



PRESS NOTICE:

The Mersey Dee Alliance proposes a pathway from Covid Recession to Green Growth in a £400million Stimulus Package Proposal

The Mersey Dee Alliance, representing the interests of the unique, cross border, functional economy in Flintshire and Wrexham in North Wales and Cheshire West and Chester and Wirral in the Northwest of England today launched a transformational plan for a £400m Fiscal Stimulus Package for the Mersey Dee Economy. The proposal has been submitted to Ministers in the UK and Welsh Governments.

Councillor Mark Pritchard, Chair of the Mersey Dee Alliance said,

“The MDA economy has been hit hard by Covid 19. Our GVA has contracted by 15%, equivalent to £3.5bn of the pre-pandemic, £22bn value of the economy. Thousands of jobs have been lost. Deeds not words are needed now to deliver an urgent fiscal stimulus to the MDA economy to save jobs and secure the future of our world class, manufacturing industry cluster.

Our proposals to the UK and Welsh Governments will create and safeguard 5000 jobs and generate £1.2bn of net economic value in a short space of time.”

The package aligns with UK Government priorities to strengthen the union, deliver “levelling up” and implement the 10-point plan for a “green industrial revolution”.

We will meet the needs of future generations with inclusive and sustainable growth as required by the Welsh Government’s Future Generations Act.”

Councillor Louise Gittins, Leader of Cheshire West and Chester Council said,

“I am passionate about climate change and sustainable growth. The MDA Fiscal Stimulus Package will accelerate investment in switching from carbon-based fuels to renewables and greener fuels like hydrogen, with carbon capture and storage for initial phases of hydrogen production.

We are proposing a major investment in cycleways and public transport to reduce carbon and noxious emissions from cars. Our Active travel proposals will enable delivery of a strategic cycling corridor linking Birkenhead to Chester and Ellesmere Port, and from West Kirby through to Deeside in Flintshire, removing barriers and opening-up employment opportunities.

Councillor Stuart Whittingham, Wirral Council and Vice Chair of the MDA said,

“Businesses and residents of the MDA area do not see a border between England and Wales. They just see enterprise, supply chain, employment and leisure opportunities in an area with an integrated economy and close cultural ties. That’s why there are 153,000 inter regional journeys both ways over a 24-hour period per day

Our economy will prosper more with a strong partnership between the UK and Welsh governments. The MDA Proposition is not only an opportunity to maximise sustainable and inclusive growth but also an opportunity to develop a positive partnership between the UK and Welsh Governments.

The Mersey Dee Alliance is a high performing partnership between Councils, businesses and universities. We are a model partnership that the UK and Welsh governments can build on.”

Ian Roberts, Leader of Flintshire County Council said

“We have worked with neighbouring local growth partnerships to develop our proposals. The MDA will continue to work closely with the North Wales Economic Ambition Board, the Cheshire and Warrington LEP and the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority. We will avoid duplication and complement the programmes of our partners.

Flintshire supports this package as the home of Airbus. We must do everything we can to support our excellent manufacturing firms who provide skilled work with good pay.”

Councillor Mark Pritchard concluded:

“The MDA economy faces big challenges to recover from Covid-19 and to adjust to “net zero” operations. We have made transformational and innovative proposals to meet those challenges.

We want to get things done and we will work creatively and flexibly with both governments to deliver investment from multiple sources at pace. This will include seeking some investment via a future fiscal event with provision made for the MDA in the Comprehensive Spending Review to be announced in the autumn of 2021.

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Notes for Editors

The Fiscal Stimulus Package Proposals

DOWNLOAD: “A Fiscal Stimulus Package for the Mersey Dee Alliance Economy: A Strategic Proposition” and Frequently Asked Questions on the Package using the links here:

[Mersey Dee Alliance – Connecting people](#) (available in English and Welsh)

The MDA Stimulus package will: -

- Create £1.2bn economic value and create/safeguard 5000 jobs
- Leverage £450m of private sector investment
- Assist 300 businesses
- Lay 100km of hydrogen pipework and create up to 10 Hydrogen and CCUS hubs and a hydrogen demonstration facility
- Create 100km of integrated cycling and walking infrastructure
- Create 130km of digitally super connected transport routes

The Package programmes are: -

- Business Support and Skills (£79m) to
 - enable manufacturing supply chains in the MDA area serving Aerospace, Automotive and Steel sectors to diversify into supplying new markets, like clean energy and prefabricated construction.
 - Promote innovation and improved productivity in the MDA’s manufacturing sector and assist companies meet net-zero carbon emissions targets
- Low Carbon Energy (£107m) to:
 - Make the MDA area a leading edge “hydrogen economy”, enabling big industrial energy users to switch from carbon energy sources to hydrogen through laying pipework, developing fuelling infrastructure for vehicles and a demonstrator facility for supply chain development and testing.

Digital (£30m) to extend NWEAB programmes connecting trunk roads and rail to superfast mobile networks from North Wales into England

- Transport (£115m) to
 - Develop an integrated, sub-regional active travel network to decarbonise transport and improve employment opportunities
 - A £20m Growth Track 360 Rail Development Fund to bring forward detailed design work for the North Wales Coast Main Line, Chester Station and the Wrexham to Bidston/Liverpool Line to enable £200m - £300m capital investment in these schemes in the lifetime of the current Parliament.
- Place (£75m) which will include investment in digitised in town centres, enabling small independent retailers and other businesses to start up businesses in empty retail premises, multi-modal transport hubs and interventions to reshape and re-purpose town centres.

Contacts

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Introducing the Mersey Dee Alliance

The Mersey Dee Alliance is a cross border alliance that was formed by Local Authorities in Wales and England to advocate improved government co-ordination and investment in the integrated, cross border functional economy in the local authority areas of Wrexham and Flintshire (in Wales) and Cheshire West and Chester and the Wirral (in England). The membership of the MDA includes the four local authorities, Wrexham-Glyndwr University, Chester University, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, the Cheshire and Warrington LEP and the Welsh Government.

The MDA is a significant economic entity of importance to both the Welsh and English economies: -

- **A Manufacturing Powerhouse in the UK**
- **£22bn** Gross Value Added
- **956,000** people
- **404,000** jobs
- **2,900** companies that each turn over more than £1m per year including a roll call of household names – Airbus, JCB, Astra Zeneca, M&S Money, Cammell Laird, Unilever, Kellogg's, Toyota, Vauxhall etc.
- **3** Enterprise Zones; Cheshire Science Corridor, Deeside Northern Gateway, Wirral Waters

The MDA is. It has a high concentration of advanced manufacturing, with important clusters of energy, aerospace, automotive, engineering, chemical and food processing industries, as well as professional and financial services. Around 16% of the workforce (65,100 people) are employed in manufacturing / engineering, compared to the UK average of 9%.

The partnership aims to further develop the economic potential of key employment sites across the region including Wirral Waters (part of Mersey Waters Enterprise Zone), Deeside Enterprise Zone, Wrexham Industrial Estate and Technology Park, Chester and Ellesmere Port (part of the Cheshire Science Corridor Enterprise Zone). With the right investment, it is thought these sites could create up to 50,000 new jobs over the next 15 to 20 years.

Enterprises in the MDA area draw their workforce, their supply chains and their customers from both sides of the border, which makes the MDA area a highly integrated functional economy. There are extensive cross border travel flows between North Wales and the neighbouring English authorities at 153,000 inter regional journeys both ways over a 24-hour period. More people commute out of North Wales to work in England than vice versa (England into Wales to work). (Mobile data 2019).

The integrated economy demands integrated transport and economic development planning and investment by national and local governments.