

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BWRDD TYFU CANOLBARTH CYMRU /
GROWING MID WALES BOARD HELD ON ZOOM ON MONDAY,
16 OCTOBER 2023**

PRESENT

Ceredigion County Council Members:

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

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

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

Powys County Council Members:

Councillor James Gibson-Watt, Leader **JGW) (Chair)**

Councillor Aled Davies **(AD)**

Councillor Matthew Dorrance, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for a Fairer Powys **(MD)**

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

Officers:

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)**

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

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

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

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

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

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

John Collingwood, Sites and Premises Programme Manager, Growing Mid Wales **(JC)**

Emma Palmer, Director of Corporate Services, Powys County Council **(EP)**

David Price, RSP Manager **(DP)**

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

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

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

Government Observers:

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

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

John Hawkins, UK Government Wales

Apologies for absence were received from Diane Reynolds Interim Director of Economy and Community Services PCC and Nicola Williams Strategic Programme Delivery Manager CJC.

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

3.	COFNODION DRAFFT Y CYFARFOD DIWETHAF / DRAFT MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING 23/6/2023
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The minutes of the last meeting held on 23rd June 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

4.	PARTNERIAETH SGILIAU RHANBARTHOL CANOLBARTH CYMRU / MW REGIONAL SKILLS PARTNERSHIP - DAI PRICE
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David Price the RSP Manager gave an update on the Regional Skills Partnership and the following proposed actions:

1. Establish sector business clusters:
 - Health and Social Care
 - Tourism
 - Energy
 - Public Sector
 - Transport
 - Agriculture, Food and Drink
 - Digital
 - Enterprise
 - Applied Research and Innovation
 - Employment and SkillsPlus two Support Cluster Groups:
 - Providers
 - Young Persons Guarantee
2. Collation and analysis of data and Labour Market Information to ensure it is current and relevant.
3. Ensure that the work of the RSP is visible and transparent. by the creation of an RSP website.
4. Restructure the RSP board, reducing membership from 49 to 24, 12 of whom would be chairs of the 12 cluster groups, ensuring at least 8 would be private sector employers. The remainder of the board would be advisory representatives from various relevant organisations, including both Councils, Higher Education, Further Education, Careers Wales and the DWP.

The RSP Manager explained that the RSP would be looking to improve access to training and education opportunities in Welsh and address the shortage of Welsh speaking staff in customer facing roles.

He confirmed that the farming unions would be represented on the Agriculture, Food and Drink Cluster Group and through that represented on the RSP.

The RSP Manager agreed with the comments of the Chair that there needed to be better careers guidance and opportunities for work experience.

The recommendations in the report were moved and seconded by Councillor James Gibson-Watt and it was

RESOLVED

- 1. To approve the new activities the RSP are proposing for delivery.**
- 2. To approve the restructure of the Regional Skills Partnership Board.**

5. CYLLID / FINANCE [DUNCAN HALL]
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The Board received the report of the Section 151 Officer. He reported that expenditure for 2022/23 was £61,179, an underspend of £138,821. This was largely due to the continuing availability of WEFO funding, which was maximised as far as possible. Therefore, the final contributions required from Ceredigion and Powys County Councils was far lower than budgeted at £30,590 each.

Year 1 funding of £4,000,000 had been received in late September 2023. The report set out the assumed funding profile over the 15 years of the Growth Deal.

The report also set out a proposed approach for determining which Project Development costs would be deemed eligible for the use of Growth Deal funding. No Project would be formally awarded Growth Deal funding until it has successfully reached the Full Business Case (FBC) stage and had subsequently received approval from the Growing Mid Wales Board.

It was proposed and seconded and

RESOLVED

- 1. To note the 2022/23 Outturn position for the GMW Budget, as outlined in section 1 of the report.**
- 2. To note the update regarding the Year 1 Mid Wales Growth Deal Funding and the current 15 year funding profile, as outlined in section 2 of the report.**

3. To agree the principles for allowing Growth Deal funding to be used for Project Development costs, as outlined in section 3 of the report.

6. Y RHAGLEN DDIGIDOL / DIGITAL PROGRAMME - DAVE OWEN
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The Board considered an updated version of the Programme Business Case. The Programme Business Case recognised that Digital Infrastructure was an essential element for economic growth and as such the priorities of the Programme remain as fixed and mobile connectivity. The programme was expected to cost approximately £15m over the next 10 years, returning an estimated £120m in net benefits to the economy of the region.

The Digital Programme underwent an Assurance Review in Mid-September predominantly focusing upon the existing governance and processes and their suitability to ensure delivery. The Programme has been merited an Amber rating.

Two projects highlighted for prioritisation during the initial draft of the Programme Business Case, a) Strategic Employment Site Project and b) Social Housing Hub Site Project were not being taken forward as there was a risk of duplication with Government initiatives that would see significant investment in both broadband and mobile provisions in Mid Wales.

A number of Identified projects had progressed through the prioritisation model and had been scrutinised by the Digital Programme Board in order to progress them to Outline Business Case (OBC), and later Full Business Case (FBC) to present to the GMW Board via the Portfolio Delivery Board.

The OBC for the Very Hard to Reach Project (VHTR project) had been developed and it was suggested that the Programme should continue to consider other publicly and commercially funded programmes before deciding upon which interventions would be the best use of resources to improve broadband provision across the Region. Both UK and Welsh Government have planned interventions in the area, namely Project Gigabit which will see at least £30m invested into the Region over the forthcoming years and the WG's own VHTR project which will target up to 70k properties across Wales with an investment of £70m.

Market engagement had taken place with Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) it appeared that following the completion of UK Government's Shared Rural Network (SRN) that there would be areas across Mid Wales that won't see any improvements in mobile provision therefore GMW intervention is required. The OBC for the project and to determine the best delivery approach to maximise mobile coverage and capacity across Mid Wales was being developed.

The Government was looking to start a contract in July 2024 covering most of Powys and the north of Ceredigion, with the south of Powys some months later. BT Openreach were looking to connect 70,000 properties by 2026. A consultant would be procured to carry out a mapping exercise to help provide a better understanding of the planned projects.

The report also set out the Programme Risk and Issue Register. Risks and Issues would continue to be managed via the formal programme and project controls, in line with the GMW Portfolio approach.

RESOLVED

1. To endorse the recommendation to approve the updated Digital Programme Business Case (v0.22).
2. To support the request to mandate progression of the identified Projects within the Digital Programme to Outline Business Case.

7.	UNRHYW FATER ARALL / ANY OTHER BUSINESS
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None

8.	DYDDIADAU CYFARFODYDD NESAF / DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS
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26th January 2024

9.	EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC
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RESOLVED to exclude the public and press from the meeting in accordance with Section 100B(2) of the Act.

10.	Y RHAGLEN SAFLEOEDD AC EIDDO / SITES & PREMISES PROGRAMME (JOHN COLLINGWOOD)
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The Board considered the Sites and Premises Programme Business Case.

RESOLVED

1. To approve the Programme Business Case, Version 3.1 and confirms a mandate to the Sites and Premises Programme Board to proceed with the Programme into the Delivery Stage.
2. To confirm a Project Mandate to Initiate the Front-Runner sites of the Programme with the two respective Project Partners listed in the report.
3. To approve that the Sites and Premises Programme Board explores and agrees a formal working arrangement with Project Partners to obtain their further commitment to the aims and objectives of the Sites and Premises Programme and its required outputs and outcomes.
4. To approve the Programme Change Management Protocol for use in considering future scope change,

should it occur, and examining the merit of launching further work and / or substituting alternative sites for delivery under the Sites and Premises Programme.

- 5. To approve the principle of undertaking further market intelligence activity at programme-level during the Delivery Stage to ensure each site remains viable, developing a clear Marketing Strategy jointly with Project Partners.**
- 6. To approve a Project Mandate to Initiate development of a Project Business Case for a “Local Intervention Fund” to support private sector led development in Local Market sites that fall outside scope of the Strategic Programme, responding to the wider objectives of the Supporting Enterprise Growth Priority.**

11.	BARGEN TWF CANOLBARTH CYMRU / MW GROWTH DEAL - CATHY MARTIN
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The Board received an update report on progress and next steps relating to the Mid Wales Growth Deal and a summary of the assessments and recommendations of the Project Strategic Outline Cases.

RESOLVED

- 1. To receive the update report.**
- 2. To approve the recommendations of the Portfolio Management Office Team and Portfolio Delivery Board following assessment of the Growth Deal projects as set out in Items 12 and 13.**

**County Councillor Bryan Davies
Chair**