

North Wales Strategic Development Plan

Revised Scoping for Consultancy Support – September 2025

The potential scope of work required falls into six distinct and sequential stages as follows:

Support Requirement Stage	Key content and outcomes	Further Context
1. Building on Work already undertaken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Original Arup report and spreadsheet summarising LDP position by LPA b. Evidence Audit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Scope of likely evidence needed (Manual, Planning Officers Group document, Delivery Agreement appendix 1) ii. Review of each LPA LDP evidence base (existing and programmed) iii. Review of other relevant housing and employment data and forecasts iv. Gap analysis – identify gaps and need for investment c. OUTPUT – Audit report/summary spreadsheet identifying any additional or updated evidence base required and broad scope and estimated budget range for each. 	<p>Building on the significant baseline already provided as part of the original commission and contract to provide support for both RTP and SDP preparation. There is excellent background contained in the North Wales Development Plan Review Data spreadsheet and in a technical note dated 10 May 2024. This work does not need to be repeated (save for minor updating of LDP positions etc) but forms the basis to look at the scope of evidence required to inform the development of an SDP. Key outcomes are to gain an understanding of what evidence is relevant for SDP preparation, what the LPAs already have that can be summarised at the regional level and advise what needs to be procured via specific work/commissions.</p>

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<p>2. Methodology for developing a consistent evidence base across North Wales</p>	<p>a. Review LPA approaches to evidence gathering, including data sources and currency, assumptions (for example behind employment forecasting, demographic analysis and housing needs assessments), timeframes for assessments, consultants, costs, software and data issues and compatibility and scope for economies The consultant should advise on areas of potential inconsistency that will require further review and areas where updates and further work beyond the respective plan periods may be required.</p> <p>b. OUTPUT – Evidence base recommendations including proposed scope, methodologies and programme for additional evidence base work.</p>	<p>Section 3.72-3.78 Of the draft SDP manual covers the development of an evidence base and is relevant to the baseline scoping work to be undertaken in task 1 above. The key requirement here is to identify a way to bring all the relevant evidence and information together so that it ‘tells the story’ for the area and the plan, is easy to interpret and analyse, and provides a direct link to strategic objectives and policies. This will also help with updating and the scrutiny of the evidence at Examination, where Inspectors currently are presented with detailed background studies on various topics. This task will also need to consider what happens beyond the evidence that covers LDPs which may only span the short-medium term of the SDP plan period, and the practicalities of predicting or evidencing what may happen 20-25 years ahead. In particular, the need for and likely scope of regional housing market and needs assessments and employment needs assessment should be considered.</p> <p>This stage of work should also consider the programme for evidence base work (identifying key interdependencies) to inform the preparation of the Delivery Agreement.</p>

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<p>3. Main Issues Report</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Summarise the main issues that are relevant to developing the SDP strategy b. Map these by broad policy area/theme - see Indicative SDP Policy Framework Diagram c. Suggest key priorities for forming a regional vision/strategic objectives d. OUTPUT – Main Issues Report (including summary policy issue maps) 	<p>This task brings together the outcomes of tasks 1 and 2 and summarises the main issues that are relevant to the development of an SDP. These should be mapped to an indicative policy framework that has been produced to reflect SDP guidance on coverage and content, and which may form a model for how the plan is prepared.</p> <p>The Main Issues Report should be shared for review and comment with each of the constituent LPAs.</p> <p>A GIS based approach is also required to illustrate the main issues identified. This could draw upon local authority and Transport for Wales GIS data that is available on request. Any opportunities for digital innovation to bring together data for North Wales will be welcomed.</p> <p>The purpose of the Main Issues Report is to assist in developing a regional vision and strategic objectives and identify any policy options that emerge from the assessment, that will need to form the basis of key decisions on direction for the SDP.</p>

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<p>4. Regional Spatial characteristics, settlement hierarchy, strategic site/location thresholds</p>	<p>Area profiles defining key spatial issues including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Strategic Settlement and Retail Hierarchy b. Environmental and landscape designations (including proposed Green Belt areas) c. Constraints mapping (including flood risk, agricultural land classification, minerals and waste and others to be agreed) d. Key transport and movement networks and accessibility/movement analysis, including highways, public transport and active travel e. Strategic infrastructure overview and known capacity issues f. Housing and employment market profiles g. Strategic sites and growth locations (existing from LDPs and any known areas of search for future growth locations) <p>Establish call for strategic candidate sites, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Engage with LPAs to set criteria for strategic call for candidate sites and search areas b. Develop and agree candidate site/area assessment methodology c. Support CJC /LPAs to initiate call for sites and to record and categorise sites for assessment d. OUTPUTS – Area Profiles Report, Candidate sites map/register and assessment methodology 	<p>Task 4 focuses on the need to understand the region’s spatial character and context to inform the definition of a settlement hierarchy. It will require a review of existing settlement hierarchies established in LDPs and identification of key strategic and cross boundary issues to develop recommendations for the strategic settlement hierarchy and capacity for growth.</p> <p>It also requires the co-ordination of a call for candidate sites/strategic locations (including their recording once received – GIS and register). A methodology will also need to be developed for the assessment of the submitted sites/locations, aligned to the SDP manual and identifying key assessment criteria. The context already gathered at the outset of task 1 can be brought into this task, in terms of the location of existing strategic development sites etc, as well as proposal emerging from the RTPAP.</p>

<p>5. Establish housing and employment targets, develop and assess spatial options and advise on apportionment and distribution of housing and employment growth</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Housing requirement for the SDP and each constituent LPA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Short/med term – LDPs & hh projections ii. Long term – hh projections b. Employment Growth provision for the LDP and each LPA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Short/med term – LDPs & job projections ii. Long term – job projections c. Scope requirements for assessing viability and deliverability d. Realistic SDP plan period e. OUTPUT –Housing and employment requirement by LPA area over lifetime of SDP f. Strategic Spatial Options and Options Assessment 	<p>Stage 5A</p> <p>The primary objective of this stage is to identify overall housing and employment needs and targets for the region.</p> <p>This will draw on the existing LDP evidence reviewed in Stages 1 and 2 as well as WG household projections and employment forecasts for the region as a whole. It will be necessary to assess housing and employment growth options for the region over a likely 25-year plan period. This should consider all relevant sources of information from the planned levels of growth in adopted/emerging LDPs (short/medium term growth), to the whole plan period (long term). It is understood that updated Welsh Government household projections are due to be published in the autumn of 2025, but those currently available should be used for this initial assessment. A key part of the task is to establish a robust method for assessing realistic and deliverable jobs growth over the plan period and use this to set a benchmark for jobs growth that in turn will influence the identification of a sufficient quantum of regional strategic employment sites. This should also be aligned to known sites and potential projects in the Growth Deal and emerging Investment Zone, as well as other transformational projects including energy. Consideration will need to be given to the overall balance of jobs and homes and likely impacts on migration and commuting patterns. Part of this task will also look at what is the most appropriate plan period for the first SDP – 20 or 25 years? Longer?</p>
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		<p>Stage 5B</p> <p>Having developed growth targets and/or options, the next stage of work will consider the most appropriate way to apportion that growth across the region.</p> <p>This stage will draw on the Main Issues Report (Stage 2) Area Profiles and spatial analysis (Stage 3) and housing and employment requirements and strategic sites (Stage 5) to develop spatial options for growth in accordance with the SDP Manual.</p> <p>It will be necessary to assess how these options perform in addressing the issues identified and in delivering the longer term vision for the region. These options will be assessed in accordance with the IIA methodology (to be developed in Stage 6)</p>
6. Integrated Impact Assessment	<p>a. Assess scoping done by LPAs for LDPs and adapt to regional scale</p> <p>b. OUTPUT – IIA Scoping Report</p> <p>c. HRA Screening</p>	<p>Part of the early work on the SDP also involves the need to scope out the SA/SEA and to consider the wider potential to include all relevant assessment tools that need to be applied to the SDP process, including HRA, in an Integrated Impact Assessment. An initial assessment of how LPAs have approached this in their respective LDPs will inform this task, although the SDP should be a plan in its own right, rather than just the sum of its parts. The scope should be aligned to the key issues report to create the key links to the early stages of the Plan.</p>