
NORTH WALES ECONOMIC AMBITION BOARD
23/10/2020

Present:

Voting Members - Councillors:- Hugh Evans (Denbighshire Council), Llinos Medi Huws (Isle of Anglesey County 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), Maria Hinfelaar (Glyndŵr University), and Askar Sheibani (Business Delivery Board).

Chief Officers - Annwen Morgan (Isle of Anglesey County Council), Iwan Davies (Conwy County Borough Council), Colin Everett (Flintshire Council), Judith Greenhalgh (Denbighshire Council), Linda Roberts (Wrexham County Borough Council) and Dilwyn Williams (Gwynedd Council).

Officers in attendance –

Host Authority:

- Dafydd Edwards (Statutory Finance Officer - Host Authority), Iwan Evans (Monitoring Officer - Host Authority), Sian Pugh (Group Accountant - Corporate and Projects) and Annes Sion (Democracy Team Leader).

Programme Office:

Alwen Williams (Programme Director), Hedd Vaughan-Evans (Operations Manager), Nia Medi Williams (Senior Operations Officer), Henry Aron (Energy Programme Manager), Robyn Lovelock (Programme Manager), David Mathews (Land and Property Programme Manager), Stuart Whitfield (Digital Programme Manager), Erin Thomas (Communication and Engagement Officer), Angharad Evans (Programme Support Officer) and Lynn Slaven (Secretary to the Director).

Local Authorities and Partners:

Gary Ferguson (Flintshire Council), Gary Williams (Denbighshire Council), Gareth Owens (Flintshire Council), Lynn Ball (Isle of Anglesey Council), Jane Richardson (Chair of the Executive Officers Group), Graham Boase (Denbighshire Council), Andrew Farrow (Flintshire Council) and James Goodman (Bangor University)

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Cllr Dyfrig Siencyn was elected chair for 2020/21.

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

Cllr Mark Pritchard was elected vice-chair for 2020/21.

3. APOLOGIES

An apology was received from Councillor Mark Pritchard (Wrexham County Borough Council) and Ian Bancroft (Wrexham County Borough Council).

4. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

There were no declarations of personal interest.

5. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

6. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 31 JULY 2020

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of the NWEAB held on 31 July, 2020 as a true record.

7. FINAL GROWTH DEAL

The report was submitted by Alwen Williams, Programme Director.

RESOLVED

- To approve the submission of the Portfolio Business Case and the 5 Programme Business Cases to UK and Welsh Governments for Final Deal Agreement on the North Wales Growth Deal.
- To agree that each of the Partners individually approve the Overarching Business Plan that sets out the arrangements for delivering the North Wales Growth Deal as the basis for completing the Final Deal Agreement and acceptance of the Grant Funding Letter with the UK and Welsh Governments.
- To agree that each of the Partners individually approve and enter into Governance Agreement 2 and specifically adopt the delegations and Terms of Reference in “Governance Agreement 2: Appendix 1” thereof as the basis for entering into the Final Deal Agreement and acceptance of the Grant Funding letter with the UK and Welsh Governments.
- To approve the method used to calculate the cost of borrowing notionally required to facilitate the negative cash flow for the Growth Deal, and the corresponding annual partner contributions required to meet this cost and the established core and supplementary contributions as set out in GA2 (and in paragraphs 5.5 - 5.7 of the report).
- To agree that the Programme Director in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the NWEAB, the Accountable Body Monitoring Officer and the Accountable Body Section 151 Officer be granted delegated authority to agree minor changes to the documents as necessary to complete the agreement.
- To approve the renaming of the of Programme Office to the Portfolio Management Office in line with best practice and as a consequence, change the job title of the Programme Director to Portfolio Director.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

In 2016 the North Wales Economic Ambition Board adopted a Growth Vision for the Economy of North Wales. Based on the Growth Vision Strategy, a Growth Deal was prepared and agreed by all the partners working with both the UK and Welsh Government and the private sector in October 2018.

In November 2019 the NWEAB and the Welsh and UK Governments agreed the Heads of Terms, for Final Deal Agreement to be completed in 2020.

The NWEAB are committed to achieving the Final Deal Agreement with both Governments before the end of December 2020.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted and it was noted that this report was a milestone in the journey of the NWEAB. Attention was drawn to the recommendations that were highlighted at the beginning of the report. The timeframe was highlighted and it was noted that much had happened within the past ten months.

It was noted that the Programme Office had been working hard on the relevant documents, and that the Final Deal would be secured based on a Portfolio Business Case and Five Programme Business Cases. It was noted that the Portfolio Business Case highlighted the main objectives, provided a summary of the funding proposal for the North Wales Growth Deal, to be included in the Final Deal. It was emphasised that the business cases were live documents that would be reviewed regularly. Attention was drawn to each business case individually.

The Overarching Business Plan was outlined, emphasising that it set out the arrangements for implementing the North Wales Growth Deal, including an overview of the programmes and projects in order to secure the approval of all partners to the Funding requirements to implement the deal. The programme team was thanked for bringing the total of the projects to £240million which was in line with the Governments' grant level. The Income and Expenditure were outlined, noting that the expenditure profile would be over approximately six years, with the governments' funding contributions being equal over 15 years, therefore there would be a negative cash flow. However, it was noted that the host authority would facilitate this for the partners and would have made reasonable presumptions before spreading the cost equally over the 15 years of the deal, in order to offer an achievable annual cost. It was added that this would commit the partners to the Growth Deal for 15 years.

Attention was drawn to Governance Agreement 2 which would take the partnership to the implementation plan for the Growth Deal. It was noted that continuing with the governance model adopted in GA1, namely a Joint-committee supported by a host authority and providing for the Partners' commitments and responsibilities to the partnership. It was added that it also defined the relationship between the Board and its constituent Partner organisations, delegation restrictions and accountability.

In relation to the Final Deal, it was noted that it was a deal created jointly between the NWEAB and both Governments. It was emphasised that it was currently in draft form and that it would continue to be adapted over the next weeks. The next steps were highlighted, namely to seek democratic approval from the six Local Authorities and Partners. It was noted during the period that the AOR Process would be held over a period of five weeks with the Governments and the timeframe was outlined, with the final report published at the end of November. It was emphasised that it was an extremely detailed process.

During the discussion the following matters were raised:

- It was stressed that the Team was ready and confident that the two Governments would be ready and would keep to their promises. It was noted that if the agreement was in place by the end of 2020 that it could be signed at the start of 2021. It was noted that if it would not be completed that the contribution could be provided in September 2021 but that this would cause a domino effect and that the best deal was required.
- It was stressed that the team was confident that once the money would be received that work on the business plans would commence immediately.

- Members congratulated the team for their hard work and it was emphasised that it was exciting and that it highlighted the drive behind the Growth Deal. It was stressed that the long period had brought results and that they were hopeful for success before the end of the year.
- A question was asked in relation to the NWEAB's scrutiny level in terms of Governance. It was noted that there would be a high level of scrutiny and that the region's focus would be on completing the final deal agreement.
- Thanks were expressed for the work and it was stressed that the challenge now would be to do the work and prove ourselves.

8. QUARTER 2 FINANCIAL REVIEW

The report was submitted by Dafydd Edwards, Statutory Finance Officer - Host Authority.

RESOLVED

To receive and note the Joint-committee's Second Quarter Review for 2020/21.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

It was noted that details of the actual expenditure and income for the second quarter of the 2020/21 financial year needed to be provided to the NWEAB together with a projected full year out-turn against the annual budget.

In order to work effectively, the Joint-committee must be aware of its expenditure situation and the spending projections against its annual budget.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted noting that the financial situation was acceptable. It was noted that there was £78k of underspend noting that this was mainly as a result of delay before appointing to some posts as a result of the pandemic. Nevertheless, it was noted that it was acceptable and that the NWEAB was not in any financial difficulties.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- The staff of the Finance department were thanked for their hard work.
- Awareness of a healthy budget was noted.

The meeting commenced at 1.00pm and concluded at 3.15pm.