

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 45 Cyngor Sir Powys	EIS 45 Powys County Council

Dear Russell,

We are glad to have the opportunity to respond to the Committee's invitation to submit issues for consideration during the Fifth Assembly.

Powys faces unique challenges in terms of growing its local economy due to the county's deep rurality and peripherality – characteristics not often found outside the Mid Wales region. It historically has high levels of economic activity and self-employment, but the economic base of the county is narrow and productivity is low.

Powys County Council, along with Ceredigion County Council, are key members of The Growing Mid Wales Partnership, which has been established with the aim of developing the Mid Wales economy. The partnership works closely with Welsh Government, and contains representatives from the private, public and voluntary sector.

Together, we have established a strong consensus around the region's opportunities and challenges, and have identified several priority areas for action;

- Diversify the economic base – including encouraging inward investment
- Support and strengthen existing businesses
- Create new quality job opportunities
- Develop workforce skills – including ensuring training provision are aligned to the skills needs of businesses
- Improve communications, accessibility and infrastructure

Building on our regional approach, we are also developing conversations with the adjacent Marches Local Enterprise Partnership and are keen to further explore the opportunities for joint working on mutually beneficial issues such as improved transport links, which are vital to encouraging inward investment in the region.

Following the United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union, we are also keen to work closely with the Welsh Government and the Wales Office to ensure that the future shape of infrastructure and skills funding for Wales does not disadvantage rural areas, where issues such as rural poverty are often well masked. Historically, Powys has had access to lower levels of funding in comparison to Local Authorities in the West Wales and the Valleys area, and not always in areas which are strategic priorities for the county. Future funding should allow for regional flexibility in investment.

The Partnership has recently agreed upon a Framework for Action, a strategic document that sets out these key priorities for achieving economic growth and prosperity across the

region, and examines how we can achieve them. The document helps articulate and advocate the aspirations for rural Mid Wales. We attach a copy of the document, which is in a final **draft** form, and we would very much welcome the opportunity to discuss the final version of the document further with you and fellow members of the Economy, Skills and Infrastructure Committee.

Regards,

Paul

Paul Griffiths

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