



## **REPORT TO THE GROWING MID WALES BOARD**

**11<sup>th</sup> November 2021**

TITLE:	Mid Wales Growth Deal – Business Sector Engagement
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### **1. Introduction and Background**

At the meeting of the Board on the 21<sup>st</sup> September 2021, Members resolved to review arrangements for engaging with the private sector in respect of further development of the Growth Deal. Now that the Portfolio Business Case has been submitted to the Welsh and UK Governments, together with the ESG having served a two-year term, it was considered an appropriate time to review arrangements. In addition, and to some extent inevitably, some ESG members wished to pursue applications to the Growth Deal which created an emerging potential for a conflict of interest, particularly as such projects developed and matured.

Having resolved to consider new arrangements for business leader engagement, Members requested a report as a matter of urgency to ensure ongoing business sector involvement as the Growth Deal moves towards a Final Deal Agreement by the end of the calendar year.

### **2. New Terms of Reference (ToR)**

A draft ToR is attached for consideration so that recruitment to an alternative business leaders' group can commence, subject to Board approval. These ToR are designed to reflect the future needs of the Growth Deal as the work moves from the development of a Strategic Portfolio Business Case to more detailed proposals involving Programmes and Projects. It is suggested that this will require focused consideration with more agile arrangements in place. This will assist with responses as programmes develop and mature, and as projects move from inception to detailed design reflecting the needs of the 5 Case Business Model.

The ToR include several fundamental changes from those adopted for the Economic Strategy Group (ESG) which are explained in more detail below.

### **3. Business Group Title**

It is proposed that the group be retitled as the Economic Advisory Group (EAG) in order to more accurately reflect the groups fundamental purpose. The role of the group is to offer advice to the Board on the strength or otherwise of the programmes and projects that are developed in line with the Portfolio Business Case. The group will provide business sector experience and knowledge to assess the various proposals as they move through the 5

Case Business Model approach. As decisions relating to programmes and projects will ultimately rest with the Board it is important that the advisory role of the EAG is clear at the outset to both members of the group and any external observers.

#### **4. Membership**

It is proposed that membership of the group be set at a maximum of six members. This will allow the group to be more agile in terms of meeting arrangements and will also allow for more direct consistent feedback to the Leaders and the Board. It is suggested that feedback to Leaders could be direct from time to time, once views had been formed, which will ensure undiluted responses and full engagement with political representatives.

#### **5. Chairing**

It is also proposed that the group does not appoint a Chair, given the limited number of members involved and the direct feedback that can be enabled. The group would be supported and facilitated by Officers so that each member has equal status and all views can be fully considered.

#### **6. Potential Conflicts of Interest**

As Members will be aware, the need to review current arrangements with the business sector is partly due to the emergence of potential conflicts of interest in the future. It is important to continue to manage the potential for this as the Growth Deal develops over the next 10 to 15 years. It is suggested that in order to reduce the risk of any such conflict, any EAG member who develops a material interest in any programme or project will be required to stand down from the group immediately. The Monitoring Officer would be the arbiter in establishing if any material interest exists, but it would be the responsibility of each EAG member to declare any emerging conflict at the earliest opportunity.

#### **7. Recruitment and Selection**

It is proposed that, subject to the Board agreeing the way forward, applications be invited for membership of the group as well as potential individuals being identified and approached to apply. As with any role it would be useful to set some basic requirements for those who may be appointed so that there are consistent criteria should there be more applicants than vacancies. It is also suggested that the selection process be conducted by the Council Leaders with support and advice provided by the Council Chief Executives.

Criteria may include the following; -

- Industry Leaders particularly from the sectors identified in the Portfolio Business Case
- Can demonstrate strategic thinking
- Significant direct business leadership experience
- Entrepreneurial background

- Collaborative approach and ability to work as part of a team
- An interest and commitment to the interests of the region

It would also be useful to have representatives who have experience of other Growth Deals and/or Local Enterprise Partnerships. This may mean a mix of business representatives from both inside and outside the region.

## **8. Way Forward**

Subject to approval or amendment, it is important that recruitment to the Economic Advisory Group is undertaken without delay to ensure ongoing business engagement with the development of the next stage of the Growth Deal. In addition, close liaison with Council Leaders will take place through each stage of recruitment.

## **9. For consideration and approval**

Members are asked to consider the contents of this report alongside the draft Terms of Reference and suggest appropriate changes that are considered necessary to allow recruitment to the Economic Advisory Group.