
NORTH WALES ECONOMIC AMBITION BOARD 31/07/20

Present:

Voting Members - Councillors:- Hugh Evans (Denbighshire Council), Llinos Medi Huws (Isle of Anglesey County Council), Mark Pritchard (Wrexham County Borough Council), Ian B.Roberts (Flintshire Council), Sam Rowlands (Conwy County Borough Council) and Dyfrig L.Siencyn (Gwynedd Council) (Chair).

Advisors – Dafydd Evans (Grŵp Llandrillo Menai), Aulay Mackenzie (Glyndwr University), Garry Reid (Bangor University) and Askar Sheibani (Business Delivery Board).

Chief Officers - Dylan Williams (Isle of Anglesey County Council), Iwan Davies (Conwy County Borough Council), Colin Everett (Flintshire Council), Judith Greenhalgh (Denbighshire Council), Steve Bayley (Wrexham County Borough Council) and Dilwyn Williams (Gwynedd Council).

Officers in attendance - Dafydd Edwards (Statutory Finance Officer - Host Authority), Iwan Evans (Monitoring Officer - Host Authority), Alwen Williams (Programme Director), Hedd Vaughan-Evans (Operations Manager), Jane Richardson (Chair of the Executive Officers Group), Nia Medi Williams (Operations Officer) and Eirian Roberts (Democracy Services Officer).

Nia Medi Williams was congratulated on her appointment as Operations Officer within the Programme Office.

1. APOLOGIES

Maria Hinfelaar (Glyndŵr University), Professor Iwan Davies (Bangor University), Yana Williams (Coleg Cambria), Annwen Morgan (Isle of Anglesey County Council) and Ian Bancroft (Wrexham County Borough Council).

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received.

3. URGENT ITEMS

None to note.

4. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of the NWEAB held on 12 June, 2020 as a true record.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT

The report was submitted by Hedd Vaughan-Evans - Operations Manager.

RESOLVED

- (a) To adopt the Risk Management Framework attached to the report and as outlined in Appendix 1, and ask the Programme Office to adapt the format in accordance with the points noted in the discussion and develop a Risk

Management Strategy in accordance with the principles in the framework as part of the final package for the North Wales Growth Deal.

- (b) To note that a report reviewing the content of the risk register in accordance with the new framework will be submitted to the next meeting of the Board.**

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The Programme Office needed to set effective risk management arrangements in order to ensure the successful delivery of the North Wales Growth Deal.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted, which provided an update to the North Wales Economic Ambition Board on risk management arrangements in order to deliver the North Wales Growth Deal.

Details were provided about the background and relevant considerations and the consultations held.

It was explained that this was a report on the Management Framework, and not on the risks themselves, and that the risks would be discussed at the next meeting. It was noted that the two biggest risks were the capacity and support of the private sector, due to the effects of Covid-19.

During the discussion, it was noted that the Risk Management Framework should be praised, but a suggestion was made that the following should be added to the template:-

- Risk trend column (better, worse or static);
- A column noting how quickly unmitigated risks would have an impact (immediately, in the short-term or medium-term).
- A second traffic lights column showing the risk level as a result of implementing steps to improve the situation.

In response, it was noted that it was intended to work on an amended template which would include scores and trends of unmitigated risks, while also incorporating the above-mentioned suggestions.

It was noted that Appendix 2 did not refer to a change of direction by the Government. In response, it was noted that it was the framework alone that was under consideration at this meeting, and that the risk register would be discussed at the next meeting.

The framework, with the observations noted, was agreed to, accepting that a report on the risk position would be submitted at the next meeting.

6. GOVERNANCE AGREEMENT 2

The report was submitted by Iwan G.D.Evans, Monitoring Officer - Host Authority.

RESOLVED to approve the timetable.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The agreement of the partnership was key to agreeing on a comprehensive Governance Agreement 2 ("GA2"). These issues had been reported to the previous meeting. This report updated the timetable for the work.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted, which presented the updated GA2 Plan to the Board and reported on the outcomes of the Governance Workshop.

Details were provided about the background and relevant considerations, timetable, legal implications and the consultations held.

It was noted that it was intended to report on proposed models and final documentation to scrutiny committees during the second half of October; to the Cabinet during the second half of November and to Council meetings within the first half of December.

It was explained that there was specific work to complete around establishing the financial commitments of the partners for GA2 and the Growth Deal specifically. This was crucial to be able to proceed to seek recommendations for the councils to adopt in accordance with the timetable. It was intended to hold a workshop for officers in August, which would include officers from the Executive Group, together with the partners' Finance Directors from the councils and colleges in order to start reaching a viewpoint on the expenditure profiles of the projects and the financial framework in GA2. Following that, the workshop listed in the work programme would have to be held for representatives and members of the NWEAB to discuss the results of the officers' workshop and to reach a viewpoint on the way forward, but that would be in September. It was stressed that there was a balance to strike between the desire to move early with the projects, and the cost effect of that in terms of cash flow. It was noted that specialist work had been commissioned over the coming fortnight which would provide information for the officers' workshop, with the results of that fed into the members' workshop in due course.

It was stressed that it was important that the Leaders were part of the workshops to be held with the councils' members to support the Plan.

7. NORTH WALES GROWTH DEAL - PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

The report was submitted by Alwen Williams, Programme Director.

RESOLVED

- (a) **To note the status of the current relations and engagement channels with the Private Sector.**
- (b) **To note the intention of the North Wales Mersey Dee Business Council to withdraw as a partner of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board.**
- (c) **To note the draft Terms of Reference submitted by the Acting Chair of the Business Delivery Group and request a further report from the Programme Director, in consultation with the Host Authority's Monitoring Officer, on the proposed amendments to the terms of reference of the Business Delivery Group adopted by the Ambition Board.**
- (ch) **To confirm the next proposed steps and actions to improve the engagement and understanding of the private sector.**
- (d) **To correspond with the Minister for Economy, Transport and North Wales to see whether or not Welsh Government could make a contribution to support the North Wales Mersey Dee Business Council, and to submit a much more detailed report regarding private sector engagement organisation to the next meeting.**

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

A decision was required in order to enable the Programme Office to invest in the design and delivery of mechanisms to improve private sector engagement in North Wales.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted which:-

- Provided an overview of the current relations and engagement channels between the NWEAB and the private sector in North Wales (Appendix 1).
- Provided an update to members on the status of the North Wales Mersey Dee Business Council as a partner of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board (Appendix 2).
- Provided proposed draft Terms of Reference submitted for consideration by the Acting Chair of the Business Delivery Group (Appendix 3).
- Proposed the next steps and method of strengthening relations, engagement and involvement of the private sector in the North Wales Growth Deal (Appendix 4).

Details were provided about the background and relevant considerations, legal implications and the consultations held.

Reference was made to the decision of the North Wales Mersey Dee Business Council to withdraw from the North Wales Economic Ambition Board and the Business Council's resignation letter was shared with members in its entirety. Ashley Rogers, in particular, was thanked for his contribution over the years to the work of the Board in developing projects and moving the entire deal forward. It was noted that, in the current climate, it was recognised that the main focus of the Business Council needed to be on the businesses they represented. However, though this was a sad situation, this could open the door for the Board to review and strengthen its relationship with the private sector by creating something new and innovative, which would offer a significant contribution from the private sector once more. It was added that the private sector in North Wales would be supportive of the Growth Deal's objectives, and the fact that something positive came out of a particularly difficult situation was welcomed.

It was further noted that a meeting had already been held with Ashley Rogers and Jim Jones from the Business Council to discuss their ideas for future collaboration with the Board. It was noted that they were stakeholders with a contribution to make, and that some very good ideas had already been mentioned.

Following the decision to review the role of the Business Delivery Group, it was noted that the Chair of the NWEAB attended the Group meeting to explain the logic behind the decision. There was considerable support at the meeting and the Group's response had been very positive. The Chair had also been witness to the fact that the Group asked very difficult and thorough questions about the various projects, which proved that they had a very important role in getting to the bottom of some of the projects and ensuring that they were realistic.

As we move forward, it was noted that there was a need to consider some of the innovative and exciting ideas presented by the Business Delivery Group and the Business Council, and see how they could be combined, and to submit a much more detailed report regarding private sector engagement organisation to the next meeting.

With reference to the decision to transfer the secretariat of the Business Delivery Group to the Programme Office, Gerry Beer, Glyndŵr University, was thanked for fulfilling this role to date.

During the discussion the following matters were raised:-

- Disappointment was expressed that the Business Council had withdrawn from the NWEAB, but the fact that steps were afoot to improve engagement with the private sector in its entirety was welcomed.
- In response to a question regarding engagement with the private sector and other growth deals, it was noted that many deals were years ahead of the North Wales Growth Deal and had more experience in terms of how to create strong relations with the sector. It had to be acknowledged that North Wales was different to other regions, and it was important to focus on collaborating with the sector to create the best approach for North Wales, and take on board some of the lessons from elsewhere. No one had found the perfect approach as yet, and every region had faced challenges.
- It was noted that the Business Council's letter referred to a lack of revenue, and it was asked whether funding sources for that should be looked at.
- It was noted that losing the Business Council would be disastrous, and would send the wrong message out, and that the Board needed the expertise more than ever. To this end, it was suggested that the Board should agree in principle at this meeting whether to fund the Business Council or not. In response, it was noted that, although it was a sad situation, there were questions around propriety and a serious question about paying a member of the Board for their representation. All partners and the Business Council made a financial and / or in kind contribution. The Board was advised about the propriety matters, and it was noted that such proposals could not be made without a formal report and guidance on these aspects.
- It was suggested that Welsh Government could be asked whether they could provide grant support towards the financial sustainability of the Business Council (not paying them to be a member of the Board).
- Iwan Davies (Conwy County Borough Council) noted that there were some technical matters arising in terms of the Draft Terms of Reference, and he would send them for the attention of the Host Authority's Monitoring Officer.

8. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED to exclude the press and public from the meeting during the discussion on the following item due to the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 14, Section 4, Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972. This paragraph is relevant as the report contains confidential and commercially sensitive information about the projects. This is pertinent to the situation of the councils, but specifically the parties who are applying, or who are partners for projects within the Growth Deal Programme.

9. PROJECT BASELINE REVIEW

The report was submitted by Hedd Vaughan-Evans, Operations Manager.

RESOLVED

- To note the content of the baseline review report and the presentation delivered at the meeting, and to continue to develop projects in order to assist to ensure the Final Growth Agreement at the earliest potential opportunity.**
- To confirm the renaming of the 'Land-based Industries and Tourism Programme' as the Agri-Food and Tourism Programme.**
- To confirm the renaming of the 'Advanced Manufacturing Programme' as the Innovation in High Value Manufacturing Programme.**

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

To update the North Wales Economic Ambition Board on the position of each programme and project as part of the process to reach a Final Agreement for the North Wales Growth Deal.

To receive the approval of the Board to rename two of the programmes so that they reflected their relevant terms of reference more accurately.

DISCUSSION

The report was discussed.

The meeting commenced at 1.00 pm and concluded at 2.55 pm

CHAIRMAN