
REPORT TO THE NORTH WALES ECONOMIC AMBITION BOARD
24th March, 2023

TITLE: North Wales Corporate Joint Committee (CJC)
– extending the part-time secondment of Ambition North Wales’ Portfolio Director as Interim CJC Chief Executive

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1. You will recall that the Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) submitted a request to the North Wales Economic Ambition Board to release its Portfolio Director on a part-time basis to fulfil the role of the CJC’s Interim Chief Executive until the 31 March, 2023. This request was approved at the Economic Ambition Board’s meeting on the 30 September, 2022 when it was agreed to release part of the Portfolio Director’s time to fulfil the role of the CJC’s Chief Executive on a secondment basis for the requested period.
- 1.2. This report presents a request by the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee (CJC), to the Economic Ambition Board, to agree an extension to that secondment, for two days per week, up until the 30 September, 2023. This request is supported by the 6 North Wales Councils’ Chief Executives.

2. DECISION SOUGHT

- 2.1. That the Board consider the following recommendations and proposed arrangements:
- That the Board supports the extension of the arrangement to release the Portfolio Director’s time for two days per week until 30 September, 2023 on a part time secondment basis to undertake the Interim Chief Executive role.
 - That all employment and associated costs are covered by the North Wales CJC.

3. REASONS FOR THE DECISION

- 3.1. The arrangements recommended here are consistent with the 6 Councils’ decisions, in principle, to the transfer Ambition North Wales’ functions to the Corporate Joint Committee.
- 3.2. By fulfilling the CJC Chief Executive's role, the Portfolio Director will assist the region to develop an effective CJC, while being uniquely positioned to ensure that Ambition North Wales’ interests are safeguarded in this year of transition.

4. BACKGROUND AND RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1. At its meeting on 22 July, 2022 the North Wales CJC reviewed the role of their Chief Executive and, after considering the options, resolved to submit a request to the Economic Ambition Board to release part of their Portfolio Director's time (x2 days per week) to fulfil the role of the CJC's Interim Chief Executive at least until 31 March, 2023. As already stated, the Board agreed to this request at its meeting on the 30 September, 2022.
- 4.2. The option to submit this request to the Board was selected as it is likely that Ambition North Wales will be incorporated into the CJC, and that there would be a substantially higher cost if a stand-alone Chief Executive post was created, with insufficient availability of time required for one of the 6 local authority Chief Executives to oversee the CJC's development.
- 4.3. The part-time secondment of the Portfolio Director ensures that the Growth Deal and Growth Vision continue to be delivered during and after that transition, with turbulence minimised.
- 4.4. The Portfolio Director's involvement in establishing the CJC is required with respect to the Economic Wellbeing aspect regardless, and therefore extending this arrangement by means of the part-time secondment allows for that involvement to be focused and for duplication of resources to be avoided.
- 4.5. The decision in principle, to transfer Ambition North Wales to the CJC, has already been taken by the Councils and following the recent legislative changes, it will now be possible to undertake this process over the next few months. As part of any transfer, the status of all PMO staff will be addressed.
- 4.6. Ambition North Wales, via Cyngor Gwynedd as the host Authority, remains as the Portfolio Director's contractual employer whilst the CJC recompenses Ambition North Wales for both direct and indirect costs associated with the secondment.
- 4.7. A number of critical matters require further attention before the CJC is able to appoint a permanent Chief Executive e.g. the likely transfer of staff to the CJC's employment, while the CJC is required to review the current secondment arrangements prior to 31 March, 2023. Hence, this report re-visits the secondment decision.
- 4.8. Under current circumstances, the CJC needs to ensure a Chief Executive on a temporary basis and therefore, with the Board's agreement, it is recommended that the Portfolio Director's secondment to the post is extended until 30 September, 2023 on the current terms.
- 4.9. On receipt of the Board's approval to release its Portfolio Director for a further period on current terms, the CJC will consider the recommendation to extend the appointment at its meeting later in the day on the 24 March, 2023.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. It can be confirmed that the proposed extension to this part-time secondment would be net cost-neutral with the CJC undertaking the relevant cost.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. The Economic Ambition Board has been established pursuant to Governance Agreement 2 to act as the decision-making body for the partnership of local authorities and the education bodies to deliver the North Wales Growth Deal and the Growth Vision. Its functions and the outcomes it needs to deliver are defined by the agreement and the related Overarching Business Plan which was completed in tandem with the Growth Deal. It is also required to appoint the Portfolio Director to lead the Portfolio Management Office.
- 6.2. Nevertheless, the advent of the Corporate Joint Committees was presaged in GA2 and is specifically referenced as a matter reserved to the Councils. There is a specific provision in the agreement which acknowledges the anticipated creation of CJC's and that a transfer of functions might occur. This is reflected in the "in-principle" decision of the 6 Councils' cabinets (or equivalent executive committees) in December 2021 to transfer the functions of Ambition North Wales to the CJC provided that the model and the statutory framework was in place to achieve this. The CJC's have now been established and the statutory model is practically completed. However, at this point in time the work of creating the CJC as a functioning public body with appropriate governance and management arrangements is being moved forward. This work needs to reflect and prepare for the assumption of the role of Ambition North Wales into the CJC and its governing model.
- 6.3. In terms of GA2 the proposed extension to the secondment does not require Ambition North Wales resources and contributions to support the CJC. There also provision in the interim for maintaining capacity for supporting the work of delivering Ambition North Wales' functions. It is also relevant that the transition of Ambition North Wales' functions to the CJC needs to be properly planned and resourced to ensure that when the functions are transferred this can be achieved effectively and efficiently.

APPENDICES:

None

STATUTORY OFFICERS RESPONSE:

i. Monitoring Officer – Host Authority:

"I have had an input into the report and I am satisfied with the propriety of the recommendations."

ii. Statutory Finance Officer (the Host Authority's Section 151 Officer):

"I think what is proposed offers a pragmatic solution to deal with the situation. I can confirm that arrangements are in place to reimburse Ambition North Wales for the Portfolio Director's time when they assume the role of Chief Executive of the Corporate Joint Committee. I have no objection to the decision sought from the perspective of financial propriety."