

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE GROWING MID WALES BOARD HELD VIA
ZOOM ON WEDNESDAY, 23rd JULY 2020**

PRESENT

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)**

Powys County Council Cabinet Members:

Councillor Rosemarie Harris Leader of Powys County Council **(Chair) (RH)**

Councillor Aled Davies, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Countryside and Transport **(AD)**

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

Councillor James Evans, Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Housing and Regulatory Services **(JE)**

Councillor Heulwen Hulme, Portfolio Holder for Environment **(HH)**

Officers:

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

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

Nigel Brinn, Corporate Director Economy & Environment, Powys County Council **(NB)**

Clive Pinney, Solicitor to the Council, Powys County Council **(CP)**

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

Stephen Johnson, Corporate Lead Officer: Finance and Procurement, Ceredigion County Council **(SJ)**

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

In attendance:

Elgan Hearn, Powys Local Democracy Reporter

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| 1. | CROESO AC YMDDIHEURIADAU / WELCOME AND APOLOGIES |
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Apologies for absence were received from:-

- Arwyn Davies, Corporate Manager Ceredigion County Council.
- Russell Hughes-Pickering, Corporate Lead Officer: Economy & Regeneration, Ceredigion County Council
- Steve Hughson, Chief Executive of the Royal Welsh Agricultural Society and Vice-Chair of the Economic Strategy Group

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

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| 3. | MINUTES |
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3.1. Cofnodion y Cyfarfod Diwethaf / Minutes of the Last Meeting 11/05/20

The minutes of the last meeting of the GMW Board held on 11th May 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

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| 4. | MID WALES GROWTH DEAL: UPDATE & NEXT STEPS |
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Members received an update and next steps for the Mid Wales Growth Deal from a pre-circulated report following formal submission of the Vision for Growing Mid Wales document by both Leaders to the UK and Welsh Government (WG) on 22nd May 2020.

CJE provided an update to Members on developments since the last meeting including feedback following both Leaders meeting with the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Wales, David TC Davies MP; the Minister for Economy, Transport and North Wales, Ken Skates MS; and the Deputy Minister, Lee Waters MS on the 11th June and the workshop held with UK and WG Civil Servants on 3rd July 2020. It was noted that the workshop went well and positive feedback was received on the vision document. Formal feedback from the Workshop is expected from both Governments.

CJE provided Members with the Forward Work Programme and key milestones ahead which is to hopefully achieve a Heads of Terms by autumn 2020 which has been agreed at portfolio level and will confirm the scope of the deal, the funding envelope and the governance and assurance arrangements to support the deal with the full deal agreement to follow in March 2021.

CJE stated that a portfolio approach will allow the Board in line with the Economic Sub Group (ESG) to continually review proposed investments and will allow projects to come in at different stages.

CJE provided an update on the current budget position and confirmed that both the UK and WG are contributing £55mil.

Members agreed that it would be beneficial to make further enquiries with Government as to whether any further match funding would be available from other funding sources. CJE stated that officers are looking to attract funding through the rural development plan for a Regional Hydrogen Study.

Members were informed that both Ceredigion and Powys County Council are in the process of appointing a Strategic Lead Officer to lead this work. CJE stated there will be a need for more communications in the region with businesses and media channels so that they are aware of investment opportunities. A website is currently being built and has a temporary holding page.

CJE highlighted the key risks to members and noted that there will be strategic and operational risk registers in place going forward.

FS provided informal feedback from ESG members and stated that they have unanimously agreed that connectivity is massively important to the development of businesses in Mid Wales.

Members agreed that a presentation from both Ceredigion and Powys County Council's Digital Officers on digital connectivity would be beneficial at the GMW Partnership meeting in September 2020.

ACTION: It was agreed to receive a presentation from Digital Officers in Ceredigion and Powys at the GMW Partnership meeting in September.

DECISION: The Joint Committee noted the updated provided today and agreed the Forward Work Programme outlined in the Report to secure the Deal and to undertake the detailed development work.

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| 5. | GMW BUDGET & RESOURCING |
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CJE provided Members with an update from a pre-circulated report regarding the GMW Budget and Resourcing required to meet the Forward Work Programme.

CJE provided Members with an update on the financial position for 2020/21. CJE explained that both Local Authorities have made available £50k each to match WG funding. CJE informed Members that there are a number of existing commitments from the 2020/21 budget to include the GMW website, staff costs and staff training.

CJE explained that there is a remaining balance to be allocated of circa £170,427.51 and provided Members with proposals on how the remaining funding is allocated together with cost headings being developed to meet the key milestones:-

- Staff Cost: Lead Strategic Officer (temporary for development phase).
- Staff Cost: Portfolio Development Support (technical/administrative).
- Commission: Regional Hydrogen Study (funding sought from the RDP).
- Commission: Applied Research Study (matched to potential WG funding).
- Commission: Commissioned technical support to advise on Portfolio Development.
- Commission: Communications & Engagement Support.

CJE proposed to members that any remaining funding is considered towards establishing the necessary capacity to progress potential emerging candidate projects in the region, however, this will be confirmed with WG.

CJE informed Members that the responsibility for developing projects does not lie with the regional office/PMO. The regional office/PMO sets out the process by which projects can come in, be considered and evaluated against set criteria – the ESG and Board then ultimately decides on its inclusion in the Portfolio or not.

CJE provided Members with the additional funding implications as set out in item 6 of the Report together with details of the development and delivery phase and the associated tasks and resource requirements with the legal, human resources and financial implications.

FS asked where the Strategic Lead Officer role will be positioned in regard to the seniority level it will be pitched at?

PG explained that Ceredigion County Council's Human Resources (HR) Department has the lead role for the recruitment and is establishing the level of seniority of the post and it will be taken through the Job Evaluation process. PG stated that the role will require a range of skills and it is imperative that the appointment is made soon to progress and lead the process of having the Heads of Terms agreed in the autumn. PG stated that once information has been received from Ceredigion's HR department, it will be circulated to Members.

Members agreed that the role should be a contracted role and that it is re-evaluated after the development phase of the Deal to determine the skills required for the role going forward and as the Growth Deal evolves, however, Members acknowledged that it is important to make an appointment on a short term basis to lead on getting the Heads of Terms agreed by the Autumn. PG stated that applications will be sought from both Local Authorities for the first phase to maintain momentum on the continuity built to date.

ACTION: Members agreed that a further discussion would be required between the two Local Authorities to clarify the appointment of the Strategic Lead Officer once the HR process had been completed and a job description is available.

DECISION: Members noted the financial position for 2019/20 and 2020/21 and agreed the proposed cost headings for allocating the budget for 2020/21. Members noted the additional and continued revenue funding implications of the Growth Deal on Local Authority budgets for the next 10-15 years (life cycle of the deal).

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| 6. | GOVERNANCE UPDATE <ul style="list-style-type: none">• REGIONAL SCRUTINY ARRANGEMENTS• ECONOMIC STRATEGY GROUP• REGIONAL LEARNING AND SKILLS PARTNERSHIP |
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Regional Scrutiny Arrangements

Members agreed for further officer discussion to take place with regards to regional scrutiny arrangements with a recommendation presented for Members consideration at their next meeting.

ACTION: Recommendation for regional scrutiny arrangements to be presented to Members at the next GMW Board (Joint Committee) on 1st October 2020.

Economic Strategy Group (ESG)

It was agreed that an ESG meeting will be arranged for early September. CJE stated that a Report will be prepared for ESG Members in the meantime to keep them updated and engaged. CJE will also prepare the Declaration of Interest procedure for Members.

FS stated that ESG Members have been keeping in contact via virtual meetings and are supporting each other in implementing new policies and procedures for their businesses due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the new and different ways of working required for the future.

Regional Learning and Skills Partnership (RLSP)

CT informed Members that WG have provided funding to undertake initial preparatory work to establish a RLSP for the Mid Wales Region and Powys are leading on the work. Further meetings will be had with Ceredigion and WG and progress is being made. CT stated that linking with the business community will be key to this work to link with the needs of businesses across the region with regards to apprenticeships and skill gaps. CT stated that further work also needs to be done on the governance arrangements. CT stated that it is the intention to present proposals for recommendation to the Joint Committee and WG by the autumn to confirm if they will be able to fund and support the RLSP long term.

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| 7. | UNRHYW FATER ARALL / ANY OTHER BUSINESS |
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None.

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| 8. | DYDDIADAU CYFARFODYDD / DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS |
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14.00pm - 1st October 2020 – Location to be confirmed
14.00pm – 4th December 2020 – Location to be confirmed

**County Councillor Rosemarie Harris
Chair**