

Growing Mid Wales & Mid Wales Growth Deal Joint Cabinet Briefing & Engagement

Date: 21.02.2020

In attendance:

Ceredigion County Council (CCC):-

Councillor Ellen Ap Gwynn (Chair) (EAG), Leader of CCC and Cabinet Member for Policy and Performance, Partnerships and Democratic Services

Councillor Alun Williams (AW), Cabinet Member for Adult Services

Councillor Catherine Hughes (CJH), Cabinet Member for Children Services and Culture

Councillor Catrin Miles (CM), Cabinet Member for Learning Services and Lifelong Learning

Councillor Dafydd Edwards (DE), Cabinet Member for Highways and Environmental Services together with Housing

Councillor Gareth Lloyd (GLI), Cabinet Member for Finance and Procurement Services and Public Protection Service

Councillor Ray Quant (RQ), Deputy Leader of CCC and Cabinet Member for Customer Contact, Legal and Governance, People and Organisation

Councillor Rhodri Evans (RE), Cabinet Member for Economy and Regeneration

Eifion Evans (EE), Chief Executive, CCC

Sue Darnbrook (SLD) Corporate Director, CCC

Russell Hughes-Pickering (RHP), Corporate Lead Officer: Economy & Regeneration

Arwyn Davies (AWD) Corporate Manager: Growth & Enterprise

Carwyn Jones-Evans (CJE) Growth Service Manager & GMW Programme Lead

Powys County Council (PCC):-

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Councillor Rosemarie Harris (RH), Leader of PCC

Councillor Aled Davies (AD), Deputy Lead of PCC and Portfolio Holder for Finance, Countryside and Transport

Councillor Graham Breeze (GB), Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance and Engagement

Councillor Heulwen Hulme (HH), Portfolio Holder for Environment

Councillor Myfanwy Alexander (MA) Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care

Councillor Phyl Davies (PD), Portfolio Holder for Education and Property

Caroline Turner (CT), Chief Executive of PCC

Clive Pinney (CP), Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Paul Griffiths (PG), Supporting Adviser for the Growth Deal

Apologies:

Councillor James Evans, Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Housing and Regulatory Services

Councillor Rachel Powell, Portfolio Holder for Young People and Culture

Barry Rees, Corporate Director

Nigel Brinn, Corporate Director Economy and Environment

Nina Davies, Head of Housing and Community Development

Location:

Ystafell Ystwyth, Neuadd Cyngor Sir Ceredigion, Penmorfa, Aberaeron. Ceredigion

Duration:

14:10pm – 16:10pm

1	<p>Welcome</p> <p>EAG welcomed all to the meeting and introductions were made.</p>
2	<p>Overview and purpose of the session</p> <p>EAG explained that this session with Members has been arranged to ensure Members are fully briefed on the context, developments to date and input into the forward work plan of the Growing Mid Wales (GMW) proposition document which has been structured in two sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 1: Strategic Economic Plan • Section 2: Growth Deal Framework and Pathway <p>The session will also provide Members with the opportunity to provide their views to shape the draft document. Members have been provided with the draft document prior to today's meeting.</p> <p>It was stated that whilst Members will not be expected to take a formal decision, they will be expected to contribute constructively to shape the direction and approach outlined in advance of the document being more widely consulted upon, before coming back to the GMW Joint Committee on 30th March 2020 for approval.</p>
3	<p>Introductory Update</p> <p>Members received a presentation from CJE which provided information on the progress, role and overall plan & key timescales of the proposition document.</p> <p>The presentation covered the following points (a copy of the presentation is attached for ease of reference):-</p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <p>200221_Cyflwyniad.pptx</p> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Strategic Context; • Progress; • Purpose; • The Strategic Economic Plan (Section 1); • The Growth Deal Roadmap (Section 2); • The immediate next steps.
4	<p>SECTION 1: Strategic Economic Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does it adequately reflect regional strategic priorities? • Any areas to strengthen? <p>CJE welcomed comments and feedback from Members to seek confirmation that Section 1 adequately reflects regional strategic priorities and whether there are any areas to strengthen.</p>

The following points were made:-

RQ congratulated CJE on the first draft of the document and stated that it had been well prepared. RQ stated that there is no mention of the coastal belt the region has to offer on page 10. RQ also welcomed that poor connectivity is repeated on several pages and a lack of sites is mentioned on page 10 and repeated on page 22. RQ stated that grid capacity is going to be a big issue and, unless we have it, we will not go very far with our energy and queried whether we could rely on generating energy locally rather than having to rely on grid infrastructure? RQ also stated that the UNESCO biosphere in the area has not been mentioned in the document.

CJE explained that Energy Policy is largely non-devolved – but the approach is to outline the breadth of interventions required to address our challenges, to ensure that both UK and Welsh Government can support elements.

MA queried that when looking at premises, what sort of premises do we need and how many? There will be a need to try and guess the needs of businesses.

EAG stated that that is why we needed a strategy more than a plan in order to be open to new ideas coming through when they are ready.

MA queried what we are doing with regards to carbon? MA stated that if we are to face a different climate, keeping water in our hills could be a major economic driver for the region. We need to include what Wales can do best for the rest of Britain and turn our challenges in to opportunities.

CJE stated that the issue of climate change and low carbon for Wales has been recognised and needs to come out stronger than it is and will need to be weaved in to this document. It needs to be linked to Section 1 and featured largely. CJE stated that with regard to Section 2, and bringing forward projects according to need – this was the purpose of agreeing a programme, which should not need us to bring all projects forward at the same time – and that we can respond flexibly.

EE stated that he agrees entirely with the opportunities MA is articulating, however, the way in which the document needs to be crafted is to ensure that there are sufficient hooks in place to allow points to be included as they arise. The purpose of this document going forward is a first formal reference point for WG and Westminster to enable projects to come forward according to the 5 case business model. It does not need to capture everything at the outset, just create the right framework.

RH stated that she is getting concerned of where the role of the ESG fits in to this and when their views will be sought? RH stated that feedback has been received that they are not being consulted with enough and queried whether an informal meeting with the ESG would be beneficial as we would not want to lose their interest?

CJE responded noting that he regularly converses with the Chair of the ESG. A meeting of the ESG will be taking place on the 9th March 2020 where Members will have the opportunity to comment on Section 1 of the proposition document. CJE also stated that workstream leads are also identifying stakeholder lists for 1:1 engagements to take place prior to the document being presented to the next Growth Deal Joint Committee for final approval on the 30th March 2020.

EE stated that he and CT met with the Chair of the ESG recently to explain the process. EE stated that the ESG may not necessarily favour the way in which the document has been written from a

private sector perspective, however, it has been written in such way to get over the first hurdle of the process. This will be explained to all ESG members on the 9th March 2020.

EAG reminded Members that both Governments wanted this document ready by the end of March 2020 and Members are extremely grateful for the work that has been done against a tight time frame.

CJE stated that WG will inform us if the document is heading in the right direction or not. From the informal soft engagement to date, both Governments were aware of the principles and the understanding is that they are broadly comfortable with the content and the progress that has been made to date. However, a more formal meeting with officers will need to be arranged.

CT stated that during 2018 there was a lot of consultation with businesses. Within the last two months, Council officers have had time to digest feedback in order to draft this document. CT stated that officers have done an excellent job in such a short timeframe. CT stated there are two things ESG members will need to understand going forward:-

1. That business advice and support is currently provided from WG. CT stated that it would be beneficial if WG provided a presentation to the joint Cabinet/ ESG and the partnership to explain what they are able to offer.

2. That this process should not be seen as a grant opportunity for businesses. £55mil capital has been promised by UKG for infrastructure (with an assumed equivalent from WG). There is a need to be clear on how this will fit in to the vision of the growth deal. The Strategy is not about accessing £55mil for capital infrastructure investment, it is making the case for additional investment alongside the growth deal needed for skills, employment (revenue). Pursuing this approach will try to get us to a position where we can attract the additional money and flexibility that the ESG is talking about.

DE firstly congratulated CJE on the rounded approach this document has taken which creates more flexibility. There is a need to emphasise more flexibility as hopefully these businesses will grow in our villages and towns. There also needs to be more flexibility in the housing market for houses to be built where businesses grow.

EAG agreed with this point and stated that CCC are currently reviewing their LDP.

CJE stated that he will be discussing the housing section further with housing colleagues to ensure accuracy and the right statements are being made.

AW stated that it would be beneficial to include the two canals in the area, particularly the Montgomeryshire Canal as if this was linked up to the UK canal network, this would be a great opportunity as canals are economic corridors. AW stated that grid capacity is also hugely important. If we are able to produce electricity, this would be a great opportunity for economic development and Mid Wales could produce energy for Wales. GB also agreed that the two canals deserve a specific mention as the potential benefits to Mid Wales are enormous.

CT stated that canals are mentioned on page 22 but can be made more specific.

<p>EE stated that it is important Local Authorities have carbon management policies in place, however, we must be careful that this document does not replace them. This document will be the main driver for economic growth supplemented by carbon management policies.</p> <p>CJE thanked Members for their comments and feedback on Section 1 of the proposition document.</p>
<p>SECTION 2: Growth Deal Roadmap</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity on the approach • Understanding of process • Work Plan
<p>Members were invited to provide feedback on Section 2 of the Growth Deal Roadmap.</p> <p>The following points were noted:-</p> <p>RQ stated that on page 40 the first point and third points are repeated. RQ raised concern that the timeline is quite ambitious.</p> <p>CJE responded noting that there are projects in the region that are more advanced than others. If the timeline slid, there wouldn't be Heads of Terms in place until 2021/22 and this would run the risk of the Government losing confidence. CJE stated that he hopes there will be a small number of projects at OBC level by Autumn 2020 in order for both Governments to evidently see that we've got a clear framework and process in place.</p> <p>RH stated that lamb produce has not been mentioned within the document but should be considered as we probably produce the best lamb in the world.</p> <p>MA stated that whilst there is a lot of mention about innovation, she would like to see more about value added. MA stated that it would also be great to have procurement in this footprint to create stability for producers which would allow us to innovate.</p> <p>CJE stated that he can write value added in but stated that procurement is more relevant to Section 1 with things that need to be done regionally alongside the Growth Deal. Delivery of Growth Deal will also need special consideration in terms of procurement also.</p> <p>CP acknowledged that the timeline is tight but there is danger of slippage even if for a short period of time. There are Local Government Elections in 2021 and CP would like to see the Heads of Terms agreed in advance of those.</p> <p>PG stated that the GMW Management group are yet to discuss this stage of the process. They will need to discuss at their next meeting how best to advise on this programme and how it can be effectively managed. It is useful to get a sense of direction at today's meeting to convert in to the plan. PG stated that there is a need to manage the understanding around grants in order for this not to be misunderstood as a grant opportunity. Discussions need to be held with people at the appropriate level to bring appropriate projects and programmes together.</p> <p>EE suggested that it is timely for both Leaders to write to the two Ministers (copied to the Secretary of State) regarding providing funding for the programme team in order to get this work started. It</p>

	<p>was noted that funding for the RLSP is also awaited and there has been no announcement regarding the fourth region as yet.</p> <p>ACTION: Members were in agreement for a joint letter to be sent from both Leaders to the Ministers and copied to the Secretary of State.</p> <p>AD queried why the last part of the document has not been completed in terms of “Asks of Government”? CJE responded noting that this bit would usually ask about business rate retention on infrastructure. It was noted this would not be something Mid Wales would want to consider. However, revenue support or additional asks could be mentioned. CJE stated that this will be discussed further at the GMW management group.</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>CONCLUSIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Milestones and Forward Work Plan
	<p>Members were supportive of the document outlined and broad principles outlined in terms of a way forward with the Growth Deal.</p> <p>Members were in agreement for CJE to proceed to consult with the ESG on Section 1 of the document and with other key stakeholders subject to today’s comments in order to bring a final version to the next Joint Committee on 30th March 2020 for approval.</p> <p>PG stated that by that time, the document will have evolved even further and a copy of what will be presented to the Joint Committee meeting will be shared with the two Cabinets, Leaders and Chief Executives ahead of the meeting.</p>
<p>6</p>	<p>Any other business</p>
	<p>There were no additional matters to be discussed. Meeting closed: 16:10pm.</p>