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Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru	National Assembly for Wales
Pwyllgor yr Economi, Seilwaith a Sgiliau	Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee
Blaenoriaethau ar gyfer Pwyllgor yr Economi, Seilwaith a Sgiliau	Priorities for the Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee
EIS 16 Cynghrair Mersi a'r Ddyfrdwy	EIS 16 Mersey Dee Alliance

RE: Mersey Dee Cross Border Economy

Thank you for your recent correspondence regarding the future work plan of the new Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee.

As you know the Mersey Dee Alliance (MDA) is a strategic economic partnership across Flintshire, Wrexham, Cheshire West and Chester and Wirral. The MDA recognises the importance of cross border collaboration to strengthen the combined economy across North Wales, Cheshire and Merseyside.

The MDA would welcome the opportunity to work with the Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee to look at the Mersey Dee cross border economy. We would like in particular to investigate how we can build further on the already successful collaborative working established between the partner organisations of Flintshire, Wrexham, Wirral and Cheshire West and Chester Councils, Merseytravel, Welsh Government, University of Chester, Glyndwr University and other key stakeholders such as the North Wales Economic Ambition Board, Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership, Liverpool City Region and the FE colleges across the MDA area in order to establish how cross border transport infrastructure and skills projects can be progressed.

Over the last 18 months the profile of the cross border economy has been raised quite significantly and has resulted in the establishment of a cross border All Party Parliamentary Group to take forward the cross border transport infrastructure and skills priorities, including the work of the North Wales and Mersey Dee Rail Task Force rail modernisation programme; Growth Track 360. We are now hopeful that an All Party AM Group will be established to complement the work of the APPG. The cross border economy also forms a major part of the emerging Cheshire and Warrington Devolution Deal (as one of three spatial propositions) and the North Wales Growth Deal. It would be

helpful therefore if the Committee would look into what mechanisms are required between Welsh and UK Governments and other delivery/funding bodies to allow for the full benefit of any Deal agreements to be realised on either side of the border and assist partners working together across the Mersey Dee area regardless of the border.

It is important for the Committee to note that the economy of the Mersey Dee cross-border region generates £22bn GVA per annum and has great growth potential. Key strategic employment sites such as Deeside Enterprise Zone, Wirral Waters Enterprise Zone, Cheshire Science Corridor Enterprise Zone, Wrexham Industrial Estate and Technology Park, central Chester Business District and Thornton Science Park could deliver 40,000-50,000 new jobs over the next 15-20 years. Combined with Anglesey Enterprise Zone, Snowdonia Enterprise Zone, the wider Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership area (including HS2 / Northern Gateway Development Zone) and the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority it is clear that this combined economy is of significant importance to Wales and the UK.

The private sector will be the principal driver of this economic growth but both Welsh and UK Governments, and their delivery agents, have a critical role to play in creating the conditions that will facilitate indigenous growth and attract new investment. In particular, ensuring efficient and integrated transport infrastructure that provides businesses with fast access to national and international markets and enables people to access employment opportunities is essential if the region is to achieve its full growth potential.

Should this area of work be of interest to the Committee the MDA would be happy to provide further details as required.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



Cllr Derek Butler
MDA Chair