

Councillor / Cynghorydd Dave Hughes

Leader of the Council

Arweinydd y Cyngor



Andrew RT Davies MS
Welsh Parliament
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Via Email
SeneddEconomy@senedd.wales

Your Ref/Eich Cyf

Our Ref/Ein Cyf DH/NW/AB

Date/Dyddiad 9th February 2026

Ask for/Gofynner am Cllr. Dave Hughes

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Dear Mr Davies

Re Follow-up from the meeting held on 21 January 2026 - Inward Investment

The Welsh Government approach to inward investment is delivered centrally with support from the regional teams. Limited information reaches the Council regarding the activities of the central inward investment function even when the business interest is located within the county. This makes it very difficult to comment, therefore, on the strengths or weaknesses of the approach being taken.

Locally, the Council works very closely with regional Welsh Government officers on those inward investment opportunities that they are able to discuss or where the business has approached the Council directly. The Council, with the regional Welsh Government team and Further and Higher Education colleagues provides a broad service to potential investors to assist them with identifying sites and premises, connecting them with recruitment, training and finance support and helping them to engage with the wider business ecosystem and key Council departments.

The limited local engagement from the central Welsh Government team weakens the service that businesses receive and can cause practical problems where, for example, business proposals are brought to the Council at an advanced stage of development and face local regulatory challenges which could have been resolved more smoothly had the proposal been discussed with the Council on a confidential basis earlier in the process. Further, the Council has a wealth of knowledge about the area and its opportunities which could be of value to the potential investor but

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which they may not get the opportunity to understand through a wholly centralised approach.

Businesses are understandably confused by the different layers of Government and the roles that each play. The layers of Government should be working together to ensure that businesses receive a “no wrong door” service but this only operates to a limited extent currently due to the limited communication between the tiers. Welsh Government does operate a client management function to support the larger businesses located in the County and to provide day to day liaison. Little information reaches the Council regarding this bipartite process to enable us to judge its effectiveness.

In a Flintshire context, there is considerable business interest in investment but also significant barriers that preclude businesses from doing so. These barriers include:

- Energy infrastructure to enable site development and/or expansion limits opportunities for investment.
- Very short supply of good quality employment land or commercial premises.
- Skills shortages in many sectors and an aging workforce with significant recruitment challenges.

The availability of employment land and sites and premises is of particular concern especially given the designation of Deeside as a national growth zone by Welsh Government. This growth goal is highly achievable but needs a step change in the approach to investment with the new Investment Zone representing the first opportunity to test this and already seeing significant investment likely in the near future. The Welsh Government owned employment land at Warren Hall, which has been undeveloped for several decades, needs to be readied for development with some urgency to capitalise upon the potential growth opportunities in Flintshire.

Kind regards

Cllr Dave Hughes



Dave Hughes
Leader of The Council