

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BWRDD TYFU CANOLBARTH CYMRU /  
GROWING MID WALES BOARD HELD BY ZOOM ON FRIDAY, 23 JUNE 2023**

**PRESENT**

**Ceredigion County Council Members:**

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

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 James Gibson-Watt, Leader and Cabinet Member for an Open and Transparent Powys **(JGW)**

Councillor Aled Davies **(AD)**

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

**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)**

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

Justin Davies, Corporate Manager: Core Finance, Ceredigion County Council **(JD)**

Ffion Lloyd, Solicitor, Ceredigion County Council **(FL)**

Carwyn Jones-Evans, Growth and Major Developments Service Manager, Ceredigion County Council **(CJE)**

Nicola Williams, Strategic Lead- Growing Mid Wales, PCC **(NW)**

Debby Jones, Professional Lead- Legal/ Deputy Monitoring Officer, Powys County Council **(DJ)**

Diane Reynolds, Head of Digital Services, Powys County Council **(DR)**

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

Louise Grove-White, Interim Regional Skills Partnership Manager, Growing Mid Wales **(LGW)**

David Owen, Digital Programme Manager, Growing Mid Wales **(DO)**

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

Stacey-Jayne Oakham, GMW Portfolio Analysis and Support Officer **(SO)**

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

Apologies were received from Councillor Clive Davies, Cabinet Member for Economy and Regeneration CCC; Councillor Matthew Dorrance, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for a Fairer Powys PCC; Councillor Amanda Jenner PCC; Lowri Edwards, Corporate Lead Officer: Democratic Services CCC; Jack Straw, Interim Chief Executive PCC; Clive Pinney, Head of Legal and Democratic Services PCC and Ann Watkin, Head of Strategy, Operations Alignment and Planning, Welsh Government.

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

<b>3.</b>	<b>COFNODION DRAFFT Y CYFARFOD DIWETHAF / DRAFT MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING 28/03/2023</b>
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The minutes of the last meeting held on 28 March 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

<b>4.</b>	<b>PARTNERIAETH SGILIAU RHANBARTHOL CANOLBARTH CYMRU / MID WALES REGIONAL SKILLS PARTNERSHIP</b>
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LGW presented the Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership – Progress Update. The RSP Spring Event took place at the Metropole Hotel in Llandrindod Wells on 23 March 2023 with the aim to engage with businesses to identify their priorities for regional investment to support jobs and growth in the Mid Wales region and to understand the barriers to skills and recruitment. Welcome speeches were delivered by the Leader of Powys County Council, Councillor James Gibson-Watt, Deputy Leader of Ceredigion County Council, Councillor Alun Williams and the RSP chair Emma Thomas. As part of the agenda for the day, Vaughan Gething, MS, joined the event via a pre-recorded video to officially launch the 3-Year Employment & Skills Plan and Action Plan. Tom Yeo, GMW Energy Lead and Grant Thomas, Procurement Spend & Market Analyst, Powys County Council led informative presentations on Net Zero and the environmental and economic benefits aligning with Welsh Government's Net Zero Wales report. The event was attended by 61 people representing 17 organisations who all contributed to the interactive round table discussions to understand the barriers to skills and recruitment, facilitated by Alun Jones (former CEO of Menter a Busnes). Businesses were invited to register their interest in attending the first business cluster group, joining the GMW mailing list and downloading a copy of the Employment & Skills Plan and Action Plan.

The first RSP Business Cluster Group meeting was held on 15 May 2023 at the National Library in Aberystwyth and was attended by 18 businesses of different sizes representing several priority sectors including digital, tourism, energy, manufacturing, research and innovation and food and drink. Communications activity around the open call for this first cluster meeting focused on social media and targeting key stakeholders and partners to distribute the invitation through their networks of businesses. Key messaging from this event aligned with the voice of businesses at the Spring event - they identified issues around recruitment and retention, connectivity and rurality and the lack of appropriate and flexible training provision across the region. Future agenda items would address these issues to draw out employer-led intelligence further informing the RSP of the barriers businesses are experiencing across the region. The next business cluster meeting will take place on 4 July 2023 in Newtown. Future sub-groups of this business cluster will be established to focus on the digital and net zero sectors in line with Welsh Government's requirements for the RSPs (Schedule 2). A Chair will be nominated from one of the member organisations of

each group. It will be the responsibility of the Chairs to report to the RSP Board when appropriate.

The draft RSP Schedule 2 activities for 2023/24 had been distributed to all the RSPs. The document was finalised at the meeting held on 6 June 2023 for RSP Managers and RSP Chairs.

As Aggie Caesar-Homden had moved to a new role in Powys County Council, Louise Grove-White, the current RSP Project Officer had taken on the position of interim RSP Manager until 30 June 2023. The new RSP Manager would commence their role on 3 July 2023.

The Chair thanked Louise Grove-White for her work as the interim RSP Manager. Given the barriers to skills and recruitment as highlighted at the RSP Spring Event, connecting with the private sector in Ceredigion and Powys was key.

#### **RESOLVED**

- To note progress to date.

<b>5.</b>	<b>BARGEN TWF CANOLBARTH CYMRU / MID WALES GROWTH DEAL</b>
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CJE explained that following approval of the updated Strategic Portfolio Business Case (v2.1) and supporting documents by GMW Board on 28 March 2023, they were formally submitted to Welsh Government and UK Government for review as part of the consideration of issuing a Grant Award Letter for the 2023/24 financial year. Feedback to date has been very positive and it was a case of working through the finer details. The Amber/Green Assurance Review in February has helped to contribute to this positivity and demonstrate that the region was ready to receive the funding and proceed with the delivery of the Growth Deal. Consideration of awarding the funding to Mid Wales was now following a process set out between both Governments.

An overview of the delivery, governance, resource and finance was provided as noted in the report. In terms of Capital Profile, following discussions with both Governments, a re-profiling exercise has been undertaken regarding the amount of funding to be released to the region for the first year that was more in line with forecast expenditure, rather than as a flat profile. Discussions have taken place with the S151 officer on how to proceed and proposals have been submitted to both Governments. A response was expected in due course.

Securing the Private Sector Investment required to deliver the Growth Deal remained a high risk across the Portfolio, a concern which was shared by both Governments. It was proposed that the Economic Advisory Group adopted ownership of the Private Sector Investment Strategy; work to clarify their role in delivery was well advanced with several discussions held to date. During the CJC meeting held earlier in the day, it was noted that work was needed to look at the process to ensure the best value for money. Discussions were held regularly with North Wales and Swansea Growth Deals to ensure lessons were learned from one another.

The Risk & Issue Register had been updated with additional risks added to reflect the current position and recommendations from PAR. An overview of the main current risks was provided along with updates to communication and engagement as noted in the report. A press release was planned for when the Growth Deal Grant Award Letter was issued along with a pre-recorded video featuring Leaders from both local authorities discussing the investment. There were also discussions with both Governments to arrange Ministerial visits to the region to meet the Leaders following the Grant Award Letter. A reception to be held on Monday morning at this year's Royal Welsh Show was in the process of being arranged, to discuss the Growth Deal and skills in the region.

CJE proceeded to present the next steps as noted in the report. During the next few months, they were expecting the projects to submit their Strategic Outline Case (SOC)/ Outline Business Case (OBC). An overview of the OBC Appraisal Framework was provided. The main difference between the SOC and OBC was the level of detail required, including the development of a procurement strategy. An additional section focusing on the project's Decarbonisation Agenda had been included.

#### **RESOLVED**

- To note progress to date.
- To note Outline Business Case Appraisal process.

Reference to the two programmes (Digital Programme and Sites and Premises Programme) and the 9 stand-alone projects was provided. All projects were rated amber at present, as the next round of business cases was expected. The team had some element of communication with the projects. A vote of confidence was required from both Governments or else, the portfolio would need to be reviewed.

In response to a question related to digital connectivity, DO confirmed that a broadband provider who had looked to connect around 11,500 properties in Mid Wales had since filed for administration. Since then, he had been in regular contact with the Government and a large procurement exercise managed by UK Government was due to be carried out across Wales in the next few months. Around 39,000 properties including those affected by the broadband provider would be considered in the procurement exercise. The investment was worth £54 million.

DJ noted that the work of connecting remote properties in Powys had gone out to tender and was about to be signed. In terms of the properties affected by the broadband provider, the local authority was monitoring the situation and if there was no progress, the work would also go out to tender.

JGW suggested there was a need to consider closely the level of employment not only directly from the programmes and projects but also indirectly.

<b>6.</b>	<b>UNRHYW FATER ARALL / ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b>
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None.

<b>7.</b>	<b>DYDDIADAU CYFARFODYDD NESAF / DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS</b>
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29 September 2023 - Virtual

15 December 2023 - Virtual

**County Councillor Bryan Davies**  
**Chair**