



REPORT TO THE GROWING MID WALES BOARD

23 June 2023

TITLE:	Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership – Progress Update
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1. Purpose of the Report.

- 1.1. To provide Members of the Growing Mid Wales Board with an update on progress of the Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership.
- 1.1. To provide members of the GMW Management Group with an update on progress of the Mid Wales RSP including a report on the RSP Spring Event which saw the launch of the 3-Year Employment & Skills Plan, the progress for the first business cluster group, feedback from the established cluster groups, the next RSP Board Meeting, the publication of the first draft of WG's Schedule 2 of activities for the RSPs and the recruitment of the new RSP Manager.

2. Decision Sought.

- 2.1. To note progress to date.

3. RSP Spring Event and the launch of the 3-year Employment & Skills Plan and Action Plan

- 3.1. The RSP continues to provide a regional perspective to inform national and UK sector skills strategies and to provide baseline data for FE planning, using employer led intelligence and labour market needs.
- 3.2. The RSP Spring Event took place at the Metropole Hotel in Llandrindod Wells on 23rd March with the aim to engage with businesses to identify their priorities for regional investment to support jobs and growth in the Mid Wales region and to understand the barriers to skills and recruitment.
- 3.3. Welcome speeches were delivered by the Leader of Powys County Council, Councillor James Gibson-Watt, Deputy Leader of Ceredigion County Council, Councillor Alun Williams and the RSP chair Emma Thomas.
- 3.4. As part of the agenda for the day Vaughan Gething, MS, joined the event via a pre-recorded video to officially launch the 3-Year Employment & Skills Plan and Action Plan.

- 3.5. Tom Yeo, GMW Energy Lead and Grant Thomas, Procurement Spend & Market Analyst, Powys County Council led informative presentations on Net Zero and the environmental and economic benefits aligning with Welsh Government's Net Zero Wales report.
- 3.6. The event was attended by 61 people representing 17 organisations who all contributed to the interactive round table discussions to understand the barriers to skills and recruitment, facilitated by Alun Jones (former CEO of Menter a Busnes).
- 3.7. Businesses were invited to register their interest in attending the first business cluster group, joining the GMW mailing list and downloading a copy of the Employment & Skills Plan and Action Plan.

Decision Sought.

To note progress to date.

4. Business Cluster Group Meeting

- 4.1. The first RSP Business Cluster Group meeting was held on 15/5/23 at the National Library in Aberystwyth. The meeting was chaired by Emma Thomas (Chair of the RSP Board) representing Aber Instruments. Terms of Reference are being drafted and will be presented at the next meeting.
- 4.2. Communications activity around the open call for this first cluster meeting focused on social media and targeting key stakeholders and partners to distribute the invitation through their networks of businesses.
- 4.3. The first meeting was attended by 18 businesses of different sizes representing a number of priority sectors including digital, tourism, energy, manufacturing, research and innovation and food and drink.
- 4.4. Key messaging from this event aligned with the voice of businesses at the Spring event - they identified issues around recruitment and retention, connectivity and rurality and the lack of appropriate and flexible training provision across the region. Future agenda items will address these issues to draw out employer-led intelligence further informing the RSP of the barriers businesses are experiencing across the region.
- 4.5. The next business cluster meeting will take place on 4 July in Newtown.
- 4.6. Future sub-groups of this business cluster will be established to focus on the digital and net zero sectors in line with Welsh Government's requirements for the RSPs (Schedule 2). A Chair will be nominated from one of the member organisations of each group. It will be the responsibility of the Chairs to report into the RSP Board when appropriate.

Decision Sought.

To note progress to date.

5. RSP Cluster Groups

- 5.1. Public Services Cluster Group, chaired by Paul Bradshaw (Head of HR, PCC), took part in a round table workshop on 17/5/23 focusing on how the group can collectively workforce plan to better understand recruitment, retention and skills requirements in the public services across the region. A working group has been set up to develop a template which each member will complete to help the RSP identify the needs. This information will be collated and analysed and fed back into conversations with the Training Provider Cluster Group when completed.
- 5.2. Training Provider Cluster Group, chaired by Catherine Lewis, Vice Principal and Vice CEO of NPTC Group, took place on 24/5/23, focused on questions arising from WG's Net Zero Skills Action Plan and aligned with WG's Schedule 2 activities for the RSP. Key messaging to feedback to WG – employers are still struggling with Net Zero terminology and they needed to bring Net Zero up the agenda; training providers are working on their green skills provision but the collective opinion was that employers and training providers would benefit from a single point of information (online and promotional print) for all green skills provision across the region.

Decision Sought.

To note progress to date.

6. RSP Board Meeting

- 6.1. The next RSP Board Meeting is scheduled for 5/6/23.
- 6.2. The RSP and cluster groups will update the board on activity to date. Heather Davidson, WG, Head of Net Zero Skills Policy will be speaking on the policy direction following the publication of the Net Zero Wales Action Plan.

Decision Sought.

To note progress to date.

7. Welsh Government Schedule 2 Activities

- 7.1. The draft RSP Schedule 2 activities for 2023/24 has been distributed to all the RSPs.
- 7.2. A meeting has been scheduled for 6/6/23 for RSP Managers and RSP Chairs to discuss the Schedule 2 requirement in more detail. Once the document has been finalised it will be circulated accordingly.

Decision Sought.

To note progress to date.

8. RSP Board Meeting (5/6/23)

9. Recruitment

9.1. Aggie Caesar-Homden has now moved over to her new role in Powys County Council. Louise Grove-White, the current RSP Project Officer has taken on the position of interim RSP Manager until the end of June.

9.2. The new RSP Manager has been appointed and is expected to join the team in early July.

Decision Sought.

To note progress to date.

10. Legal Implications

10.1. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

11. Human Resources Implications

11.1. There are no HR implications arising from this report.

12. Financial Implications

12.1. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

13. Appendices

13.1. None Attached