

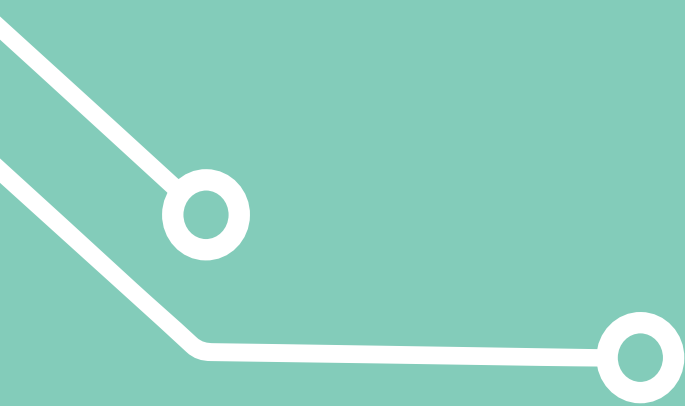


Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

# Moving North Wales Forward

Our Vision for North Wales and  
the North East Wales Metro

March 2017



## Foreword by Ken Skates AM

Cabinet Secretary for Economy  
and Infrastructure



There is huge potential to deliver economic growth in North Wales and to add value to the Welsh and UK economy. A modern, high quality transport system is fundamental to achieving this, connecting businesses to markets, facilitating trade, exchange and travel. I am committed to investing in transport in North Wales to ensure this region of Wales is a competitive and connected component of the Northern Powerhouse.

Our investment in transport must deliver social, environmental and cultural benefits to make North Wales a great place to live and work. Abandoning more isolated communities to a life that is wholly dependent on the private motor vehicle is economically, ethically and environmentally unacceptable. I have committed an additional £50 million to move forward our plans for the North East Wales Metro. This is on top of the substantial commitments for North Wales set out in the National Transport Finance Plan 2015 which will also contribute to achieving our aims.

We have an ambitious vision for transport in North Wales but we cannot achieve this on our own. We will engage and collaborate with public, private and third sector partners across Wales and the rest of the UK to deliver on our commitments.

# North Wales – Opportunities for Growth

## Our Economy

North Wales is well placed with access to markets not just in the region but also to markets across Wales, to the Northern Powerhouse and the Midlands, to London and the rest of the UK. North Wales contributes almost £13 billion GVA to the UK economy<sup>1</sup>. The industrial heartland of north-east Wales with West Cheshire and the Wirral make up the Mersey Dee economic sub-region. Together, the North Wales and Mersey Dee area has an economy worth around £26.5 billion GVA<sup>2</sup>.

## Jobs and Skills

North Wales is the location of a range of nationally and internationally important industrial and commercial companies, with a particular focus on advanced manufacturing and research and development. We have a highly skilled workforce, supported by universities at Bangor and Wrexham and an extensive further education sector. Key development sites at Wylfa Newydd, Wrexham and Deeside will contribute to the expected doubling of the economy of the North Wales – Mersey Dee area by 2040.

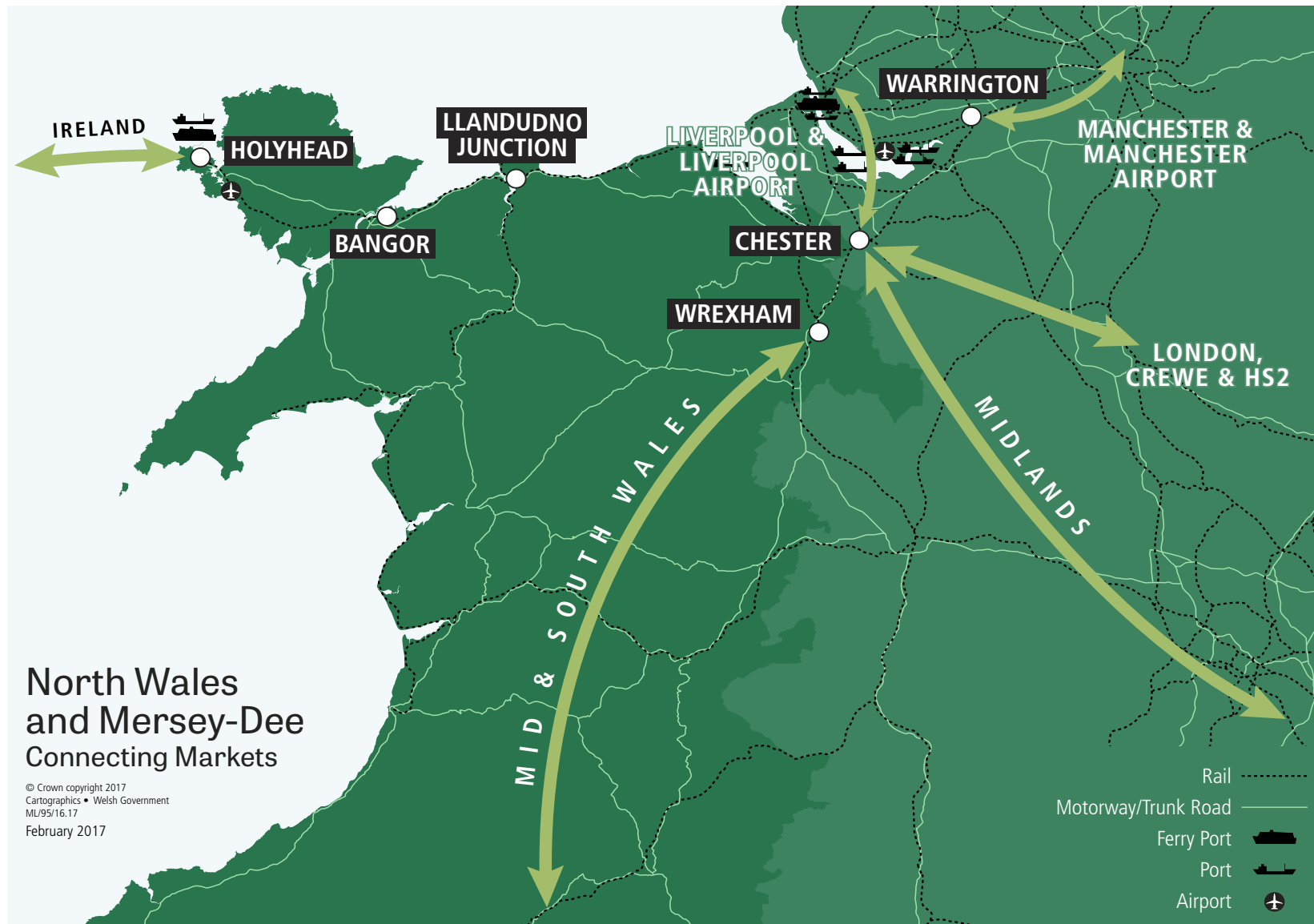
## Leisure and Tourism

North Wales has stunning landscapes and heritage, high quality sports and cultural facilities and has been recognised by the Lonely Planet Guide as one of the world's top regions to visit in 2017. Tourism annual spend for North Wales exceeds £1.2 billion, of which £659 million is from domestic overnight visitors, £98 million from international visitors, and £481 million from tourism day visits<sup>3</sup>. Outdoor leisure in particular is a growing market with recent developments at Surf Snowdonia and at Zip World with the longest zip wire in Europe.

<sup>1</sup> <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Business-Economy-and-Labour-Market/Regional-Accounts/Gross-Value-Added-GDP/gva-by-measure-welsh-economic-region-year>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/grossvalueaddedgva/datasets/regionalgrossvalueaddedincomeapproach> and <http://gov.wales/docs/statistics/2016/161103-regional-economic-labour-market-profiles-november-2016-north-wales-en.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> International Passenger Survey (<https://www.visitbritain.org/nation-region-county-data>), GB Tourism Survey (<http://dservuk.tns-global.com/GBTSWalesLightViewer/ViewTable.aspx>), and GB Day Visits Survey (<http://gov.wales/docs/statistics/2016/160809-great-britain-day-visitor-2015-en.pdf>)



# Our Commitment

We are committed to delivering a transport system in North Wales that is internationally focused and facilitates a region that is ambitious, engaged and connected to the wider world. It will work for:

**People** – Enable people to live healthy and independent lives, with equality of opportunity and access to jobs and services, enabling people into employment and sustaining jobs.

**Businesses** – Provide the conditions to maximise economic development and employment access to markets in Wales, the rest of the UK and beyond, stimulating innovation and growth for a modern economy.

**Communities** - Connect communities to facilities, jobs and services through sustainable and resilient infrastructure that supports socially cohesive and resilient communities.

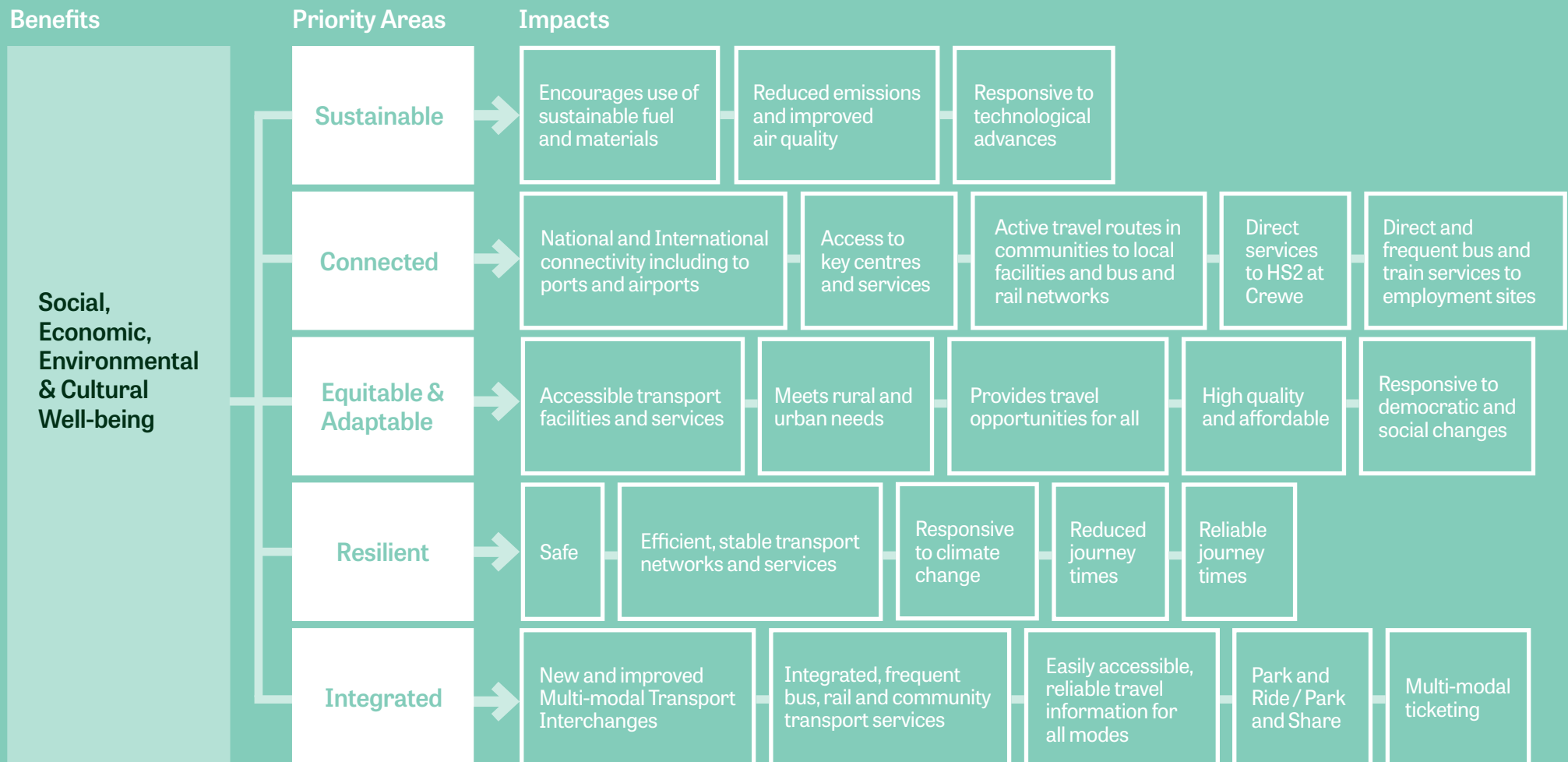
**Environment** – Encompass sustainable development principles with a transport network that is integrated and sustainable.



# Our Vision for an Integrated Transport Network

We will create a sustainable, reliable, efficient and quality integrated transport network across the region. It will connect people, communities and businesses to jobs, facilities, and services and maximise the economic opportunities of connectivity across Wales and our borders. We will provide the policy framework and the necessary tools using the Well-being of Future Generations Act and WelTAG – the Welsh Transport Appraisal Guidance – to guide the development and delivery of the most effective solutions.

## Our transport systems will deliver:



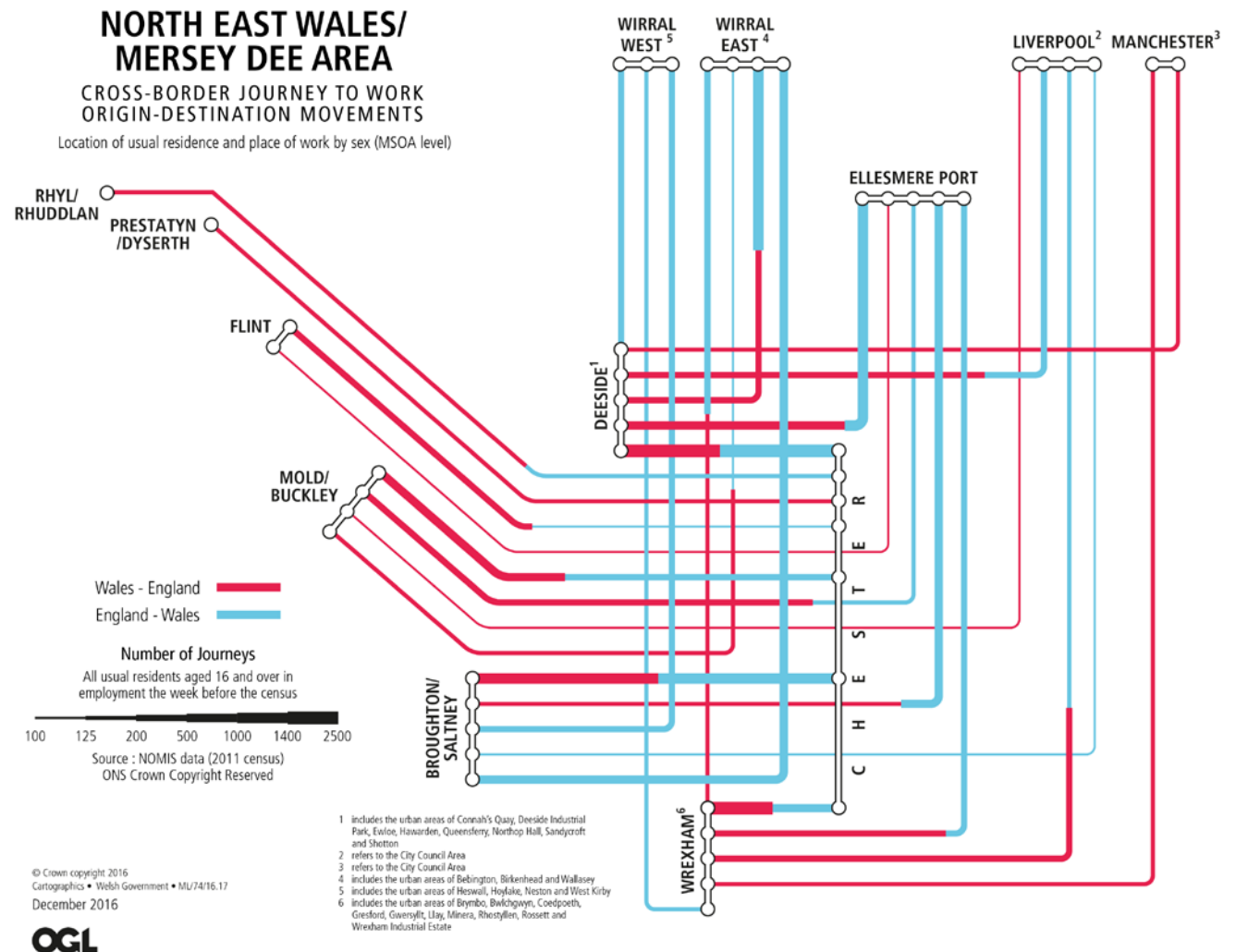
# North East Wales Metro and Cross-Border Connections

There are strong links between the economy of North East Wales and that of North West England. The 2011 census recorded significant cross-border commuter flows amounting to one million journeys per month. Significant daily flows to work are from North Wales to Chester and Cheshire (17,500), to Merseyside (3,500) and to Greater Manchester (2,200).

Similarly about 20,000 workers cross the border each day into Wales. There are also around 3,000 commuter trips from North East Wales to Shropshire daily highlighting the importance of cross-border links to the English Midlands<sup>4</sup>.

Cross-border routes through North East Wales are important for road freight transport, particularly for freight between mainland Europe, England and Ireland. There are also important local and regional strategic transport links to and from North East Wales to North West Wales, Llangollen, Corwen and to Mid, South and West Wales.

A selection of the complex cross-border commuter movements within the Mersey Dee area are illustrated here.

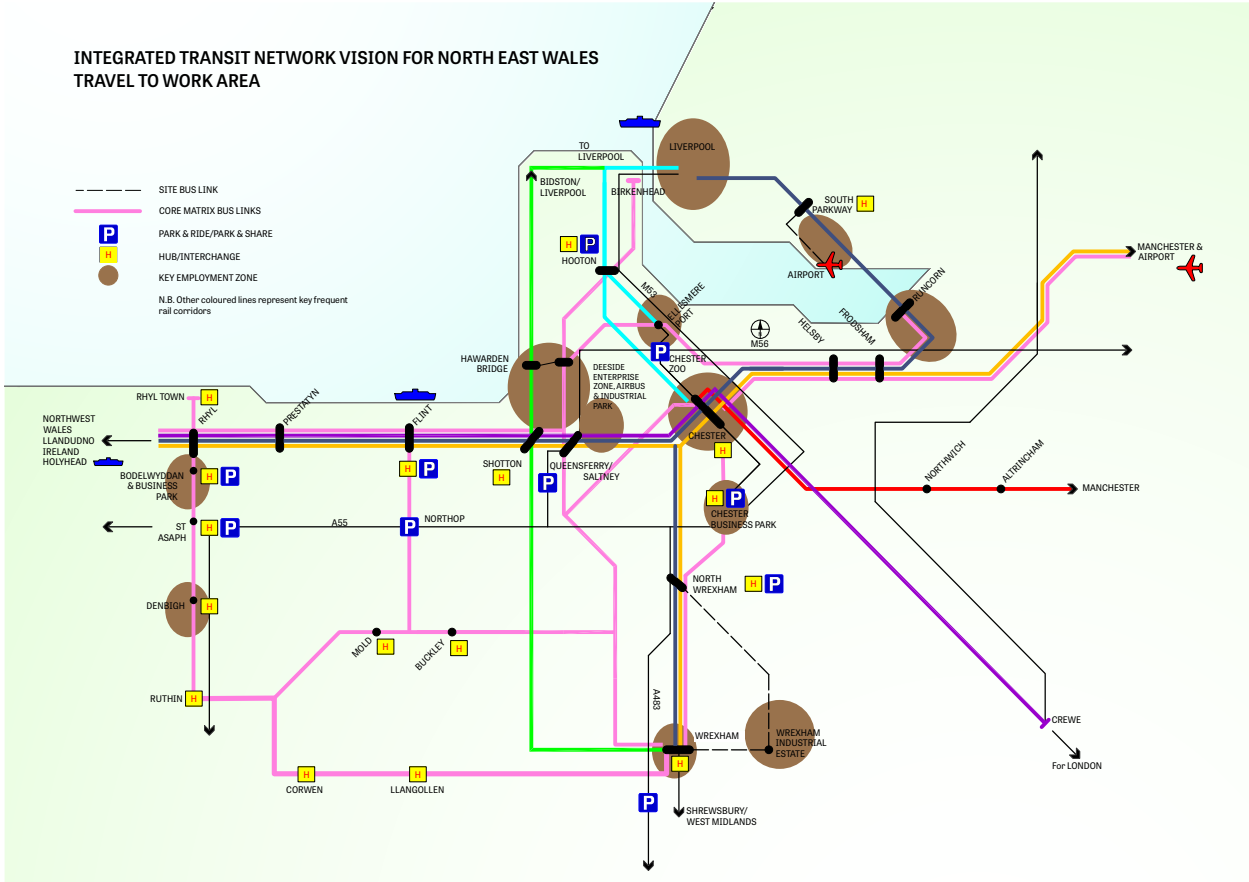


<sup>4</sup> [www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk) Commuting Patterns in the United Kingdom, 2011 Census

We will work with authorities across the border, most notably Cheshire West and Chester Council, the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership, Transport for the North and Midlands Connect. Working together, we will deliver a joined up public transport system that meets the needs of people in both Wales and England and provides fast, frequent and reliable services to existing and planned employment opportunities.

The North East Wales Integrated Transport Task Force, established by the Welsh Government in 2013, developed a possible network for a Metro in the North East Wales travel to work area. This is shown here.

The Task Force included representatives from the public, business and third sectors across the Wales – England border. The Task Force work has influenced projects we are currently taking forward and we will build on this work as we develop in collaboration with partners our plans for the North East Wales Metro.



# We are already delivering transport improvements across North Wales

Whilst our plans are being developed we are already investing in key projects. These will contribute to the achievement of our longer term aims for improvements to rail and road capacity and resilience, active travel facilities and schemes to facilitate the development of and support for bus, rail and air services.

Maps 1 and 2 reflect some of the main projects we are currently developing. Further major schemes will need to be developed and taken forward to deliver our transport vision and modernise transport services and infrastructure.

## Highway schemes currently being developed are for:

- 1. A third crossing over the Menai Straits** to provide additional capacity, improve resilience and reduce congestion. Works could start by end 2020.
- 2. A55 Abergwyngregyn to Tai'r Meibion improvement** will upgrade this section to current standards and improve drainage, resilience and safety. Works are planned to start in 2017.
- 3. A55 Junctions 15 and 16** replacement of the roundabouts with grade separated junctions to improve safety and journey time reliability. Works could start in 2019.
- 4. A55/A494/A548 Deeside Corridor Improvement** package of measures including highway scheme to improve connectivity, safety and resilience and reduce congestion on a key strategic link into North Wales. A public consultation on two options is being held March-June 2017 with a preferred route expected to be announced before end of 2017.
- 5. A494 River Dee Bridge Improvement** provision of a new bridge which will allow an upgrade of the existing bridge which is in poor structural condition.
- 6. A487 Caernarfon to Bontnewydd Bypass** will improve connectivity and road safety, reduce congestion and reduce traffic in built up areas. Works could start late 2017.
- 7. A487 Pont ar Dyfi, Machynlleth** construction of a new bridge upstream of the existing historic bridge to improve connectivity and resilience. The existing bridge is unsuitable for current traffic volumes and is prone to closure due to flooding. Works could start in 2017.
- 8. A483 Junctions 4 and 5 improvements** development of options to improve capacity at key junctions with the A483 trunk road to west of Wrexham to facilitate potential employment and housing development.
- 9. A483/A5 Halton Junction improvement** development of a scheme to improve capacity and reduce queuing.
- 10. A55 to Holyhead Port improvement** development of a scheme to improve access onto the A55 for vehicles leaving Holyhead Port, to reduce congestion and delay, especially for freight vehicles and to improve conditions for local road users.
- 11. A55 Route Study** study of existing and projected traffic issues on A55 across North Wales taking account of key strategic economic growth and development opportunities and identification of options to accommodate increased traffic where appropriate.
- 12. A483 Route Study** study of existing and projected traffic issues between A483 Gledrid Roundabout, Chirk and Rossett Interchange, taking account of key strategic economic growth and development opportunities and identification of options to accommodate increased traffic where appropriate.





**Rail and integrated transport schemes currently being developed are for:**

1. **Capacity Improvements, Chester Station** development of options to accommodate increased number of rail services through the station.
2. **Integrated Transport Hubs and Improved Rail Access, Deeside** development of options to improve access by rail, bus and active travel to key employment sites in Deeside.
3. **Integrated Transport Hubs, Wrexham** development of options to improve rail / bus / active travel interchange at Wrexham General Station and other key locations within the Wrexham catchment area.
4. **Electrification of the North Wales Coast Main Line** continue to work with partners to make the case for investment by the UK Government in this scheme to improve access to HS2 and the wider UK market.
5. **Rail Capacity Improvements between Wrexham and Chester** development of options for further capacity improvements to facilitate additional rail services.
6. **Signalling and Linespeed Improvements on the North Wales Coast Main Line** to be delivered by Network Rail and will facilitate faster and more reliable rail journeys.
7. **Linespeed Improvements on the Wrexham-Bidston Line** development of options to facilitate faster and more reliable rail journeys.
8. **Holyhead Port Rail Freight Facilities** work with partners to identify opportunities to develop rail freight facilities at Holyhead Port and promote transfer of freight from road to rail.
9. **New Wales and Borders Franchise** continue preparation of specification for new franchise to operate from 2018.
10. **Direct Rail Services to Liverpool via Halton Curve** development of services between North Wales and Liverpool via Liverpool Airport using a re-opened Halton Curve.



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North East Wales Integrated Transport Task  
Force: Report to Minister for Economy, Science  
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