



REPORT TO THE GROWING MID WALES BOARD

26th January 2024

TITLE:	Mid Wales Growth Deal Report
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1 Purpose of the Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the following:

- a brief overview of the progress and next steps relating to the Mid Wales Growth Deal

2 Decision(s) Sought

2.1 Consider the progress update and identify any key issues/concerns.

3 Delivery

3.1 Since the last reporting period the work of the team has been focused on updating the Outline Business Case (OBC) Appraisal Framework in line with the recommendations from the Critical Friend Review and subsequently undertaking appraisals, exploring governance processes such as options for delegated authority and change management protocol and ensuring that there is consistency across Programmes and Projects and overall Portfolio approach.

3.2 **Digital Programme** – an Outline Business Case for the Mobile/ 4G project has been drafted and presented to Programme Board with a workshop being held with specific focus on the Economic case and the Options Assessment. A final draft is expected to be submitted for appraisal in January.

3.3 **Sites & Premises Programme** – following approval of the Programme Business Case work is continuing on progressing the two Front-Runner projects proposed. A marketing strategy is being developed along with proposals around the potential establishment of a Local Intervention Fund.

3.4 **Projects** - of the 9 standalone projects, to date all shortlisted projects have submitted Strategic Outline Cases and two Outline Business Cases have been submitted. There has been a delay in submissions of some OBCs with extensions agreed into early 2024.

- 3.5 A webinar was held with Project Sponsors in November led by Gemma Delafield, Regional Energy Officer, presenting the Mid Wales Growth Deal's approach to considering net zero and nature restoration in the project proposals and encouraging project sponsors to embed both carbon reduction and biodiversity benefits within their business cases.
- 3.6 A further webinar was held on 12th December led by David Price, RSP Manager, covering skills considerations within business case development such as jobs created/safeguarded, training, apprenticeships, work placements.
- 3.7 Centre for Alternative Technology - members will be aware of the recent news that due to a drop in visitor numbers and rising costs CAT have announced the closure of its visitor centre to day visitors. Discussions have been held with CAT and a 'health check' undertaken.
- 3.8 Strategic Portfolio Business Case (Annual Refresh – 2024) – Hatch Ltd will be supporting the third annual refresh (V3) of the SPBC which will commence in January, with a view to having a finalised document by the end of March 2024.

4 Governance

- 4.1 Following Board approval, a formal Programme Board has been established for the Sites & Premises Programme with Russell Hughes-Pickering, CLO Economy & Regeneration, Ceredigion County Council as Programme Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) and Neil Clutton, Professional Lead – Strategic Property, Powys County Council as Deputy Programme SRO.
- 4.2 Following Nigel Brinn's departure from Powys County Council at the end of October, Diane Reynolds was appointed as Interim Director of Economy and Community Services which includes taking up the role of Joint SRO alongside Barry Rees.
- 4.3 Jonathon Evans, Senior Manager of Digital Operations, Powys County Council has subsequently taken on the role of SRO for the Digital Programme with Alan Morris, Ceredigion County Council as Deputy Programme SRO.
- 4.4 Training is being organised with Welsh Government for existing and new SROs to provide further guidance on roles and responsibilities.

5 Assurance

- 5.1 **Portfolio Assurance Review (PAR)** - planning is underway for the next PAR to take place in May 2024 following the Strategic Portfolio Business Case refresh – this is part of the annual funding approval process.
- 5.2 **Critical Friend Review** - the recommendations from the Critical Friend Review regarding the OBC appraisal process have been taken on board including a skills analysis of the review team and arrangements for an independent chair for the moderation meetings. The completed action plan is

attached. The report is now considered complete and will be closed on our files – see Appendix 2.

5.3 **Project Assurance** - assurance reviews are being planned for projects at OBC stage therefore further information on this has been provided to all Project Sponsors.

5.4 An initial assessment meeting with WG's Assurance Hub has taken place for the Elan Valley Lakes project with dates set for the assurance review in February.

6 Resource

6.1 Peter Jones joined the Growing Mid Wales Team on 4th December as Growth Deal Projects & Performance Manager. Peter will be responsible for liaising with Project Sponsors regarding business case development, providing support and monitoring progress. As such he will be visiting all projects over the next couple of months. Peter will also be developing Portfolio monitoring processes such as Benefits Realisation.

6.2 Amy Waters also joined the team on 12th January as Senior Service Support Officer providing administration support for 3 days a week.

7 Risk

7.1 The Risk & Issue Register has been updated with additional risks added to reflect current position and recommendations from PAR. The main current risks are:

- PoMO resources: (PAR) recommended an increase to PoMO capacity – two new members joined December and January.
- Construction Costs increases / supply chain issues /inflationary costs: remain an issue particularly for Project Sponsors.
- Private sector investment: remains a key consideration by Governments with emphasis on strategy in action.
- Recent conversations with CAT have highlighted potential issues facing project sponsors with regards to sourcing funding for development costs - discussions are ongoing with Finance.

8 Monitoring and Evaluation

8.1 A monitoring and evaluation framework for the Growth Deal is being developed as the Growth Deal progresses.

9 Benefits Realisation

9.1 As Projects progress to OBC further consideration will be given to details around proposed benefits and this will inform development of the Plan.

9.2 The newly appointed Projects & Performance Manager will be taking on this piece of work.

10 Communications Update

06.10.23

Interview on Business New Wales featuring both Leaders talking about the release of Government funding to the region and the potential impact of the Growth Deal.

Investment Secured for Mid Wales Growth Deal

02.11.23

Sites and Premises feature in the latest edition of Commercial Property Monthly, pg4-5:

Exciting Development Opportunities in Mid Wales

09.11.23

Business News Wales published the Leaders' audios on Sites and Premises programme development:

Rhaglen Safleoedd ac Eiddo ar Fin Symud Ymlaen ar ôl cael golau gwyrdd o Fwrdd Canolbarth Cymru

Sites and Premises Programme Set to Progress After Green Light from Growing Mid Wales Board

14.11.23

GMW press release following Ministers and Leaders catch up:

Mid-Wales-Growth-Deal-progressing-positively-towards-delivery-in-2024

11 Next Steps

11.1 Please find below an overview of the next steps:

January 2024 onwards	Closer working with project sponsors and monitoring of business case development. Project Business Cases to be submitted and assessed (2 at OBC, 1 at SOC)
January onwards	Commence Strategic Portfolio Business Case refresh
January	Advanced Manufacturing Campus – workshop on SOC with project sponsor
January/February	Elan Valley Lakes OBC – review of additional information
February	Project Assurance reviews: Elan Valley Lakes
March	Portfolio Delivery Board – receive assessments on SOC/OBCs
March	Finalise updated Strategic Portfolio Business Case
April	GMW Board – receive recommendations on Business Cases for consideration
May	Portfolio Assurance Review

12 Legal Implications

12.1 None.

13 Human Resources Implications

13.1 None.

14 Financial Implications

14.1 None.

15 Appendices

- Appendix 1: Portfolio Overview
- Appendix 2: Critical Friend Review Action Plan
- Appendix 3: Portfolio Risk & Issue Register