

National Assembly for Wales' Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee
Inquiry into City Deals and the Regional Economies of Wales.

Grow Mid Wales

Mid Wales Manufacturing Group (MWMG) have been involved with the partnership since its inaugural meeting. We are delighted to be able to participate in what we hope could develop into a vital initiative representing the specific and possibly unique interests of our region in the overall Welsh economy and provide the means for transformational change to the region.

- Partnership Structure

Full engagement by the private sector has been challenging, due in part by the size of companies that operate in the region but also through a lack of change after countless regional and County strategies have failed to deliver. The structure is very public sector heavy, however this is noted by the Partnership who are seeking other ways to engage. We would welcome a Partnership Director who is employed outside of the Council structure to deliver on the Framework agreements.

- Economic Development Priorities

Transformational change doesn't come easily or without cost, however considering the failure by all parties to provide even mobile phone coverage for the region even 30 years later, we need to somehow find a way to get the needs of businesses in the region addressed. The opportunity to be able to develop and bid for a programme of change without the EU regulations hindrance is welcomed and allows us to focus on the needs of all of Mid Wales rather than West Wales & the Valleys or East Wales and aligning ourselves to particular funding pockets.

- Cross Border Working

East-West connectivity is vitally important to the region and it was encouraging to see the work with the Marches on the cross border freight survey. Opportunities are evident for supply chain development if we can capitalise on them.

- Industrial Property

The availability of suitable industrial premises in the region is a major barrier to growth of businesses and despite inward investment enquiries we are unable to attract new business as the property and land is unavailable, Planning regulations are stifling, and BREEAM regulations a large expense. Addressing this issue is a major priority and can be addressed through the partnership by ensuring appropriate sites are available and addressing market failure.

- Skills & Training

The latest MWMG member survey (May 17) shows 62% of our members have cited skills shortage as affecting Business Growth, we must develop initiatives around retention of young people in the region, recruitment into the region and upskilling the exiting workforce to ensure the future prosperity of our businesses.

- Infrastructure

Improving transport flow into the region will assist with recruitment difficulties. Widening trunk roads, providing overtaking spaces can all assist. We must do more to connect Wales and to connect Mid Wales into the Midlands corridor. Many companies are still unable to maximise the benefits of Digital Technology due to poor broadband speeds.

Mid Wales Manufacturing Group
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