

# North East Wales Integrated Transport Task Force

Report to Edwina Hart AM OStJ MBE  
Minister for Economy, Science and Transport



June 2013

# Foreword

## Chair's Introduction, Councillor Mike Priestley, Chair of Taith

Dear Minister,

Thank you for the invitation to Chair the North East Wales Integrated Transport Taskforce set out in your letter of 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2013.

I am delighted to present the report produced by the North East Wales Integrated Transport Task Force for your consideration. The report has taken into account the views from representative organisations in North East Wales and over the border in Cheshire and Merseyside. We have also been supported in our task by cross sector representation and I am grateful for the support of all partners and especially those from the private sector who have contributed positively to the Task Force work.

North East Wales and West Cheshire is a successful economic sub-region, which has an enviable track record in job creation over recent years. It is an area with some world class business located within it and recent studies by the Mersey Dee Alliance have identified that up to 55,000 jobs could be created in the area over the next 20 years.



Despite this success, there remain real issues to be resolved in the economy. There are stubborn pockets of deprivation and access to employment is an issue. GDP levels remain low by UK standards and the economy is reliant on long-distance commuting by many residents to access good quality employment. The Task Force has identified that the potential for further growth is hampered by capacity issues in the infrastructure of the region, an issue that also poses risks for existing businesses. The Task Force considers that the economy is over-reliant on road based transport and personal car usage to provide access to employment. This causes localised congestion on the strategic network which impacts on access for freight and long distance travel. Our evidence points strongly to the fact that there are many good initiatives or pieces of infrastructure already available, but that these need linking together to create meaningful networks to facilitate access to employment and services.

Our vision therefore, is to create an integrated transport network that links people sustainably to the best jobs, services and education possible. We aim to provide viable alternatives to car-based access improving the prospects for growth and benefiting the people of North Wales and the areas of North West England that it relates to. The transport network in the North East Wales / West Cheshire Cross Border Dee area is complex due to the nature of the employment provision. There is no dominant single centre, and both employment and services exist in many locations in the study area. This has led to a complex origin and destination pattern that makes the task of designing public transport networks a much more difficult task.

The report of the Task Force highlights that the core passenger transport networks available in the study area do not always serve the needs of business well. The Task Force has identified the following issues in its work:

- The rail network does not link places where people live to employment sites effectively and does not offer sufficient service frequencies to allow seamless commuting where it does.
- Bus networks serve town and city centres reasonably well, but service frequencies are often poor, journey times slow and access to employment for commuting purposes is poor.
- Many journeys in the study area are often very short, but the active travel network is patchy in places and even good routes have gaps in provision which deter potential users.
- Interchanges between transport modes are poor, rail is not connected with bus, car parking is limited at rail interchanges, and rural areas have few opportunities other than car to access employment or services.
- Travel planning is under-developed and often seen as a planning-led, desk based report process rather than a key activity to support the best use our network.
- Marketing of alternatives to the car is poor and ticket arrangements across public transport networks are complex, not joined-up and are often not understood by consumers.
- There is evidence that transport networks either side of the border are developed partially in isolation from each other, leading to gaps in service provision and difficulties in seamless cross-border journeys.

The Task Force has also identified that the differing governance arrangements either side of the border have an impact on the delivery of transport interventions that support access to employment and services. This need not be the case in future and the report considers options for improving transport delivery seamlessly across the border.

The key recommendations in the report are set out below and in more detail on pages 6 & 7:

1. The public transport services and infrastructure should provide high quality access to employment sites;
2. The Bus & Community Transport Regional Networks Strategy will consider how accessibility between disadvantaged communities and employment can be improved;
3. The rail modernisation business case should consider how frequencies of service and journey times within North Wales and to/from key destinations in the North West can be improved;
4. A network of integrated transport hubs that provide connectivity between transport modes should be developed;
5. Access from rural areas to/from key services and employment by all transport modes should be improved;
6. Consideration should be given to the development of better integrated cross-border delivery mechanisms;
7. Enhance and develop multi-modal, multi-operator ticketing schemes supporting seamless journeys, including cross-border trips;
8. Delivery of an enhanced commuter and recreational active mode network and facilities to enable interchange;
9. Undertake travel planning and travel marketing activities with employees and the business community to increase awareness of and access to sustainable travel opportunities and reduce the need to travel; and
10. Address key traffic 'pinch points' to improve accessibility and journey times for people and movement of goods.

Through implementing these recommendations, together we can work towards achieving 'the integrated transit network vision' shown on page 8. More detail is given in the report along with specific projects and other interventions aimed at supporting the economy and accessibility.

In the short-term however, we believe that there are a number of key projects that should be accelerated to demonstrate progress on delivery of transport improvements in the study area. Your support to achieve these early outcomes from the study is requested.

1. Urgent progress with the identification of a solution to the A494 congestion problems;
2. Identification of funding to facilitate a half hourly service on the Wrexham - Bidston rail line, with all trains stopping at Hawarden Bridge station; and
3. Support to work with bus operators to develop an area-based partnership providing better bus access to key employment sites.



**Councillor Mike Priestley**

**Chair of the North East Wales Integrated Transport Task Force**

Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. The Case for Change	2
3. Transport Vision and Recommendations	5
4. Delivery of the Vision	11
Annex A: Task Force Membership	17

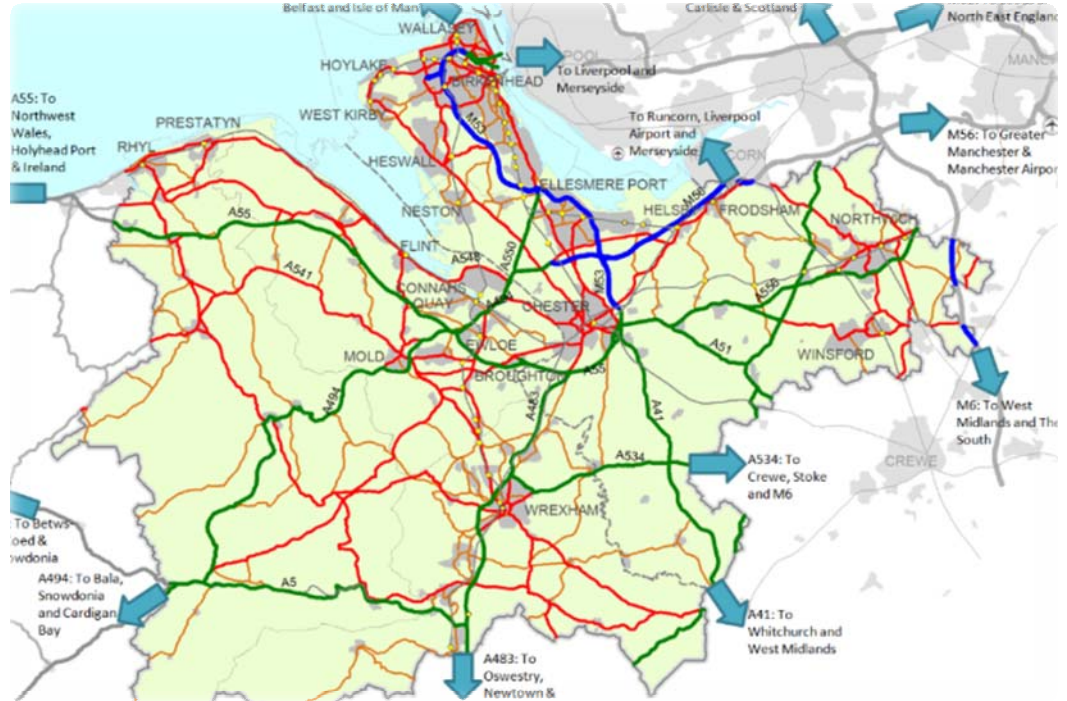




# 1 Introduction

## Context

The Minister for Economy, Science and Transport commissioned a Task Force to drive forward the development of an integrated transport system in North East Wales, building upon the multi-modal opportunities highlighted as part of the North East Wales Area Based Transport Study (NEWABTS) published in November 2012. This is in accordance with existing Welsh Government policy on Growth and Sustainable Jobs which aims to “...strengthen the conditions that will enable business to create jobs and sustainable economic growth.”



The Task Force, supported by the Welsh Government and Taith, was drawn from local authorities in North East Wales, North West England and representatives from industry, business, public transport providers and operators, third sector and various passenger / user groups (see Annex A for Task Force Membership).

In essence, the Task Force was tasked with developing recommendations to maintain and improve existing connectivity within North East Wales, at the same time as ensuring wider cross-border links to/from North West England, in particular Chester West & Chester and the Wirral, with whom economic geographies significantly overlap.

## Terms of Reference

The overarching objective established for the Task Force is as follows:

### **To further develop the transport system in North East Wales so that it:**

- Develops and underpins jobs and growth in the economy;
- Promotes social inclusion, equality and the reduction of poverty; and
- Protects the environment.

It is acknowledged that there are ongoing workstreams relating to considering North Wales Rail Modernisation and assessing solutions for addressing transport issues on the A55 / A494 through Deeside, the need for both of which are strongly endorsed by the Task Force.

This report presents the case for change in the North East Wales travel to work area and outlines the key recommendations of the Task Force and our vision for an integrated transit network. This report is supported by an accompanying Technical Report (June 2013). This is an exciting multi-partner opportunity for a range of schemes to be delivered in a phased and cost-effective manner.

## 2 The Case for Change

Our Task Force evidence creates a strong case that while there are significant employment assets in and around North East Wales, there is a need to provide significant changes in the transport network to address issues of connectivity, access to employment and assist the economic development of the area.

**Put quite simply, much of the core infrastructure is there, particularly across the core modes of rail and road, but there is a need for it to relate better to the significant changes in land use and the economic adjustment that has occurred over the last 30 years or so and the continued population growth of the area as informed by recent census data.**

North Wales is an **economy worth approximately £10.4billion per annum**<sup>1</sup> and represents 22% of the economy of Wales as a whole<sup>2</sup>. The strength in the manufacturing character of the area is, however, illustrated by the fact that North Wales **represents over 30% of the manufacturing output of Wales**<sup>3</sup>. Much of this includes high technology jobs such as those at Airbus and St. Asaph Business Park, but it should not be forgotten that there are also significant numbers of jobs that whilst not as highly skilled or paid, do create valuable employment for the country and local area.

It is also useful to consider North East Wales in the context of its wider economic geography since our evidence clearly shows that people do not base their employment decisions upon national or local boundaries, but on practical realities of gaining an accessible relevant job. The scale of the economy running along the M56/A55 from **Manchester Airport to Anglesey generates an output of £31billion**<sup>4</sup>. Merseyside's economy is also growing and is strong in core sectors such as car manufacturing and petrochemicals.

**The value of greater connectivity in the cross-border area can be further illustrated by research undertaken by the Mersey Dee Alliance (MDA), which indicates an estimated employment growth of 45-55,000 jobs over the next 20 years in the region, including the projected 20,000 at Wirral Waters Enterprise Zone.**<sup>5</sup>

The significant road upgrading of the A55, A483, A494 and M56 in particular, has aided and maintained the ability to create and attract jobs. There is however a point being reached where these roads are **attracting unsustainable, long distance car commuting** and where at a local level key 'pinch points' have emerged (such as around Queensferry which are beginning to become less resilient to the demand for movement placed upon them). Indeed, based on an analysis of 2011 average annual daily flow data, there are approximately 32,000 more vehicles using the key cross-border roads in North East Wales (A550, A55, A483 & A5104) than the core crossings in South East Wales (M4, M48, A466 & A40)<sup>6</sup>.

It is clear that while public transport exists, it does not meet aspirations in terms of linkage to employment, frequency or quality of service. Journey times are simply not competitive to those by car and there is clear evidence that this is having a significant impact on both employee and employer aspirations.

The fact that **1 in 5 turn down job interviews or employment offers**<sup>7</sup> **because of inaccessibility** speaks for itself. Analysis of employment data shows there are concentrations of economic inactivity along the coast line in towns such as Rhyl, Prestatyn, and Birkenhead. These need to be linked more effectively to the major employment locations where employers are demonstrating that they often find it **difficult to either attract staff or accommodate car borne employees**. Major employment locations such as Deeside Enterprise Zone and Wrexham Industrial Estate have job vacancies, but

*"Limited access to public transport does restrict recruitment opportunity."*  
Operations Manager, Industrial Company,  
Wrexham Industrial Estate.

<sup>1</sup> Statistical Bulletin, Statistics for Wales, May 2013

<sup>2</sup> 2011 Regional GVA, Office of National Statistics, 2012

<sup>3</sup> Sector Reports – North Wales, Report to the North Wales Forum, Mickledore, 2012

<sup>4</sup> Sector Reports – North Wales, Report to the North Wales Forum, Mickledore, 2012

<sup>5</sup> Haywood (2013) 'The Dee Region Cross-Border Economy: next steps Report for the Minister for Business, Enterprise, Technology and Science'

<sup>6</sup> DfT Statistics, 2011

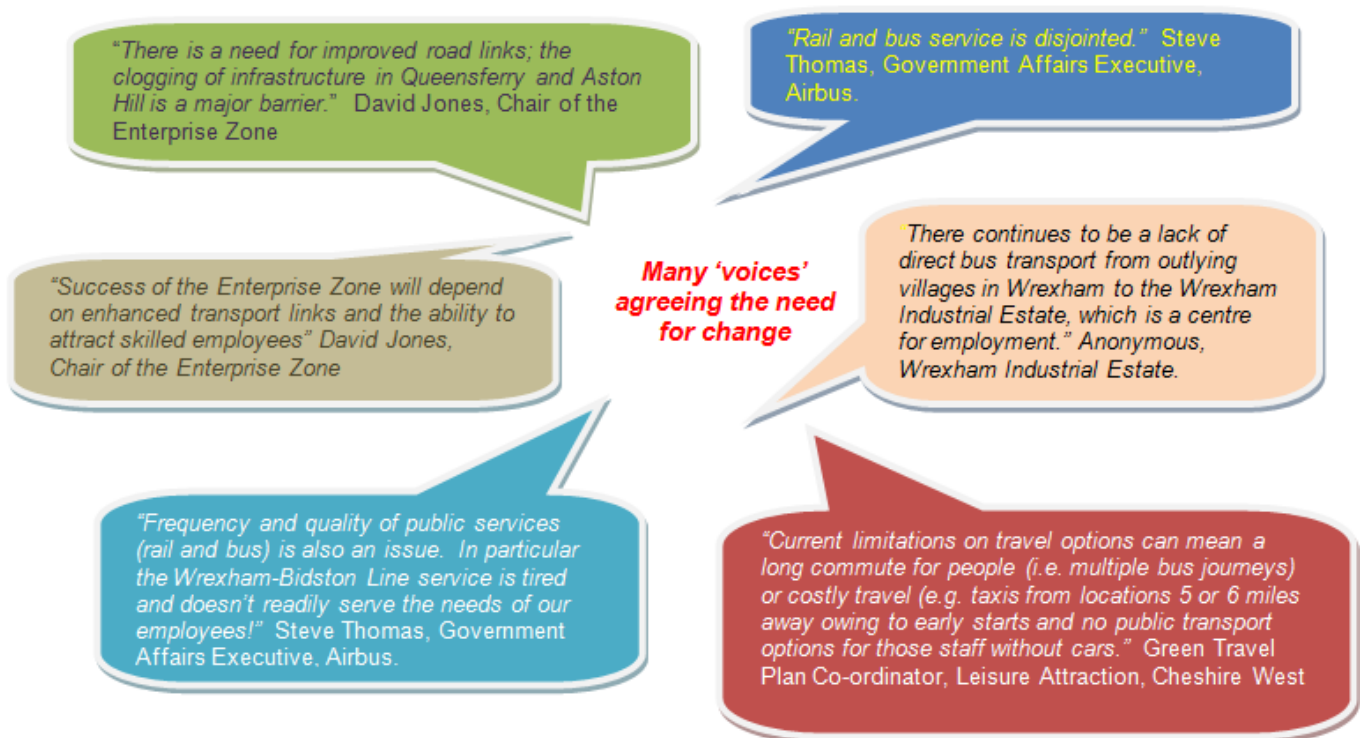
<sup>7</sup> North East Wales Job Seeker Survey, Taith, 2013





Destination:	Deeside Enterprise Zone – Deeside Industrial Park (c.8,000 jobs)		
Origin:	Car Journey time (hh:mm)	Public Transport Journey time (hh:mm)	Public Transport Mode
Flint	00:16	00:43	Bus (1 change)
Rhyl	00:39	01:25	Bus / Train (1 change)
Denbigh	00:44	02:17	Bus / Train (2 changes)
Wrexham	00:32	01:25	Bus (2 changes)
Frodsham	00:24	01:14	Bus / Train (2 changes)

The Task Force considers that the most important ‘voices’ are those of the users and businesses of the area. The following are examples that help summarise the need to change the networks and provision of the area.....



In transport terms, the following are key issues that need to be addressed.

- The rail network does not link places where people live to employment sites effectively and does not offer sufficient service frequencies to allow seamless commuting where it does.
- Bus networks serve town and city centres reasonably well, but outside of the core network service frequencies are often poor, journey times slow and access to employment for commuting purposes is generally difficult.
- Many journeys in the study area are often very short, but the active travel network is patchy in places and even good routes have gaps in provision which deter existing and potential users.
- Interchanges between transport modes are poor, rail is not connected with bus, car parking is limited at rail interchanges, and rural areas have few opportunities other than car to access employment or services.
- Travel planning is under-developed and often seen as a planning led, desk-based report process rather than a key activity that will enable us to make better use of the existing network.
- Marketing of alternatives to the car is poor and ticket arrangements across public transport networks are complex, not joined-up and are often not understood by consumers.
- There is evidence that transport networks either side of the border are developed partially in isolation from each other, leading to gaps in service provision and difficulties in seamless cross border journeys.
- There are a number of key congestion pinch points that hinder the efficient movement of goods and people.

### 3 Transport Vision and Recommendations

North East Wales / West Cheshire is an area with a successful record in job creation, and an area which has seen significant transformation and growth since the 1980s. The study area is home to some world class manufacturing businesses, such as Airbus, Tata & Toyota and significant financial services employers, including M & S Finance and Bank of America. Nevertheless, the Task Force considers that the potential for further growth is being hampered by capacity and flexibility issues in the area's infrastructure and services, and this also poses risks for some existing business. Additionally, there are ambitious proposals for new developments within the study area, to the west in the Anglesey Enterprise Zone, including Wylfa B and the Menai Science Park and to the east along the M56 corridor towards Manchester and on Merseyside.

Developing a transport network for the travel to work area is complex due to the nature of the employment provision. There is no dominant single residential centre, and both employment and services exist in many locations in the study area. This has led to a complex origin and destination pattern that makes the task of designing public transport networks a much more challenging task than providing a radial network to a dominant city centre. The success of the study area to date has been the readily available capacity in the strategic highway network which has allowed easy access for car based transport to most locations. Increasingly however, congestion is a significant barrier especially where intensive local commuting and heavy traffic on the strategic network coincide. Without investment in the development of alternative sustainable transport opportunities alongside further strategic route capacity enhancement, the economic potential of the area will be negatively impacted.

The aspirations of the Task Force focus on a series of phased measures, facilitated by future capital and revenue commitment from a variety of partners. The measures outlined include physical schemes, transport service improvements and operational and marketing initiatives to create a **'total-journey concept'**. Our evidence points strongly to the fact that there are many good initiatives or pieces of infrastructure already available, but that these need linking together to create meaningful networks that facilitate access to employment and services.

**In order to maximise the benefit from these investments, the Task Force Vision for the study area is intended to provide a transport network that supports further growth, encourages investment in new developments and provides access to services for North East Wales and the wider region.**

The primary focus is connecting people to the right jobs in a sustainable manner. Sustainability can mean many things. In this case it revolves around environmental, social and economic factors with the aim being to enhance the wealth and wellbeing of the people of North East Wales and connecting areas, at the same time as helping to tackle poverty. With economic success come additional benefits of leisure time and the need for movement that this entails, which supports the tourism sector in North East and North West Wales.

The Task Force has identified that the differing governance arrangements either side of the border have an impact on the delivery of transport interventions that support access to employment and services. This need not be the case in future. Regions that are successful on a European scale, such as those around Basle in Germany / France / Switzerland or Malmo / Copenhagen in Scandinavia and that straddle national boundaries have one thing in common – they have resolved to ensure transport networks work effectively across the artificial boundaries that borders create.

**'Our vision is to create an integrated transport network that links people sustainably to jobs / higher value employment, health and other services and education. We aim to provide viable alternatives to car based access improving the prospects for growth and benefiting the people of North East Wales and the wider area that it relates to including North West Wales and North West England.'**

A conceptual illustration of our vision of an 'integrated transit network for the North East Wales Travel to Work Area' is included on page 8. This shows what an integrated transport system could look like if our recommendations are implemented and projects we identify are delivered.

The key outcomes of this report are based on resolving issues identified in the case for change. The core recommendations of the Task Force are set out overleaf:

## Recommendations....

### Recommendation

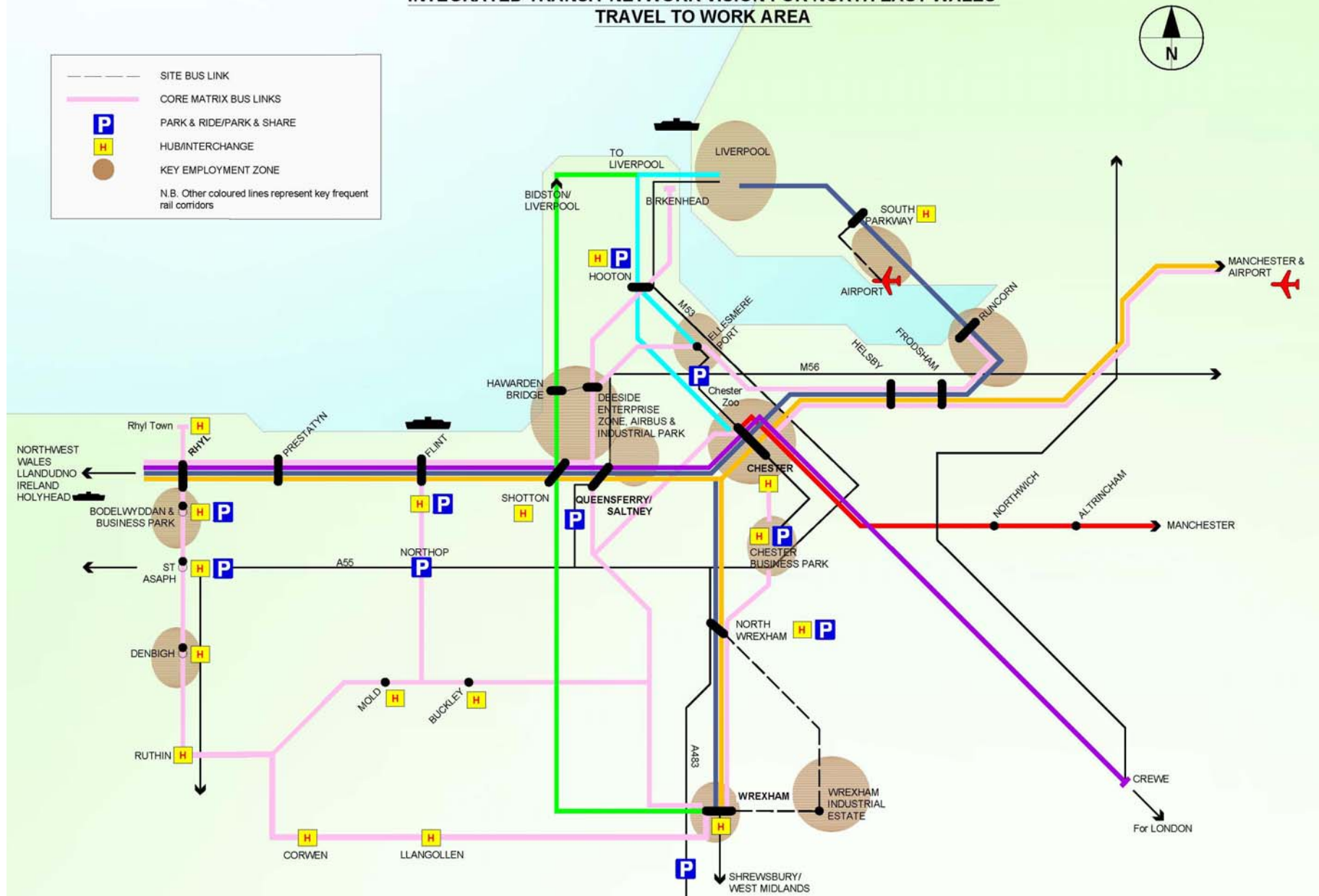
1. **The public transport services and infrastructure should provide high quality access to employment sites across the study area and beyond.** Proposals for an area-based quality bus partnership providing access to employment and key services should be developed in partnership with bus operators.
2. **The Regional Bus Networks Strategy will consider how accessibility between disadvantaged communities and employment can be improved.** We have identified a number of locations where existing bus services impact on travel horizons of job seekers and individuals seeking higher value employment. This strategy should include the provision of affordable bus and community transport, whilst also catering for high levels of evening shift activity.
3. **The rail modernisation business case should consider how frequencies of service and journey times within North Wales and to/from key destinations in the North West can be improved. We would encourage the provision of new stations and additional services that specifically serve major employment areas and help to tackle poverty.** The Task Force strongly supports the need to improve frequency and line speeds on the North Wales Coast Main Line and the Borderlands Line. We have also identified the need for new / enhanced stations including at Hawarden Bridge, serving Deeside Industrial Park and at North Wrexham, connecting residents with training and employment opportunities. There is also strong support for the delivery of the Halton Curve to enable direct services to Liverpool South / Liverpool from the study area.
4. **A network of integrated transport hubs that provide connectivity between transport modes should be developed. As an element of this, we consider that Park & Share / Ride sites can provide a strategic contribution to the regional network.** We have identified the need to provide a network of transport hubs at strategic locations such as Northop, Mold and North Wrexham, incorporating facilities for multi-modal interchange. Over time, we see that these hubs would evolve to form the basis of shuttle services to adjacent employment sites or other hubs on the network. At these hubs, other non-transport services can also be focussed to provide additional benefits to users.
5. **Access from rural areas to/from key services and employment by all transport modes should be improved. The concept of integrated rural hubs aligned with a reconfigured bus service network should be developed.** In terms of transport from more rural areas of the study area, we recognise the opportunities presented by reconfiguring existing bus and community transport services to serve hubs, such as for example at locations in the Vale of Clwyd. As part of this, we envisage developing a network of rural feeder services to connect to 'Express' services from strategic bus and rail hubs. Such rural transport hubs, providing modest interchange facilities, could also potentially include connected office space to reduce the need to travel, post office and home delivery pick-up services.
6. **Consideration should be given to the development of better integrated cross-border delivery mechanisms.** Given the level of interaction between North East Wales and North West England, the Task Force has identified a need for dialogue between the Welsh and English Governments to develop structures / formalised partnerships to enable greater cross-border collaboration to support and grow the economic region. This should include consideration of pooling / ring-fencing resources and consideration of opportunities for European Funding bids.
7. **Enhance and develop multi-modal, multi-operator ticketing schemes supporting seamless journeys, including cross-border trips. Solution should recognise trend for more flexible ways of working.** Work with transport authorities and operators to develop ticketing options that provide greater flexibility between modes, across border and recognise changes in flexible ways of working.
8. **Delivery of an enhanced commuter and recreational active mode network and facilities to enable interchange.** We have identified a number of priority routes including links to Airbus / Broughton and Wrexham Industrial Estate, as well as the need to enhance in-town walking and cycle links to open up opportunities for active modes and the provision of high quality and signed walking / cycling routes to stations. These will consider, where appropriate, the concept of Green Corridors.
9. **Undertake travel planning and travel marketing activities with employees and the business community to increase awareness of and access to sustainable travel opportunities and reduce the need to travel.** We consider that the employer based travel planning scheme operating in West Cheshire on key corridors should be mirrored in North East Wales, working with the major employment areas such as Deeside Enterprise Zone, Wrexham Industrial Estate and St. Asaph Business Park. This should be accompanied by greater onus on local planning authorities to make provision for sustainable transport as part of the planning process and stronger greater travel plan enforcement and monitoring.
10. **Address key traffic 'pinch points' to improve resilience, accessibility and journey times for people and movement of goods.** We have identified a number of key traffic pinch points on our network that hinders access to employment opportunities and the movement of goods / freight to / from key employment sites, including the A494 / A55 at Aston Hill, links from the Vale of Clwyd on the A494 connection to the A55/M56 through Mold or on the A525 connection to the A55 northwards and across to the A483, at the A55/A483 junction and the A483 between the A525 and the A541, west of Wrexham Town Centre. Strategic network constraints also burden the local network and thus impact on sustainable transport options / uptake.

## ....Actions and Outcomes

How Welsh Government Can Contribute	How Task Force Partners Can Contribute	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain revenue and capital support for public transport services and infrastructure.</li> <li>• Lead discussions with DfT on cross-border bus partnership arrangements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target available funding towards accessing employment sites.</li> <li>• Work with operators to ensure increased focus on work and education related public transport.</li> <li>• Ensure all stakeholders work to recognise network-wide benefits.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing access to projected 55,000 jobs in the area plus connectivity for those currently employed.</li> <li>• Reduction of job seekers not able to access jobs and interviews.</li> <li>• Reduced reliance on private car travel.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target revenue support for key initiatives across the area.</li> <li>• Engage with DfT to ensure that regulatory barriers across border are reduced on matters such as bus subsidy and regulation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with operators and to target resources and overcome 'regulatory' barriers, including cross-border.</li> <li>• Focus funding where can achieve the best outcomes.</li> <li>• Work with employers and developers to gain further funding for services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Services that create viable public transport focused options for job seekers and disadvantaged communities to link with existing and future opportunities.</li> <li>• New services that make more efficient use of current resources to target jobs and encourage new routes.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead the case for rail modernisation across all routes in North Wales and links to Crewe, Manchester &amp; Liverpool.</li> <li>• Engage with DfT on West Coast Mainline Franchise, Halton Curve, Manchester Hub and Northern Franchise replacement including northern rail devolution proposals.</li> <li>• Provide revenue support for Wrexham to Bidston frequency upgrade and capital funding for hubs and stations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use short-term and developer funding to provide schemes that support the rail modernisation and frequency improvements.</li> <li>• Work with cross-border partners to prioritise wider schemes.</li> <li>• Supporting business case development for rail modernisation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of a rail network with a minimum 30 minute service on all corridors to provide a network based system and reducing car reliance.</li> <li>• New and improved hubs that create access both between lines, but also between employment and residents.</li> <li>• Increased local and strategic rail access within/external to North East Wales.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen co-ordination with Highways Agency to deliver consistent route management across border areas.</li> <li>• Assistance in removing barriers to integrating modes and to providing cross-border services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement Park &amp; Share/Ride sites in liaison with Welsh Government and where applicable encourage the Highways Agency to do so too.</li> <li>• Work with bus operators to develop ways of integrating non-car modes to car focused hubs.</li> <li>• We will promote use of sites.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formalisation of the positive elements of car sharing and other sustainable activities for which there is proven demand.</li> <li>• A series of linked sites along core corridors to reduce pressure at pinch points and help intensify options on an area-wide network.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to provide targeted revenue support to bus and other services in rural areas.</li> <li>• Provide financial and other support for pilot schemes that encourage commercial entities to engage in provision of rural hubs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify sites and work with communities to develop hubs.</li> <li>• Implement example locations and work with authorities and private sector to identify other land uses and incorporate community focused initiatives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased ability for employers in rural areas to attract and retain staff locally while becoming increasingly accessible to and from outside markets.</li> <li>• Stronger local economies retaining and attracting jobs while supporting community.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead engagement with UK Government and DfT to maximise benefits from funding arrangements on both sides of the border.</li> <li>• Support and facilitate the creation of formalised cross-border working arrangements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with authorities on both sides of the border to collaborate on transport and land-use related issues that affect movement.</li> <li>• Work closely through the MDA and other groups to identify joint-delivery and funding initiatives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision and funding that relates to the real life journeys of users, not ones artificially created by different systems and mechanisms.</li> <li>• More focused use of resources, targeted in a manner that is more cost-effective for operators and users.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to lead standardised smartcard development.</li> <li>• Assistance to reduce cross-border barriers.</li> <li>• Work within existing and incorporate within new franchise arrangements to require multi-mode, multi-operator ticketing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work to identify and reduce barriers to movement that are created by different means of working and ticketing.</li> <li>• Examine potential to extend coverage of Taith Ranger and Merseytravel Trio tickets.</li> <li>• We will use persuasion and regulatory powers available to us to ensure operators work together.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased take up of network-wide ticketing and use, providing cumulative benefit in terms of revenue and ability to sustain greater service/connectivity.</li> <li>• Simplified, more cost effective journeys for all users, particularly employment trips.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued capital funding to develop active travel networks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target funding on delivering active travel links to employment sites and linking deprived communities with jobs and services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant rises in numbers of people accessing employment by active modes, leading to transport, environment and health benefits.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help with engaging key employers at national level to support core initiatives.</li> <li>• Provide targeted funding for employer based travel planning / engagement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use available funds to target key employment sites and develop initiatives complementary to existing Cheshire West and Chester workplace travel planning / engagement initiative.</li> <li>• We will ensure that Travel Planning is promoted as a practical tool, within all developments and through the planning process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An engaged employment community that can attract the diverse workforces needed to match job opportunities.</li> <li>• Reduced car use for travel to work.</li> <li>• Increasing matching of lifestyles with future jobs, linking economics with wellbeing.</li> <li>• Effective use of resources cross-border.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritise funding to tackle congestion and pinch points on the network that impact negatively on the movement of goods and services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work closely with the Welsh Government and Highways Agency to support their efforts to improve pinch points and encourage their joint area-wide working.</li> <li>• We will focus on schemes that provide greatest economic employment benefit.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reliable access, particularly for freight and suppliers across the network, ensuring economic competitiveness and access to key ports and airports as gateways.</li> <li>• Reduced future need for significant and costly road expansion schemes.</li> </ul>



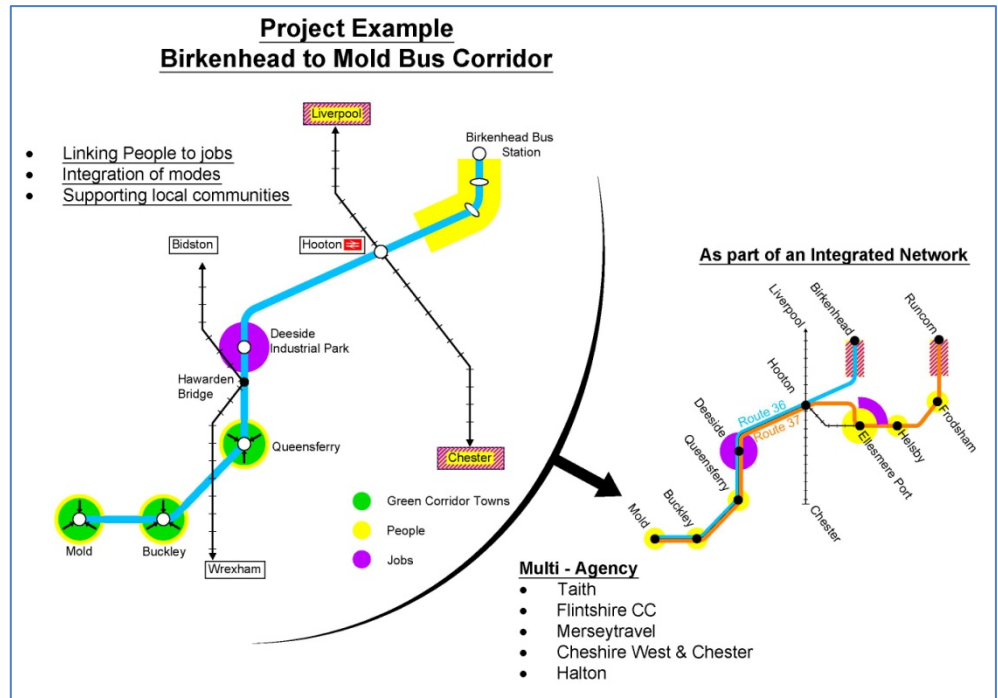
# INTEGRATED TRANSIT NETWORK VISION FOR NORTH EAST WALES TRAVEL TO WORK AREA



We believe that there are some key relatively simple interventions and changes in the short and medium-term that can provide specific benefits, and contribute towards our longer term vision. Two examples are highlighted below:

***Vision Example: Provision of Integrated Cross-Border Bus Corridors - The Birkenhead to Mold Bus Route***

The adjacent diagram illustrates the potential of a Birkenhead to Mold Bus Route, which has been developed by Merseytravel with Wirral, Flintshire and Cheshire West and Chester Councils. The key barriers that have prevented this from being implemented to date are the difficulties of linking together tendered and commercial services across authority and national boundaries. What matters is linking people in communities to the opportunities along this route, in this case, those in and around Deeside Industrial Park in the Deeside Enterprise Zone.



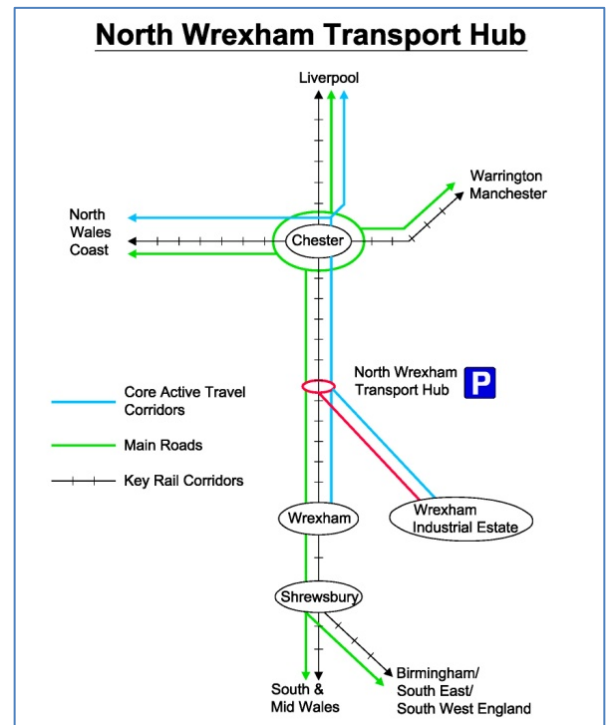
At present, our research shows how, even for the relatively short journeys from places such as Buckley to Deeside Industrial Park, the availability of public transport is poor, and where it is provided it is expensive for both user and operator. The beauty of this proposed 'route 36' is the potential for it to serve many different journey types allowing it to build up over time to become self supporting. Our aim is to take routes such as this and integrate them into the network – not just physically, but also supported by ticketing and marketing. The diagram shows how further connections with 'route 37' could be created – adding a further route to employment around the Mersey Basin in Runcorn, but also allowing people living in that area to access jobs at Deeside. The connectivity benefits of such a route are potentially significant, allowing someone in Mold or Queensferry to undertake a journey to Liverpool for work or leisure without relying on the availability of a car. Similarly someone living in the more deprived eastern side of the Wirral, such as Birkenhead could link through to a location such as Deeside for employment, ensuring that the businesses that are located there have an appropriate labour catchment and that they stay and expand there.

Establishing new corridors that create better integration between modes is also key – in this case the link at Hooton Station provides two-way access from North East Wales to and from Merseyside. Once the core corridor of movement is established, the aim would be to significantly upgrade the corridor in terms of both frequency and amenity. The Birkenhead to Mold Bus Route is just one example of the various corridor focused opportunities that we include in our list of potential schemes. Different corridors are at different levels of development – the aim is to upgrade them all as a package over time, including providing new ones where we need to respond to land use and trip making changes.

### ***Vision Example: Improving and Creating Multi-Purpose Transport Hubs – North Wrexham***

In combination with the aim of improving corridors comes the need to create enhanced points of connection between them. The following diagram helps illustrate why a new transport hub in North Wrexham, incorporating 'Park & Rail/Ride/Share' solutions, between Chester and Wrexham is proposed within the list of schemes, capitalising on the planned line speed enhancements / dualling of the line.

The Wrexham Industrial Estate is one of the three largest employment sites within North East Wales (alongside Deeside Industrial Park and Airbus) and is the preferred site by the Ministry of Justice for a new 'Super' prison. The census information in our evidence base highlights its draw both locally and strategically. The industrial estate is poorly served by public transport and employees travelling from the north by public transport have to travel through Wrexham itself which increases journey times significantly. Rail/bus interchange at the proposed hub, complemented by new bus service patterns would improve accessibility and competitiveness to core populations and markets to the north. The suggested location also forms a potential hub for local bus services in a location north of Wrexham, linking outlying villages and also serving as a hub to other employment sites such as the Llay Industrial Estate. It also provides an interception point for traffic travelling north on the A483 from Wrexham and south of here towards key employers around Chester, Cheshire and Deeside. Improvements of this nature would help reduce congestion on the already suffering road networks and junctions.



At the same time, the report points towards the need to provide cycle routes that can help reduce car use for the relatively short and flat journeys that exist around some core parts of existing networks (the topography partially explains why such movement corridors exist where they do). Our Transit Network Vision indicates a number of strategically located integrated transport hubs, many of which are upgrades to existing amenities, but some of which, like the proposed North Wrexham Hub will require new facilities. The hubs provide interchange between modes and network feeder services and provide flexibility and choice to respond to modern lifestyles and complex movement patterns that working lives in particular create.

### **Summary**

In summary, the vision is a series of proposals that fit together to create a network that relates to aspirations for travel to work and lifestyle, while ensuring that the businesses of North East Wales are connected and the area is attractive for businesses considering relocation. The network builds over time into a multi-modal, multi-route network that links with other networks and where ticketing, marketing and branding initiatives will play an important role. The key intervention is that of working across boundaries, both local and national to ensure that these aims are achieved for the collective benefit of all.

**This vision has been developed collectively by a series of partners across modes and geographies to identify what the critical issues are before developing this linked and coherent strategy that is capable of being implemented steadily over time with significant cumulative benefits. This is our vision for North East Wales and our recommendation as the Transport Task Force for the area.**

## 4 Delivery of the Vision

A series of phased measures and initiatives, have been identified by the Task Force, which it believes will provide a positive contribution towards the delivery of the overall vision. Whilst the Task Force acknowledges that funding is limited, the Task Force partners are committed to delivering those elements of the delivery plan which are within their control and to working with the Welsh Government and other partners in support of the wider delivery plan proposals.

### Delivery and Cross-Border Working Arrangements

**In order to efficiently deliver the Task Force recommendations and in line with the recent Haywood Dee Region Cross Border Economy Report<sup>10</sup>, it is critical that a continued strategic approach to high-level cooperation between the Welsh and UK Governments should take place. Complementing this, for transport, there should be formal working arrangements between Network Rail, Taith, and the English Local Transport Boards (LTBs).**

The Task Force believes that the Mersey Dee Alliance (MDA) supported by effective and constituted joint delivery bodies for specific interventions, is best placed to co-ordinate and support continued economic growth in the cross-border region. There should be a specific delivery body for transport interventions that would:

- Develop integrated local transport networks;
- Identify potential funding opportunities;
- Identify and jointly promote strategic transport projects;
- Share information on strategic developments or transport projects that may impact on the cross-border region (and also wider North Wales economy); and
- Work with the MDA and other partners to support economic growth in the area.

This body should also seek to engage in dialogue with other adjacent cross-border transport authorities, including Greater Manchester and southwards to Shropshire, to ensure greater co-ordination in transport planning. There may also be a case for specific cross-border bodies for the delivery of strategic projects or services if circumstances demand.

We are grateful for the significant input that English partners have put into this report and are pleased that there is agreement that the area should have a strong shared vision for future transport delivery.

### Funding Opportunities

**The Task Force acknowledges that the availability of public sector funding is highly uncertain, therefore innovative funding options need to be carefully considered and created to ensure that transport schemes can be delivered in this constrained environment.**

Any funding strategy will draw on known and potential sources and could comprise:

- Greater coordination and pooling of transport funding at a regional level;
- Development of a 'ring-fenced' fund for delivering cross-border transport schemes through an identified delivery agency or Special Purpose Vehicle for the North East Wales Travel to Work Area. This can be sourced through the pooling of transport funding from local and regional pots;
- Proactively engage with private developers and other private sources to ensure they will support transport schemes that benefit their aims;
- Maximise opportunities to obtain funding from European funds; and
- Understand the potential for obtaining funds from the Community Infrastructure Levies.

In the short-term, a number of actions can be undertaken to start to provide options for accessing funding. These include:

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<sup>10</sup> Haywood (2013) 'The Dee Region Cross-Border Economy: next steps Report for the Minister for Business, Enterprise, Technology and Science'



- Undertake early engagement with property developers to understand which schemes could come online alongside development opportunities;
- Understand the funding cycles and opportunities to bid for funds from the Welsh Government, English Government and European bodies; and
- Engage closely with the emerging city region planning context and explore opportunities for promoting greater coherence across policy areas including housing, economic development, health and education.

It is important that all funding opportunities are understood and it is likely that over time more innovative approaches to funding are developed.

### Delivery Proposals

This section summarises the core schemes and initiatives that have been identified by the Task Force as a set of potential schemes that would help deliver the vision, including 'quick-wins' whilst acknowledging that many of the schemes would require further work / feasibility to deliver. It should be noted that a number of the schemes are partially implemented or planned to be delivered within existing budgets, a number of schemes could be delivered by making better use of existing resources / diverting existing funding and finally a number of schemes could be accelerated or delivered through the identification of new funding.

Our key aims have been to identify schemes and initiatives that **assist economic growth, job creation and provide improved opportunities for people to access jobs and services alongside promoting social inclusion and the reduction of poverty**. By nature, a significant focus of this work has been on improving connections between residential areas and key employment sites, such as Deeside Industrial Park, Wrexham Industrial Estate and St. Asaph Business Park / Bodelwyddan.

The Task Force sees **rail modernisation** in North Wales as a major opportunity to reconfigure the transport network in the region and is fully supportive of the progress which is being made in this area under a separate workstream. Improvements to services, rail speeds and frequency enhancements are strongly supported by the Task Force, providing the basis for a modern, integrated transport network and helping to address the coastal deprivation issues by improving access to employment and making the area more attractive to inward investment.

In addition, there is also significant support for finding a solution to the issues of traffic capacity and congestion on the **A494/A55** in the vicinity of the Deeside Enterprise Zone and as such, the Task Force also consider it important to accelerate the progress of the scheme development through the next phase of the scheme appraisal process (WelTAG Phase Two) and work towards a solution that ensures that the development of the Deeside Enterprise Zone and wider area is not curtailed.

The table overleaf contains a series of interventions that we consider would help to deliver the vision, detailing indicative timescales for delivery (short-term 2013/14-2014/15, medium-term 2015/16-2019/20 and longer-term 2020+), geographical coverage, indicative capital and revenue costs and whether any funding is already identified to deliver elements of the intervention. These schemes have also been mapped against the recommendations contained in the 'Transport Vision and Recommendations' section.

**The Task Force has identified a series of short-term measures which, through the commitment of Task Force partners and the Welsh Government, it believes are both deliverable and affordable, providing 'quick-wins' in delivering the recommendations of the Task Force and leading towards delivery of the integrated Transit Network Vision.**

<b>Potential Interventions</b>		<b>Recommen- dation Mapping</b>	<b>Time- frame</b>	<b>Coverage</b>			<b>Indicative Capital Cost / Revenue Implications (R)</b>	<b>Funding Already identified for Elements</b>
<b>Scheme</b>				<b>Wales</b>	<b>England</b>	<b>Cross - Border</b>		
*Scheme benefits Deeside Enterprise Zone								
[Time Frame: ST (Short Term); MT (Medium Term); LT (Longer-Term)]								
<b>Public Transport Network Development and Accessibility – Bus</b>	1. Cross Dee Bus Route (Mold to Birkenhead)*.	1,2,4	ST				£0.25m R	Y
	2. Cross-Dee Bus Route (Rhyl / Prestatyn, Holywell, Flint, Deeside Industrial Park to Chester)*.	1,2,4	ST				£0.25m R	
	3. Bus Priority Measures in the Rhyl & Kinmel Bay areas.	1,2	ST				£1m-£2m	
	4. Provide Bus Shuttle Links to major employment sites from Stations.	1,4	ST				£1m R	
	5. Identify and provide Quality Bus Corridors and Bus Priority Measures.	1,2	ST				£4m	
	6. Upgrade Real Time Passenger Information on the core bus network.		ST				£0.5m-£1m R	
	7. Integrated Area Ticketing	2,6,7	MT				TBC	
	8. Introduction of Express Bus Services from Park & Share / Ride sites to Key Employment Sites.	1,4	MT				£0.5m R	
	9. Provision of bus priority at the A483 / B5445 junction.	1,2,4	MT				TBC	
	10. Development of Cross-City Park & Ride Services in the Chester Urban Area.*	1,4	MT				£0.5m-£1m R	
	11. Network improvements – improved access / egress to Wrexham Maelor Hospital (Phase 3).	1,2	MT				£0.25m	Y
	12. Bus priority along the B5129 through Connah's Quay / Shotton / Queensferry - Phase Two.*	1,2	MT				£2.5m	
	13. Creation of a multi-modal hub at Wrexham General Station.	1,4	MT				£1m	
	14. Chester Bus Station	1,4	MT				£10m	
	15. Enhanced Transport Hubs at Denbigh, Ruthin and St. Asaph / or Bodelwyddan and network service reconfiguration (including Community Transport solutions).	2,4	MT				£1.5m R	
	16. Enhanced Transport Hub at Llangollen.	2,4	MT				£0.5m	
	17. Enhanced Transport Hub at Chester Business Park.	4	MT				£0.5m	
	18. On-board Cycle Provision / Capacity - Pilot Scheme.		MT				£0.05m	
<b>Public Transport Network</b>	1. Frequency enhancement to half-hourly service on the Wrexham – Bidston Line.	1,3,5	ST				TBC	
	2. Extension of Llandudno-Manchester service to Manchester Airport (utilising existing dwell times and subject to Northern Hub Proposals).	1,3	ST				TBC	
	3. Enhanced Station at Hawarden Bridge with upgraded access arrangements to Deeside Industrial Park / Enterprise Zone (subject to any decision on future of Deeside Industrial Park Station).	1,3,4	ST				TBC	

<b>Potential Interventions</b>		<b>Recommen- dation Mapping</b>	<b>Time- frame</b>	<b>Coverage</b>			<b>Indicative Capital Cost / Revenue Implications (R)</b>	<b>Funding Already identified for Elements</b>
<b>Scheme</b>				<b>Wales</b>	<b>England</b>	<b>Cross - Border</b>		
*Scheme benefits Deeside Enterprise Zone								
<i>[Time Frame: ST (Short Term); MT (Medium Term); LT (Longer-Term)]</i>								
	4. Station Enhancement at Shotton Interchange (creation of a bus hub)	1,3,4	MT				£1m	
	5. New station at Deeside Industrial Park / Northern Gateway (subject to future strategy relating to Hawarden Bridge).	1,3,4	MT				£7.5m	
	6. New station north of Wrexham on the Shrewsbury to Chester Line.	1,3,4,5	MT				£3m-£5m	
	7. New station at Queensferry and / or Airbus / Saltney (Mold Junction).	1,3,4	MT				£7.5m	
	8. Improved car parking at Rail Stations.	1,5	MT				£1m-£2m	
	9. Following double tracking, options to provide frequency enhancements between Chester and Wrexham.	1,3	MT				TBC	
	10. Provision of Halton Curve to enable direct services to Liverpool South / Liverpool from the study area.	1,3	MT				£16m	
	11. Extension of London - Chester services to Bangor / Holyhead.	1,3	MT				TBC	
	12. Service enhancements following outcomes of Rail Modernisation. Schemes may include service changes on the North Wales Coast Line, including Fast Llandudno-Manchester Airport service, splitting and joining at Chester with Wrexham portion and Rhyl - Chester (with possible extension to Crewe) local shuttle.	1,3	LT				TBC	
<b>Access to Employment / Network Relief</b>	1. A55 / A483 pinch point.	1,10	<b>ST</b>				£5m-8m	Y
	2. Traffic signal upgrade on the Shotton Corridor, Queensferry.*	10	<b>ST</b>				£0.25m	Y
	3. Traffic Management / Capacity enhancements in Shotton / Connah's Quay / Queensferry Area.	10	<b>ST</b>				£1m	Y
	4. Park & Share at Dobshell.*	4,5	<b>ST</b>				£0.5m-£1m	
	5. Park & Share at Northop.*	4	<b>ST</b>				£0.5m-£1m	
	6. Traffic signal changes on the A494 to Mold Bypass.	10	<b>ST</b>				£0.25m	
	7. Bodelwyddan Infrastructure improvements.	1	MT				TBC	
	8. Park & Share at Abergele.	4,5	MT				£0.5m-£1m	
	9. Park & Share at Caerwys.	4,5	MT				£0.5m-£1m	
	10. Park & Share south of Wrexham sites.	4,5	MT				£0.5m-£1m	
	11. Wrexham Gateway Spine Road / Junction Improvement.	1	MT				£10m	

<b>Potential Interventions</b>		<b>Recommen- dation Mapping</b>	<b>Time- frame</b>	<b>Coverage</b>			<b>Indicative Capital Cost / Revenue Implications (R)</b>	<b>Funding Already identified for Elements</b>
<b>Scheme</b>				<b>Wales</b>	<b>England</b>	<b>Cross - Border</b>		
*Scheme benefits Deeside Enterprise Zone								
<i>[Time Frame: ST (Short Term); MT (Medium Term); LT (Longer-Term)]</i>								
	12. Pinch point Scheme at Vale Road, Rhyl.	1,10	MT				£0.25m	
	13. A55 – Vale of Clwyd Links (A525 Connections or A494 between Ruthin and Mold).	5	LT				TBC	
	14. New road bridge between Connah's Quay and Deeside Park.	10	LT				TBC	
<b>Active Modes Network Improvements</b>	1. Cycle Links to Wrexham Industrial Estate.	8	ST				£0.4m	Y
	2. Further rollout of schemes serving the Deeside Growth Zone (New link between Regional Route 568, Chester and Airbus. Broughton / Broughton Retail Park and Loop to Queensferry / Deeside Industrial Park; Saltney to Airbus & Queensferry to Broughton & Sandycroft).*	8	ST				£1.5m	Y (partial)
	3. Cycle parking at transport interchanges and key centres.	4,8	ST				£0.5m	
	4. Signing audit and improvement package.	8	ST				£0.5m	
	5. Rhyl Rail / Bus Station Links.	8	ST				£0.5m	Y
	6. New Cycling / Walking Routes along the Dee Coastal Path from Prestatyn – Flint and Flint to Connah's Quay.	8	MT				£0.5m	
	7. Delivery of high quality and signed walking / cycling routes to rail / bus stations.	5,8	MT				£1m	
	8. Medium distance routes in the 'Flintshire Matrix' area connecting residential areas and employment areas.*	8	MT				£1m	
	9. Medium distance route between Mold and Wrexham linking communities along the corridor.	5,8	MT				£2.5m	
	10. Delivery of in-town cycle/walking links.	8	MT				£6-8m	
	11. Extension of National Cycle Network (NCN) from Chester to Denbigh (via Mold).	5,8	LT				TBC	
	12. Long distance route between Chester and Wrexham linking communities along the corridor, with spurs to employment areas.	5,8	LT				TBC	
	13. Vale of Clwyd cycling connectivity.	5,8	LT				TBC	
	14. Dee Valley Cycleway Development.	5,8	LT				TBC	
<b>Smarter Choices</b>	1. Smarter Choices - Workplace Engagement (Travel Roadshows / Personalised Travel Planning)	9	ST				£0.5m R	
	2. Smarter Choices / Sustainable Travel Promotion Package	9	MT				£2m - £6m R	



## Summary

This report has been compiled to represent the collective view of the Task Force and meet the Minister's brief to look at ways in which Transport can support economic growth for the benefit of the people and employers of North East Wales. We have made a series of recommendations that relate to both the current situation, and the future opportunities that we envisage arising. Further details on the work undertaken in developing the Task Force Recommendations are contained in the associated Technical Report.

**We recognise that we can make better use of the resources we have available to help deliver the vision of an integrated transit network and can also review existing commitments and proposals to this end, but should further funding be available, we feel that we can accelerate schemes to sustain and grow the economy of North Wales and the wider region.**

The Task Force members request that the Minister accepts this report and its implications in terms of taking forward the recommendations made, working closely with all partners to ensure effective connectivity for this economically important region of both Wales and England.

## Annex A: Task Force Membership

### 1. Chair of Task Force: Councillor Mike Priestley, Taith

Officers from the following organisations:

- Taith.
- Flintshire County Council.
- Denbighshire County Council.
- Wrexham County Borough Council.
- Cheshire West & Chester Council.
- Mersey Dee Alliance.
- Merseytravel.
- Network Rail.
- Arriva Trains Wales (to represent Train Operating Companies).
- Confederation of Passenger Transport (to represent bus operators).
- Bus Users UK.
- PTUC Wales.
- Community Transport Association.
- Sustrans Cymru.
- CBI Wales.
- Federation of Small Businesses.
- Wales TUC.
- WCVA (to represent 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector interests).

### 2. Support to Task Force

The Task Force was supported by Welsh Government officials, officers from Taith and AECOM Consultants.

### 3. Wider Stakeholders

Input was also sought from the following organisations:

- Other Taith local authorities (Conwy CBC, Gwynedd Council, Isle of Anglesey CC).
- Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council.
- Warrington Borough Council.
- Halton Borough Council.
- Cheshire East Council.
- Highways Agency.
- North and Mid Wales Trunk Road Agency.
- Virgin Trains.
- Shropshire and Marches Strategic Rail Group.
- West Cheshire & North Wales Chamber of Commerce.
- Cheshire and Warrington Local Economic Partnership.
- Wrexham – Bidston Rail User Group.
- Representatives of key businesses in the area.
- Chair of the Deeside Enterprise Zone.

### 4. Review Group

The work of the Task Force was overseen by the Lead Members with responsibility for Transport from the following organisations:

- Denbighshire County Council.
- Flintshire County Council.
- Wrexham County Borough Council.
- Cheshire West & Chester Council.

