are being scoped to identify which communities are suitable, aiming for an even split across both Local Authorities.
4. **Lafan & Coleg Sir Gâr** - Sustainable utilisation of livestock slurry for renewable generation, grid optimisation and excess nutrient export to a centralised treatment hub: Investigating ways to use livestock slurry (a mix of manure and water from farms) to produce renewable energy. This will include the additional aim to recover useful nutrients from the slurry and find ways to improve how the energy grid works, making it more efficient and sustainable. Based in Felinfach.
5. **Water to Water** - First Welsh Net Zero milk: Partnering with First Milk, the project aims to demonstrate the potential of Smart Local Energy Systems on dairy farms across Ceredigion, enabling energy self-sufficiency whilst ensuring long-term financial stability and driving the potential for accelerated renewable uptake in rural communities.

Watch the clips below on sustainable utilisation of livestock slurry for renewable generation and the Water to Water project. Keep an eye on our [YouTube](#) channel for videos on the other projects in the coming weeks.

For further details about the WSRID Challenge Fund and the successful projects, visit <https://www.growingmid.wales/WSRID>.



and specifically electricity on farms and rural communities in Wales.



Net Zero Energy independent users for their heating, transport, fuel and electricity.

Employing Prison Leavers: Unlocking Potential in Mid and North Wales

Businesses across Mid and North Wales are being invited to explore an untapped workforce at two upcoming events aimed at bridging the gap between employers and skilled prison leavers.

Organised by the Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership (MWRSP), North Wales Regional Skills Partnership (NWRSP), and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), the events will challenge perceptions and provide employers with valuable insights into hiring individuals with lived experiences of the justice system.

The Mid Wales event will take place at:

- Hope Church, Newtown - April 9, 2025 | 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Register here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/1277877077739?aff=oddttdtcreator>

Businesses across Wales are facing skills shortages, yet thousands of talented individuals are being overlooked. These events will showcase how businesses can benefit from hiring skilled prison leavers while breaking down misconceptions.

Read more on our [news page](#).

Employers - unlock hidden talent

Discover how hiring a skilled prison leaver can benefit your business

Join us to find out more:

📅 Hope Church, Newtown – 9 April, 2025 | 9am - 12pm

- Learn how prison training matches employer needs.
- Understand the barriers & find practical solutions.
- Discover available support for hiring individuals after release.

🔗 Register through Eventbrite

Have your say on the future of travel in Mid Wales!



Regional Transport Plan Consultation – Have Your Say!

Transport plays a vital role in our daily lives, shaping how we access work, education, healthcare, and leisure. In recognition of its importance, the [Mid Wales Corporate Joint Committee](#) is developing a **Regional Transport Plan (RTP)** to identify how they will contribute to the delivery of the Welsh Government's National Transport Strategy and transform transportation in the region.

The draft RTP sets an ambitious vision to create a sustainable, low-carbon, and efficient transport system. It will focus on improving connectivity within and beyond Mid Wales while tackling challenges unique to our rural landscape.

Key objectives of the RTP include:

- Increasing access to sustainable transport modes such as cycling, walking, and public transport.
- Enhancing transport links to drive economic and tourism growth.
- Supporting efforts to reduce carbon emissions and combat climate change.

The RTP is being developed in partnership with Ceredigion and Powys County Councils, guided by the Welsh Government's [Llwybr Newydd: Wales Transport Strategy 2021](#). Public consultation is a critical step in the process, offering you an opportunity to shape the final plan.

How Can You Get Involved?

The consultation is now live and **runs until the 4th of April 2025**. It's easy to take part:

- Online: Visit our website to read the Plan: www.bit.ly/MidWalesTransport, and complete the online survey: <https://bit.ly/MWRTP>

Read more in our [press release](#).



3 - Councillor James Gibson-Watt, Chair of the Mid Wales Corporate Joint Committee, and Leader of Powys County Council and Councillor Bryan Davies, Vice-Chair of the Mid Wales Corporate Joint Committee, and Leader of Ceredigion County Council discuss the aims of the Mid Wales Corporate Joint Committee Regional transport plan consultation.

Looking to expand your business in Mid Wales?

Last summer and autumn, we launched a “Supporting Growth” survey explaining that consideration was being given to setting up a local grant fund to support local businesses and organisations with their future growth plans by providing financial assistance in realising premises improvement plans. Thanks to your valuable feedback, we have now shaped this fund to tailor it to meets the expressed needs of businesses across the region. Your input has helped us create a fund that we believe to be fit for purpose in supporting sustainable business growth and unlocking new opportunities in Mid Wales. So,

Get ready for the Mid Wales Commercial Property Investment Fund, launching on 01 May!

This new capital fund, is designed to support businesses with vital investment for growth—whether it’s expanding to a new premises or scaling up operations at an existing location.

Email us if you would like to attend the launch event, growingmidwales@ceredigion.gov.uk.



Mid Wales Commercial Property Investment Fund

Launch Event 01 May 2025

A new capital fund to support businesses with vital investment for growth—whether expanding to new premises or scaling up operations.

✉ Interested in attending the launch event?
Email growingmidwales@ceredigion.gov.uk



Two exciting career opportunities in the Mid Wales Growth Deal!

As you may have seen in recent updates, the Mid Wales Growth Deal has made significant progress with key projects receiving approval.

As we mark this important milestone, we are now looking for experienced and committed individuals to help navigate us through the delivery phase.

These key roles offer a huge opportunity to make a difference in the region and leave a lasting impact through the delivery of some great initiatives.

Portfolio Director

Are you an experienced leader with a proven track record in managing large portfolio/programme management offices? We are looking for a delivery-focused individual who can manage a complex and multi-faceted capital portfolio in a dynamic, yet rewarding environment. This role will join us at a crucial juncture as we shift from development into delivery to ensure the successful completion of our ambitious projects.

<https://careers.ceredigion.gov.uk/jobs/req105887/>

Portfolio Planner

Do you have a knack for meticulous planning and coordination? We are seeking a detail-oriented professional to support our portfolio management processes and help us achieve our delivery objectives across the portfolio. This role will be essential in keeping the portfolio on track and manage performance. <https://careers.ceredigion.gov.uk/jobs/req105886/>

Join us in shaping the future of Mid Wales! ✨

Closing date: **27/03/2025**

APPLY NOW

WE ARE HIRING

PORTFOLIO DIRECTOR

➤ Full time ➤ £ 56,999 - 59,095 per annum

We are seeking an enthusiastic, experienced, and committed individual to join the Portfolio Management Office for the Mid Wales Growth Deal.

We offer a range of benefits: flexible working (including location), opportunities for training, an attractive pension scheme, as well as the opportunity to work in a fantastic rural location.

APPLY NOW

WE ARE HIRING

PORTFOLIO PLANNER

➤ Full time ➤ £44,711 - 46,731 per annum

We are seeking an enthusiastic, experienced, and committed individual to join the Portfolio Management Office for the Mid Wales Growth Deal.

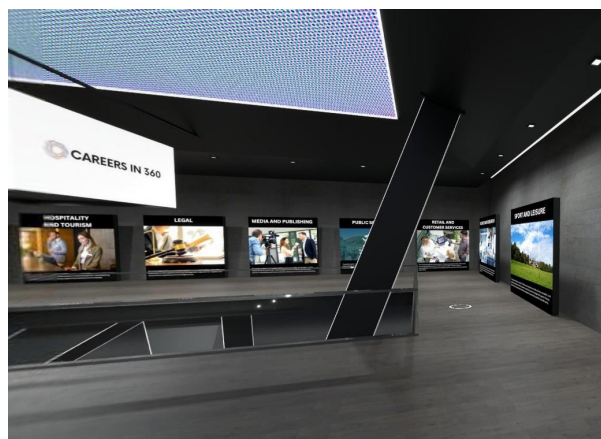
We offer a range of benefits: flexible working (including location), opportunities for training, an attractive pension scheme, as well as the opportunity to work in a fantastic rural location.



Careers in 360: Transforming Career Exploration in Mid and North Wales

The Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership is proud to be a pioneer partner in *Careers in 360*, an innovative platform designed to revolutionise career exploration. Developed in collaboration with One Step North and key public sector organisations, including universities, colleges, and schools across Wales, this cutting-edge tool offers immersive 360-degree virtual experiences that bring the world of work to life.

More information on the [Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership website](#).



Other News

The flagship AberInnovation Solutions Catalyst programme supported by [UKRI - BBSRC](#) to drive innovation has returned for a fourth round, offering a package of support, including

academic consultancy and access to facilities and technical support at AberInnovation for proof of concept bioscience projects.

UK-wide companies have the chance to win a voucher worth up to £30,000 and join the 2025 cohort.

How to apply:

Follow this link: <https://aberinnovation.com/development-hub/solutions-catalyst> to download the competition documents available, including guidance notes.

Completed applications should be submitted to catalyst@aberinnovation.com

The deadline for applications is 5pm on **2nd April 2025**.



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 X, LinkedIn pages, and YouTube channel:

<https://twitter.com/growingmidwales>

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

<https://www.youtube.com/@TCC-GMW>

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.

Disclaimer: As a Growing Mid Wales Stakeholder you receive these emails so that we can share news and information with you on a regular basis. You can inform us if you no longer wish to receive these emails by emailing growingmidwales@ceredigion.gov.uk.

