



Partneriaeth Sgiliau Rhanbarthol
Gogledd Cymru
North Wales
Regional Skills Partnership

Flintshire and Wrexham Investment Zone Skills Strategy

2025 - 2035

Summary Document



What is this document?

This is the Skills Strategy for the Flintshire & Wrexham Investment Zone, setting out how skills and training will support new jobs, business growth and inward investment over the course of the Investment Zone Programme. It provides a framework for investment to align employers, education and training providers, and public sector partners over the next 10 years.

What is the Investment Zone?

The Flintshire & Wrexham Investment Zone focuses on growing advanced manufacturing, innovation-driven industries and local supply chains. Enabled by investment in modern facilities and skilled individuals across Flintshire & Wrexham, the Investment Zone will:

Attract new businesses

Create high-quality jobs

Strengthen local industry

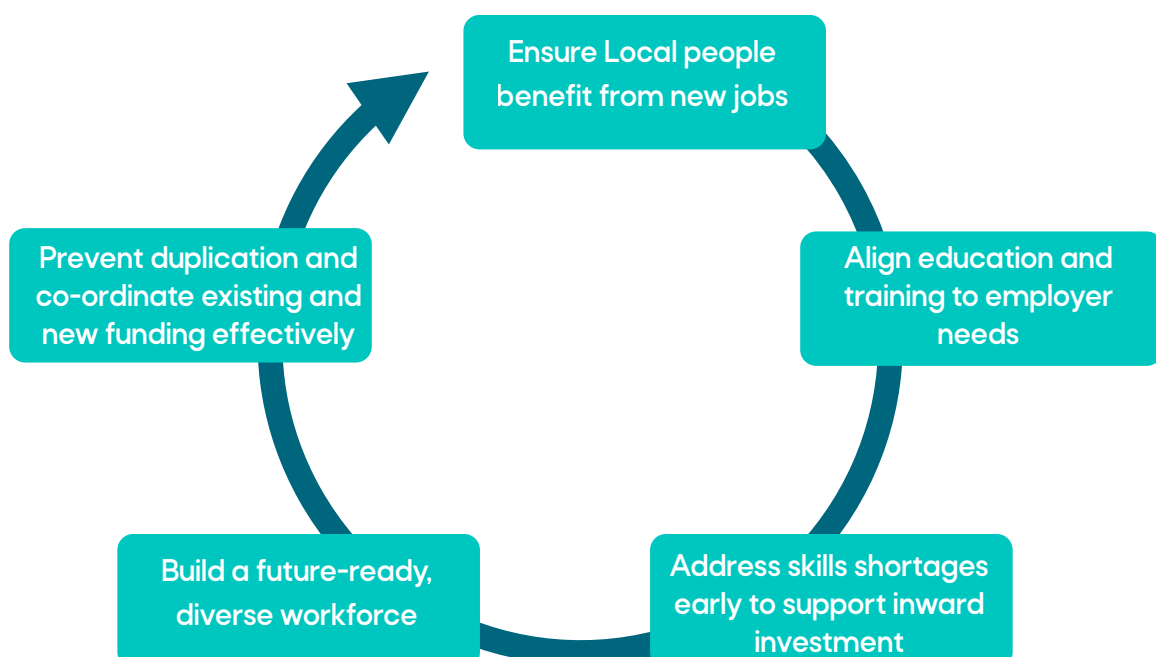
Why is this important?

The importance of the Investment Zone opportunity for Flintshire & Wrexham can be summarised as promoting growth, inclusion and the enhancement of existing economic clusters.

- Flintshire & Wrexham has one of the strongest advanced manufacturing clusters in Wales, employing 19,000 people.
- The sector faces major opportunities through new technologies, but also risks around ageing workforce, skills gaps, and future workforce readiness.
- An inclusive approach is needed to widen access, attract underrepresented groups, and develop local career opportunities.

Why prepare a strategy?

The role of a strategy is to shape decision-making by ensuring that access to opportunity is increased and business needs are met. In particular, this strategy sets out to:



What does the evidence say?



Strengths

Strong existing FE and HE offer, led by Coleg Cambria and Wrexham University

Network of existing business anchors

Opportunities for cross-border collaboration



Young People

Want clear career routes

Need better access to information

Would benefit from improved work-readiness and local transport links



Business Community

Facing immediate skills shortages

Require work-ready recruits

Emphasise the simultaneous importance of technical, soft and transferable skills



Key Challenges

Ageing workforce

Gaps in STEM

Limited graduate retention

Women and minority groups remain underrepresented

What should we do about it?

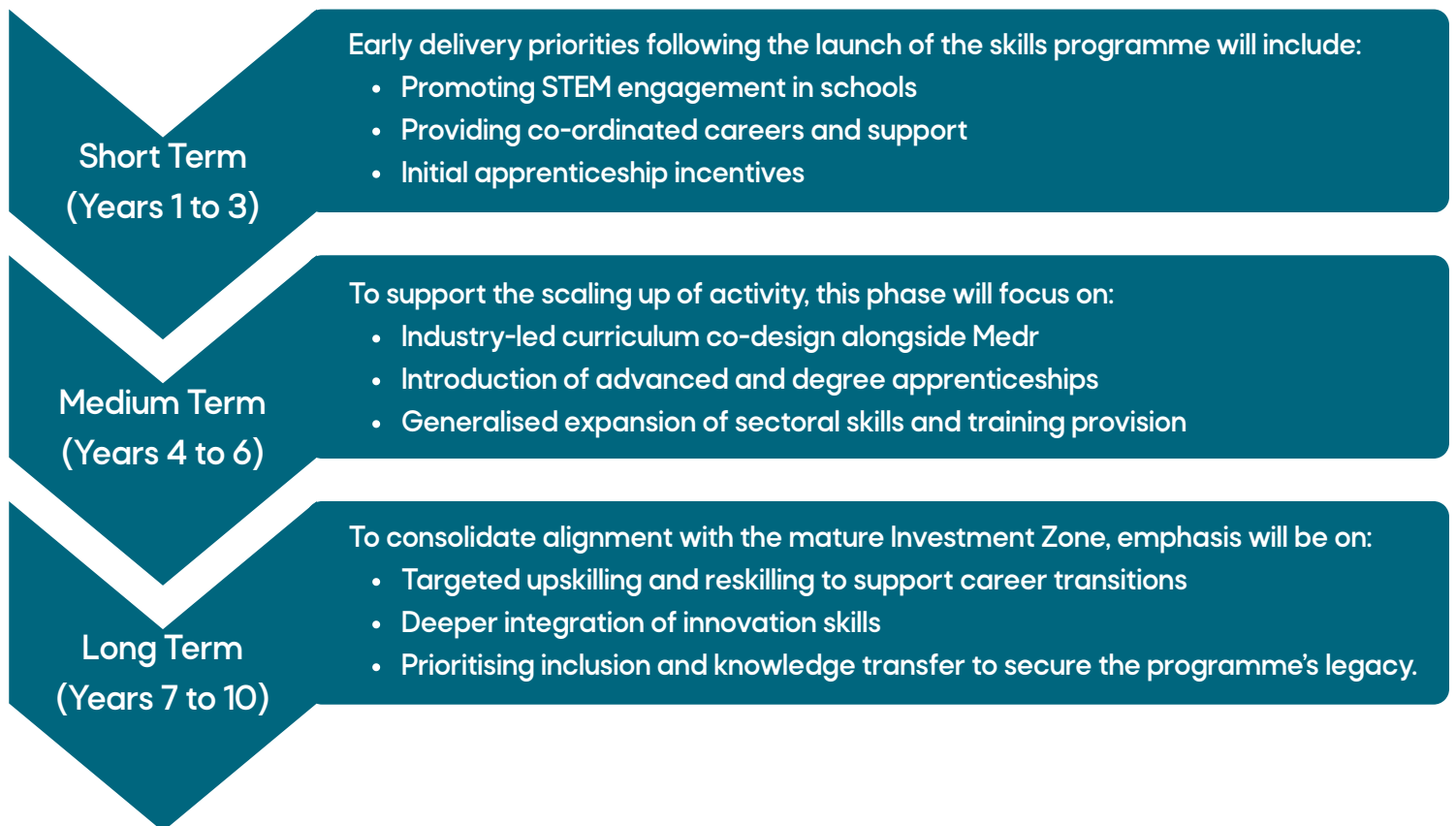
The Investment Zone's skills programme will focus on the following core themes and areas, which span across all stages of the sectoral employment pathway.

Intervention theme	Intervention areas
STEM and Schools engagement	- Careers engagement - Raising awareness of local opportunities - Expansion of STEM pathways - Pre-16 engagement
Support for 16 - 18 learners	- Expansion of apprenticeships - Work placements - Provision of employer incentives
Employer-led curriculum co-design	- Integration of Investment Zone into curriculum - Alignment of training provision with sectoral needs
Pathways for 18+	- Expansion of degree apprenticeships - Creation of new MSc/PhD routes - Delivery of skills bootcamps and other micro-credentials
Upskills and reskilling	- Retraining of career transitions - Support of lifelong, and work-based learning
Infrastructure and accessibility	- Improve transport to enhance access to opportunities - Development of training facilities - Expansion of the already established NW Skills Portal
Inclusion and diversity	Targeted engagement to boost participation amongst women, minority groups, SEND learners, care leavers and others

How will that happen?

The effective governance of the Investment Zone skills programme will be co-ordinated by the North Wales Regional Skills Partnership, whilst delivery will be led by the Investment Zone Skills Steering Group. Given the long-term nature of the Investment Zone programme and the uncertainty surrounding the precise timing of future inward investment, the skills programme must remain agile and responsive, and will therefore be shaped by Annual Delivery Plans to identify priorities, inform resource allocations and design monitoring activities.

Whilst specific details of programme delivery will be confirmed on an annual basis, it is envisaged that the phasing of the skills programme will be broadly structured around three key horizons:



Throughout delivery, engagement with Medr¹ and the Welsh Government is important. This is particularly the case as Medr's strategic remit around tertiary education, research and innovation and responding to needs of employers.

What are the next steps?

By maintaining a strong commitment to collaboration, evidence-led practice, and inclusivity, the Flintshire & Wrexham Investment Zone will be well positioned to create a resilient, skilled workforce capable of driving long-term regional prosperity. Immediate next steps include:

- Rapid establishment and mobilisation of the Investment Zone Skills Steering Group to allow for the launch of the skills programme.
- Agreeing shared outcomes and investment principles for future skills interventions.
- Development of action plans for interventions outlining projects, outputs and outcomes.
- Continuing to strengthen engagement and communication with stakeholders, including the business community.

¹ Medr is an arm's length body of the Welsh Government responsible for funding and regulating the tertiary education and research sector in Wales.
<https://www.medr.cymru/en/>



FOR MORE INFORMATION
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