

NORTH WALES & EUROPE

INVESTING IN A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR NORTH WALES

ISSUE 4: SUMMER 2015

Produced by the North Wales Specialist European Team on behalf of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board.

READY FOR TAKE OFF NORTH WALES SET FOR GROWTH & PRODUCTIVITY BOOST



ERDF



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ewrop & Chymru: Buddsoddi yn eich dyfodol
Cronfa Datblygu Rhanbarthol Ewrop

Europe & Wales: Investing in your future
European Regional Development Fund



ESF



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ewrop & Chymru: Buddsoddi yn eich dyfodol
Cronfa Gynddeithasol Ewrop

Europe & Wales: Investing in your future
European Social Fund



Enterprising Enterprises
Supporting business growth and increased
competitiveness in the region

Boosting Business Productivity
Encouraging productivity, skills development
and progression of North Wales' employers



THE **NORTH WALES ECONOMIC
AMBITION BOARD** BRINGS TOGETHER
THE REGION'S KEY STAKEHOLDERS IN THE
PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTORS TO DRIVE
ECONOMIC GROWTH ACROSS THE REGION.

Building a **strong and resilient business sector** in North Wales



North Wales has secured an investment of over £279m, including £154m from the European Structural Funds, since 2007. This investment has contributed to creating a stimulating climate for businesses to grow and thrive, and to increasing the skills levels of the region's workforce to drive productivity and higher earnings.

There are over 27,000 businesses operational across North Wales, generating an estimated £10 billion for the region's economy and employing thousands of people across the region.

We speak to Councillor Dilwyn Roberts, Chairman of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board about their plans to support business growth and bolster productivity in North Wales.

Our focus is on ensuring that our existing businesses, new investors and start-ups have access to the right infrastructure, premises, advice and funding that will enable development and job creation, especially, in key sectors such as energy, advanced manufacturing, creative industries, digital technology and heritage and outdoor tourism.

North Wales is already home to some of the international giants of industry. Airbus, Magellan, Toyota and ConvaTec, are just a few of the major companies that have chosen to invest their business in the region, and we are working continuously to promote the area to potential new investors.

Small and medium sized businesses are the very backbone of our economy, and contribute over £1.6 billion annually to the wealth of the region, with more than 2,500 new businesses starting up in 2013. We aim to ensure that help is at hand to continue this trend and further increase the number of sustainable business start-ups across the region as well as, supporting our existing businesses to expand, adapt and respond to changing opportunities.

Our region's universities and colleges are working hard to support economic growth in the key sectors, helping businesses to develop new fields and grow, and supporting people to gain skills and qualifications tailored to the needs of businesses – pushing up productivity and local earnings.

Enterprising Enterprises

Investment from the European Structural Funds since 2007 has helped more than 3,900 businesses to grow, supported over 2,100 business start-ups, and has resulted in over 5,000 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.

Boosting Business Productivity

Across North Wales, European Structural Funds investment has helped more than 38,000 people to gain the qualifications and skills to succeed.

This investment through training and development has helped us towards developing and securing the highly skilled workforce we need in North Wales. Having a skilled, adaptable and responsive workforce will not only increase the value of our existing businesses by bolstering productivity and contributing to business growth, but also make our region more attractive to investors.





Playground manufacturers GL Jones in Bethesda received support from LIF project - support enabled them to streamline production helping improve competitiveness and safeguard jobs

ENTERPRISING ENTERPRISES

Millions of pounds have been invested in a variety of schemes to stimulate and support business growth and expansion, and help small and medium sized businesses to increase their competitiveness in North Wales.

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 it assisted 448 businesses and helped create over 750 jobs in North West Wales.

The North East Wales Strategic Business Parks project facilitated access to local and national business support schemes and services, helping existing businesses expand and new business to set up at North

East Wales' two key employment hubs – Wrexham Industrial Estate and Deeside Business Park.

The £1.2 million Business Succession and Co-operative Consortia project provided specialist advice to business owners wishing to retire and pass their business onto their employees.

Socially driven businesses have benefited from investment from the Cyfenter scheme and Communities Investment Fund; the schemes have provided financial investment for new and developing Social Enterprises to fulfil their potential as sustainable viable businesses in the North Wales economy.



Lawrence Washington from Porthmadog's Purple Moose Brewery benefited from the LEAD Wales programme

BOOSTING BUSINESS PRODUCTIVITY

Businesses and the region's workforce have had access to a number of training and development opportunities aimed at increasing productivity, growth and competitiveness by improving workers' skills and addressing skills gaps.

The North East Wales Strategic Business Parks project supported collaboration between Glyndwr University, local Colleges and 500 plus businesses. A number of training and development programmes, customised to businesses' needs were delivered to support the 18,000 plus workers on the Wrexham Industrial Estate and Deeside Business Park.

The Dyfodol Skills Project, led by Llandrillo Menai Group helped over 1,700 businesses benefit from improved productivity in the workplace. The project offered a wide range of affordable training and development opportunities that supported more than 7,500 employees to gain new skills.

Over 700 businesses received support to improve their leadership skills under the LEAD Wales project, enabling them to work more efficiently and boost business growth. Software Alliance Wales helped more than 300 businesses improve their information communication technology (ICT) skills, grasp emerging new technologies and work in new and smarter ways.



NEXT TIME YOU VISIT IKEA....



...see if you can spot the furniture made right here in north Wales. Thanks to a new contract with IKEA, Deeside Industrial Park-based Westbridge Furniture Designs is expanding fast.

Westbridge now supplies seven ranges to Ikea comprising sofas, chairs, sofa beds and corner groups and also supplies other retailers such as John Lewis, M&S and Next.

The company has opened a third manufacturing facility on Deeside Industrial Park to service the new five-year contract with Ikea, and has already created 220 new jobs and seen production ramp up from 100 items a week to more than 2000.

The company now employs a total of 960 staff at its factories at Deeside and Holywell.

Deeside Industrial Park was part of the EU funded North East Wales Strategic Business Parks Project, which helped over 500 companies on Wrexham and Deeside Industrial Estates develop their services, expand and grow.

The project helped create 283 jobs, attract £7.7 million of private sector investment and establish 14 new businesses.

www.deesideindustrialpark.co.uk



FROM CAFÉ WORKERS TO CAFÉ CO-OWNERS

When one door closes, another usually opens and for the popular Caffi Florence, based at Loggerheads Country Park near Mold, a change in ownership structure safeguarded 15 jobs

Seven café employees purchased the award winning café from its previous owner with support from the Wales Co-operative Centre, Business Succession Project.

Nicola Price-Rohan is one of the owners who co-founded the co-operative.

“As a co-operative we believe we have the potential to take the business and grow it using the principles set out by its original owner. The business has now been operating as a worker co-operative for nearly a year.

“As owners we can plan for the future and ensure that Caffi Florence offers great food and great service at Loggerheads Country Park for a long time to come.”

www.walescooperative.org

A CATALYST FOR THIRD SECTOR GROWTH

For Bangor-based Resource Renew the ability to access support from WCVA's Community Investment Fund was crucial to the development of this socially driven business. The project gave it the freedom to channel its resources into capacity and infrastructure building.

Calvin Davies from the company said, “It’s a simple truth that we as a fledgling socially driven charitable company would not exist without the support received from the Community Investment Fund. We have generated a turnover to date in excess

of £476,000, made possible by an initial start up loan of just £55,000.

“In the last 16 months we have created 5 full time jobs and 3 part time jobs all for individuals who were previously long term unemployed. We have also diverted 189 tonnes of furniture from the commercial waste stream and a further 72 tons of large domestic appliances.”

www.wcva.org.uk





SUPPORTING A LONG-TERM VISION



St Asaph's Kent Periscopes are one of the World's leading manufacturers of sighting and observation systems for armoured fighting vehicles.

The company received support from North West Wales Local Investment Fund (LIF) to fit out a new HQ on St Asaph Business Park - an investment which created a new full-time post.

The North West Wales Local Investment Fund (LIF) delivered more than £1.9m of funding support to businesses in North Wales. Part-funded by the ERDF, the scheme helped create over 750 new jobs and safeguarded over a 1,000 jobs in Gwynedd, Conwy, Anglesey and Denbighshire.

www.lifcymru.org

KENT



Kay Laurie, Plas Cadnant Visitor Services Manager (far right) with Software Alliance Wales representatives

APP-EALING SOFTWARE FOR THOSE WITH GREEN FINGERS

Visitors to Plas Cadnant Gardens in Anglesey often want to know what species plants are, however labels detract from the natural feel of the gardens. Plas Cadnant Gardens wanted to develop a mobile app to enhance the visitor experience.

Software Alliance Wales scoped out a project with Bangor University Computer Science students.

The solution was an app which allows visitors to scan QR codes at key locations to see which plants are in flower. The project allowed Plas Cadnant to develop a mobile app without the need to spend

money on expensive software development with QR codes engraved in slate posts to be placed around the gardens.

“The project has helped us introduce new technology to Plas Cadnant - technology which has improved the visitor experience and enabled us to work smarter,” said Kay Laurie from Plas Cadnant Gardens.

www.softwarealliancewales.com





The Tavern on The Bay

LEADERS OF THE FUTURE

With Tourism playing such a key role in the North Wales economy - supporting over 80,000 jobs - providing training opportunities is vital if businesses are to improve skill levels and, address specific gaps and / or skills shortages to meet the needs of the industry.

The Dyfodol Skills project provided managerial training 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 Dyfodol project helped us gain new skills and improve productivity.

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

www.llandrillo.ac.uk



TO LEAD WITH CONFIDENCE

A revolutionary 10-month Leadership Development programme specifically designed for leaders and the owner-managers of SMEs has boosted one of the UK's leading providers of radiological protection.

Conwy-based Matom received support from the LEAD programme to develop and enhance their leadership skills.

Owner Matt Tuck said, "Business owners tend to ensure their staff are well trained but often forget about their own education

and leadership needs. LEAD also helped me identify to see what I was doing right, and confirmed that".

The programme was led by Swansea University in partnership with Bangor University.

www.leadwales.co.uk



IMPACT OF INVESTMENT CAUGHT ON CAMERA

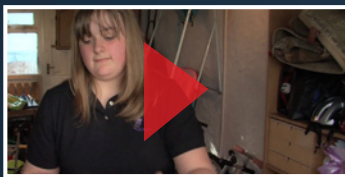
The North Wales Specialist European Team has also published a series of Europe and North Wales videos which looks at the effects of 2007-13 European Structural Funding on the businesses, communities and people of North Wales.



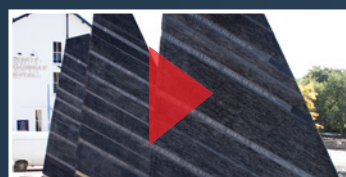
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www.bit.ly/PhysReg



**SNOWDONIA CENTRE
OF EXCELLENCE**
www.bit.ly/fideorhag

This booklet was prepared on behalf of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board by the North Wales Specialist European Team which is based in the 6 North Wales Local Authorities. The Specialist European Team works toward ensuring that the region gets the maximum benefit from European funding by providing a range of support to raise awareness of opportunities and ensure its effective delivery. Specialist European Teams exist across Wales and in different sectors, from Local Authorities, Welsh Government and the Welsh Council for Voluntary Action.

www.tinyurl.com/EuropeNorthWales

