

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BWRDD TYFU CANOLBARTH CYMRU /
GROWING MID WALES BOARD HELD BY ZOOM ON THURSDAY, 11TH MARCH
2021**

PRESENT

Powys County Council Cabinet Members:

Councillor Rosemarie Harris Leader of Powys County Council **(RH) (Chair)**
Councillor Aled Davies, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Countryside and Transport **(AD)**
Councillor Phyl Davies, Portfolio Holder for Education and Property **(PD)**
Councillor Heulwen Hulme, Portfolio Holder for Environment **(HH)**
Councillor Iain McIntosh, Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Planning and Housing **(IM)**

Ceredigion County Council Cabinet Members:

Councillor Ellen ap Gwynn, Leader of Ceredigion County and Cabinet Member for Policy Performance, Partnerships and Democratic Services **(EAG)**
Councillor Dafydd Edwards: Cabinet Member for Highways and Environmental Services together with Housing **(DE)**
Councillor Catrin Miles: Cabinet Member for Learning Services and Lifelong Learning **(CM)**
Councillor Rhodri Evans: Cabinet Member for Economy and Regeneration **(RE)**
Councillor Gareth Lloyd, Cabinet Member for Finance and Procurement Services and Public Protection Services **(GL)**

Fiona Stewart, Chair of the Economic Strategy Group **(FS)**

Officers:

Eifion Evans, Chief Executive, Ceredigion County Council **(EE)**
Dr. Caroline Turner, Chief Executive, Powys County Council **(CT)**
Carwyn Jones-Evans, Strategic Manager Mid Wales Growth Deal **(CJE)**
Clive Pinney, Solicitor to the Council, Powys County Council **(CP)**
Lowri Edwards, Corporate Lead Officer: Democratic Services **(LE)**
Nigel Brinn, Corporate Director Economy & Environment, Powys County Council **(NB)**
Paul Griffiths, Advisor **(PG)**
Russell Hughes-Pickering, Corporate Lead Officer: Economy & Regeneration, Ceredigion County Council **(RHP)**
Stephen Johnson, Corporate Lead Officer: Finance & Procurement, Ceredigion County Council **(SJ)**

In attendance: Elgan Hearn, Powys Local Democracy Reporter

1. CROESO AC YMDDIHEURIADAU / WELCOME AND APOLOGIES
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The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies received: Steve Hughson, Chief Executive of the Royal Welsh Agricultural Society.

2. DATGANIADAU O FUDDIANT PERSONOL / DECLARATIONS OF

PERSONAL INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest reported.

3. COFNODION Y CYFARFOD DIWETHAF/ MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING 03/02/2021

The minutes of the last meeting held on 3rd February 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

4. MID WALES GROWTH DEAL: PORTFOLIO DEVELOPMENT
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- **Report: Progress update and context for discussion**
- **Verbal: Feedback from the Economic Strategy Group**

CJE reported on the positive announcement from the UK Government's Spring Budget last week. CJE stated that instead of £15mil over 15 years for Growth Deal funding, the UK Treasury has decided that funding will be accelerated to be distributed over 10 years, which equates to £5.5mil per annum. The UK Government has not announced when the funding will begin and WG have not indicated whether they will be matching the funding profile as yet. CJE stated that this amendment does not result in any change to processes and fortnightly meetings are being had with WG and UK Civil Servants to maintain regular communication.

CJE provided a progress update from a pre-circulated report to Members on the formal development of the Mid Wales Growth Deal which included the draft Strategic Portfolio Business Case and the initial long-list of projects.

CJE stated that weekly officer meetings are being held to manage activity.

CJE stated that the Welsh European Funding Office have approved revenue funding at just over £1mil over 3 years which both Local Authorities have match funded and will help to establish the Portfolio Management Office (PMO). The structure will be discussed with both Chief Executives and will be concluded in the coming months.

CJE reported that the GMW website is now live and is being kept up to date with information on the Growth Deal and how businesses can engage. CJE explained that while the PMO is being established, business are being asked to approach the economy teams in both Local Authorities in the first instance for further discussion.

CJE stated that the Strategic Portfolio Business Case has been discussed at an informal joint Cabinet workshop between Ceredigion and Powys and has been discussed with the ESG. CJE stated that the Strategic Portfolio Business Case is the first formal document to be produced to both Governments to show the capacity and capability to deliver the Growth Deal.

CJE provided an update on the feasibility studies to all as outlined in the accompanying report. CJE stated that the current set of projects are still being scoped and will be communicated shortly once the long-list has been developed and further work has been undertaken to refine it into an initial short list.

CJE provided Members with the next steps as outlined in Section 5 of the accompanying report which will include sharing and publishing the feasibility studies to allow for more open, structured and detailed conversations. Further conversations will be had with both Leaders on strengthening communication and messaging as to how businesses can get involved in the development of the Deal.

PG stated that the team are working very closely with both UK and WG Governments which is providing confidence to both Governments that processes are being followed correctly and at the right pace. PG stated that capacity is having to increase as the workload increases and it is important to keep the pace as projects are being developed.

PG provided a brief update on the RLSP and stated that the work is moving at pace and will allow for opportunities on capital investment.

PG stated that feasibility studies are an important part of the work being done and the Board and the ESG will see them as an indication that projects are beginning to be developed and the change they will bring to communities.

PG stated that it will need to be made sure that the governance and assurance is in tandem with the expectations of both Governments, the Board and the ESG.

Following discussion, Members agreed to the two recommendations contained in the Report as follows:-

- To note the progress to date in developing the Deal, and the next steps outlined.
 - To mandate the further development of the Portfolio Business Case as outlined, subject to additional views from the Board/ESG – so that initial programme and project proposals can be brought forward for consideration at pace.
- **Verbal: Feedback from the Economic Strategy Group**

FS provided feedback from the ESG meeting held on 3rd March 2021 and the discussion that was had on the initial long-list. FS stated that no decision was made by the ESG on the long-list and the ESG Members are looking forward to discussing the feasibility studies and decision making to come. The ESG Members felt that all projects were in the spirit of the Mid Wales Growth Deal. FS stated that he ESG Members are providing information to both Council's on the information they are looking for in order to work together.

FS suggested that the ESG Members are provided with questions that require response ahead of ESG meetings to allow discussions to take place between the ESG Members beforehand.

Going forward, FS stated that the ESG might be broken down in to smaller groups to discuss matters.

PG stated that further discussion will be had with FS and CJE to discuss these points further.

FS asked if there was a Vision Statement in place for the long-list of projects? FS stated that we are also in a changing financial and economical situation worldwide to the Covid-19 pandemic and the target areas of the feasibility studies may change. CJE confirmed that there is a Vision Statement in place, which was discussed with ESG Members in March 2019, which is included in the draft Strategic Portfolio Business Case document.

NB stated that discussions are ongoing concerning providing support and assistance to bring projects forward.

CJE stated that a press release will be issued today inviting ideas for the Growth Deal and information will be placed on the GMW website. Further communications will be undertaken post-Election in May 2021.

PG suggested that Members of the GMW Board and ESG Members inform contacts through their networks of the opportunities of the Growth Deal and to guide them to the PMO for further discussion.

EAG wished to congratulate officers for all the work that has been undertaken to date. A lot more work will be undertaken to define projects to place on the short list and with different funding streams developing going forward, there may be more funding streams available for projects that will not come under the Growth Deal.

EAG asked if there is a need to have a joint Audit Committee established to oversee the work in addition to a joint Scrutiny Committee?

CJE and CP stated that that the joint Scrutiny is being developed and Terms of Reference have been drafted which will be presented to Members at the next GMW Board (Joint Committee) meeting. Arrangements for a joint Audit Committee will be discussed in more detail.

EAG asked for further information on two ideas discussed at the Senedd Scrutiny Committee by Cardiff City Council being a Challenge Fund to put in place to bring forward to new ideas to tackle problems and using some funding to reinvest in giving loans rather than full investment.

CJE stated that the latter point is not possible for the Mid Wales Growth Deal as it is a different model to other Deals in Wales however, there may be opportunities to ask for some of these elements if appropriate. With regards to

the Challenge Fund, CJE stated that there may be opportunities to pilot something similar in Mid Wales.

- **Revised Inter-Authority Agreement**

Whilst the revised Inter-Authority Agreement (IAA) had been formally withdrawn from this evening's Agenda, CP provided a brief update. CP stated that work has been undertaken to amend the IAA and there is still some further work to be done and discussion with the Board will be delayed until the next meeting on the 11th June 2021. However, CP stated that there is a suggestion that the Board should agree to extend the IAA to allow for the development of the portfolio development business case pending a formal amendment at the next Board on 11th June 2021.

All Members agreed to the form of wording (shared on screen by CP) to extend the IAA to cover the future development pending a formal amendment to the IAA at the next meeting on the 11th June 2021.

5.	REGIONAL LEARNING AND SKILLS PARTNERSHIP (RLSP): PROGRESS BRIEFING AND NEXT STEPS
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NB provided a progress update on the establishment of the Regional Learning and Skills Partnership (RLSP). NB stated that applications for the RLSP Manager was shortlisted last week and interviews will be held this Monday, 15th March 2021.

NB stated that Expressions of Interest are being sought for the Chair of the RLSP and Expressions of Interest forms will be circulated to Members post-meeting which Members can circulate as they see fit.

NB stated that meetings are ongoing with WG to ensure the Mid Wales RLSP will be treated equally to others in Wales.

6.	UNRHYW FATER ARALL / ANY OTHER BUSINESS
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None.

The Chair thanked all for attending and for all the work being undertaken.

7.	DYDDIADAU CYFARFOD NESAF / DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS
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11 June 2021 – Virtual
21 September 2021 – Virtual
10 December 2021 - Virtual

County Councillor Rosemarie Harris
Chair