
NORTH WALES ECONOMIC AMBITION BOARD 17/05/19

Present:

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

Advisors – Dafydd Evans (Grŵp Llandrillo Menai), Maria Hinfelaar (Glyndwr University), Prof. Graham Upton (Bangor University), Steve Jackson (Coleg Cambria), Ashley Rogers (North Wales Mersey Dee Business Council) and Sasha Davies (Business Delivery Board).

Chief Officers - Dr Gwynne Jones (Isle of Anglesey County Council), Iwan Davies (Conwy County Borough Council), Colin Everett (Flintshire Council), Judith Greenhalgh (Denbighshire Council), Ian Bancroft (Wrexham Council) and Dilwyn Williams (Gwynedd Council).

Officers in attendance – Dafydd L.Edwards (Section 151 Officer), Iwan Trefor Jones (The Board's Lead Director), Iwan Evans (Monitoring Officer) Eurig Williams (Human Resources Advisory Services Manager), Nia Medi Williams (Senior Executive Officer) and Eirian Roberts (Member Support Officer).

Observer – Bryn Jones (Bangor University)

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Councillor Dyfrig Siencyn (Gwynedd Council) was elected Chair of the Joint-Committee until the Annual Meeting of the Board on 21 June 2019.

It was noted by the Chair that this would possibly be the last meeting of the Board for Sasha Davies to attend in her current role. Best wishes were extended to her in her new post and she was thanked for all her work.

It was noted by the Chair that Bangor University had appointed Dr Iwan Davies from Swansea University as permanent Vice-Chancellor from 1 September, and that he would be the University's advisor on the Board from now on.

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

Councillor Mark Pritchard (Wrexham Council) was elected Vice-chair of the Joint-Committee until the Annual Meeting of the Board on 21 June 2019.

3. APOLOGIES

David Jones (Coleg Cambria).

4. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

The Lead Director, Senior Executive Officer and the Member Support Officer left the meeting for item 15 due to an interest.

5. URGENT ITEMS

None to note.

6. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee, held on 12 April 2019, as a true record.

7. UPDATE ON THE NWEAB WORK PROGRAMME AND PROJECT LOG

The report was presented by Iwan Trefor Jones, Lead Director.

RESOLVED to approve the RAG status of all actions within the Work Programme and note the updates on the progress of individual projects, in accordance with the report.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

Update progress of the Work Programme tasks.
Update progress of individual projects.

DISCUSSION

It was noted that, due to the need to allocate the next meeting of the Board on 21 June to interview candidates for the post of Programme Director, an additional meeting of the Board would be held on 28 June to discuss other matters of importance which were part of the work programme.

It was noted that, following the submission of the outline business cases for the individual projects, the initial feedback received from both governments was positive and that no obstacles were anticipated at present.

Reference was made to specific meetings with Alun Cairns, Secretary of State for Wales and Kevin Foster, the junior Minister, and it was noted that those meetings had been constructive and positive, with the aspiration to reach Heads of Terms by July clearly highlighted. It was noted that the relationship with civil servants of both governments was also very strong, with close collaboration happening at officer level.

It was noted that a meeting would be held with Ken Skates, Minister for Economy and Transport the following week. At that meeting, the Chair would convey the desire for the political dialogue to be more regular in order to ensure that nothing was lost in the discussions.

Assurance was given that the Heads of Terms would incorporate the 14 projects in the Growth Deal.

Reference was made to the Board's previous decision to submit a quarterly progress report on the work of the Board to the individual partners for the reporting and scrutiny purposes of the individual bodies, and a request was made for reference to this to be included in the 'Governance' category of the work programme.

It was noted that an additional block needed to be included in the table regarding GA2, noting the timeframe for the organisations etc. In response, it was explained that this had been included under the category 'Legal and Procurement', but that there may be a need to highlight the risks more clearly. It was also noted that GA2 was part of the wider contract and that it was, therefore, noted on the plan.

With reference to the Morlais Project, it was suggested that there was a need to note in the 'other comments' column that the region was losing the £21m confirmed from Europe as that money needed to be returned. In response, it was explained that reaching Heads of Terms by July would provide adequate assurance to Europe that it would be possible to draw down the money and proceed with the scheme.

It was noted that the governments had asked for a more detailed business case in relation to the additional £40m requested, and that it was intended to submit that information to them by the end of the following week.

It was explained that both governments were working on Heads of Terms at present and that it was hoped that a draft of the document would be available in the coming weeks in order for it to be circulated to Board members and discussed at the next meeting.

It was stressed that Heads of Terms needed to be reached by the beginning of the summer recess. In response, it was noted that this was the message that had been and was still being conveyed to both governments.

The Business Delivery Board's desire to have an input to the discussions with both governments in order assist the process, was expressed. It was confirmed that the Chair of the Business Delivery Board would have a key role in that regard.

8. GOVERNANCE AGREEMENT 2 WORK PROGRAMME

The report was presented by Iwan Evans, Monitoring Officer.

RESOLVED to approve the proposed work programme for the preparation and completion of Governance Agreement 2, and ask the Monitoring Officer to couple the actions in the lower half of the proposed timetable to relevant steps in the work programme.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The Partners had agreed that the governance and the supporting partnership of both the Growth Bid and Vision would be developed in two initial stages. The partners had concluded Governance Agreement 1 ("GA1") which had been entered into in order to take the project forward to a formal offer of funding. It was intended that a subsequent Governance Agreement 2 ("GA2") would be entered into to take the partnership into the implementation phase.

DISCUSSION

It was noted that establishing completion dates for elements of the work in the lower half of the timescale was subject to the outputs of the Growth Deal Work Programme. It was suggested that efforts should be made to determine target dates for the actions in the lower half of the proposed timetable in order to have something specific to aim for.

9. BUSINESS DELIVERY BOARD

The report was presented by Iwan Trefor Jones, Lead Director.

RESOLVED

- 1. To approve the proposed role and responsibilities of the Business Delivery Board, subject to adapting paragraph 2.1, Role and Remit, by combining the wording of paragraph 2.2 in the third bullet point.**

2. **To approve the recruitment process for the Chair of the Business Delivery Board as set out in the report and to delegate authority to the Chief Executive of the Accountable Body to undertake the recruitment process.**
3. **To approve the arrangements for selection and recruitment of Board Members as set out in the report and to delegate authority to the Chief Executive of the Accountable Body to undertake the recruitment process once the Chair has been appointed.**
4. **To confirm the use of up to £20,000 per annum from the North Wales Economic Ambition Board's 'Project Development and Support' budget to support the Business Delivery Board.**
5. **To delegate authority to the Chief Executive of the Accountable Body to establish the remuneration arrangements for the Chair, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board, in accordance with the report.**

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

In order to formalise the arrangements and firmly establish the Business Delivery Board as a key part of the governance framework to deliver the Growth Vision for North Wales.

DISCUSSION

Sasha Davies noted that she agreed entirely with the proposed role and responsibilities of the Business Delivery Board and that she was available to assist with the process for consistency.

The following observations were noted arising from the discussion:-

- The importance of following a robust process to appoint the Chair of the Business Delivery Board.
- The importance of maintaining focus in order to deliver.
- That there was a need to strengthen the wording of paragraph 2.1 in order to emphasise that the Business Delivery Board's role was important in drawing down money from the private sector.
- That it was important that the membership of the Business Delivery Board reflected and represented the entire geographical area of North Wales, its sectors and its business communities.
- That the Business Delivery Board needed to understand what input the groups of employers that already sponsored and supported projects had.
- Despite recognising that the Growth Vision and the Growth Bid were crucial, there was another, broader vision that should not be disregarded, and a letter should be sent to the Minister drawing attention to this, as well as the potential economic disadvantage of projects, such as HS2, to North Wales.
- The importance of ensuring that a cross-section of different sectors were a part of the Business Delivery Board.

10. TOURISM SUB-GROUP

The report was presented by Iwan Trefor Jones, Lead Director.

RESOLVED

1. **That the Economic Ambition Board supports the principle that the Regional Tourism Forum assumes a formal relationship with it.**
2. **That the status and function of the Forum be developed as part of the review of the governance arrangements to be established in Governance Agreement 2.**

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The proposition and implementation documents of the North Wales Growth deal explicitly stated the desire to 'develop and project the reputation of North Wales as a centre for excellence for land-based industries and tourism, firmly establishing ourselves as the adventure capital of the UK'. For other key sectors and themes within the Growth Deal such as digital, transport and skills, the Board was being supported either by formal sub-committees, or less formal sub-groups. These groups and committees could provide expert advice and information to the Board. There was currently a gap in terms of providing this expert advice on tourism projects and initiatives.

Although there was a gap in terms of a direct tourism link into the Board, there was a regional group which existed to: collate and report on needs within the sector; prioritise regional strategies and activities; and provide a regional tourism perspective to Welsh Government. This was the Regional Tourism Forum. It was proposed therefore that a link should be established between this Forum and the NWEAB to strengthen and underpin regional decision-making around tourism investment and development within the context of the economic Growth Vision.

DISCUSSION

The importance of ensuring alignment between local issues and regional issues was stressed.

It was suggested that the link between the Regional Tourism Forum and the NWEAB should go further than the Growth Deal alone.

11. 2018/19 OUT-TURN REPORT AND ANNUAL (STATUTORY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS) RETURN

The report was submitted by Dafydd Edwards, Section 151 Officer.

RESOLVED

- 1. To note and accept the Joint Committee's Revenue Income and Expenditure Account for 2018/19 (Appendix 1 and 2 to the report).**
- 2. To note and accept the Joint Committee's Official Annual (Statutory Financial Statements) Return for 2018/19 (subject to External Audit), in line with the statutory deadline of 15 June 2019 which had been duly completed and certified by the Statutory Finance Officer (Appendix 3 to the report).**

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

To inform the Joint Committee of its financial position for 2018/19, and to comply with statutory requirements with regard to completing the Annual (Financial Statements) Return.

DISCUSSION

Appreciation of the good work delivered by the Head and officers of Gwynedd Council Finance Department was expressed.

The Official Annual (Statutory Financial Statements) Return was signed by the Chair.

12. GROWTH DEAL COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT PLAN

The report was presented by Iwan Trefor Jones, Lead Director.

RESOLVED to approve the Communications and Engagement Plan.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

Robust engagement had been a key theme throughout the process of developing the North Wales Growth Vision, and the Communication and Engagement Plan would set out a clear plan to ensure that this vision was promoted in a consistent and co-ordinated way.

DISCUSSION

It was noted that it was intended to publish a quarterly newsletter promoting the Growth Vision which would be available for the organisations to distribute, with the first to be published at the end of the quarter, during June.

The following observations were noted arising from the discussion:-

- That it was important to ensure consistency of the messages that would be communicated regarding the Growth Vision.
- That it would be advantageous to form a more structured calendar of communication and engagement activities.
- That Glyndwr University had several stories for the press, and that Martin Williams who was responsible for the NWEAB's public relations needed to release them. It was agreed for Martin Williams to work with Glyndwr University on this on behalf of the NWEAB.

13. INQUIRY INTO EFFECTIVENESS OF GROWTH AND CITY DEALS FOR WALES

The report was presented by Iwan Trefor Jones, Lead Director.

RESOLVED to endorse the response to the “Inquiry into effectiveness of Growth and City Deals for Wales” undertaken by the Welsh Affairs Committee.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

As the NWEAB was supportive of the response submitted to the "Inquiry into effectiveness of Growth and City Deals for Wales".

DISCUSSION

It was noted that the Chair and Vice-chair of the Board would have an opportunity to appear before the Select Committee to submit oral information. This would be an opportunity to highlight the ambition in North Wales and what we were seeking to deliver.

It was noted that it was important to stress that we were only at the start of the journey in North Wales.

14. 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 12, Section 4, Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972. This paragraph is relevant as the report contains information about specific individuals who have the right to privacy. There is no public interest that calls for disclosing personal information about these individuals which would outweigh the rights of these

individuals. Consequently, the public interest falls in favour of maintaining the exemption.

15. PROGRAMME DIRECTOR - SHORT-LISTING

The report was submitted by Dilwyn Williams, Chief Executive of the Accountable Body.

RESOLVED to place four candidates on the short list to go on to an interview on 21 June.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

Drawing up a short list of candidates was one of the key milestones in the process of recruiting and appointing an individual to this key post. It was agreed at a previous meeting that the Board would use one of the scheduled meetings to draw up a short list for the post.

The meeting commenced at 1.00 pm and concluded at 3.00 pm

CHAIRMAN