



As we wrap up another productive year, this December edition brings you a comprehensive look back at 2024—a year filled with transformative developments, community engagement, and exciting progress across the region. From enhancing digital infrastructure to advancing sustainability goals, we reflect on the pivotal projects that have laid the foundation for a more connected, resilient, and thriving Mid Wales. Together, we've witnessed remarkable achievements, including the launch of innovative tools like the mobile coverage checker and substantial strides in gigabit broadband expansion, both of which are set to bridge long-standing digital gaps and elevate the quality of life for residents and businesses.

Our work this year has also driven a significant shift towards a sustainable future. The endorsement of Local Area Energy Plans for both Ceredigion and Powys marked a critical step in our region's journey to net-zero by 2050. Efforts have focused on advancing renewable energy projects, improving energy efficiency, and preparing our workforce for new opportunities in green energy sectors. We are proud of the Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership's (RSP) impactful initiatives, from updating the Employment and Skills Plan to launching sector-specific business clusters that address skills gaps and foster industry collaboration. The unveiling of a dedicated RSP website has provided an accessible hub for data and resources, further empowering our local businesses.

As we look ahead to 2025, our vision remains clear: to continue building on the momentum of this year's successes and to embrace the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. We are excited about the upcoming launch of a cutting-edge AI-driven careers portal and the further development of the Mid Wales Growth Deal projects and programmes with strategic partners.

Our dedicated team, including new members who have brought fresh perspectives and expertise, will keep working to ensure that Mid Wales continues to grow as a hub of innovation, opportunity, and community. Thank you for your continued support throughout 2024—we look forward to embarking on another impactful year with you in 2025.

Helping to grow opportunity in Mid Wales,

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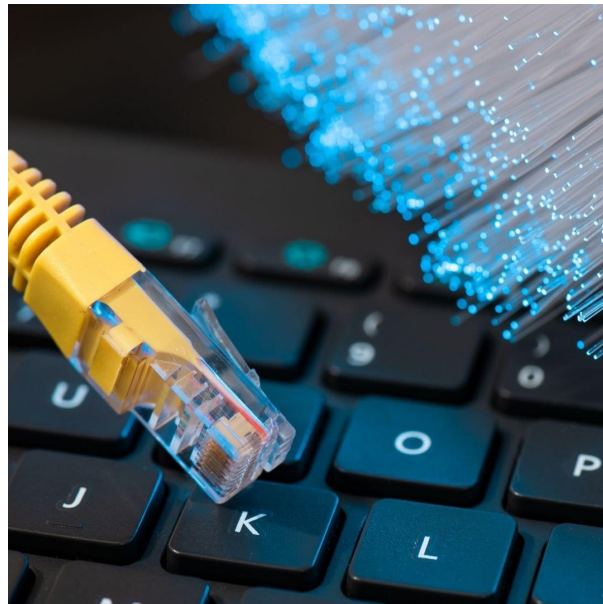
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## Growing Mid Wales: 2024 Successes and Key Developments

2024 has been a transformative year for Growing Mid Wales, marked by numerous achievements and initiatives, managed by ourselves or ones we have supported, that have significantly impacted our region's growth, connectivity, and sustainability.

### Infrastructure and Digital Connectivity

- **Mobile Coverage Enhancements:** A pioneering mobile mapping project was launched, utilising data from waste collection vehicles to identify and address "mobile not-spots." In June 2024, data-capturing devices were installed in waste collection vehicles across Powys and Ceredigion. These devices have been surveying mobile network quality, currently covering over 95% of properties in the region, with periodic updates. This data was shared through a newly developed mobile coverage checker, aiding residents and businesses. Use the mobile coverage checker here: [www.growingmid.wales/Coverage](http://www.growingmid.wales/Coverage)
- **Gigabit Broadband Expansion:** In September 2024, it was announced that Ceredigion and Powys are set to benefit significantly from the UK Government's Project Gigabit, with a new framework agreement signed between Building Digital UK (BDUK) and Openreach. With a significant rollout aimed at providing full fibre services to a potential 23,000 properties across Mid Wales, this move is set to enhance economic growth and address long-standing digital inequalities. Read the full story on our news page: <https://www.growingmidwales.co.uk/article/17114/Gigabit-Broadband-Expansion-to-Boost-Connectivity-in-Ceredigion-and-Powys>



## Energy and Sustainability Initiatives

- **Decarbonisation Workshop:** In March 2024, a successful event, *Sustainable Business Solutions in Mid Wales: Minimising Emissions and Costs*, took place. The event featured expert-led workshops, panel discussions, and presentations from Business Wales, the Regional Skills Partnership, and energy network providers. Attendees learned practical strategies to decarbonise their operations and reduce energy costs, contributing to a more sustainable regional economy. You can view the slides from the event on our website: [www.growingmid.wales/article/15932/Sustainable-business-solutions-in-Mid-Wales-Minimising-emissions-and-costs](http://www.growingmid.wales/article/15932/Sustainable-business-solutions-in-Mid-Wales-Minimising-emissions-and-costs), or watch back some of the presentations on our [Youtube channel](#).
- **Local Area Energy Plans (LAEPs):** During summer 2024, both Ceredigion and Powys endorsed their LAEPs, outlining steps to achieve net-zero by 2050. High-priority

projects included heat pump installations, fabric efficiency upgrades, and the development of smart local energy systems. To view the LAEPs for each county, visit: <https://www.growingmid.wales/LAEP> You can view the combined key outputs from the region in this formative [pdf](#).



## Economic Growth

- **Mid Wales Growth Deal Progress:** Significant advancements have been made in the eight live projects, all of which have now completed their Strategic Outline Cases and are developing their Outline Business Cases. In April 2024, the Elan Valley Lakes project became the first to reach the Outline Business Case stage, aiming to create a flagship visitor destination that includes upgraded facilities, high-quality accommodation, and conservation efforts. These projects, combined with the Mid Wales Growth Deal programmes, have laid a strong foundation for continued regional growth. Read more about the programmes and projects within the Growth Deal Portfolio here: <https://bit.ly/MidWalesGrowthDeal>

- Economic Advisory Group:** The Growth Deal continues to enlist the support of a number of industry leaders utilising their experience and local knowledge to inform the development of the programme, with new members joining in 2024. Read more about the EAG members on our website: [www.growingmidwales.co.uk/EAG](http://www.growingmidwales.co.uk/EAG)
- Sites and Premises:** The Mid Wales Growth Deal Sites and Premises Programme Board, in collaboration with real estate advisors Savills, conducted comprehensive assessments of strategic employment sites across the region. This included evaluating planning considerations, economic impact, and development viability. These efforts aim to stimulate property investment, ensuring the availability of modern commercial spaces that meet the needs of diverse industry sectors in Mid Wales.



- Shared Prosperity Fund Impact:** Since Mid Wales' Regional Investment Plan was approved by the UK Government in December 2022, a total of 166\* projects have been awarded funding in the region. Over a staggering £40 million has been committed to the projects. Further projects have been approved under the umbrella grant schemes such as [Cynnal y Cardi](#) in Ceredigion and Making a [Difference in Powys](#). The Shared Prosperity Fund programme is broken down into four priority areas (figures below from October 2024).



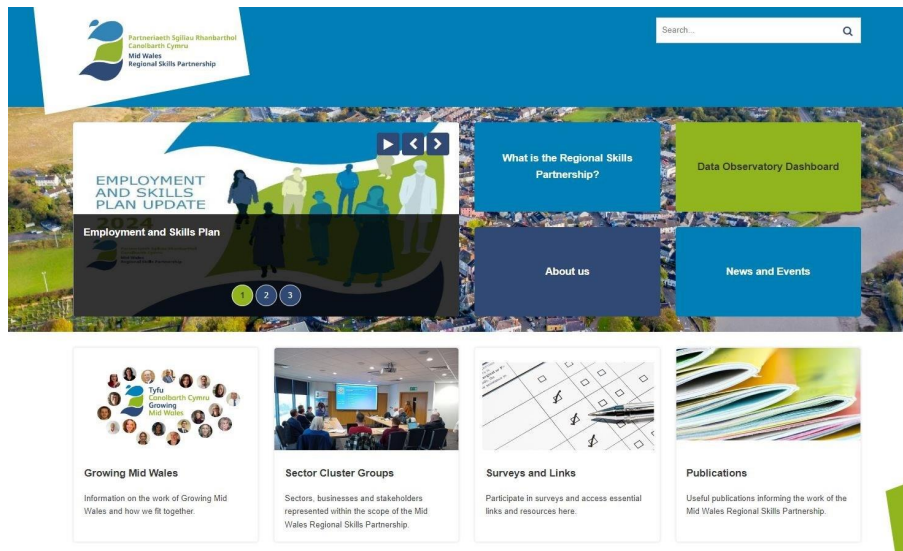
## Skills Development

- **Employment and Skills Plan Update:** The Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership unveiled updates to its Employment and Skills Plan at the Royal Welsh Show, reflecting emerging sector needs and future job growth in construction, advanced manufacturing, food and drink, and digital. View the full plan from the RSP website: [www.midwalesrsp.wales/article/17159/Our-Employment-and-Skills-Plan](http://www.midwalesrsp.wales/article/17159/Our-Employment-and-Skills-Plan)
- **Cluster Groups and Labour Market Intelligence:** 11 sector-specific business clusters were established this year, with focused efforts on mapping training provisions and tackling skills shortages to align with regional economic demands.



## Business Engagement and Education

- **New RSP Website:** This year, a dedicated website for the Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership was launched, offering resources on skills, funding, and Welsh Government policies. It also features Data Cymru's observatory for comprehensive regional insights. Explore the website now: <https://midwalesrsp.wales/>



1 - <https://midwalesrsp.wales/>

## Events

**Royal Welsh Show Highlights:** The event served as a platform for unveiling strategic updates, engaging with government representatives, and showcasing our energy and digital initiatives through interactive sessions like building a sustainable house in virtual reality.

Dame Nia Griffith DBE MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Wales Office, met with Councillor James Gibson-Watt, Leader of Powys County Council, and Councillor Bryan Davies, Leader of Ceredigion County Council, to discuss progress being made to grow the Mid Wales economy.

To view the full story, visit our news page: [www.growingmidwales.co.uk/article/16826/Re-affirming-UK-Government-commitments-to-grow-the-Mid-Wales-economy](http://www.growingmidwales.co.uk/article/16826/Re-affirming-UK-Government-commitments-to-grow-the-Mid-Wales-economy)



## What you can expect in 2025

In 2025, we are set to advance several key initiatives aimed at fostering regional development and sustainability:

- 1. Mid Wales Corporate Joint Committee Regional Transport Plan:** In 2025, the Mid Wales Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) will play an increasingly instrumental role in driving strategic regional development alongside Growing Mid Wales. The CJC will take on greater responsibilities, particularly in areas such as transportation, strategic development and regional economic planning. One major focus will be advancing the Mid Wales Regional Transport Plan, which aims to improve connectivity and infrastructure across the region in line with the Welsh Government's new transport strategy. By coordinating with local authorities and stakeholders, the CJC will ensure that key transportation objectives and economic initiatives are met, fostering sustainable growth and better integration of regional services. The Regional Transport Plan Consultation will begin in February 2025. Get to know more about the role of the Mid Wales Corporate Joint Committee on our website: [www.growingmid.wales/article/17212/Mid-Wales-Corporate-Joint-Committee](http://www.growingmid.wales/article/17212/Mid-Wales-Corporate-Joint-Committee)
- 2. Launch of the AI-Driven Careers Portal:** Early in the year, the RSP plans to introduce an interactive, AI-powered careers portal tailored for students aged 11-18. This platform will provide daily access to career opportunities, emphasising local prospects within Mid Wales, thereby enhancing career guidance for young people.
- 3. Growth Deal moves into delivery:** A number of projects are expected to receive funding approval in 2025 and subsequently start delivery on the ground. It has been a long journey and we look forward to continuing to work with our external partners to ensure successful delivery leading ultimately to economic benefits within the region.
- 4. Completion of the Education and Training Review Exercise:** The RSP Provider group is working with Careers Wales, conducting a comprehensive check of accessibility to post-16 education and training opportunities across the region. The results, expected in 2025 will assist Careers Wales to update systems for businesses to access. This exercise will assist in identifying and addressing gaps in training aligned with local industry needs.
- 5. Implementation of Local Area Energy Plans (LAEPs):** Following the endorsement of LAEPs by Ceredigion and Powys County Councils, GMW will focus on supporting projects that are committed to make sustainable energy. These include installing heat



pumps, enhancing building fabric efficiency, and developing smart local energy systems, all aimed at progressing towards a net-zero energy system by 2050. Get to know more about the LAEPs on our website: [www.growingmid.wales/LAEP](http://www.growingmid.wales/LAEP)

## Other news

### **New Cluster Management Organisation launched to drive Agri-Tech and Food Innovation in Mid and North Wales**

Growing Mid Wales, Ambition North Wales, M-SParc and AberInnovation are pleased to announce the official launch of the Cluster Management Organisation (CMO) to drive agri-tech and food technology innovation across Mid and North Wales.

*Nurturing Innovation in the Agri-tech and Food Technology Cluster for Mid and North Wales*, the CMO will coordinate activities and promote funding opportunities available in the local cluster through a project that will run initially for two years using funding from Innovate UK.

Read the full story here: [www.growingmidwales.co.uk/article/17662/New-Cluster-Management-Organisation-launched-to-drive-Agri-Tech-and-Food-Innovation-in-Mid-and-North-Wales](http://www.growingmidwales.co.uk/article/17662/New-Cluster-Management-Organisation-launched-to-drive-Agri-Tech-and-Food-Innovation-in-Mid-and-North-Wales)



*3 - Back Row L to R: Elliw Hughes, Ambition North Wales, Arwyn Davies, Ceredigion County Council, Carwyn Jones-Evans, Growing Mid Wales, Pryderi ap Rhisiart, M-SParc & Tom Burke, M-SParc*

*Front Row L to R: Louise Jones, Innovate UK, Nicholas Shilton, Welsh Government, Barbara Green, Growing Mid Wales, Becky Jeremy, Ceredigion County Council*

### **Planning to grow your business?**

Join other Mid Wales businesses who have already shared their thoughts on potential opportunities for capital grant funding! Be part of the conversation and take part in our survey now: <https://bit.ly/SupportingEnterpriseSurvey>

## Supporting Business Growth

### Planning to Grow Your Business?

Share your expansion plans in our survey and explore potential opportunities for capital grant funding to help you succeed!

<https://bit.ly/SupportingEnterpriseSurvey>



### Mobile coverage checker receives an upgrade

Thanks to residents feedback, the mobile coverage checker tool now shows performances across the region on a map - not just data for individual properties.

This new feature helps you see which operators perform best across the region, while still providing exact speeds for your address.

Follow the link to explore the bigger picture of mobile provision in Mid Wales:

<https://bit.ly/GMWMobileCoverageChecker>



✨ Congratulations to all the winners ✨ Caru Ceredigion Awards 2024



Congratulations to all the winning businesses at last week's Caru Ceredigion Awards 🎉 A special shoutout to those supported by the Shared Prosperity Fund—your hard work and innovation are truly inspiring. See the winners here: [Celebrating outstanding talent in Ceredigion - Gwobrau Caru Ceredigion Awards 2024 winners announced - Ceredigion County Council](#)



## 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 X, LinkedIn pages, and YouTube channel:

<https://twitter.com/growingmidwales>

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

<https://www.youtube.com/@TCC-GMW>

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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