

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BWRDD TYFU CANOLBARTH CYMRU /
GROWING MID WALES BOARD HELD BY ZOOM ON FRIDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2023**

PRESENT

PRESENT

Ceredigion County Council Members:

Councillor Bryan Davies, Leader and Cabinet Member for Democratic Services, Policy, Performance and People and Organisation **(BD) (Chair)**

Councillor Catrin M S. Davies, Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Customer Services **(CMSD)**

Councillor Clive Davies, Cabinet Member for Economy and Regeneration **(CD)**

Councillor Keith Henson, Cabinet Member for Highways and Environmental Services and Carbon Management **(KH)**

Councillor Matthew Vaux, Cabinet Member for Partnerships, Housing, Legal and Governance and Public Protection **(MV)**

Powys County Council Members:

Councillor Aled Davies **(AD)**

Councillor David Selby, Cabinet Member for a More Prosperous Powys **(DS)**

Councillor Amanda Jenner **(AJ)**

Officers:

Eifion Evans, Chief Executive, Ceredigion County Council **(EE)**

Barry Rees, Corporate Director, Ceredigion County Council **(BR)**

Elin Prysor, Corporate Lead Officer: Legal and Governance, Ceredigion County Council **(EP)**

Lowri Edwards, Corporate Lead Officer: Democratic Services, Ceredigion County Council **(LE)**

Russell Hughes-Pickering, Corporate Lead Officer: Economy and Regeneration, Ceredigion County Council **(RHP)**

Duncan Hall, Corporate Lead Officer: Finance and Procurement, Ceredigion County Council **(DH)**

Arwyn Davies, Corporate Manager: Growth and Enterprise, Ceredigion County Council **(ADa)**

Carwyn Jones-Evans, Joint Strategic Lead, Growing Mid Wales/Ceredigion County Council **(CJE)**

Dr Caroline Turner, Chief Executive, Powys County Council **(CT)**

Clive Pinney, Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Powys County Council **(CP)**

Cathy Martin, Operations Manager, Growing Mid Wales **(CM)**

Aggie Caesar-Homden, Partnership Manager - Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership, Growing Mid Wales **(ACH)**

Angharad Massow, Communications Officer, Growing Mid Wales **(AM)**

Nigel Brinn, Executive Director Economy and Environment, Powys County Council **(NB)**

Nicola Williams, Joint Strategic Lead, Growing Mid Wales/ Powys County Council **(NW)**

Government Observers:

Gareth Ashman, Head of Regional and Local Growth, UK Government Wales

John Hawkins, UK Government Wales

Ann Watkin, Head of Strategy, Operations Alignment and Planning, Welsh Government

Darnley Reid, Regional & Local Growth Team, UK Government Wales

Peter James, Senior Strategy & Operations Manager, Welsh Government

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

Apologies were received from Councillor James Gibson-Watt (PCC), Councillor Matthew Dorrance (PCC), Diane Reynolds (PCC) Diana Davies and Nicola Owen.

2.	DATGANIADAU O FUDDIANT PERSONOL / DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST
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There were no declarations of personal interest reported.

3.	COFNODION DRAFFT Y CYFARFOD DIWETHAF 26/09/22 / DRAFT MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING 26/09/22
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The minutes of the last meeting held on 26th September 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

4.	BARGEN TWF MW / MW GROWTH DEAL
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CM advised that the Strategic Portfolio Business Case v2.0 had been drafted and was currently undergoing consultation. A workshop had been held on 10th February with members of the Management Group, UK Government and Welsh Government colleagues, the Economic Advisory Group and Welsh Government policy leads to take a more detailed look at the changes and invite feedback.

Supporting documents had been updated including the Private Sector Investment Strategy which would also be subject to further consultation particularly with members of the Economic Advisory Group to provide private sector input.

Final versions of both documents would be tabled for GMW Board approval on 28 March 2023 then submitted to both Governments for consideration at the Welsh Cites & Growth Deal Implementation Board meeting on 29th March. This would instigate the release of the Grant Award Letter.

A Portfolio Assurance Review had taken place in the week 14-17 February. The purpose of the review, involving an external and independent review team, was to provide assurance to the Board and to both Governments that everything was in place to progress with the delivery phase of the Growth Deal. A report would be provided to the Senior Responsible Owners and subsequently feedback to the GMW Board.

CM was asked if there was still room for new projects to come in if other projects dropped out. She advised that the portfolio management office will be developing a process to enable pipeline projects to come forward. The Board would need to assess how they fitted in with the Growth Deal objectives and it would be important not to raise expectations.

The Board noted that the presentations by sponsors had been generally well received although some could have been shorter and better focused. Cllr AJ asked for the presentations from the second workshop. Any comments should be directed to the Senior Responsible Officers, Nigel Brinn and Barry Rees.

The Chair asked for consideration to be given as to whether the Board should have a single point of contact with the EAG.

5. CYLLID / FINANCE

5.1 Datganiad Blynyddol ar gyfer y flwyddyn a ddaeth i ben ar 31 Mawrth 2022 / Report - Annual Return for the year ended 31 March 2022

The Board received the Annual Return for the year ended 31 March 2022. Audit Wales had audited the Annual Return. Their Audit certificate and opinion states – ‘It is our intention to issue an unqualified certificate and report for the year ended 31 March 2022 and there are no matters in respect of the opinion which we wish to draw to your attention.’

RESOLVED to approve the Annual Return for the year ending 31 March 2022.

5.4 Proposed 2023/24 revenue budget for Growing Mid Wales Board

The Board considered the Annual Budget for 2023/24.

Since the formal establishment of the Growing Mid Wales (GMW) Board development activity to date on the Mid Wales Growth Deal had largely been funded through spot contributions by the two Local Authorities and external grant funding (Welsh Government).

Additional revenue support was received in February 2021 from the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO) for an element of revenue costs to help establish a Portfolio Management Office for the period up to July 2023, as part of wider regional working via Growing Mid Wales. This grant funding did not form part of the GMW Board budget and currently supports 7 posts.

A revenue budget for 2023/24 for the GMW Board totalling £592,000 was proposed. The proposed budget assumed that the Portfolio Management Office costs from August 2023 onwards would be included, supporting the following posts:

- Growth Deal Operations Manager
- Programme Manager: Sites & Premises
- Programme Manager: Digital
- Portfolio Analysis & Support Officer
- ESF Project Manager (*subject to review*)
- GMW Communications officer

- GMW Energy Lead (*subject to review*)

The proposed 23/24 Budget assumed revenue funding of £367,000 which was a 4% top slice of the anticipated Year 1 Growth Deal Funding from both governments during 2023/24. This was subject to the full Growth Deal approval. The proposed budget also assumed continuing £100,000 funding each from both Powys and Ceredigion County Councils.

The proposed budget for 2023/24 was a holding position prior to the anticipated award of the Growth Deal Funding. A resource review, in readiness for moving from the development to delivery phase of the Growth Deal, would need to be undertaken during quarter one of 2023/24 which may result in the need for the Board to consider a revised Budget during 2023/24. This review could conclude that either higher, lower or broadly the same level of resources was required for the next phase. In addition, core expenditure beyond the proposed Council contributions totalling £200k should not be incurred until the Growth Deal is formally secured, as the 4% top slice does not exist until that is in place and a grant offer letter is received.

RESOLVED

- 1.1. The GMW Board approves the Annual Budget for 2023/2024 of £592,000 as outlined in Appendix 1, which includes a £100,000 contribution each from both Ceredigion County Council and Powys County Council.**
- 1.2. The GMW Board notes the intention for a Resources review to be undertaken in readiness for the next stage of the Growth Deal.**
- 1.3 The GMW Board notes that core expenditure should not exceed £200,000 during 2023/24 until the Growth Deal has been secured and the associated WG Grant offer letter has been received and accepted.**

6.	UNRHYW FATER ARALL / ANY OTHER BUSINESS
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NB reported that the first draft of the Portfolio Assurance Review had been returned with an Amber/Green confidence assessment. The final draft would be shared with the Board when available.

7.	DYDDIADAU CYFARFODYDD YN Y DYFODOL / DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS
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28 March 2023 – Virtual
23 June 2023 – Virtual
29 September 2023 – Virtual
15 December 2023 – Virtual

8.	EITHRIO'R CYHOEDD / EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC
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The report relating to item 5 is not for publication as it contains exempt information as defined in paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to information) (Variation) (Wales) Order 2007. If, following the application of the Public Interest Test, the Council resolves to consider this item in private, the public and press will be excluded from the meeting during such consideration, in accordance with Section 100B(2) of the Act.

RESOLVED

It was agreed to exclude the public and press during consideration of item 9 below on the basis that documents included information relating to the financial or business affairs of the Councils, which should not, on balance, be disclosed to the public and press.

9.	PARTNERIAETH SGILIAU RHANBARTHOL CC / MW REGIONAL SKILLS PARTNERSHIP
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ACH provided an update on progress of the Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership and on the draft RSP 3-year Employment and Skills Plan and Action Plan. The Board also received the RSP Annual Report.

The RSP had been commissioned by Welsh Government to produce labour market intelligence collaborating with employers and stakeholders to develop the new 3-year Employment and Skills Plan and Action Plan. RSP had commissioned Lightcast to support the development of the plan. To capture the voice of businesses, the annual Employment and Skills survey was distributed through business contacts, specific business forums such as FSB and the Mid Wales Manufacturing Group, Stakeholders, Partners, other networks, and RSP Board members.

An initial high level draft version of the new 3-year Employment and Skills Plan (2022 – 2025) and Action Plan, which would identify priorities for regional investment that supports jobs and growth in the Mid Wales region, had been submitted to WG for comments and initial feedback had been provided for the final draft.

The plan was supplemented by a number of annexes which would focus on different policy areas that feature in the Programme for Government. Key deliverables for the next 12 months were required for each of the following areas:

- Employment and Skills Plan 2022 – 2025
- Digital skills
- Net Zero skills
- National Occupational Standards (NOS)
- Further Education and Apprenticeships
- Welsh Language

Each Annex above had its own guidance note. In order to provide additional context and advice, WG Policy Leads were assigned to the RSP for each of the areas above.

The RSP had also produced a separate, larger, employer and stakeholder focused draft 3-year Employment and Skills Plan and Action Plan to promote their work in the region, maximising the use of infographics to make it more reader friendly. Where GMW Economic Priority areas had not been specifically included in the annexes, these were more fully explored in the larger plan.

ACH explained what was being done to engage with businesses and she advised that the response rate was average for Mid Wales. The Board asked about opportunities for students and how many were having to leave the region to pursue their chosen courses. It was agreed that there needed to be analysis of the provision available in Mid Wales.

RESOLVED

- 1. To receive the RSP Annual Report**
- 2. To note progress to date.**
- 3. To approve the draft RSP 3-year Employment and Skills Plan and Action Plan.**

County Councillor Bryan Davies (Chair)