



# Growing Mid Wales February Newsletter

## Supporting enterprise and economic growth

One of our strategic aims is to foster the environment for a strong, resilient and diverse Mid Wales economy that enables enterprise to start, grow and prosper with the right support and infrastructure. One of the ways we can help achieve this is through the Sites and Premises Programme, which is our focus for this month's newsletter.

We take a look at where we are at with the Programme, the processes involved and current advancements.

*'Our vision is for a strong, resilient and diverse Mid Wales economy that enables enterprises to start, grow and prosper with the right support and infrastructure.'*

*We will achieve this by creating the conditions to drive enterprise growth, investment and competitiveness which will raise regional productivity.'*

*We want to ensure enterprises are supported to be dynamic and entrepreneurial, to identify and target market opportunities, exploit innovation, automation, training and digitalisation as key drivers of growth - creating higher value employment opportunities in the process.'*

Section 6.5: Supporting Enterprise. [A Vision for Growing Mid Wales.](#)



This month's *Meet the Team* spotlight is on John Collingwood, our Sites and Premises Programme Manager.

Helping to grow opportunity in Mid Wales,

***The Growing Mid Wales team***

\* Is your organisation part of the Growing Mid Wales partnership? Or, are you a member of a group that's benefitted from European Regional Development Funding? If so, we'd love to share some of your news in future newsletters. Get in touch!

**Read on for:**

- Overview of programme
- Programme processes
- Successful infrastructure projects in the region
- Meet the Team
- Fact of the month
- Keep up to date

## Overview of programme



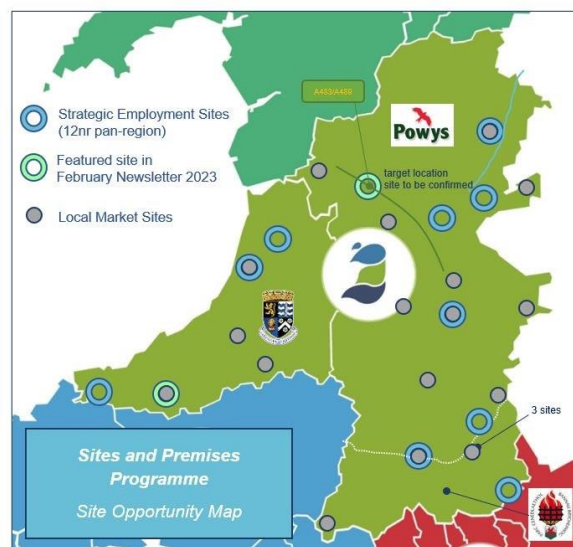
(L-R clockwise) Brecon, Newtown, Aberystwyth, Powys landscape

It is widely acknowledged that there is a lack of good quality employment sites and premises to meet business requirements and expectations in Mid Wales. There is minimal activity in terms of speculative building of such sites by the private sector due to market failure. An ageing stock of premises exists that require significant investment to become an attractive proposition.

Ensuring the right supply and location of employment land and premises to meet business needs is a vital component of supporting the competitiveness of the economy.

The employment sites and premises market in Mid Wales differs from adjacent regions. Most of the demand is from businesses already established in the region. There are significant geographic variations with sub-market areas such as Aberystwyth, the Severn Valley and Brecon experiencing higher demand and an identified gap in serviced sites. This compares to more remote rural locations, some of which have seen little, or no development take place over recent years.

There is a recognised lack of availability and investment in modern and technical employment premises across the region with low levels of speculative development and issues of commercial viability in provision. Market failure drives an estimated viability gap of ~ 60%.



1 - Site Opportunity map

The focus of the Sites & Premises Programme, which sits within the Mid Wales Growth Deal Portfolio, is to stimulate property investment in the Mid Wales region to support our buoyant and varied industry sectors.

An important piece of work relating to the provision of employment sites pan-region has already been concluded, sufficient to initially scope a proposed Growth Deal Sites and Premises Programme.

We are now looking to set out a clear business case which confirms a deliverable plan of action for this investment, implementing sustainable development projects across Mid Wales that will help meet identified local market demand for employment premises.

A programme board has already been established to oversee development and delivery of the Programme and dedicated Growth Deal resources are in place to drive this forward.

Over the [coming months](#) real estate advisers, Savills, will be working with the team to consider the planning, economic and development viability of a shortlist of strategic employment sites, the next important step towards formulating a deliverable Programme.

A new section for the Sites & Premises Programme will be coming soon to the Growing Mid Wales website - we'll keep you posted on our social media pages!

## The processes involved

### Evolving the Sites and Premises Programme

Over the last couple of years, research, analysis and action planning has been carried out to initiate the Sites and Premises Programme.

It aims to ensure that the right supply and location of employment land and commercial premises is available to meet business needs and support economic growth in the region.

**£66.5 million**

The initial scale of the programme funding is £66.5 million\*: around about 50% of this will come from the Mid Wales Growth Deal funding.

To achieve the rest of the investment, the programme will look to attract other public sector funding and private sector funding. The more investments made, the greater the outputs there will be for the area.

\*This is the estimated programme value, which includes Growth Deal and other funding sources, including the private sector.

High Value Manufacturing, Agriculture, Food & Drink, Tourism & Hospitality, Sustainable Technologies, and Defence & Security are all sectors showing growth in the region.

These sectors are being looked at further by the Programme to assess which ones, if a site was designated to them, would bring the most economic growth to the region.

Although some sites which have been identified for potential development are owned either by the Local Authorities, Welsh Government, or partner organisations, some are not so clear as to who owns the land and the surrounding lands.

It will take time to find out and place all the pieces together, a bit like a giant jigsaw puzzle.

Other points of consideration while the Programme develops are:

- Phosphate's issue, which affects the rivers Teifi, Tywi and the Wye catchments
- Inflationary pressures
- Escalating costs

As the Programme progresses, so will the engagement with stakeholders and the wider community progress too. A clear message from the Programme will show collaboration and commitment to the region:

*'Premises will be constructed that are resilient and sustainable developments, ones which provide opportunities, builds communities and a sense of place and ownership.'*

## Potential Sites of interests

Included in the list of strategic employment sites currently under consideration are the following two examples; one in Ceredigion and one in Powys.

Over the next coming months, these alongside the other sites shortlisted will be considered in terms of planning, economic and development viability.

With all shortlisted sites, we are eager to work with the private sector and secure wider investment for the development of the sites and stimulate growth across the region together.

If you're interested in talking more on investments opportunities, email John Collingwood, Growing Mid Wales Sites and Premises Programme Manager: [John.Collingwood@ceredigion.gov.uk](mailto:John.Collingwood@ceredigion.gov.uk)

<p>Mid Wales Sustainable Technologies Business Park</p>	<p><b>A Mid Wales Sustainable Technologies Business Park Programme Identification Work: Stage One Report</b>          "The establishment of a sector forum to bring together FE/HE assets, businesses and public sector stakeholders to increase profile of the sector, encourage collaboration and promote it lobby externally"</p>  <p><b>The Advanced Manufacturing Campus (AMC) Concept</b>          A recommended intervention from the SCRI Applied Research and Innovation Report to develop an AMC for Mid Wales as a learning and skills centre with leading edge technology aimed at improving the supply of skills into industry and providing a hub for collaboration with wider R&amp;D partners in the region. The campus will also attract school-based learners. Ease of access for schools and sectoral adversaries is important.</p>	<p><b>Potential Sites &amp; Premises Programme Interest in Powys</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ No site currently identified, dependant on options identified through Powys Local Development Plan renewal process</li> <li>❖ Concept is to create a facility that will cluster businesses into a common site to allow for interaction and interdependencies to naturally occur and create a local centre of excellence in sustainable technologies</li> <li>❖ Provision of a specialised range of spin-out facilities to meet demand and attract emergent enterprises in the sector</li> <li>❖ Potential to link with sectoral adversaries operating at other centres in the region e.g. CAT, Aberystwyth University, AberInnovation and other R&amp;D facilities</li> <li>❖ Potential to co-join development with the proposed Growth Deal Advanced Manufacturing Campus, if this is successful, to provide a mixed 'learning and doing' complex</li> <li>❖ Powys County Council, Project Sponsors.</li> </ul>	
<p>Food Centre Wales/ Horeb Business Park, Llandysul</p>	 <p>Extract from Ceredigion Local Development Plan</p> 	<p><b>Potential Sites &amp; Premises Programme Interest in Ceredigion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ An existing business park mainly occupied by Food Centre Wales (FCW) with good local infrastructure links</li> <li>❖ FCW already developing a proposal for a the Manufacturing Innovation Centre</li> <li>❖ Potential to develop the site further for employment uses, possibly focussing on the food technology sector.</li> <li>❖ Ceredigion County Council own the site.</li> </ul> 	

## Existing infrastructure projects in the region

Over the last few years, Growing Mid Wales has already been part of successful infrastructure projects that have both utilised new sites for development and regenerated key strategic sites with the region.

We take a quick look back at some examples where GMW has previously – in conjunction with the Welsh European Funding Office - regionally prioritised funding from the European Regional Development Fund to help boost the region's productivity, economy and job opportunities:

- [Creuddyn](#), a £3m business centre for Mid Wales was opened in Lampeter by one of the region's housing association, Barcud. The centre provides an eco-friendly, state of the art community facility that accommodates social enterprises, supports jobs and helps to reduce social isolation in the area.
- [VetHub1](#), the £4.2m project, provides unique high-level laboratory facilities. It engages with SMEs, HEIs and multinational companies in developing research and commercial activities targeting diseases of zoonotic and animal health importance to both Mid Wales and the world.

Local Authorities within Mid Wales have also worked regionally to secure regeneration funding via the Welsh Government Transforming Towns Programme to help develop the following premises:

- Automobile Palace, Llandrindod Wells. The building, which is of national heritage importance, is currently being developed into a business centre to support the regeneration of the town and local economy.
- The [Hafan yr Afon venue in Newtown](#) is a new facility which forms part of the town's rejuvenation project. The sustainable venue provides community spaces, facilities such as changing rooms, tourist information provision, a dog friendly café with a community kitchen, and bookable facilities (canoe/bike hire/event space).

Another example of Welsh Government funding to help support local company expansion in Powys is the development of [Abermule Business Park](#). Having been earmarked for industrial development within the Local Development Plan, for over 20 years, the site is specifically allocated for small and medium sized employment opportunities and will capitalise on the county's main road and transport infrastructure. The site will also use renewable and low carbon energy sources.



2 - Infrastructure projects in the region. (From top left to bottom right) Canolfan Creuddyn, VetHub1, Riverside Venue in Newtown, and Automobile Palace, Llandrindod Wells.

## Meet the Team



3 - John Collingwood, Growing Mid Wales Sites and Premises Programme Manager

- **When did you start with the team?**

I joined the team in August 2022, coming to what is for me a really exciting opportunity to be part of a piece of work which should make a real difference to local enterprises and to the regional economy – if I do my job right that is!

- **What are your current priorities?**

Since joining, my priority has been to pick up the threads of an important piece of work, already completed, that identified the need for the Sites and Premises Programme. My aim is to work collaboratively with the Growth Deal Team and the region's Local Authority officers to bring about its realisation. Setting up the right governance and organisational processes has taken my time initially and I am grateful for the support shown to me by the Team and the new Sites and Premises Programme Board since my arrival.

- **What developments have you seen over the years?**

I have had links with Mid Wales for about twenty years and have lived here permanently for nearly ten of them. I was stunned by the beauty of the place and the lifestyle it offers, so the opportunity to work here, and for the region is particularly satisfying for me. My career has always been in construction, so I always notice physical changes to the built environment over time; it's just the way I'm wired! I have seen changes in my time here, road improvements, town centre developments, new housing; all keeping pace with the times I suppose, but with the Growth Deal we have a real opportunity to make a significant impact in developing relevant and useful infrastructure that really addresses local needs.



- **What's been your biggest achievement?**

I've worked on loads of interesting projects over the years, mainly in a local government setting, but I have to say that helping Aberystwyth University realise the creation of the [AberInnovation](#) facility at their Gogerddan Campus was a particular highlight for me. It enabled me to meet some very talented people and build some really useful contacts with local authority colleagues - who I am now working a lot closer with! I hope I can achieve the same sense of pride in creating new Growth Deal employment premises across the region as I feel for AberInnovation now.

- **What is your greatest hope for the programme?**

That it really does meet local needs, builds the right level of capacity in those sectors that are strong in the region already, and that it builds new opportunities for companies already working in the area, but also for those to come into it too. If all goes together well, it should make a real difference to the economy and reputation of this special part of Wales.

- **One word that sums up the Growing Mid Wales Team:**

Passionate (in the right way!)



## Fact of the month: Strata Florida

A site which has been a sacred valley for over four thousand years

Strata Florida Abbey, Ceredigion was built in 1164 but did you know that there's evidence of a long history of people using the land and settling on the site, going back to 2500-2000 B.C.E?

At the head of the valley, at Blaenglasffrwd, is a large complex of monuments dating from the early Bronze Age or even the Late Neolithic period.

The [Strata Florida Trust](#) have evidenced that the current Abbey was laid out over a pre-existing holy well which may date back to a Dark Age, Pre-Cistercian Celtic monastery.



4 - Holy Well, Strata Florida, Ceredigion

## News

Teresa Peel Jones recently joined the [Regional Skills Partnership](#) team as the Employer Engagement Officer and will be engaging with the region's businesses to establish the Business Cluster groups and help to deliver on areas of the Employment and Skills plan.

## Keep up to Date

Need to catch up on what's been discussed in our meetings? Here's a reminder of where you can find the minutes for the following meetings:

- All minutes relating to the Growing Mid Wales Board are hosted on Powys County Council [website](#).
- Papers relating to the Growing Mid Wales Partnership can be found on our [website](#).

Keep up to date with Growing Mid Wales news, developments on activity and organisations we support by following our Twitter and Linked In pages:

<https://twitter.com/growingmidwales>

[www.linkedin.com/company/growing-mid-wales](http://www.linkedin.com/company/growing-mid-wales)

We're eager to reach out to as many organisations and businesses across Mid Wales as possible. You can make this possible by following, liking and sharing our pages.

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