

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BWRDD TYFU CANOLBARTH CYMRU /
GROWING MID WALES BOARD HELD BY ZOOM ON FRIDAY, 11 MARCH 2022**

PRESENT

Ceredigion County Council Cabinet Members:

Councillor Ellen ap Gwynn, Leader of Ceredigion County and Cabinet Member for Policy, Performance and Partnerships **(EAG)**

Councillor Dafydd Edwards, Cabinet Member for Highways and Environmental Services, Housing and Customer Contact **(DE)**

Councillor Catrin Miles, Cabinet Member for Schools, Lifelong Learning and Skills, Support and Intervention **(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 **(RH) (Chair)**

Councillor Myfanwy Alexander, Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Welsh Language **(MA)**

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

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

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

Officers:

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

Elin Prysor, Corporate Lead Officer: Legal and Governance, Ceredigion County Council **(EP)**

Lowri Edwards, Corporate Lead Officer: Democratic Services, Ceredigion County Council **(LE)**

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

Arwyn Davies, Corporate Manager: Growth and Enterprise, Ceredigion County Council **(AD)**

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

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

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

Carwyn Jones-Evans, Strategic Manager, Mid Wales Growth Deal **(CJE)**

Cathy Martin, Operations Manager **(CM)**

Aggie Caesar-Homden, Partnership Manager - Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership **(ACH)**

David Owen, Digital Programme Manager **(DO)**

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

1.	CROESO AC YMDDIHEURIADAU / WELCOME AND APOLOGIES
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No apologies were received.

2.	DATGANIADAU O FUDDIANT PERSONOL / DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST
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There were no disclosures of personal/prejudicial interests.

3.	COFNODION DRAFFT Y CYFARFOD DIWETHAF / DRAFT MINUTES OF
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THE LAST MEETING 15/12/21

The minutes of the last meeting held on 15th December 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

4. PORTFFOLIO BTCC / MWGD PORTFOLIO

CM provided members with an overview of the Quarter Progress Report circulated prior to the meeting. Reference was made to the following:

Final Deal Agreement (FDA)

The FDA was officially signed on the 13th of January and marks the commitment of all partners to deliver the Mid Wales Growth Deal.

Economic Advisory Group (EAG)

An EAG has been put in place and is led by Paul Griffiths. A number of representatives have been appointed and a meeting has been arranged for next week to introduce all officers, leaders and the growth deal itself.

Assurance Review

An assurance review of the portfolio by the Welsh Government has been held this week and a number of interviews were done as part of the process. A draft report will follow in due course.

Inter-Authority Agreement

Version 3 of the Inter-Authority Agreement has been approved by both Local Authority cabinets in January 2022 and subsequently signed by all parties. Within the agreement, there are various terms of reference to governance and management arrangements. Following a review of the GMW Management Group, this has now been divided into 2 parts - Part 1: GMW Management Group (Growth Deal Portfolio Board) to ensure a more focused approach to Growth Deal matters, and Part 2: GMW Management Group (Regional Collaboration) to cover wider regional discussions.

- Appendix 1: Strategic Portfolio Business Case v1.5
- Appendix 2: Assurance & Approvals Overview
- Appendix 3: Portfolio Roadmap
- Appendix 4: Portfolio Summary
- Appendix 5: Risk & Issue Register

EAG noted the resourcing of the portfolio office and the governance structure was raised at the assurance meeting, therefore, greater clarity was required. She added that clarity was needed as the Treasury had stated the commitment was for 10 years. The Welsh Government currently remains committed for 15 years.

CM reported that early indications following the assurance review suggest there were good governance structures in place and it was about looking at how things put in place could be improved to ensure they were in the best position for delivery. This could be looked into further once they received the full report.

The Chair stated funding should be referred to on the risk register. The risk register would need to be seen regularly at a high level, as there were many

uncertainties at present that could have a bearing on the future.

EAG agreed and noted it would be critical for members involved following the election to have an overview of the risk register often.

RESOLVED

1. Note progress to date
2. Note forward work plan
3. Approve the Strategic Portfolio Business Case v1.5 with updates to the Strategic and Management Cases

5.	RHAGLEN DDIGIDOL BTCC / MWGD DIGITAL PROGRAMME
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DO gave a PowerPoint presentation to the members on the Digital Programme Business Case. The presentation focused on the following points:-

- Decision Sought
- Progress to date
- Programme Business Case (Strategic, Economic, Commercial, Financial & Management case)
- Governance
- Next Steps

The Chair noted it was disappointing that the Welsh Government would not provide additional funding for community broadband.

DO explained that Welsh Government's view was that the UK Government should provide more funding to ensure the connections were made, as the matter was not devolved. It was noted that a few projects had been identified to explore placing fibre across the region. A decision will be made by the programme board in due course on which project to progress.

EAG expressed disappointment in the Welsh Government's decision but understood that European Union funding used previously was no longer available.

In terms of mobile phone signal, DO clarified that the UK Government, through the Shared Rural Network, are working with the 4 main network providers to ensure the sharing of mast capacity. Collectively, the 4 providers have invested £500 million to expand on the availability of mobile coverage. In addition, the UK Government have allocated £500 million to build new masts as required to ensure rural areas throughout the UK have an increase in coverage too. Following this, approximately 96-97% of Mid-Wales will have coverage from at least one network. Ceredigion County Council are currently receiving planning applications for the development of masts and once approved, the builds will commence. From his understanding, increased powers had been granted to install masts where required following issues with landowners.

DO and ACH have discussed the skills needed from a provider's perspective, how local education providers view this and how they will start to develop appropriate training and courses for people in the area for when the builds happen.

DO stated it would be clarified in the documents that governance would be discussed in the Joint Committee.

RESOLVED

1. To note progress and developments to date with consideration of the documentation attached in relation to the Digital Programme.
2. To mandate the further formal development of the Digital Programme Business Case and further exploration of the potential projects within the programme.
3. To mandate the establishment of a Digital Programme Board and appropriate governance and reporting arrangements with the Management Group (Portfolio Board).

6.	LLYWODRAETHU / GOVERNANCE
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CP reported that a Growing Mid Wales Joint Scrutiny Committee held on 23 February 2022 was well attended and not many questions were raised with the Inter-authority Agreement. He explained that a presentation was given on the Mid-Wales Energy Strategy. There were no recommendations from the committee.

7.	PARTNERIAETH SGILIAU RHANBARTHOL / MW REGIONAL SKILLS PARTNERSHIP
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ACH provided members with a progress update. An Employer Engagement Officer was in place and a review of the resources within the RSP would be done once there was a confirmation of the funding agreement and Requirement in Schedule 2 which was expected in the next few weeks.

In terms of the joint report by RSP Managers and Data Cymru on Green Skills, the final version was presented at the RSP Board Meeting by Data Cymru. The report will hopefully be signed off before the end of April and until then, it remains confidential. The report will form a basis for the Net Zero Skills Action Plan and will be shared with Welsh Government and partners in due course.

A meeting will be held next week with Welsh Government regarding the Employability and Skills Plan. Following this, they will have further information on the expectations of the RSP to move it forward. Digital Skills is on the agenda and the RSP Managers are invited to Joint Welsh Government Digital Skills Forum. Another RSP Manager sits on the panel but ACH is in contact with the colleague. ACH clarified that she and DO have spoken about the digital cluster and how the RSP will feed into it.

Following a review, there will be 3 cluster groups (Training Providers, Businesses & Public Services). Further work will take place post-election. In addition, Welsh Government Task and Finish Groups will be set up to expand on the expertise and to ensure they were not limiting themselves to RSP membership. Employment Skills questionnaires will be sent soon.

Mid Wales Strategic Employability Network, a joint venture between the Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership and the Mid Wales Regional Engagement Team have held their first meeting. The next meeting held following the election will look at what further support is required for those in need of

training, employment or entrepreneurship.

ACH presented a PowerPoint presentation regarding the Young Person Guarantee.

EAG queried who was responsible from the Welsh Government's perspective.

ACP clarified Vaughan Gething, Minister for Economy has been the main point of contact along with Emma Edworthy and Meurig Thomas but they had been introduced to the work of Jeremy Miles, Minister for Education and Welsh Language this week. Their RSP Managers will meet with Meurig Thomas next week and there would be another meeting later in the week to discuss the Employability and Skills Plan. Hopefully, there will be some clarity next week regarding the roles of RSPs and how the work will link up. In terms of RSP and Mid Wales RSP, the 2 local offices and RSP colleagues are linking up where possible.

EAG noted it was important for the ministers to work in a joined-up way to ensure things were progressing in the correct direction.

The Board noted the report on the MW Regional Skills Partnership.

8.	UNRHYW FATER ARALL / ANY OTHER BUSINESS
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The Chair wished Councillor Ellen ap Gwynn, Leader of Ceredigion County Council well following her decision not to stand for re-election. The Chair thanked her for her contribution and enthusiasm with the Growing Mid Wales Board and with other matters.

EAG thanked the Chair for her kind words and wished all involved the best with the project and in the local elections.

The Chair echoed EAG's comments. She thanked the officers for preparing the reports for today's meeting.

9.	DYDDIADAU CYFARFODYDD NESAF / DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS
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21 June 2022 – Virtual

26 September 2022 – Virtual

12 December 2022 – Virtual

**County Councillor Rosemarie Harris
Chair**