
NORTH WALES ECONOMIC AMBITION BOARD 17/09/21

Present:

Voting Members - Councillors:- Llinos Medi Huws (Isle of Anglesey County Council), Mark Pritchard (Wrexham County Borough Council), Ian B.Roberts (Flintshire Council), Charlie McCoubrey (Conwy County Borough Council) and Dyfrig Siencyn (Gwynedd Council) (Chair).

Advisors - Dafydd Evans (Grŵp Llandrillo Menai) and Prof. Paul Spencer (Bangor University).

Chief Officers - Annwen Morgan (Isle of Anglesey County Council), Iwan Davies (Conwy County Borough Council), Dafydd Gibbard (Gwynedd Council), Steve Bayley (Wrexham County Borough Council) and Graham Boase (Denbighshire Council).

Officers in attendance - Dafydd L. Edwards (Statutory Finance Officer - Host Authority), Iwan Evans (Monitoring Officer - Host Authority), Alwen Williams (Portfolio Director), Hedd Vaughan-Evans (Operations Manager), Sheryl Le Bon Jones (Senior Operational Officer), Robyn Lovelock (Growth Deal Programme Manager), David Mathews (Land and Property Programme Manager), Sian Pugh (Group Accountant - Corporate and Projects) and Eirian Roberts (Democracy Services Officer).

Gareth Williams, press correspondent, was welcomed to the meeting.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Hugh Evans (Denbighshire Council), Maria Hinfelaar (Glyndŵr University), Yana Williams (Coleg Cambria), Askar Sheibani (Business Delivery Board), Professor Iwan Davies (Bangor University), Colin Everett (Flintshire 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 OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The Chair signed the minutes of the meetings held on 30 July and 26 August 2021, as a true record.

5. PROGRAMME ASSESSMENT REVIEW 2021

The report was submitted by Alwen Williams, Portfolio Director.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Board note the findings of the 2021 Programme Assessment Review.
- (2) That the Board note that the report will form part of the 2021-22 annual funding award submission.

(3) That the Board note that the Portfolio Management Office will be developing an action plan to deliver against the recommendations.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

It is a requirement of the Final Deal Agreement that the North Wales Growth Deal undertakes an annual external gateway review of the portfolio and five programmes.

DISCUSSION

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

With reference to recommendation 3 of the review, the Monitoring Officer noted:-

- That he had circulated a briefing note to Board members with a vote to remind them of the procedure for appointing deputies.
- That it was likely that the concept of an "out of committee" mechanism to approve urgent matters merited a report on a further delegation procedure by the Board, but that there was provision within GA2 to extend the delegation as needed, as long as the Board was satisfied with that.

During the discussion, the following matters were raised:-

- In response to a question, it was confirmed that there was a requirement to notify both Governments of any changes to the agreement in terms of the viability of programmes and projects, and for those decisions to be brought back to the Board for agreement. It was explained that the Programme Assessment Review requested that the Portfolio Office be aware that some projects could become inviable during the process of creating the final business cases, and therefore we should be scanning the horizon for other projects that could come forward if that were to happen. However, that would have to happen with the Board's approval.
- In response to a question, it was explained that it was important to define criteria for determining that a project was no longer viable. In terms of scanning the horizon, it would be beneficial to work with the Portfolio Board in order to understand how this was happening and what the opportunities were for projects across the local authorities which could be suitable for consideration should a project within the Growth Deal portfolio become inviable. This would all have to be included as part of the work of creating these criteria over the coming two months.
- It was noted that it was important that the work of scanning the horizon happened in accordance with the Growth Vision and the three fundamental principles, namely Smart, Connected and Resilient North Wales, and came back to the Board for a political discussion. In response, it was stressed that all our work was based on the three principles, and that any projects would have to be measured against those principles, as well as their sustainability and contribution to the North Wales economy.

6. LOGO UPDATE

The report was submitted by Alwen Williams, Portfolio Director.

RESOLVED to approve the revised logo for the North Wales Economic Ambition Board and the North Wales Growth Deal.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The Economic Ambition Board's current brand and website were developed during the early days of the Board's establishment. With the Final Deal Agreement signed, and the Portfolio Management Office moving to the delivery phase of the Growth Deal projects, it was timely to refresh and relaunch the brand and website.

At the 30th July 2021 meeting of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board, the Board endorsed the overall Brand (style, colours etc.) and requested that further work was undertaken to revise the logo taking account of the feedback received at the meeting.

DISCUSSION

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

It was noted that, further to preparing the report, the Business Delivery Board had considered and endorsed the approved logo on 14 September.

Members expressed their support to the number and size of the component parts of the logo, and the importance of the brand and the need to sell ourselves to the rest of Wales and further afield was stressed.

7. 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, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 - information about the financial or business transactions of any specific person (including the authority that retains that information). There is an acknowledged public interest in openness in relation to the use of public resources and related financial issues. It is also acknowledged that there are occasions, in order to protect the financial and commercial interests that matters related to such information need to be discussed without being publicised. The report deals specifically with financial and business matter and related discussions. Publication of such commercially sensitive information could adversely affect the interests of the bodies and the Councils and undermine the confidence of other Growth Deal participants in sharing sensitive information for consideration. This would be contrary to the wider public interest of securing the best overall outcome.

8. PORTFOLIO BUSINESS CASE UPDATE 2021

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

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Board approve the 2021 update of the Portfolio Business Case and its submission to Welsh Government and UK Government as part of the annual award of funding process.**
- (2) That the Board notes the four projects currently forecasting a potential financial variance from the 2020 Business Case will be subject to a review by the PMO and the Portfolio Board with an update provided at the next meeting.**
- (3) That the Board request that the Portfolio Director submit all required documentation and change request form to Welsh and UK Government as part of the annual award of funding process and delegate to the Portfolio Director, in consultation with the Chair of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board, the Monitoring Officer and the s151 Officer, authority to make any minor amendments requested by Welsh Government and UK Government.**

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

It is a requirement of the Final Deal Agreement that the Portfolio Business Case is updated on an annual basis and submitted to Welsh Government and UK Government as part of the annual award of funding process.

DISCUSSION

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

The report was discussed.

The meeting commenced at 2.30 pm and concluded at 3.30 pm

CHAIR