

# INVESTING IN A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR NORTH WALES



## CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT FIT FOR GROWTH

Building North Wales' regional economy

## INVESTING IN BUSINESS GROWTH

Laying the foundations for expansion

## SKILLING-UP NORTH WALES

North Wales set for growth and  
productivity boost

## REALISING TOMORROW'S AMBITIONS TODAY

Innovation at the heart of the North  
Wales economy

## EXPLOITING OUR STRENGTHS

Capitalising on North Wales' assets to  
boost economic growth



NORTH WALES AND EUROPE  
2007 – 2013

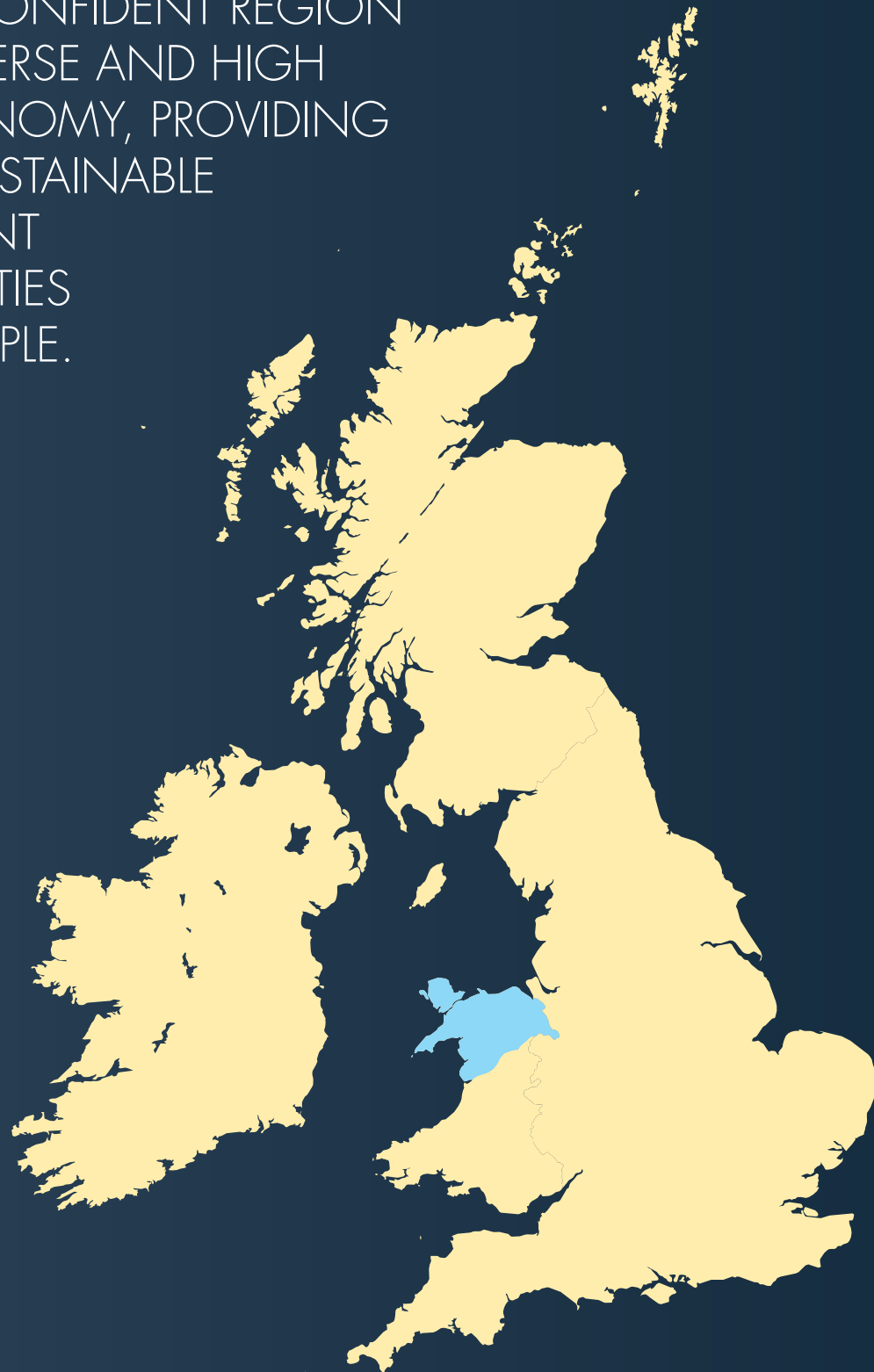
Produced on behalf of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board by the 2010 – 2015 North Wales Specialist European Team





## EUROPEAN STRUCTURAL FUNDING IS HELPING NORTH WALES BUILD A BRIGHTER FUTURE.

THE NORTH WALES ECONOMIC  
AMBITION BOARD'S AIM IS TO  
CREATE A CONFIDENT REGION  
WITH A DIVERSE AND HIGH  
VALUE ECONOMY, PROVIDING  
QUALITY, SUSTAINABLE  
EMPLOYMENT  
OPPORTUNITIES  
FOR ITS PEOPLE.



## Seven years of tremendous change in North Wales



Since 2007, over £279m of investment including £154m from the European Structural Funds has helped strengthen the North Wales economy and laid the foundations for sustainable growth and enabled the region's people, businesses and communities to move towards achieving their full economic potential.

**Councillor Dilwyn Roberts, Chairman of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board looks back at the achievements across North Wales over the past 7 years and how investment from EU Funds has contributed to the Board's ambitions for building the region's economy.**

"We have every reason to look forward with real optimism to the prospects for the economy of North Wales over the next few years.

"Projects supported by European Structural Funds have helped more than 3,900 businesses to grow, supported over 2,100 business start-ups, and has resulted in over 6,000 jobs being created across North Wales. The investment has enabled the region's businesses to become more competitive and to seek out opportunities for development, as well as adopt new and more efficient processes and practices.

"North Wales is already home to some of the international giants of industry. Airbus, Toyota and ConvaTec, are just a few of the major companies that have chosen to invest in the region, and with major new developments such as Wylfa Newydd, the £250 million prison in Wrexham and ongoing developments at North Wales' three Enterprise Zones, there will be range of opportunities for businesses and the people of North Wales to take advantage of.

"We were also one of the first regions in Wales to see major public investment in superfast broadband roll-out. We are building a digital network that can compete with anywhere in the world, and with facilities such as OptIC Glyndŵr, PONTIO in Bangor, the Menai Science Park planned for Anglesey, a business environment which is second to none is being established.

"It's no big secret that North Wales has a wealth of riches when it comes to its unique landscape, culture, heritage and language and we are already seeing the positive results of EU Structural Funds investment in our outdoor and cultural heritage tourism industry. Over 320,000 people have visited the sites supported contributing to our existing tourism industry which generates £1.8 billion for the North Wales economy each year.

"There has also been an investment in our people, and through training and development we are moving towards developing the skilled workforce we need. Having a skilled, adaptable and responsive workforce will not only increase the value of our existing businesses, but also make our region more attractive to investors.

"It's clear European investment has helped North Wales prepare and build for a prosperous future, and, with new jobs and opportunities on the horizon, we can look ahead with optimism. By giving our young people the confidence of future career prospects, it will help to retain them in the region, which will in turn assist in the preservation of the Welsh language and culture.

"This booklet looks back at some examples of how North Wales has benefited from European support over the period 2007 - 2014."

Between 2007 and 2014 four counties in North Wales (Anglesey, Conwy, Denbighshire and Gwynedd) received the highest level of European support through the £1.8bn West Wales and the Valleys Convergence Programmes. Wrexham and Flintshire received support from the £115m Regional Competitiveness and Employment Programmes for East Wales.



## A BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT SECOND TO NONE

North Wales' three Enterprise Zones in Deeside, Anglesey and Snowdonia are going from strength to strength, powering new business growth to boost the economy across North Wales.

To make sure every part of the region benefits, investment has been made across North Wales to create space for large and small businesses to start-up, expand and to exploit new opportunities.

Developments include the redevelopment of the historic Bee and Station Hotel in Denbighshire into high quality office accommodation and a business centre for new enterprises in rural Pen Llŷn.

Another example is the transformation of developed land and premises into modern business units in Llangefni. The £1.8 million project provided 7 high quality business units to meet the needs of modern businesses.

Among those benefiting from the new accommodation two companies - Always Aim High' and TDL Events Services - have located next to each other to create their own 'events hub' and make the most of working together. Founder and Managing Director of TDL Event Services, Tom Last, added, "Our Company is going from strength to strength and 2015 is going to be a very busy year. These new units will provide an excellent location for us to continue to grow and will be a great base for coordinating and planning the services we provide to the many exciting sporting events we'll be involved in over the coming years."



High quality business units in Llangefni

## MAKING VIBRANT PLACES



£45 million has been invested in town and city centres across North Wales to attract private investment, jobs and visitors to the region.

From Wrexham to Caernarfon and from Flint to Holyhead and Colwyn Bay underused buildings have been brought back to life and town centres have seen major enhancements for the benefit of those who, live, work and visit them.

Rhyl is one town that has benefitted significantly as a result of a £9 million project which has helped the town to reassert its status as a popular tourist destination. As part of the project the Pont y Ddraig, pedestrian and cycle bridge across Rhyl harbour was built to draw in new visitors by linking the town to the Wales Coastal Path and the National Cycling Route.



Pont y Ddraig, Rhyl

## INVESTMENT DELIVERS RESULTS



The £4.4 million redevelopment of Blaenau Ffestiniog town centre has created a lively shopping location and reinvigorated the town as a destination for visitors.

Alongside significant investment by the public and private sectors in making the most of the town's unique culture and landscape for outdoor activities and heritage tourism; the project has led to a number of new businesses in the town centre, creating jobs and confidence that Blaenau is a great place to live, work and visit.

One of the UK's leading pub leasing companies, Punch Taverns, has invested in renovating and leasing two pubs in the town.

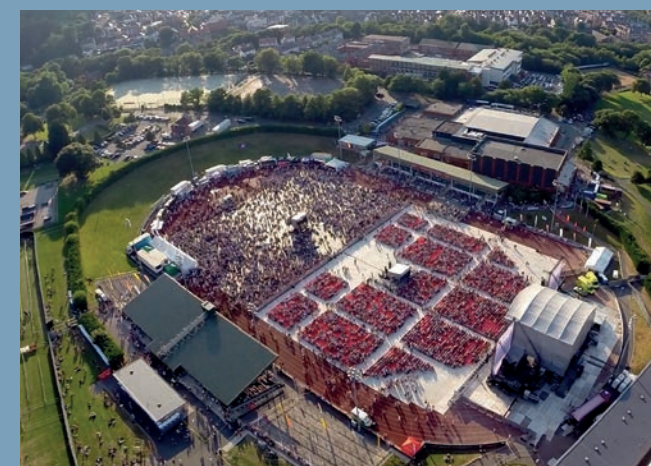
Andrew Lewis, proprietor of the Gwesty Tŷ Gorsaf Hotel in Blaenau Ffestiniog explains: "When I came to see Blaenau Ffestiniog, I could see the investment going on in the town, and the research I did on the area was very encouraging. Without the regeneration work I doubt we would have invested in the town. With tourist attractions such as the Ffestiniog Railway, Llechwedd and world class downhill biking trails, there were a lot of aspects that we thought could help bring tourists in and help boost the hotel and the local economy."



## A CORNERSTONE OF REGENERATION

Regeneration funding and its key position at the heart of North Wales is pushing forward the economy of Conwy.

One innovative project that has already boosted the area is Porth Eirias - a multi-million pound Waterfront Project in Colwyn Bay, which combines coastal defence and regeneration as part of the promenade improvements. Porth Eirias is also home to Celebrity Chef Bryn Williams' beach front bistro, Bryn Williams. At Porth Eirias which opened in the summer of 2015.



The £6.5m Parc Eirias Events Centre, situated in Colwyn Bay, is a state-of-the-art community, cultural and sporting events venue.

Since opening at the end of 2011, the Centre has hosted the Olympic and Paralympic flame, open air concerts by Pixie Lott, Olly Murs, Jessie J, Sir Tom Jones and Sir Elton John, as well as Six Nations under 20s and Senior International Rugby matches.

Teresa Carnel, Chair of Colwyn Bay Chamber of Trade, agreed: "Having the investment into Parc Eirias has really helped Colwyn Bay. It's helped instil business confidence and new jobs, we're on an upward spiral and, once again, Colwyn Bay is on the map as a visitor destination."



## THE INGREDIENTS OF SUCCESS

Millions of pounds of support have been provided in North Wales to stimulate and support growth, helping small and medium sized businesses in particular to increase their competitiveness.

Schemes such as the North West Wales Local Investment Fund (LIF) gave aspiring businesses that extra bit of support they needed to move forward – and in doing so assisted 448 businesses and helped create over 750 jobs.

One example of how LIF made a big difference is Dylan's Restaurant on Anglesey, which opened in June 2012.

David Evans, Director of Dylan's Restaurant, explained: "The financial support helped us significantly in terms of our planning and we received enormous support locally to help put together our application. The £35,000 we were awarded helped us fit out a high quality kitchen at our restaurant on Anglesey - without it we may not have opened."

The restaurant created 33 new jobs, and the company's success has since led to the opening, this year, of a sister restaurant in Criccieth.



## GET YOUR HOLIDAY BOOKED SUPER FAST

Businesses across North Wales are able to work smarter, faster and better, following major public investment in providing superfast broadband across the region. The Superfast Cymru project is helping to transform the way businesses across North Wales operate, enabling them to access new markets, work more efficiently and boost their profits.

The arrival of superfast broadband has helped make an online letting agency for premier self-catering properties across North Wales more efficient, competitive and profitable. Set up in 2010, Dioni Holiday Cottages, employs 4 members of staff, each able to work remotely by using collaborative software and cloud computing.

Dioni has embraced the power of social media and created walk-through videos for each of properties in the portfolio on the website and has also been able to take advantage and streamline their businesses systems on the cloud, and employees keep in touch using Skype and are able to make more use of screen sharing and remote desktop management.



## WORKING TOGETHER FOR BUSINESS GROWTH

The £1 million Strategic Business Parks project worked in North East Wales's key employment hubs - Wrexham Industrial Estate and Deeside Business Park – to help enterprises at the sites to get to know each other and establish working relationships. The project helped over 500 existing businesses and companies employing 18,000 people.

Between 2009 and 2015, 14 new businesses established on the sites, creating 283 new jobs, generating over £11.6 million of additional GVA every year for the regional economy.

The sites attracted significant private sector investment, Westbridge Furniture Designs for example opened a third manufacturing facility on Deeside Industrial Park to service a new five-year contract with Ikea, creating hundreds of new jobs and increasing production from 100 items a week to more than 2,000. The company now employs a total of 960 staff at its factories at Deeside and Holywell.

ConvaTec, which employs 600 people making wound dressings on Deeside Industrial Estate, made a £3.7m investment at its factory creating 67 jobs and safeguarding another 16.

## THE SCIENCE OF SNOW AND SALT

North Wales' universities and colleges have been working hard to make sure that businesses in the region make the most of the skills and knowledge they can offer to develop new products and services helping them to compete on the global stage.

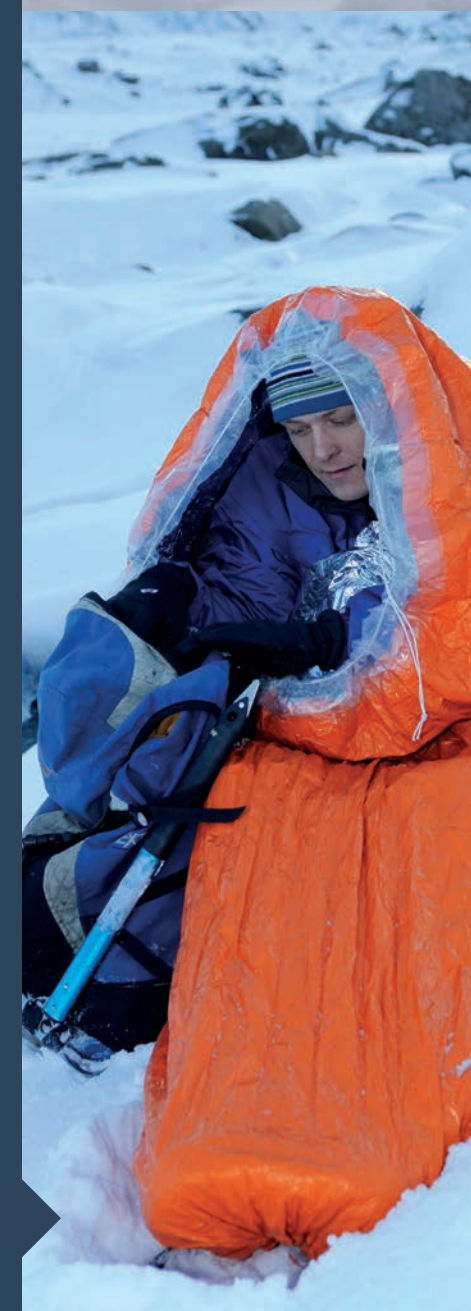
A new material designed to aid survival in extreme conditions was developed in collaboration between Blizzard Protection Systems Limited and the KESS (Knowledge Economy Skills Scholarship) project led by Bangor University. The firm has grown from a cottage industry to become a world leader in its field and increased turnover and employment at its headquarters in Bethesda.

With customers ranging from Michelin Star Restaurants to M&S, Halen Môn's Oak Smoked Water is doing a roaring trade. Heston Blumenthal can't get enough of the stuff! This unique water is added to soups and casseroles for a rich, smoky depth and researchers from the WISE 2 project worked with the company in testing the new product's stability.

WISE 2 researchers also worked with The National Beekeeping Centre Wales (NBCW), in Conwy, helping them define their offer and identify new products and services, finding ways of enhancing the experience of visitors and space for activities the Centre provides whilst improving revenue to support the work of the company.

WISE 2 also opened doors for Ruthin based Civil Engineering and Planning Consultancy, Waterco to access powerful spatial data, and provided expertise with GIS contributing to the company's aim of delivering flood risk alleviation through the implementation of natural approaches. Waterco's ambition to become a "nationally recognised expert in water, drainage and flood risk" is now being realised.

The BEACON project assisted another Denbighshire company Clifford Jones Timber Group (CJ Timber) in sourcing an innovative, durable and environmentally friendly coating product which protects timber from rotting, resulting in the company investing in equipment to apply the coating technology to their products leading to new market opportunities.





# TOMORROW'S ENTREPRENEURS TODAY



Almost £17 million have been invested to equip young people across North West Wales with the skills to take full advantage of the opportunities which will be generated in sectors such as energy, advanced manufacturing, media, digital technology and heritage and outdoor tourism, during the next decade.

'Potential', a £13.6 million project, motivated and supported over 4,300 11-19 year olds who were not in education, employment or training to remain in education and improve their skills

Another initiative, Llwyddo'n Lleol, helped over 11,000 11-19 year olds to develop an entrepreneurial outlook and be successful within their communities. The scheme also provided bursaries to more than 800 aspiring entrepreneurs to purchase essential equipment to try out their business ideas.



Solving a grizzly murder through forensic science, building a robot, creating a wind turbine and developing a 60 foot suspension bridge were some of the challenges on offer for students in Conwy and Denbighshire secondary schools.

These challenging days through Llwyddo'n Lleol highlighted the importance of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) subjects, and practical sessions gave students an insight into the world of work and the diversity of careers available locally.

# SKILLS FOR THE FUTURE

Investment in training and learning over the last few years has helped more than 35,000 people in North Wales to gain qualifications and skills. Having a skilled, adaptable and responsive workforce has not only increased the value of businesses by bolstering productivity, but is also making North Wales attractive to investors.

Companies in North East Wales received a £3.5 million boost to develop their employee's skills and improve their business performance. The Skills for the Workforce programme led by Coleg Cambria provided 2,800 employees working in 600 companies with the skills needed to succeed.

One sector which has benefited is North Wales' tourism industry, which generates £31.8 billion for the North Wales economy each year and supports 80,000 jobs. The Y Dyfodol project provided training in management for hospitality and tourism businesses across the region. One business to benefit was the Tavern on The Bay Gastro Pub on Anglesey.

Carol Peers, HR Manager said: "The restaurant is nothing without the calibre of management needed to lead the team and the Y Dyfodol project helped us gain new skills and improve productivity."

"The training of our two Restaurant Managers received benefits the level of 5-star service we strive to achieve."

[www.cambria.ac.uk](http://www.cambria.ac.uk)  
[www.gllm.ac.uk](http://www.gllm.ac.uk)



Tavern on The Bay

# SET UP FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE

With energy generation coming to an end at Wylfa power station and the first phase of decommissioning the Trawsfynydd Nuclear Site almost complete, the Shaping the Future project was set up to improve the skills and adaptability of the 1,200 employees who are likely to be affected.

At a time of global shortages in key technical and engineering expertise, North Wales is perfectly placed thanks to its unique concentration of sought-after skills – a valuable commodity that can support the sustainable growth of the region.

An important legacy has been forged in North Wales, thanks to the project's focus on developing the skills of the workforce. Employees were encouraged to think regionally and develop the skills they will need in the future to create sustainable, diverse careers in North West Wales.



# BREAKING DOWN THE BARRIERS

'New Work Connections', a £20 million project, motivated and supported over 4,768 individuals facing disadvantages into training, education and employment. The aim was to reduce economic inactivity and improve employment levels amongst the most disadvantaged groups across North West Wales.

# HOW SHAPING THE FUTURE HELPED ADRIAN



Adrian Williams is a Mechanical Designer working as a contractor at Trawsfynydd and grasped the opportunity to improve his current skills.

Adrian, whose goal is to set up a mechanical design consultancy said "The funding available to me, even as a contractor, meant I could attend specialist courses that I would not be able to fund otherwise". Adrian worked towards achieving the SolidWorks software Expert status. There are 70 in the UK – and just 8 in Wales. Adrian hopes to be the ninth.

Trawsfynydd Nuclear Site



## INNOVATION...IT'S AN ART AS WELL AS A SCIENCE!

Innovation and new technologies are driving competitiveness, jobs and sustainable growth in regions across the world; and with a vibrant business community, two prominent universities and dynamic further education institutions, North Wales is well placed to set the pace into the future.

Complementing the network of facilities which already exist across the region, Bangor University's £47m new Pontio development will bring together the arts and sciences in a unique way providing a further stimulus to innovation.

As well as a range of facilities including Hwb a dedicated state of the art innovation facility, Pontio will bring together research expertise, individuals and businesses to collaborate and develop new products and processes, and turning them into commercial reality.

[www.pontio.co.uk](http://www.pontio.co.uk)

The European Extremely Large Telescope (E-ELT)



## PRECISION WHICH IS OUT OF THIS WORLD

Scientists from Glyndŵr Innovations have been working closer than ever with businesses to develop cutting edge technology thanks to investment from the Academic Expertise for Business (A4B) programme.

The programme aimed to promote a high value economy and to maximise economic impact on businesses through knowledge transfer.

As Professor Paul Rees explained, "As a result of the funding from A4B, we achieved a world first metrology system that puts North Wales at the forefront to bid for producing up to 1,000 mirrors for the world's largest telescope – potentially generating 25 jobs for North Wales' manufacturing industry".

[www.glyndwrinnovations.co.uk](http://www.glyndwrinnovations.co.uk)

## HARNESSING THE SUPER POWER OF THE OCEANS

Previously untapped opportunities to generate low carbon energy in the waters around the Welsh coast is now a reality thanks to collaborative research undertaken by researchers from SEACAMS - Bangor University's School of Ocean Sciences' new £24 million centre in Menai Bridge, Anglesey - and the High Performance Computing (HPC) Wales project.

Using HPC Wales to access the national supercomputing network, researchers can model the environmental impact of placing marine renewable-energy devices around the Welsh coast

According to Dr Simon Neill of the School of Ocean Sciences, "Wales has some of the best tidal energy resources in the world. By helping to develop these locations we are now bringing developers into Wales and enhancing the Welsh renewable energy sector".

The low carbon energy sector in Wales, employs 40,000 people and contributes £3.2 billion to the economy each year.

[www.hpcwales.co.uk](http://www.hpcwales.co.uk)







# MAKING A SPLASH!

Two of North Wales’ most wonderful assets are its exceptional environment and unique culture. Making the most of these assets is a fabulous opportunity to celebrate what’s so special about North Wales and drive up the value we gain from one of our most important industries, tourism.

Over the last few years, with help from the Welsh Government and the European Union, tens of millions of pounds have been invested in making sure our coast has world-class infrastructure - through the Wales Coastal Path - and facilities to match.

On Pen Llŷn, Plas Heli, a new £9 million state-of-the-art sailing academy recently opened its doors and is already hosting world class sailing events and welcoming hundreds of sailors from around globe, bringing economic benefit and strengthening North Wales’ marine and sailing industry.

In Anglesey, along the spectacular coast 18 sites have seen investment from the Coastal Environment project, including Beaumaris Pier. Adventure tour company Ribride is one of operators who has benefited from enhancements to the Pier, and the company now operates a fleet of boats employing more staff and contributing to increasing footfall and visitor spend on the Island.

Watersport lovers are also flocking in their thousands to Porth Eirias, Colwyn Bay’s £3.7 million waterfront development to take advantage of the facilities, activities and the accredited tuition the friendly centre has to offer. Local businesses are reporting more visitors from further afield and increases in takings of up to 20%!



Dolwyddelan Castle



# MAKING HISTORY!

As well as its natural beauty, North Wales’ has a rich and unique culture and history. Heritage Tourism contributes over £193 million to the Welsh Economy annually and almost £3 million has been invested to make the most of what North Wales has to offer.

Through the Denbigh Town – Castle Link, Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site, Our Heritage, Princes of Gwynedd and Mona Antiqua projects history has been brought to life across North West Wales through enhanced access and facilities at historic sites and exciting new interpretation making the most of new technology. Among the development supported was the re-interpretation of the centuries old 130 mile Pilgrim’s Way linking from St Winefride’s Well at Holywell all the way to Bardsey Island!

Over 200,000 tourists have visited the 58 historically important sites supported by the projects, to date.

# REACHING NEW HEIGHTS

Tourists visiting North Wales to take part in outdoor activities are estimated to contribute £213 million to the region’s economy every year.

Almost £13 million has been invested to enhance the outdoor activity offer in North Wales taking full advantage of the region’s spectacular landscape and environment – boosting local business and employment in the process.

Set in Colwyn Bay’s wonderful 50 acre Parc Eirias and overlooking the Bay, the Eirias Events Centre has attracted over 140,000 visitors since it opened in 2011 and delivered in excess of £2.5 million in direct benefit to the local economy by hosting national and international events.

North Wales has also become a mecca for mountain bikers, with a range of wonderful facilities developed in recent years including the Conwy and Denbighshire Cycling Centre of Excellence and an extension to Coed-y-Brenin Mountain Biking Centre plus a new Downhill Mountain Biking Centre in Blaenau Ffestiniog opened as part of the Snowdonia One Big Adventure project. Over 220,000 visitors a year are now taking advantage of some of the best cycling and outdoor activity provision around.



Porth Eirias, Colwyn Bay



Antur Sionod’s downhill mountain biking trail





# north wales economic ambition board bwrdd uchelgais economaidd gogledd cymru

**The next 10 years is a crucial period for the North Wales economy. It has a real opportunity to increase economic productivity and growth, and generate over 40,000 new jobs.**

The main economic drivers within the region include projects such as Wylfa Newydd, modernisation of the railway line, the North Wales Prison development at Wrexham, Tidal Lagoon, UK Spaceport development and further investment in the Deeside, Anglesey and Snowdonia Enterprise Zones. These are transformational projects that have huge economic and employment potential for the whole region.

The North Wales Economic Ambition Board will build upon the legacy of projects delivered during the current period with the support of the North Wales Specialist European Team by providing the strategic vehicle to deliver transformational projects, co-ordinating and enabling economic growth and responding directly to the needs of business.

Investment from the European Structural Funds will be instrumental in delivering its strategy to create business growth across North Wales.

With the support of Welsh Government, the Board has decided to focus on key priorities to increase the productivity, competitiveness and growth of the North Wales economy. These priorities are outlined below:

- To strengthen supply chains in the region, in particular within high value sectors such as advanced manufacturing, and supply chains associated with energy related activities and development;
- To develop the region's infrastructure to facilitate and support economic investment;
- To improve and upgrade the region's skills base and promoting employment growth;
- To promote the marketing of North Wales as a destination for businesses and visitors, as well as ensuring that due attention is given to communication issues and information sharing.

Focusing on these priorities will support the development, delivery and sustainability of the major projects that have the potential to transform the economy, ensuring that their impact is maximised, and deliver the vision outlined above.



NWEAB General via @NorthWalesEAB  
BUSINESS & INVESTMENT via @7NorthWales  
SKILLS & EMPLOYMENT via @SkillsNWales



*Its vision is to "establish North Wales as a confident and outward looking region with a diverse and high value economy, providing a range of quality, sustainable employment opportunities for its people".*



CYNGOR SIR  
YNYS MÔN  
ISLE OF ANGLESEY  
COUNTY COUNCIL



CYNGOR  
Sir Ddinbych  
Denbighshire  
COUNTY COUNCIL



CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL  
COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL



CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL  
WREXHAM  
COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL



CYNGOR  
Sir y Fflint  
Flintshire  
COUNTY COUNCIL